Impact of a Genre-based Intervention on EFL Students' Written Narratives: A Case Study with Embedded Units

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a case study with three embedded units on the impact of a genre-based EFL pedagogical intervention on students' written narratives. The participants included three Spanish-speaking EFL students enrolled in a B1 general English course at a private language centre in Bogota, Colombia. In order to assess impact, a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was carried out. Data collection instruments included analyses of students' writing samples before and after the intervention, a teachers' questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews with students. The findings suggest that the genre-based intervention had a positive impact on the schematic structure of EFL students' written narratives, and the nature of this impact was related to specific aspects such as genre organisation, development of ideas in paragraphs, and use of linking devices, although this impact was less marked for a student who had already shown awareness of the basic schematic structure of a narrative before the intervention.

The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing has gone through many stages over the last few decades and nowadays there still are polarised views regarding how EFL teachers should approach it in second language (L2) classrooms. For example, there are product approaches rooted on analysis and controlled practice of linguistic items found in models, imitation of these models, and correctness of the final piece of writing (Steele, 2004). Conversely, there exist process approaches based on planning, drafting, continuous feedback and editing (Ariza, 2005; Diaz, 2010; Jarvis, 2002; White and Arndt, 1991). As part of the latter approach, other researchers have also proposed a series of pre-writing tasks as a way of supporting students and emphasising the communicative nature of EFL writing (Byrd, 2011). The genre approach (Bathia, 1993; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Hyland, 2003; Paltridge, 2001; Sidaway, 2006; Swales, 1990; Widodo, 2006), grounded on the communicative purpose of texts in social contexts, has also found its place amongst these teaching approaches.

In spite of this array of choices, it is not entirely clear which approach is most effective. For instance, critiques have been made about the genre approach regarding its neglect of students' ability to

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produce self-sufficient content (Byram, 2004) and its interference with students' creativity (Bawarshi, 2000). Furthermore, other academics have found a combination of approaches the better choice, for example, see Badger and White (2000) for work on the process-genre model, and Gabrielatos (2000) for work on a combination of Product-Process approaches.

Therefore, this study hopes to shed more light on the impact of genre-based instruction on the narrative writing performance of EFL students, in relatively unexplored contexts like Colombia.

This paper is fourfold. It first provides a literature review which sets the theoretical framework for the study. This includes a description of systemic theory around genre, and a review of previous genre-related studies. The paper then describes the adopted research methodology. It next presents findings and discusses implications. Finally, it provides a general conclusion with acknowledgements of weaknesses in the study, and advice on other potential lines of inquiry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Genre in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Within SFL, Halliday and Hasan (1976) have coined the term "texture" (p. 2) as an intricate property of texts. Eggins (2004) defines texture as "the property that distinguishes text from non-text. [It] is what holds the clauses of a text together to give them unity" (p. 24). In other words, a true text must have cohesion or elements that bind it together as a whole (e.g. references, lexical relations and conjunctive relations), but also coherence, that is, the relationship to its immediate social-situational and cultural context. The latter property can be divided twofold into registerial coherence or how the writer-reader relationship is realised, and generic coherence or how the text achieves its social purpose through an identifiable and predictable generic or schematic structure. For example, a story with a historical theme can be realised by the relationship between an expert with extensive subject knowledge and a novice who lacks this knowledge. Simultaneously, the same story needs to follow certain generic or schematic structure linked to its immediate context for it to be classified as a narrative and not, for example, as a report, academic essay, review or recipe.

In SFL, genre is seen as "the cultural purpose of texts" (Eggins, 2004, p. 54). Genre is closely related to how, through the choice and use of language, speakers engage in staged, goal-oriented and purposeful activities that involve everyday transactions (Martin, 1984). A transaction refers to the way people communicate with each other and use language to achieve a specific goal, for instance, buying a pair of shoes in a shop. Therefore, bearing in mind that "[c]ommunication is an interactive process through which meaning is negotiated in real time" (Bloor and Bloor, 2013, p. 8), analyzing the structure and organizational patterns in texts can help us understand how texts express genres, and subsequently meaning, in specific cultural-situational contexts.

Genre-based pedagogy tends to be based on a threefold cycle that involves deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction of a text within a specific context and field (Martin, 1999). For instance, through text analysis tasks, an EFL teacher can use a formal business letter in the classroom to raise awareness of peculiarities in this text, including its purpose in a specific context of situation, the choices of lexis and grammar used to express meaning, the reader-writer roles and relationship, the mode of communication, the structure and organization of ideas, and specific conventions used in the genre. It is through these text-based instructional activities that students learn how to create meaning (Burns, 2010).

2.2. The Concept of Narrative

Historically, narratives have been around for as long as humans have existed due to our need to explain things and pass knowledge from one generation to another. Narratives are effective in achieving their purpose because they trigger our innermost emotions and make the events seem closer to our reality. In an EFL context, narratives are powerful tools for raising awareness of social and cultural issues associated with L2 learning, because "we cannot only recreate "virtual" social situations in our brain but actively develop our social skills through cooperation and empathy, broaden our awareness of cultural peculiarities and find a sense of belonging" (Guinan and Hammes, 2013, p. 8).

Despite its many definitions, in SFL, and in this study, a narrative is defined as "[a story] which [is] concerned with protagonists who face and resolve problematic experiences" (Eggins and Slade, 1997, p. 239). This genre may be encapsulated in a text as shown in Appendix A.

The structure of a narrative with a linear concept made up of a beginning, middle and end was first conceptualised by Aristotle in 350BC, and later modified by a playwright named Gustav Freytag who added rising and falling actions in relation to the climax (Hockrow, 2014). However, in SFL, the structure of the narrative genre is made up of five main moves or stages, namely: orientation, problem, complication, evaluation and resolution (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). The table below shows a breakdown of these moves or stages exemplified by the text entitled 'A Sticky Night Out' presented in Appendix A.

Table 1.
Labov and Waletzky's (1967) Narrative Stages with Examples

Paragraph	Narrative Moves/Stages	Questions Answered	Examples in Text 'A Sticky Night Out'
1	Orientation	When? Where? Who? Why?	Two years ago / French restaurant, Bristol / Best friend George and I / His 40th birthday celebration
2	Problem, Complication & Evaluation	What problem? How? What happened? What **else** happened? How feel?	Ordered food but starter was two hours late / soup salty and cold Main course worse, raw chicken and slug in salad Awful meal, ruined occasion
3	Resolution & Evaluation	What happened in the end? How feel?	Complained, ordered burgers from another place, didn't have to pay Wonderful night out

Labov and Waletzky (1967) point out that narratives sometimes include two optional stages. An abstract at the beginning, which prepares readers for the type of story that is coming, and a coda towards the end which gives an overall statement about the text by switching from narrative to present tenses. They also put forward that more complex narratives can have a series of problem-complication-evaluation stages one after the other, and that a well-written narrative should have a stand-alone evaluation stage before a resolution is reached. However, this latter idea is somewhat debatable, as evaluation stages are often embedded throughout the narrative in the shape of adjectives that describe feelings, for instance.

2.3. Studies on Genre-based EFL Instruction

Some studies seem to have demonstrated the instructional efficacy of EFL genre instruction in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts. For instance, employing an experimental strategy, and a statistical analysis of data through the Wilcoxon match-pairs signed-ranks test, Henry and Roseberry (1998) studied the impact of genre exposure with both explicit and non-explicit instruction regarding tourist information

genre-related moves in a management course. They found that there was improvement in the treatment group in terms of cohesion and coherence in post-tests.

In Taiwan, through a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistical analysis and students' interviews, Yuan-Shan and Shao-Wen (2011) showed that the genre-based approach to teaching writing was effective in improving university students' ability to summarise a narrative text, and improvements were greater regarding content and organisation of information, compared to vocabulary and language use.

In Thailand, employing a case study strategy, Kongpetch (2006) demonstrated that the genre-approach helped university students get to grips with intricacies of expository writing, particularly in relation to classroom assignments and research projects.

Other studies (Hyon, 2001; Pang, 2002; Yayli, 2012) have also found positive results. However, in many of these studies, the findings may have only applied to reasonably advanced EAP learners, so it is unknown if the same results could be obtained with learners whose English level is much lower.

In Colombia, Chala and Chapeton (2013) seemed to show that a group of pre-service teachers on an undergraduate course in Modern Languages improved their confidence and attitudes towards essay writing through processes such as scaffolding, use of samples and explicit instruction embedded into genre-based activities. Similarly, through qualitative analyses of students' writing samples and a teachers' survey, Velasco (2016) appeared to find a link between the incorporation of text analysis tasks in EFL writing instruction and fairly positive effects on the cohesion and coherence of students' factual pieces of writing. It would be interesting to see if these findings could be supported by similar results in other Colombian classrooms, especially in regards to other genres such as narratives.

Also, Herazo (2012) has called for the incorporation of a genre-based approach into curricula, as a means to foster more meaningful oral communication. He heavily criticizes the tendency in Colombia to use approaches rooted in rote learning and memorization of unrealistic and purposeless dialogues for the teaching of oral communication.

In Thailand, through statistical analyses of paired-samples *t*-tests, Cheng (2008) found that Thai college freshmen's narrative writing showed large improvements in terms of rhetorical moves, content, coherence and language use, as a result of the introduction of genre-based pedagogy. Once again, more work would need to be done to see if these findings also apply to learners with a different (i.e. lower) English level and whose L1 is not Thai.

The above corpus needs to be expanded in order to truly understand the processes involved in the teaching of EFL writing. As Cheng (2008) puts it: "more research is required to further explore learner dynamics as receiving genre instruction and to understand the complexities of genre-based learning" (p. 185). Clearly, there is a gap for further investigation, and it is here where this study can provide more information about the application and impact of genre-based instruction, particularly in relatively unexplored contexts like Colombia.

3. Research Aim and Objectives

This study evaluates the impact of the implementation of a genre-based pedagogical intervention on written narratives produced by three B1-level Colombian EFL students. The evaluation of such intervention will hopefully help EFL teachers make informed decisions about potential tools that can be used for the teaching of narrative writing in Colombia, as well as in other contexts. The study addressed the following research question: How does a genre-based teaching intervention impact the narrative writing performance of a group of B1-level Colombian EFL students? In order to assess impact, the intervention was evaluated from three different angles through: a) a qualitative evaluation of students' narrative writing performance before and after the intervention, b) a quantitative evaluation of students'

narrative writing performance before and after the intervention, and c) the students' opinions about the effectiveness of the intervention.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study was part of a four-week general EFL course in which writing a narrative was an element of the overall course assessment. Writing was identified as a weakness during the needs analysis carried out with students at the beginning of the course. The study was designed based on the general assumption that genre-based instruction could potentially be beneficial for Colombian EFL students' narrative writing abilities.

This study employed a single case study strategy with embedded units (Yin, 2003), in which the narrative writing performance of three EFL students was followed through a pedagogical intervention. Pieces of writing produced by students were compared before and after such intervention. As recommended when carrying out small-scale projects (Bell, 2010), this strategy was chosen bearing in mind limiting factors in the study such as the time available, lack of human resources, and nature of the study. Another pivotal factor in choosing this strategy was the ethics implied in social research (Denscombe, 2010). That is, had other strategies been chosen instead, for example, experimental, some participants would have been deprived of potentially beneficial writing instruction, resulting in unethical treatment of participants.

4.2. Context and Participants

The study took place in a private English language centre in Bogota, Colombia. General English courses at this centre usually last eight weeks, and they are divided into five levels ranging from Elementary (A1) to Advanced (C1) English, mapped to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). Pre-Intermediate (B1) level is subdivided into four sublevels. In some cases, depending on demand, courses are offered intensively over four weeks. Whether intensive or not, a general English course entails forty learning contact hours. Students normally have to sit an end-of-term exam on the penultimate day of a course in order to move from one sublevel to the next. Students are placed on courses based on the results of a placement test that measures passive knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and reading skills. There is also a face-to-face interview that assesses students' spoken English proficiency.

The research population included a class of 9 Spanish-speaking EFL students enrolled in a four-week intensive general English course at Pre-Intermediate (B1) level. From this population, a sample of three students was randomly chosen employing a non-statistical approach. The sample size (i.e. three students out of nine) was decided based on factors such as the scale and nature of the study, and availability of human resources.

The sampled group was made up of 2 females and 1 male. The first female (referred to as Student 1 from this point onwards) was 23 years old at the time of the study. She was a university student and was studying English in order to be able to graduate from university. Demonstrating a minimum level of English tends to be a requirement for most university students in Colombia before they are allowed to graduate. Her level of English was assessed at B1-low, as per standardised placement test and interview.

The male (referred to as Student 2 from this point onwards) was 36 years old at the time of the study. He was an Industrial Engineer and was studying English to increase his employability prospects. His level of English was also assessed at B1-low, according to his placement test result and interview.

The second female (referred to as Student 3 from this point onwards) was 26 years old at the time of the study. She was studying a bachelor's degree in Business Studies at a private university, and her motivations for studying English included furthering studies and travelling. Her level of English was assessed at B1-mid, according to her placement test result and interview.

These students received about 10 hours of instruction per week over four weeks, under the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The genre-based pedagogical intervention was embedded in the instruction. Other instruction included development of reading, listening and speaking skills related to various topics, and grammar input regarding narrative tenses. Participants signed and dated consent forms before taking part in the study.

Other participants included myself, the teacher-researcher, and a group of 15 teachers working in the same centre. All teachers had English as their first language (L1) and had a minimum of two years post-CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) teaching experience in various contexts. Their main role was to assess the students' pieces of writing and give their overall impression in terms of application of narrative stages. They did not take part in any classroom input, nor did they interfere in the pedagogical intervention delivered to the students.

4.3. Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments included students' writing samples, a teachers' questionnaire based on an assessment of these writing samples, and semi-structured interviews carried out with two (out of three) sampled students.

Writing samples were collected before and after a pedagogical intervention, in weeks 1 and 4, respectively. A different instrument was applied before and after in order to assess progression or regression. The first task included a handwritten narrative based on a minor accident students had had. Students were given 40 minutes to do this in class, and were given a word limit of 180-250 words. Another task was also done under the same conditions after the intervention, but the topic was a holiday or journey that had not gone well. Copies of the handwritten originals were made to ensure submitted typed-in narratives remained unchanged. Writing samples after the intervention were collected in week 4, and not sooner, because the intensive General English course at the language centre followed a pre-determined syllabus, including an exam at the end of the four-week period, that had to be covered in the time available (i.e. the four-week period). The intervention, delivered in the shape of a one-off workshop in week 1, had to be tightly fitted into the course syllabus, so there was little flexibility in terms of timings.

Teachers' assessments of students' writing samples were carried out two weeks after the course had finished.

Semi-structured interviews carried out with two of the sampled students took place three months after the course had finished. The timing of the interviews was subject to students' schedules and availability around the time of the study. Students were specifically consulted about the language in which they wanted the interviews to be carried out. The sampled students unanimously chose English as the preferred language, as they saw that as an opportunity to gain speaking practice.

4.4. Pedagogical Intervention

Teaching material was designed and delivered in the shape of a collaborative workshop based on Martin's (1999) threefold cycle, in week 1, as part of the students' classroom instruction, soon after the first instrument had been applied. The workshop began with an overview of genres and differences between them. Here, students were presented with a letter of complaint, a recipe, and a children's narrative, and were asked to collaboratively discuss questions such as: What type of texts (or genres) are they? How do

you know this? Where would you find them? What is their purpose? Who are the respective writers and readers? What is their relationship?

Next, the definition of a narrative was discussed and narrowed down to the one given by Eggins and Slade (1997) presented earlier in this paper. Then, students were asked to read a version of the text 'A Sticky Night Out', presented in Appendix A, and assess its quality and readability. This version had key moves or stages missing (i.e. parts of the orientation were removed and there were no problem and evaluation stages). After this, students were asked to carry out a similar activity but with the full version of the same narrative to try to establish what moves or stages a good narrative should have. This was followed by a collaborative analysis of the moves in the genre, as presented in Table 1 earlier. In addition, students were asked to highlight the language used in the text to signpost different stages (i.e. linking devices and connectors) and provide alternatives.

Lastly, students worked collaboratively in small groups to plan and write their own narratives entitled 'A time when I got lost'. Students were specifically asked to use linking words and connectors from the previous analysis in their pieces of writing. Narratives were shared with other students in class. Peer and teacher feedback was given. As part of their independent learning, students had to carry out an analysis of schematic moves or stages of the collaborative narratives shared in class.

4.5. Data Analysis

Students' writing samples were coded to guarantee anonymity, and then qualitatively analysed using Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative stages, as shown in Table 1 earlier. Due to the shortness of the study and nature of the instruction imparted to students, priority of assessment was given to areas such as task response and cohesion and coherence. Narratives were coded according to student numbers (e.g. S1=student 1, S2=student 2, etc.). Also, narratives before the intervention were coded A, and the ones afterwards B. For instance, the code S1A represented the writing produced by student 1 before the intervention. Qualitative analyses were carried out by me, the teacher-researcher.

The teachers' questionnaire was based on the questions shown in Appendix B. This instrument was developed by me, the teacher-researcher, for the purpose of the study based on Denscombe's (2010) criteria for designing questionnaires. The instrument was validated through an initial and secondary trial carried out with 5 of the 15 teachers working in the same centre who took part in the study. After the trial, Question 2 was left as a way of checking the consistency of answers in Question 1. Teachers were also encouraged to write open-ended comments to expand on their rationale behind assessments. The subareas of cohesion and coherence were adapted from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) band descriptors for writing. Due to the nature of the pedagogical intervention, areas such as lexical resource, grammatical use, and writing mechanics were not included in the teachers' assessments.

Results from this questionnaire were collected, organised, tabulated, and analysed by contrasting answers from Question 1 to assess progression or regression. The mode or most common answer within Question 3 was used as a measure of central tendency, and the range was used as a measure of data dispersion (Denscombe, 2010). This assessment exercise was designed more as an internal peer survey on overall impression of students' writing quality, as opposed to a complex statistical process.

Teachers' assessments of students' writing samples before and after the intervention were carried out by three groups of five teachers, each group of five assessing a different pair of narratives. Assessments were coded as follows: T1= teacher 1, T2= teacher 2, and so on. Teachers were briefed about the theory behind narrative stages, using the text and analysis of the narrative 'A Sticky Night Out' presented in Table 1 earlier. They were then asked to read a before-after pair of narratives and assess their overall application of stages. In order to avoid bias, narratives were presented in no particular order and

teachers were not told they had been produced by the same student. Typed-in samples were colour coded randomly, using either pink or green colour to avoid identification.

Semi-structured interviews carried out with two of the sampled students were implemented, recorded, transcribed and qualitatively analysed employing a relational analysis of proximity of concepts (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). The proximity or relations between concepts was based on strength (i.e. weak or strong relation) and connotation (i.e. positive or negative association). In order to make data more robust and less biased, during their interviews, student 3 was asked to anonymously assess student 1's colour-coded narratives, and student 2 was asked to reflect on and assess his own writing performance.

5. Results

The findings below are the results of qualitative and quantitative evaluations of students' narrative writing performance before and after the intervention, and students' opinions about the effectiveness of the intervention.

5.1. Student 1

S1A. The qualitative analysis of student 1's writing sample before the intervention showed that she did not seem to respond well to the task. The word count tallied 172 words and some content was underdeveloped. This narrative showed the basic structure of a narrative fairly well organised into paragraphs. However, the orientation stage was somewhat tangential and the problem was introduced too soon (paragraph 1). There were a number of evaluation stages embedded in the text (paragraphs 1 and 3) but these were not related to the writer's feelings. The resolution in paragraph 4 was poorly developed, as it gave a sense that it had been cut short. This is exemplified in the table below.

Table 2
Qualitative Analysis S1A (before)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages
1	My name is Xxxxxxx Xxxxx, I'm 23 years old, in this moment study English, a few months I accident when practiced tennis, in this moment, I scared, my right leg is broken, after of the accident my coach called to my parent for said that her girl had a accident.	Orientation Evaluation Problem
2	My coach or personality training, called to a emergengy and she told about with the nurse, the nurse take something my name, age etc. The Ambulance never lost. Then, my coach called a taxi for can go to the hospital, my parents went to hospital for met with me.	Complication
3	When I arrived to the hospital, my parent was scared, the doctor said that was a fracture of right knee, my inmovilized and he said that went to the house, and my incapacited by 5 days. After I went to the university in muletas and studied. My friends was tired because I didn't go to the cinema, and played with them.	Evaluation Complication Evaluation
4	Finally, 1 months after for the accident I recover.	Resolution

S1B. On the other hand, student 1's writing sample after the intervention showed that she responded fairly better to the task. The word count tallied 188 words. The orientation stage was more focused and

gave more relevant information. The problem and complication were introduced in paragraph 2, these were prompted by the use of linking devices i.e. 'However' and 'Additionally', respectively.

This was also supported by qualitative data from students' interviews. For example, when asked to anonymously assess student 1's pair of narratives, student 3 saw improvements in cohesion due to use of linking devices:

> S3: In the green sticker narrative the use of linking words is better, is definitely better, because in the pink one I think is a little confused and it don't have… it doesn't have cohesion [mispronounced] between the paragraphs… I don't know how to say this. But for me, another area important is the use of linking words and in this is better the green one.

The qualitative analysis of student 1's writing sample after the intervention also showed that there was a stand-alone evaluation stage in paragraph 3, and a resolution was given in paragraph 4. The latter was also prompted by the linking device 'Finally', and there was another evaluation stage at that point i.e. 'very happy', as shown in the table below.

Table 3
Qualitative Analysis S1B (after)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages
1	This story is real. This happened last year. My family and me were on vacations in Miami, Florida by some days. My father rent a car in Miami for went to Orlando and visited the diferences parks, but this day we specify visited Magic Kingdown.	Orientation
2	However, when we went to Orlando, the GPS didn't work, it was on but not gaven the diference routes and is imposible that we have arriven to Orlando with the GPS damage. Additionally, the GPS didn't speak Spanish, just English, and in this moment my family and me didn't understand English.	Problem Complication
3	We were scared and bad, because we had paid the GPS by each day of use and the GPS didn't work. Other hand, is very neccesary didn't go late to park because my family and me didn't know all the atraction and diferents shows of the park.	Evaluation (followed by elaboration)
4	Finally, my brother had a idea, and we decide bought a SIM card of USA for can use Waze and we can arrived the park and enjoy of all atractions and shared in family. I was very happy because park is very big and beautifull.	Resolution Evaluation

This sense of progression was corroborated by quantitative data from teachers 1-5 who unanimously assessed writing sample S1B considerably better than S1A. The mode indicated that the organisation and structure of the genre was the main reason for this. They thought that writing sample S1A lacked coherence and was hard to follow. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 4
Results of Teachers' Assessment Narratives S1A-S1B

	Pink (S1A)	Green (S1B)	Rationale behind one being better than the other	Comments
T1	3	4	1, 2, 3, 4	Due to lack of coherence pink sticker is hard to follow. Green one follows model better
T2	2	4	1, 3	Pink sticker – problem introduced too soon, lack of elaboration

T3	4	5	1, 2, 4	I think the green sticker had more detail and flowed a bit better
T4	2	4	1, 3	Pink - more orientation needed, lacks evaluation, mentions parents' feelings instead
T5	3	5	1, 2, 4	It's difficult to follow the pink stickered writing as it doesn't follow the structure, it's not coherent

The figure below shows a visual representation of this assessment.
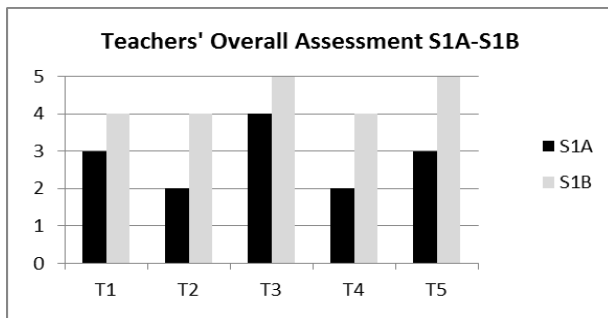

Figure 1. Teachers' Assessment S1A-S1B

In her interview, student 3 also thought that narrative S1B was considerably better than S1A in terms of organisation and structure of ideas.

> S3: The quality of the two narratives is different. Erm… the narrative of the green sticker is very organised in general. It had been structured more organised that the pink sticker. Erm… the readability [mispronounced] is shown better in the green sticker that in the pink sticker.

She also exemplified how she thought S1's afterwards narrative was better organized.

> S3: In the green sticker narrative, in the first paragraph, we see the time, the characters, the place, the environment, all the description of the context. After, in the second paragraph, erm… is the problem, the problem has been described, has been explained. And the third paragraph we see the feeling of the characters about the problem, how they feel. And finally, in the fourth paragraph we see the resolution of the problem, how the characters resolve the problem.

5.2. Student 2

S2A. The qualitative analysis of student 2's writing sample before the intervention showed that he responded fairly well to the task. The word count tallied 190 words and content was fairly well developed. Even though there were perhaps too many paragraphs, this narrative showed fairly good structure and organisation with some degree of complexity. For instance, there were evaluation-complication-evaluation-complication stages intertwined in paragraphs 2-3. Perhaps, the orientation stage in paragraph 1 could have given more information (e.g. where? what grade?) before introducing the problem. The writer skillfully employed a coda stage towards the end (paragraph 6) indicated by the word 'Nowadays' where there was a shift in tense to bring the reader to the state of the writer's current situation. However, in spite of its good content, there was a lack of linking devices to guide the reader. This is exemplified in the table below.

Table 5
Qualitative Analysis S2A (before)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages

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1	Once day, I was playing football at the school with my classmate, I was eleven years old, I have just done a goal when I received a hard hit in my right leg.	Orientation Problem
2	I felt very bad, because my classmate has hit me very strong, I was lie on the grass for a five minutes, and when I could to get up I was resting for ten minutes more.	Evaluation (followed by elaboration)
3	When I felt fine, I could to continuous playing football, but after to do another goal, the same classmate again hit me; for this time I was lie on the grass for fifteen minutes, but when I want to get up I felt a hard pain in my right feet, I could to walk because my ancle was broke.	Evaluation Complication Evaluation Complication
4	I could get up again, and two classmate took me and we went to the nurse and doctor room.	Resolution
5	For this accident I was in home for six mounths, and I never could play football again.	Resolution
6	Nowdays I'm swimming every weekend because this kind sport is the healthies, and it helps me to recover my normal way to walk.	Coda

S2B. Once again, student 2 responded fairly well to the task after the intervention. The word count tallied 218 words and content was well developed. Overall, there was no major progression in terms of application of narrative stages between his analyses before and after the intervention. However, the orientation stage at the beginning of the afterwards narrative was slightly more compact and gave more relevant information. Ideas were more compact compared to his narrative before the intervention as these were organised into just three paragraphs.

Also, there was some progression in terms of use of some linking devices to guide the reader, something that was lacking before the intervention. For example, 'suddenly' was used to introduce the problem (paragraph 2), 'To make it even worse' introduced the complication (paragraph 2), and 'Finally' introduced the resolution (paragraph 3).

Once again, a coda stage was skillfully included after the intervention to express the current state of affairs, specifically in paragraph 3 straight after the resolution and evaluation, as shown in the table below.

Table 6
Qualitative Analysis S2B (after)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages
1	This happened two years ago. I was working at the office in Bogota and I had an argument with my boss about a ship that didn't arrive at Cartagena port. For this reason that day was terrible for me.	Orientation
2	Me and two friends left the office, how I was so tired and sleepy I didn't want to drive home but I did. I was driving home I was talking with my friend, all was fine and suddenly a motorbike acrossed in front on my car. Unfortunately, he fall on the street. I was so scared and I could to stop the car to avoid injure him. I got out the car and I asked him if all was right but the biker was angry and he was guilting me. To make it even worse, more people appeared next to me and my friends. They wanted to hit us but we could to got in the car. Outside the car were many people shotting us, we were	Evaluation Problem Complication Evaluation

	so scared that they could to injury us.	
3	Finally, I could to phone to the police, they understood all that happened and took him (biker) to the prison. That was the worse moment in my life, and for this reason each time that I need to drive home always I'm driving carefully.	Resolution Evaluation Coda

Quantitative data from assessments by teachers 6-10 also indicated that most teachers, other than T9, assessed writing sample S2B moderately better than S2A. The mode indicated that progress was due to three equally common aspects, that is, organisation and structure of genre, ideas included in paragraphs and how these are developed, and use of linking devices. While T9 assessed both pieces of writing as 'Good' and saw neither progress nor regress, T8 thought that the orientation stage in writing sample S2A was underdeveloped. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 7
Results of Teachers' Assessment Narratives S2A-S2B

	Green (S2A)	Pink (S2B)	Rationale behind one being better than the other	Comments
T6	3	5	1, 2, 3	Pink follows all the stages and sub stages, for example, para.2 problem then escalation + uses funct lang to sign post it
T7	2	4	1, 2	
T8	3	4	1, 3	Green one – orientation a bit thin. Pink better written
T9	4	4	-	Pink – paragraphs better layout, Green sticker better linking
T10	4	5	2, 3, 4	The pink sticker writing uses good linkers to develop ideas within paragraphs e.g. Suddenly, unfortunately, finally. The writer uses good substitution (I did) and referencing e.g. he, they, us, that.

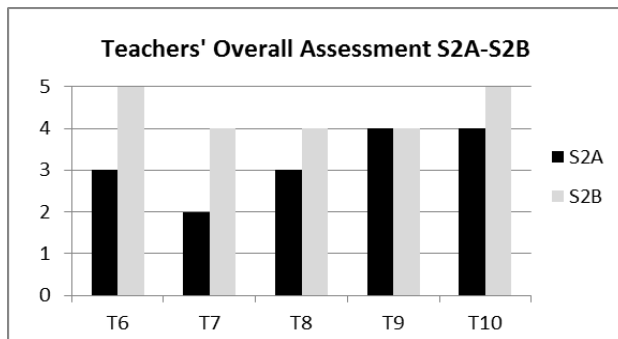The figure below shows a visual representation of this assessment.

Figure 2. Teachers' Assessment S2A-S2B

In his interview, student 2 also felt that his own second narrative was moderately better in terms of its structure: "the writing with label pink has a good structure, you can understand each part of this and you

can maybe to identify, or you can understand better because the explain of… the explanation that I've done in this writing is more accurate", and its vocabulary: "if I use the correct tense and I use the correct adverb or adjectives, I can explain to the other… another person… explain better my ideas… explain better that I want to they understand me".

However, he also felt that there was some improvement in regards to aspects such as grammar, which had not been included as part of the genre-based pedagogical intervention.

S2: The write with the pink label was better because in this writing I used well tense, for example, past continuous, and past perfect… I used, for example, adverbs and I can that… in this moment… helped me to explain better my ideas.

In terms of effectiveness of the genre-based pedagogical intervention, in his interview, student 2 thought that the workshop was effective for the teaching of narrative writing.

S2: I think that after the workshop I learnt to structure my writing because erm… with this tool maybe I can to explain well each part of my writing. … I think your workshop for me was effective because it helped me to… to explain better my ideas and it helped me to… to organise my ideas and… because the reason for this writing is that another person could understand me or my ideas.

These results from qualitative and quantitative analyses showed that the teaching intervention may have had a lesser impact on this student who seemed to be aware of narrative stages before the intervention and who seemed to show some improvement in aspects not related to the teaching intervention.

5.3. Student 3

S3A. The qualitative analysis of student 3's writing sample before the intervention showed that she did not respond well to the task. The word count tallied 142 words and content was poorly developed. Her narrative had key stages missing, for example, there was no evaluation at any point throughout the piece of writing. Although there was a sense of good structure through accurate use of paragraphs, the orientation was incomplete (paragraph 1), and there was not complication stage after the problem was stated and before a resolution was reached (paragraphs 2-3). It would have been ideal to have included an evaluation stage at some point in the story to indicate how the writer was feeling. The above is exemplified in the table below.

Table 8
Qualitative Analysis S3A (before)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages
1	I used to go to the English class every morning by bus	Orientation
2	One day, I got out later, so I ran very fast to the bus stop. But, I fell on the street just before arrive at the bus stop and I twisted my ancle. Suddently, a person next to me helped me to get up.	Problem (followed by positive event)
3	Finally, I had to walk very slowly to get back to my house and I couldn't go to the English class. When I arrived, my mother gave me a cream for my ancle. Later, I called the doctor for an appointment. Next day, my father took me to the English class in his car, because I couldn't walk.	Resolution
4	In the afternoon I went to the doctor. He told me that my ancle was fine and he gave me	Resolution

another cream for my ancle.

S3B. Conversely, student 3's writing sample after the intervention showed that she responded much better to the task. The word count tallied 232 words and content was more developed and better organised. This narrative had all the key stages included. The orientation stage in paragraph 1 had all the relevant information. The problem and complication stages were introduced in paragraph 2 through linking devices such as 'but' and 'To top it [off]', respectively. Here, there were also some evaluative devices such as 'awful', 'angry', and 'sad'. Similarly, the resolution stage was prompted by linking devices such as 'However', 'luckily', and 'Finally' in paragraphs 3-4. A further evaluation stage was included in paragraph 4 as shown in the table below.

Table 9
Qualitative Analysis S3B (after)

Para.	Text	Narrative Stages
1	Last Christmas, my brother and I were on holidays in EEUU. We had plans to visit Chicago, Washigton and New York. First, we arrived in Chicago. We spent five days with some friends who lived there. We visited the downtown, the Navy Pier, the Willis Tower and we ate the classic Chicago's hot dog. The city is very beautiful.	Orientation
2	The next city to visit was Washigton. So we arrived at the airport on time, but the line to enter to the gates for national flights was very long. One hour after, we could arrive to the gate, but the airplane's door was closed. It was aweful, we lost the flight. So we told with a man who worked in United Airlines. To top it up, he told us that they didn't have another flight to Washigton at the same day. We were angry and sad at the same time.	Problem Evaluation Complication Evaluation
3	However, the man told us that other possibility was to flight in American Airlines. So, we told with a lady of this airline and luckily, they had flights to Washigton every three hours.	Beginning of Resolution
4	Finally, we could flight to Washigton at the same day. We only had to wait two hours to take the flight. We spent five days in Washigton and five days in New York. It was one of the most amazing trips that we have ever had. We were so blessed.	Resolution Evaluation

These positive findings were supported by quantitative data from teachers' assessments. Teachers 11-15 unanimously assessed writing sample S3B better than S3A. The mode showed that organisation and structure of genre was the main reason for this progress. The second most common reason for this was ideas included in paragraphs and how these were developed. Teachers 11, 13 and 15 thought that writing sample S3A missed an evaluation stage, which was then included in writing sample S3B. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 10
Results of Teachers' Assessment Narratives S3A-S3B

	Pink (S3A)	Green (S3B)	Rationale behind one being better than the other	Comments
T11	3	5	1, 2	In pink para 2 develops ideas in para 1 so they should be merged, pink has no final evaluation

T12	2	4	1, 2, 3, 4	
T13	3	5	1	Green provides decent examples of orientation, problem, complication, evaluation
T14	2	4	1, 2, 3	The use of specific states and airlines gives clarity to a memorable journey they've had
T15	3	5	1, 2	The pink sticker writing has no evaluation

The figure below shows a visual representation of this assessment.
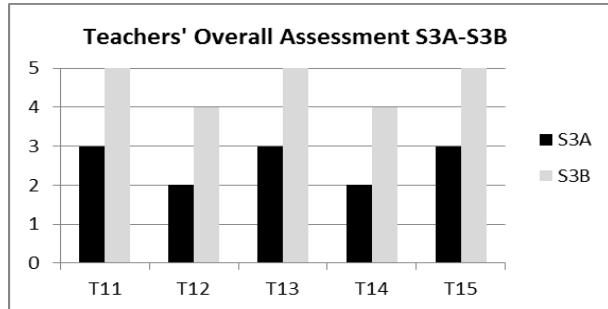

Figure 3. Teachers' Assessment S3A-S3B

In terms of effectiveness of the genre-based pedagogical intervention, in her interview, student 3 thought that the workshop was very effective for the teaching of narrative writing.

> S3: The workshop that we did a few months later in the English class helped us, as a students, to know the structure of a narrative text, what kind of parts we have to put in the text. … In my opinion, I think the workshop was very effective because it helped me to improve my ability to write narrative texts. So, in general, my narrative texts are more structured, more organised that the texts before the workshop, so I think is… it was very effective.

6. Discussion

This study addressed the research question: How does a genre-based teaching intervention impact the narrative writing performance of a group of B1-level Colombian EFL students?

6.1. Impact of the Intervention

A comparison of results from the three embedded units in the case study revealed that the implementation of a genre-based pedagogical intervention had an overall positive impact on the written narratives produced by the group of B1-level Colombian EFL students, and the nature of this impact was related to specific aspects such as genre organisation, development of ideas in paragraphs, and use of linking devices.

For instance, results from student 1 showed that genre instruction appeared to have a positive impact on the narrative after the pedagogical intervention, particularly in the area of development of ideas. The orientation stage afterwards was more focused and relevant. The evaluation stage was more related to the writer's feelings and the other stages were prompted by linking devices which appeared to give the piece of writing better structure and organisation. Similarly, results from student 2 demonstrated that although this student responded well to both tasks, the second narrative seemed slightly better packaged in the sense that it had fewer paragraphs and it was more compact. It also had better

signposting through the use of linking devices and the orientation stage at the beginning was fuller and more detailed. Likewise, results from student 3 indicated that the genre-based intervention tended to have a positive impact on the second narrative, particularly in the areas of generic organisation, development of ideas in paragraphs, and better use of linking devices. The orientation stage was more complete and extended, and there were more connectors to guide the reader through the problem, complication and resolution stages. There were also some evaluative devices included which were lacking in the piece of writing before the intervention.

This seems to be consistent with Cheng (2008), Henry and Roseberry (1998), and Yuan-Shan and Shao-Wen's (2011) findings where students' writing performance improved in terms of rhetorical moves, content, organization and coherence, as a result of the introduction of genre-based instruction.

However, it is important to highlight that the classroom instruction imparted between the intervention in week 1 and the collection of the second lot of writing samples in week 4 may have had a positive transfer regarding students' ability to use linking devices in L1, something that would not have necessarily been solely related to the intervention.

6.2. Effectiveness of the Intervention

Taking the small sample size into account, the genre-based intervention showed positive results for the teaching of narrative writing for this particular group of students. This corroborates previous studies with similar results across other genres in the same context. For example, the seemingly sense of progression in the students' narrative writing performance in this study mirrors Velasco's (2016) findings which appeared to find a link between text analysis tasks and fairly positive effects on the cohesion and coherence of students' factual pieces of writing in a Colombian context, and Chala and Chapeton's (2013) findings where a group of pre-service teachers on an undergraduate course appeared to improve their confidence and attitudes towards essay writing through processes such as scaffolding, use of samples and explicit instruction as part of genre-based activities.

Results of this study do not directly contradict other approaches for the teaching of writing (e.g. product and process approaches), nor do they support criticism of approaches rooted in rote learning and memorization in Colombian EFL classrooms (Herazo, 2012). Instead, the findings here simply imply that genre-based interventions based on deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction of texts (Martin, 1999) are effective in encouraging meaningful written communication and improving the flow of EFL narrative texts.

On the other hand, bearing in mind the small sample size, student 2's less significant improvement showed that the intervention may not be as effective as initially thought when it comes to EFL students whose writing skills are already established. For instance, evaluation stages were embedded in his narratives before and after the intervention. Also, on both occasions, he skillfully added a coda stage at the end of each narrative, something that came natural to him and was clearly unrelated to the pedagogical intervention. These findings may have been different if the sample size had been larger.

Results from student 2 rightly exemplify Labov and Waletzky's (1967) idea that narratives sometimes include an optional stage called coda towards the end to give an overall statement about the text, and that more complex narratives can have a series of problem-complication-evaluation stages one after the other. Nevertheless, the same results seem to contradict these authors' idea that a well-written narrative should have a stand-alone evaluation stage, because student 2 embedded evaluation stages throughout his narrative in the shape of adjectives describing feelings. This was deemed a positive aspect in his writing.

6.3. Pedagogical Implications

Results in this study have shown seemingly positive results in terms of students' narrative writing performance after the genre-based pedagogical intervention. This goes in line with other studies that have also found positive results in terms of the application of genre-based instruction to the teaching of EFL writing (Cheng, 2008; Hyon, 2001; Kongpetch, 2006; Pang, 2002; Yayli, 2012). Nonetheless, in some of these studies, the findings may have only applied to either reasonably advanced EAP learners or students in Asian contexts. Therefore, it would be fairly reasonable to say that one pedagogical implication of this study is that the implementation of genre-based interventions of this kind could also work relatively well for the teaching of EFL writing in non-Asian, general English contexts, where students' English proficiency is considerably lower than advanced. Results here could potentially be useful for teacher educators and pre- and in-service EFL teachers in these contexts.

7. Conclusions

This study was based on the general assumption that the implementation of a genre-based pedagogical intervention could potentially benefit the narrative writing ability of a group of B1 Colombian EFL students. All in all, the findings suggest that there was some positive progress in the students' narrative writing performance after the intervention across the three embedded units, and this progression was mainly related to better genre organisation, development of ideas in paragraphs, and use of linking devices. On the other hand, it could also be inferred that those learners who already possess an innate writing ability, and already know the basic schematic structure of a narrative, might not be as positively impacted as those students whose L2 writing ability is not fully established yet.

     The findings in this study seem to mirror those from other previous studies which have demonstrated the efficacy of EFL genre instruction. However, the results here should be neither applicable nor generalised to all EFL contexts due to the nature of the study and the specific setting in which the research was carried out. Some questions may derive from this study regarding whether or not similar results could be obtained in a different programme of study, or by enlarging the sample taken from the study's research population, or by adopting another research strategy all together. As is the case with any case study, "[a]lthough each case is in some respects unique, it is [only] a single example of a broader class of things." (Descombe, 2010, p. 60).

     One limitation of the study was the timing of some stages due to internal constrains generated by the syllabus that had to be covered. In other words, the four-week intensive English course was rigid in terms of what could be achieved at specific times in relation to the organization of its syllabus content. For example, in regards to the pedagogical intervention, writing samples after the workshop could have been collected much sooner to avoid positive transfer from regular class instruction.

     Timing of interviews and the language in which these were conducted may have been other limiting factors in the study. Although the timing of interviews was subject to students' schedules and availability, results may have been different if interviews had been carried out sooner. Also, although students requested English as the preferred language to carry out the interviews, they might not have been able to accurately articulate what they would have said in their L1.

     Looking ahead, researchers could explore other lines of inquiry such as other skills needed to improve EFL students' narrative writing performance, the relationship between genre-based instruction and students' L1-L2 distance, or the impact of genre instruction regarding EFL spoken narratives.

     On a more general note, although unique in nature and dependent on its immediate context, this study has simply highlighted the fact that teaching and learning EFL writing is a complex process, and

our role as practitioners and researchers is to try to find possible ways to understand the intricacies of the type of writing instruction that is imparted to students in EFL classrooms.

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Appendix A

A Sticky Night Out (text created for the purpose of this study based on Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative stages)

This happened about two years ago. My best friend George and I decided to go out to a new restaurant in town for his 40th birthday. This French restaurant had many branches in London, but we wanted to try the newly opened branch in our city, Bristol.

The evening started really well. We got to the restaurant quite early, so we sat at the bar and had a couple of glasses of red wine. A few minutes later, we were asked to move to the table we had booked. The waiter then approached us and took our order. We decided to go for the Chef's Special menu, a vegetable soup followed by a roast chicken served with a fresh salad. Unfortunately, the starter was served two hours later, at which point we were starving. When the soup arrived it was salty and cold. To top it off, the main course was even worse. The chicken was raw and we found a dead slug in the salad. It was an awful meal which completely ruined the occasion.

We complained to the restaurant manager, who did not know what to say. He was really apologetic and told us that we could order something else from the place across the road, a hamburger shack that also belonged to the same restaurant owner.

Luckily, we didn't have to pay for anything and we ended up having a wonderful night out.

Appendix B

Questionnaire Employed in Teachers' Assessment of Narratives

<u>Instructions</u>: Please read the pieces of writing handed to you and answer the questions below. The English level of the students is **B1 (low)**.

1. Overall, how would you assess each narrative in terms of application of narrative stages?

Tick (√) ONLY ONE box (□) in each row.	VERY GOOD 5	GOOD 4	SATISFACTORY 3	POOR 2	VERY POOR 1
Pink sticker	□	□	□	□	□
Green sticker	□	□	□	□	□

2. Which narrative shows better application of narrative stages?
   Tick (√) ONLY ONE box (□)

   □   □   □
   Pink sticker   Green sticker   Neither

3. What is the **main reason** that justifies (or reasons that justify) your choice?

   Tick (√) more than one box (□) if applicable

1.Organisation and structure of genre	2.Ideas included in paragraphs and how these are developed	3.Use of linking devices	4.Use of referencing and substitution (e.g. George-he-him-his)	5.Another reason (Please specify below)
□	□	□	□	□

If another reason, please specify here:
_____
_____

4. If you have any comments, please write them below:
_____
_____