When Scientists Meet an English Language Teacher: A Genre-Based Course for Teaching Science and Technology Writing

Issra Pramoolsook
Suranaree University of Technology (Thailand)
issra@sut.ac.th

The fast-growing and competitive world of academic and research publication has put great pressure on researchers and postgraduate students worldwide. The demand of the English language for international publication has added an extra burden to non-native speakers of English. Therefore, effective teaching and learning methodologies to help and support these writers to cope with this task should be thought about and tried out. This paper reports an innovative course that introduces the genre-based approach to teaching English writing to science and technology students at a university in Thailand. The first of its kind, this course brings together science and technology content and English language teaching practice through collaboration between content lecturers and an English language teacher. Fourteen postgraduate students from different science and technology disciplines enrolled in this product-based process-orientated course, which requires them to produce three important academic genres necessary for their dissertation and research article, i.e. abstract, introduction, and literature review. Following the genre-based teaching and learning cycle, each genre was taught and learned through three stages, namely; modeling, joint negotiation of text, and independent construction of text. The sample texts for the students' analysis during the modeling stage were supplied by the content lecturers, and the analysis was led by the English teacher using the models available in the genre analysis literature. The topic and tentative content for each genre were nominated by the lecturers for their students and the writing was done through two drafts with rhetorical and grammatical guidance from the English teacher. At the end, the lecturers were asked to see their students' writing and provide comments towards evaluation of those texts. The course was reported to be an interesting and beneficial one as it allows close negotiations among the students, the content lecturers, and the English language teacher, the three key parties in the writing up of dissertation and research article.