



## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING WRITING THROUGH A GENRE-BASED APPROACH

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### Abstract

This study reports on the effectiveness of teaching writing through a genre-based approach. This study employed a qualitative research design, embracing the characteristics of a case study. The data were obtained from classroom observation. The study involved students at a public high school in Bandung. The result shows that the teaching program of Genre Based Approach which includes Building knowledge of the field (BKOF), Modeling of the text (MOT), Joint construction of the text (JCOT), and Independent construction of the text (ICOT) helped the students to express the idea in writing. It also helped students to understand the language features and structures of the text. Based on the analysis, it is recommended that the teaching program can be applied in various text genres to improve the teaching of English and enhance the students' writing ability.

**Keywords:** *teaching writing, genre-based approach*

### INTRODUCTION

Writing as one of the four skills has always formed part of the syllabus of teaching English. Writing is quite different from spoken language. Spoken language can be acquired naturally as a result of being exposed, whereas writing has to be consciously learned (Harmer, 2006:3). Specifically, writing assists people to learn how to form language, how to spell, and how to put the idea together in a good plot that becomes one way to enable people to express their thoughts to others and deals with the interpersonal communication which exists in the reflection of what people is thinking (Brown, 2010:335; Harmer(b), 2007:112; Kumaravadivelu, 2008:8).



Apart from it, in pedagogical contexts, writing should be learned, not to be taught (Hyland, 2009:11). However, Alwasilah (2007) stated that teachers tend to teach theorists of writing and ignore the practice of writing. At the same time, writing as Emilia (2011) states is a key factor for students to succeed in school. Therefore, writing skills must be paid the same attention as the other three skills by teachers. Furthermore, writing is not just speech written down. It is necessary to make written texts much fuller in information, rather than spoken texts, for there is no chance of adding information (Gibbons, 2002; Kress, 1982 cited in Emilia 2011).

GBA is the approach to teaching genre moving through certain stages. The stages are begun by BKOF, then MOT, JCOT, and ICOT. The combination of the stages is called the curriculum cycle (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Feez, 2002; Gibbons, 2002). The genre approach to teaching writing focuses on teaching particular genres that students need control of the texts, as well as the context in which the text is produced (Derewianka, 2003). The GBA is aimed at creating a sufficient understanding of grammar as a dynamic resource for making meaning, to enable teachers to understand their students' texts as well as the texts which they would wish students to be able to produce (Kress, 1993).

By viewing the importance of the teaching cycle in accomplishing writing text, this study therefore will aim to investigate the implementation of the Genre Based Approach to teaching writing in the classroom. The study however concerned with the process of each cycle, starting from Building knowledge of the field (BKOF), Modeling of text (MOT), Joint constructions of text(JCOT), and Independent construction of text (ICOT) in Genre Based Approach.

## **METHODS**

Corresponding to the purposes of the study, this study uses a case study design for at least three reasons. First, this study was aimed to provide an investigation of a real situation of students' behavior in the teaching program (Nunan 1992; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Cohen, 2013).



Second, the result of this study was not attempted to generalize beyond the case, since a case study is going to analyze the situation of such phenomena rather than develop a theory (Creswell, 1998; Cohen, 2007).

Third, this study was developed in-depth by a small group of participants (Creswell, 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Cohen, 2007; Punch, 2009). Specifically, this study was to examine a particular case to give insight into an issue in the teaching cycle in Genre Based Approach.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The teacher implemented the teaching using Recount texts incorporated with a genre-based approach. Students were taught in eight sessions for about 5 weeks. Activities and materials in each session were constructed in a lesson plan as a guide to running the program. Each session of the meeting was about 90 minutes. The teaching model of the study was divided into four stages; *Building Knowledge of the Field*, *Modelling of Text*, *Joint Construction*, and *Independent Construction*.



Fig 1. Teaching cycle in genre-based approach (Hammond et al, 1992)

### A. *Building Knowledge of Field (BKOF)*



This activity was aimed to make sure that students have enough knowledge about the topic (Gibbons, 2002). Therefore the main focus of this stage was to build up students' knowledge about the topic. Context building was an important foundation for second-language learners (Feez, 2002).

In this step, the students were stimulated by using several photos of someone who was taking holiday. Each student must share their opinions about the photo. Several questions were asked to brainstorm students' ideas. The questions were 1) look at the photo, what did the man probably do?; 2) where did they go?; 3) what did they probably feel? The instruction was performed in both English and *Bahasa*. It was to make sure that they can really understand the ideas.

By giving the questions, the students simultaneously built their ideas about the photo. In this activity, most of the students told their ideas in *Bahasa*. Therefore, several English vocabulary was written on the whiteboard. It was to inform them about the word they might not know to express in English.

After that, the students were then given several photos with a short conversation. The conversation was about two high school students who talked about their last holiday experience. This short conversation text includes the speaker's photo which described their experience. In this activity, students were not only discussing the text, but also the photos. Images in a text were able to give stimulation to students in recognizing the purpose of the text (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Salway & Martinec, 2005).

Then, the teacher read the text aloud, and the students one by one tried to read the sentence correctly as what was illustrated by the teacher. Students were then instructed to practice the conversation with their pair. The students should read the conversation in front of the class. Several pronunciations which spoke incorrectly would be noticed and corrected. Students should practice pronouncing the words as accurately as possible. This activity was aimed to practice students' ability in speaking English.



Next, students in pairs made their own conversation about their holiday trip. Students should use their own photos to enhance the ideas in the conversation. Students might be able to use the former text as an example in making conversation. Guidance in making the conversation was given by walking around the class from one to another student. The students in pairs were asked whether they had problems expressing their ideas.

As the participant-observer, in this stage, the researcher noticed that most of the students had good knowledge and a clear concept about holiday time. They could notice several ideas which might be seen and done while the holiday. It might be because each of the students was ever experienced a holiday. Therefore they didn't have any difficulties discussing it.

#### B. *Modeling of Text (MOT)*

The aim of this stage was to familiarize students with the purpose, organization, and language features of text genres (Gibbons, 2002). Students were presented and explained the social function and language features in detail. This activity was intended to build up students' understanding of the purpose, structure, and language features of Recount text (Gibbons, 2009). Some good models of Recount text were shown to students. It was to illustrate the organization and language features of the genre (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Derewianka, 1990; Feez, 2002; Gibbons, 2002; Emilia, 2011; Derewianka & Jones, 2012).

Modeling of text was started by familiarizing the students with Recount text in the social context. A Recount text is a piece of text that retells past events in which to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred (Derewianka, 1990; Anderson & Anderson, 1997; Barwick, 1999). Recount texts are begun with an orientation that gives background information needed to understand the text. It may answer the questions of who, where, when, etc. Then the recount unfolds a series of events that are ordered in a chronological sequence. At last, there may be some personal comments or reorientation related to the events (Derewianka, 1991; Barwick 1999).



<b>Recount Text</b>	<b>Text Organisation</b>
Yesterday morning, I woke up at 6am, got ready for Saturday cooking.	Introduction/ Orientation
I baked a batch of blueberry cookies. They look a bit weird, but oh my god, they are a taste sensation, juicy sweet fruit bursting on the tongue with soft chewy cookie melting.	Event 1
After cooking, Dana and I went to walk around. We left home around 12. Then we planned to eat some food. So we headed downtown to Savory Cafe & Bakery. We ordered grilled chicken and veggie burger. YUMMY! Service at this restaurant is always good.	Event 2
And luckily we met our old friends in the cafe. So we spent the day with friends and it was such a great time.	Event 3
It was a very exciting hangout! Loved it. I had a good feeling yesterday, and that good feeling was spot on!	Concluding/ Comment

Fig 2. An example of Recount text organization

Students were familiarized with social function in Recount text first. Students' understanding of the social function of the text is crucial (Emilia, 2011). So before introducing language feature items, students should be able to draw the organizational structure of the text and recognize the purpose of the text (Gibbons, 2002). When students can identify the organization of the text, they can easily capture the text's purpose. Certainly, it will help students to read and write texts.



Text Organisation	Recount Text	Language Features
Introduction/ Orientation	<i>Yesterday morning, I woke up at 6am, got ready for Saturday cooking.</i>	Adverb of time
Event 1	<i>I baked a batch of blueberry cookies. They look a bit weird, but oh my god, they were a taste sensation, juicy sweet fruit bursting on the tongue with soft chewy cookie melting.</i>	Past tense Action verb
Event 2	<i>After cooking, Dana and I went to walk around. We left home around 12. Then we planned to eat some food. So we headed downtown to Savory Cafe &amp; Bakery. We ordered grilled chicken and veggie burger. YUMMY Service at this restaurant is always good.</i>	Conjunction/ linking word
Event 3	<i>And luckily we met our old friends in the cafe. So we spent the day with friends and it was such a great time.</i>	Specific participant
Concluding/ Comment	<i>It was a very exciting hangout! Loved it. I had a good feeling yesterday, and that good feeling was spot on!</i>	

After finishing discussing the organisation of recount text, students then were explained about the language features. Language features or linguistics pattern in recount text were presented together with the text. Students were showed how to put linguistics aspect of recount text in the right way. While explaining it, students were given a copy of organization and language features in recount texts. Students may use this materials as reference on the future occasion when they have to write the text in joint construction and independent (Gibbons, 2002).



Generic Structure	Text	Language Features
Introduction / orientation	<i>A couple of weeks ago</i> I went to a nice cafe in Eltham. It was called <u>volumes</u> .	Adverb of time Past tense
Sequence of events that reconstruct the past in the order in which events occurred	When I <u>walked</u> through the door I could smell coffee toast and pasta. It smelt delicious. I <u>got</u> spring rolls with salad. The spring rolls felt oily, but tasted nice. The salad sour and disgusting. My brother <u>got</u> chips and fish. The fish looked gross but the chips were nice. In the cafe they have a mini book shop. I <u>got</u> a horse stencil book. <i>My brother Liam</i> got a pen with a book light on the end.	Action verb Specific participant Conjunction/ linking word Personal Pronoun
Concluding/ Personal comment	<i>I really liked</i> the cafe, then I had to leave the smell.	

#### A. Joint Construction of Text (JCOT)

Joint construction allows teachers and students to discuss together the structure of the text, suggest more appropriate vocabularies, consider alternative ways of wording an idea, and work on correcting grammatical mistakes, spelling, and punctuation (Gibbons, 2002).

The first step at the joint construction stage was deciding on the topic. Topic on joint construction should be a new topic (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988). Thereby, based on the discussion on the preliminary phase, the next topic to be discussed was *My Last Weekend*. To prepare the students with joint construction, students were instructed to bring their photos which described their activity during the weekend.

The second step in joint construction stage was pooling information. This was aimed to demonstrate what form the final product may take and the process involved in writing a text (Derewianka, 1990). Thereby students were shown three





big-size photos on the whiteboard. Students and teacher togetherly wrote a recount text based on the photos. The photos however could give descriptions of someone's weekend activity.

The third step in joint construction was jointly constructing the text. In this step, students were asked to make groups of three or four. The member of each group was chosen randomly. The teacher acted as a guide and leader in writing recount text (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988). Students were guided through the steps of preparing, drafting, explicitly discussing, and negotiating the meanings they were making as they go (Gibbons, 2002).

Done with this activity, students were then asked to work in groups and create a recount text together with their peers in the group. They could choose one series of pictures and use it as authentic materials to write a recount text. During the joint construction stage, the teacher walked around the class and approached each group while discussing students' problems in constructing writing. Students were guided to overcome their problems. Some students were given guiding questions to develop their ideas. The questions were; *tell me about your weekend, how many events are there? What do you feel about your experience?... etc.*

The teacher also gave scaffolding to the students in constructing the text. The teacher suggested words and discussed ideas with the students to improve their writing. Students were also reminded to use past tense in constructing the text. Moreover, in this step, students looked interested to ask the teacher about the things they were confused about. Even though there were still some students who did not join the discussion in their group work.

However, in this activity, most students used *Bahasa Indonesia* as the first draft of their writing. Students tend to construct their ideas in their mother language first, then translated them into English. In some conversations with the students during the activity, some confirmed that they felt more comfortable to write in Indonesia to construct the ideas rather than in English.



### B. *Independent Construction of Text (ICOT)*

This was the final stage of the teaching cycle in genre-based approach. Independent construction allowed students to develop their knowledge about the topic by themselves. Students should be able to write with confidence in writing the text, drawing on their experiences and learning in the previous three stages (Gibbons, 2002).

At this stage, the topic was about *Hang out with Friends*. Students were allowed to bring their photos that described their activities with friends. The photos can help students to generate ideas for their writing. The students at this stage wrote the text individually and independently, but they were allowed to discuss it with their peers. The students were asked to write the first draft, and take a look to the modeling texts which had been given.

Although in this stage students are allowed to write independently, it did not mean that the students did not get scaffolding from the teacher. The teacher still opened consultation or assistance with what the students did (Emilia, 2011; Gibbons, 2002). While the students wrote their writing, they were reminded of the organization of the text and the linguistic features that should be noticed in Recount text (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Gibbons, 2002).

### **CONCLUSION**

The teaching program introduces the students to four phases in writing a text to promote writing at greater length, with clear schematic structure and lexicogrammatical features of organized texts. Regarding this, the students can construct the text with minor weaknesses in the schematic structure. In deep analysis, the teaching phases help the students to have significant development to explore the ideas in writing recount text.

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