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The Study Of Students' Writing Ability Using Genre Based Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to discusses about the students writing ability using Genre based approach in teaching writing. The purpose of this study is to examine the writing compositions of secondary school students in writing descriptive text. This study is qualitative study using case study approach since it was carried out in a small scale and focuses on one case of educational experience or practice The data of this study is taken from the brief interview with the teacher to understand the stages in teaching writing using genre based approach and the descriptive text written by ten high school students and was examined using Holsitic Score System. This study reveals that teaching writing descriptive text through Genre Based Approach basically give framework for the student to be able to write composition for particular genre even though some of the students still have difficulties to compose in the targeted genre. While for the teacher, genre based approach beneficial in identifying the weakness of the students in writing so that teacher can set up strategy to be able to teach writing certain genre.

Keyword: Genre Based Approach, Teaching writing, Descriptive text

Introduction

Teaching English writing in Indonesia currently is applying a Genre-Based Approach. This is part of the education curriculum that is currently applied in Indonesia which is Curriculum K-13. Apparently, the genre based approach is primarily designed to help students to improve their ability in communicate both oral and written based on the genre. Therefore, the Indonesia education curriculum apply genre based approach in teaching writing, so that the students have the ability in making composition that sufficient for difference situation. The genre approach -especially on written- generally focuses on models and key features of text written for a particular purpose, therefore the students will find it convenient to produce the written text based on the genre that requested. The Genre-Based Approach considered as the big shift from controlled or guided composition making to the form of genre that focuses on the type of the text including the distinctive characteristic of different genre and its stages and also focuses on rhetorical function of the text (Paltridge, 1994)

The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as a framework for language instruction based on examples of a particular genre. The genre framework supports students' writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages (retrieved from: https://www.slideshare.net/widiyantieni/group-2-genre-based-approach). Accordingly, the Genre Based Approach directing the writers become aware of required formats, style and conventionalities for given writing context.

Different from other approaches – process and product approach– genre approach also concerns on text discourse in which it relates to the different structure for different purpose and different social situation. For instance, Process approach requires students to follow the stages such as prewriting, writing, revising and editing before achieving the final product and the sequence teaches students how to write. The product approach that only focus

on what final pieces of writing will look alike. Accordingly, unlike genre approach, both of the above mentioned approaches have more concern about the longer steps and product of writing and little concern about discourse of the text which is also important in accommodating writing purpose, convention and community requirement. Bruce (2008) stated that it is essential for the novice writer to develop the discourse competence, particularly in academic text, this involves writers developing the ability to integrate a wide range of different types of knowledge in order to create extended written discourse that is both linguistically accurate and socially appropriate. Based on this statement, genre based approach is more likely introduced at a very early time with simple genre therefore it is better introduced at secondary level so the students are able to develop strategies appropriate for other written genres, particularly those that are required for success in secondary school. In the genre approach, samples of a specific genre are introduced, and some distinctive characteristics of the given genre are pointed out so that students notice specific configurations of that genre. Next, students attempt to produce the first draft through imitating the given genre. Lin (2006 as cited in http://lana-cometorich.blogspot.co.id/2009/06/genre-based-approach.html) asserted that Genre-Based Approach, teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and producing selected genres of the text.

Teaching and learning based on text genres has identified as one of the major trend and influential in the field of English Language teaching. Genre Based approach is believed can equipped the students or English learner with writing ability in various situation and purposes. That makes the genre based approach gain its popularity in EFL teaching writing. For the teaching of writing skill, it seems that genre-based approach has three major strengths as follows: first of all, they make it possible to focus on larger units of language, secondly, they can provide a focus on organizational or procedural elements of written discourse and thirdly, they make it possible to retain linguistic components as functioning features of a larger unit of discourse. (Bruce, 2008)

The Genre-based approach implementation in Indonesia is parallel with the Competence based curriculum and still continue to implement in the new Curriculum K-13. (Aswir Astaman, 2010) in his scientific articles; mentions that the result of the process of teaching and learning should be measurable and observable. Accordingly based on the genre based approach at the end of the lesson, student must be able to produce their own text and they must be able to produce written text genre that they have learned. It is also part of the evaluation that is used by the teacher to monitor the effectiveness of genre based approach in teaching learning activity of EFL writing. Furthermore, the teacher also can reflect from it and encourage the student to do more writing activity. Based on the notion that the students should be able to produce the text of certain genre, accordingly the students should be taught the features of different genres, experientially not only explicitly, so that they develop facilities in producing them and become familiar with variant features of each genre. Notably, it is very helpful to have read that genre first before one's going to read and write in a genre. (NTCE, 2004)

In Indonesia, there are 12 type of text that is provided to the student, among others are: recount, report, discussion, explanation, exposition analytical, exposition hortatory, news item, anecdote, narrative, procedure, descriptive and the last is review. Genre based that covers the purpose of writing as well as the specific features of the writing such as grammar, vocabulary and related language component that necessary for writing is assumed can reduce the difficulties in teaching EFL writing in Indonesia, especially for secondary school student because at this level, they should mastery the genre in order to be able to comprehend the text and also to produce the written text related to certain genre communicatively to cope with the requirement of various purpose in the future.

Regarding the above mentioned background therefore the purpose of this article is to explain "How the genre based approach in teaching writing support the student ability in writing?"

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this observation is grounded primarily in the Genre Based Approach. However, in relation to the genre based approach, we have to understand the nature of teaching writing.

The nature of teaching EFL writing

Writing is the skill most students are least proficient moreover writing for EFL students will not be an easy matter especially when the students' English competence is not very well developed. Basically writing is not just considering only one thing or one practice or one activity, it considers many aspects. It varies from structure and production process according to its audience, function and purpose. the purpose for writing include developing social network; engaging in civic discourse; supporting personal and spiritual growth; reflecting on experience; communicating professionally and academically; building relationship with other, including friends, family, and like-minded individuals; and engaging in aesthetic experience (NTCE, 2004). Accordingly, it is not sufficient to teach writing to students by giving only one type of writing and believed that it will accommodate all the needs of writing in all different situations. Writing outside school have many different purposes and use more diverse genres of writing. Therefore, it is important that students have experiences within school that teach them writing for different purposes, different audience or other different elements of the situations.

The duty of the teacher to teach writing effectively and enable the students acquire the writing skills that leads to the ability to communicate between the writer and the readers successfully. The teacher should always teach by keeping the learners needs in mind, making teaching functional and also by giving appropriate and proper purpose to learners for writing. Basically the objective of writing course as quoted from Chitravelu, Sithamparan and Choon (2005) from Malaysian school stated that:

> "(The writing course) must provide instructions on how to write a composition. These instructions must be presented step by step so that students can, after going through the steps, be able to write a composition. It is important then to provide models of the expected product followed by various activities and exercises on grammar and vocabulary necessary to write the composition. Only then should the students be expected to write the composition."

Based on the statement above, the need to give the models for writing is essential. There are three reasons behind the importance of giving the model of writing which are: 1) To give the students an idea of what is expected of them, 2) to provide organizational framework and language in which a carefully chosen model can provide the organizational framework as well as the language the students may requires to express their own ideas, and 3) to provide model for imitation for students to learn the stylistic features, phrase, organizing ideas or the generic structure that cannot be taught but can be acquired.

Even though there are several approaches in teaching writing such as process approach and product approach, since teaching writing in Indonesia is based on the Curriculum K-13 in which still implement the genre based approach therefore in this study the writer only discusses about genre based approach. Furthermore, the genre based approach also considers discourse of the text (how meaning of the text are cleared using language) which is beneficial for students in relation to accommodate their purpose of writing. In the genre based approach the knowledge of the language is very well attached to a social purpose, and more focus is on the readers' point of view rather than the writer's. Accordingly, it looks like that genre based take into account the essential of discourse in writing.

Genre Based Approach

The genre approach is concerned with providing students with explicit knowledge about language. According to Yan (2005) this approach has become popular since 1980 along with the notion that student writer could benefit from studying different types of written text. Moreover, it is supported by Lin (2006) who stated that in Genre-Based approach, teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres of text. Basically, Genre based approach focused on describing and explaining regularities of purpose, form and situated social action. Moreover, situation and purpose are central to genre based writing approach, in which the writer will become aware of

required formats or generic structure, styles and conventionalities for a given writing context. Genre based approach is seen as product oriented and characterized by a clear consciousness of the functional relationship between the text and context (Hyland, 2004 as cited in Sekkal, 2013).

In genre based approach, writing is mostly viewed as the students' reproduction of the text based on the genre offered by the teacher. It is also believed that learning takes place through imitation and exploration of different kinds of models. Accordingly, learners should be exposed to many examples of the same genre to develop their ability to write a particular genre. Through exposure to similar texts, students can detect the specialized configurations of that genre, and they also can activate their memories of prior reading or writing experiences whenever they encounter the task of creating new piece in a familiar genre (Badger & White, 2000 as cited from Abd-Elfatah Elashri, 2013 p 7)

Additionally, Dudley-Evans (1997) present three stages approach to genre based writing instruction. In the first stage, learners are exposed to the model genre. In the second stage, learners are provided with exercises to develop related language forms and in the third stage learners independently create original text resembling comparable stages in product approach (cited in Cornelius & Cotsworth). Asserted by Hammond (1992, as cited in Abd-Elfatah Elashri, 2013), who also mention about three phases of teaching learning using genre based approach, and he elaborates the three phases as follows: **Modelling**, according to Hammond, is the time when the particular genre that students should construct is introduced to the students. At this stage, the main focus for discussion are about the educational and social function of the genre while the main focus for analysis are about text structure and language. **Joint Construction**, of text refers to the stage when learners carry out exercises using relevant language form. It raised discussion between teacher and learners. It involves reading, research and distribute the information and the text of the genre is dependent on those activities. **The Independent construction** is the final phase which learners produce actual text. Furthermore, Genre based approach have the function to help students understand the steps involved in writing and it expected to recognized by the students so it can contribute in the development of students writing. The genre based approach here will give the underlying theory to the writing activity, which through genre based, open an opportunity for both student and teacher to have framework to elaborate written text with certain purpose.

Descriptive Text.

Descriptive text is one of the genres that is taught in secondary school. It has the purpose to describe a characteristic for person, place or things in details. The generic structure of descriptive text consists of:

1. Identification
   This part introduces to the subject of the description.
2. Description
   In this part gives details of the characteristic features of the subject. It may describe parts of qualities, characteristics, size, physical appearance, ability, habit, daily live and other feature.
3. Conclusion (optional)
   Language feature of descriptive text is simple present tense if the things or person described is still alive. It will use simple past if the things or person do not exist anymore. Descriptive text was chosen here because it has clear generic structure, simplicity in diction and easiness in identifying grammatical errors.

Review of related study

The present study deals with genre based approach. The related studies that will be discussed are about the research especially about Genre Based Approach in teaching writing.

Numerous studies have been conducted to understand the role of genre based approach in teaching writing related to student ability in writing. In a number of researches, the researchers tend to pay attention to the student ability after they exposed by Genre Based Approach from the teacher teaching writing. Lestari (2015) showed in her research that Genre Based approach had good effect in developing students writing ability. This study is in line with the study of Sekkal (2013) which has result that the performance of the students was improving in the post test compare to the pretest.

Methodology

This study aims to understand the role of genre based approach in teaching writing to understand the secondary student ability in writing. This study is qualitative study with case study approach since it was carried out in a small scale and focuses on one case of educational experience or practice. The data was collected from the brief interview with the teacher about teaching writing using genre based approach and the student writing result. The writing result was taken from students' final test of writing from one of the private catholic high school in Central Surabaya. Ten written text results were examined for this study. The writing test took descriptive text as subject of the test.

For data collection, the writer did several actions as follows: Firstly, the writer will ask about the steps taken by the teacher in teaching writing using genre based approach in the classroom and taken notes for teacher answer. Secondly, the writer then collected the writing result from the teacher. As it is mentioned earlier, the writing results were taken from the final test of writing and the score were given primarily by the teacher. Additionally, before the test the teacher gave instruction for the students about the mechanism of the test and its First, the teacher gave a picture, and then there is a direction for student along with the picture. The direction specifically asked the student to write descriptive text based on the picture given,

with 150-200 words length and specifically required the student to follow the generic structure of descriptive text. The teacher has explained the generic structure of description text during class along with the key features of the description text. The writer rated the writing result using Holistic Scoring System to see the writing as a whole composition. Holistic scoring in this paper will add the essence of the entirety of the composition so that the writer will be able to measure the students' ability in writing.

Some characteristic of Holistic scoring systems among others:

❖ A single scale is used to describe different levels of writing performance.
❖ Not to think about the individual components of the writing skills or to count the number of errors in the writing.
❖ The rater reacts to the writing as a whole.
❖ A single score given, for example: on a scale of 1-5
❖ Focuses more on communication; overall impression
    (retrieved   from: http://slideplayer.com/slide/7636259/)

Furthermore, the holistic scoring system has several advantages such as:

➢ Fast evaluation
➢ Relatively high inter-rater reliability
➢ The fact that the scores represent standards that are easily interpreted by other person
➢ Applicable to writing across many different discipline.

The Holistic Scoring System

Holistic Scoring Rubrics	
Score	Description
5	Demonstrates complete understanding of the problem. All requirements of task are included in response.
4	Demonstrates considerable understanding of the problem. All requirements of task are included.
3	Demonstrates partial understanding of the problem. Most requirements of task are included.
2	Demonstrates little understanding of the problem. Many requirements of task are missing.
1	Demonstrates no understanding of the problem.
0	No response/task not attempted.

Source: https://www.slideshare.net/missreynova/a-sample-of-holistic-scoring-rubric

Discussion

This study aims to discuss about students' writing ability using genre based

approach. The data were obtained from short interview with the teacher about teaching writing using genre based to write descriptive

text. From the interview, the teacher explained the stages in teaching writing descriptive text using genre based approach. First of all, teacher introduced the genre based approach in general to the student so that the students have an insight about genre based in writing and also kinds of genre that would discuss include descriptive text. Secondly, teacher discuss about descriptive text based on the sample that was brought by the teacher. The teacher discussed the components of descriptive text such as the purpose in descriptive text, and the generic feature of the text in which it includes the generic structure, grammar and vocabulary. In the next meeting, teacher gave several sample of descriptive texts as a model for the students to familiarize the feature of the descriptive text. Those samples of descriptive text would be analyzed together and based on that teacher and students all together discussed the points or features of descriptive text that the teacher has explained in the previous meeting. After that, the teacher gave another example to the students so they can analyze it themselves. Furthermore, the stages that require students to write. In this stage, teacher guided students making draft of descriptive text using main feature of descriptive text, such as the generic structure, grammar, related vocabulary. Then, finally, the students were asked to develop the paragraph on their own

Based on the result of the brief interview with teacher about the stages of teaching writing using genre based approach, it showed that teacher did the approach as it is suggested, in which it followed the stages of teaching writing using genre approach: modelling, joint construction, and independent construction.
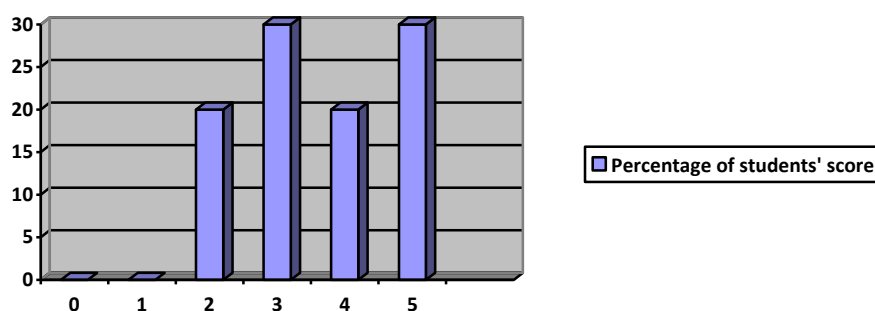
In addition to the result from the interview, the students writing result also will be discussed here. For the student's writing, as it is mentioned in the metodhology, the writer using Holistic Score system, in which the writer evaluated the composition as a whole text rather than evaluated its individual component that build the composition. Based on the holistic score system, the result is as follows:

Table 1. Result of Writing Descriptive text

No	Student	Score	Information
1	A	5	The students was able to demonstrate the ability in writing descriptive text. The students was able to describe the subject using appropriate word and vocabulary. Besides that, the student was able to produce a coherent and cohesive text.
2	B	4	The student was able to demonstrate considerable understanding in writing descriptive text. It showed that the text has some part of describing the subject, however, the text is lack of coherent.
3	C	3	The student was able to demonstrate the partial understanding in writing descriptive text. It showed that the text has small part of describing the subject, and again, it is lack of coherent.
4	D	3	The student was able to demonstrate the partial understanding in writing descriptive text. It showed that the text has very small part of describing the subject; only in the first two or three sentences of the composition. The rest of the composition seems to have different genre that is recall.
5	E	2	The student have little understanding in writing descriptive text. It seems that the student writing a narative text instead of descriptive text which is the main feature is describing person or thing.
6	F	2	The student have little understanding in writing descriptive text. It seems that the student writing a recall text instead of descriptive text which is the main feature is describing person or thing.
7	G	4	The student was able to demonstrate considerable understanding in writing descriptive text. It showed that the student still describes the subject
8	H	3	The student was able to demonstrate the partial understanding in writing descriptive text. It showed that the text has very small part of

			describing the subject; only in the first two or three sentences of the composition. The rest of the composition seems to have different genre which is narrative
9	I	5	The students was able to demonstrate the ability in writing descriptive text. The students was able to describe the subject using appropriate word and vocabulary. Besides that, the student was able to produce a coherent and cohesive text.
10	J	5	The students was able to demonstrate the ability in writing descriptive text. The students was able to describe the subject using appropriate word and vocabulary. Besides that, the student was able to produce a coherent and cohesive text.

Graphic 1. Percentage of students' writing using holistic score.

Based on the scores above, 30% of the students who took the test has good writing ability in descriptive writing. It showed from their ability to produce coherent and cohesive text, and follow generic feature of requested genre. However, the same amount (30%) of students still have partial understanding in writing descriptive text. They still mention some descriptive features but only in the first part of composition, usually as an introduction of the subject. However the rest of the composition had the different genre. The information can be seen in the table 1 above. Another thing that need to be discussed is that there are some students that almost completely did not follow the generic feature of the genre which is descriptive text, and their composition still lack of coherent and cohesion.

Basically the English teacher mentioned that she has already given certain technique to teach the writing that enables student to be able to elaborate their writing in particular genre. The teacher techniques involve with teaching vocabulary –especially noun and the adjective-- through games that hopefully, can attract the student interest and memorize the vocabulary easily. While for the exercise, the teacher usually gave picture to the student, and asked the student to describe the picture, it will give enough time to student to elaborate their writing properly.

Even though the writer examin the writing using holistic scoring but, the writer realized that the problem that seems to occur is about the understanding of particular genre, since some of the student shift the genre in the middle of the composition and the use of grammar. Basically the benefit to apply the genre based approach is because the certain text has already had the rules or specific features that systematically applied in each genre therefore it easier to identify the type of the genre. As an example in the description text, the grammar uses simple present tense because it describes their observation from the object that is given by the teacher. The object is considered still exist at the time of speaking. The genre based helps the student and the teacher because each of the genres has specific grammar use, and generic structure of the text. It is the framework for both student and teacher to raise the ability in teaching learning activity. By using the genre based approach, the teacher can use genre analysis to analyze the text and can easily identify the weakness of the student, for example about grammar, the teacher can review the use of grammar, ask the

student to read or summary the tenses according to the genre that still learn at that moment.

As for the teacher, the genre based approach helps them to be able to identify the student's weakness, and in the future can apply appropriate strategy for the students as a treatment. Basically from the teacher information about teaching strategy that has already applied in the classroom, it seems is already appropriate with the guidance structure from descriptive text genre. The genre based also provides the teacher opportunity to monitor not only the writing process as well as the product of the student writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as the most difficult part in English language skill, writing becomes the skill that most student, even teacher feel uneasy. However, by using genre based approach in the teaching learning activity, it is expected to be able to help not only student, but also teacher, which is give guidance for the teacher to identifying the student weakness in writing certain genre and could overcome with appropriate strategy.

Additionally, from 10 sample of student writing, it can sum up that the weakness of the student is in understanding the certain genre since some of them can shift the genre into recall or narrative in the middle of the composition, and also about the grammar use. This weakness apparently can be identified because certain genre applied certain features including the grammar. It also beneficial for teacher to monitor the students' composition for particular gener in order to be able to give the appropriate strategy immediately to overcome the weakness, for example using related games to teach vocabulary for the certain genre -for description, the vocabulary mostly noun and adjective--

The use of genre based also give opportunity for the teacher as well student to monitor the achievement and progress of the teaching learning activity.

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