

## Genre Based Approach: A Way to Enhance Students' Writing Ability

Irawansyah

IAIN Raden Intan Lampung

Email: irawansyah1989@gmail.com

**Abstract.** *The goal of this research is to know whether genre based approach is able to enhance student's writing ability. The research was conducted towards students of English education department which consists of 26 students. The method of this research is classroom action research which applies two cycles. Each cycle covered five stages, namely planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. In addition, test, observation, interview, and field note were used to collect the data. After collecting the data, the data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics (quantitative) and data reduction, data display, and conclusion (qualitative). The research finding shows that the students' writing ability underwent the improvement from 56.56 to 68.52. Therefore, it can be concluded that genre based approach is able to enhance students' writing ability.*

**Keywords:** *genre based approach, writing, recount text*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of skills in English which plays important in learning language. Moreover, it can help the people to express ideas, feeling and opinion and able to communicate with other people. According to Raimes (1985:252) states that writing is an effective way for learners to generate words, sentences, and chunks of discourse and to communicate them in a new language. In addition, Harmer (2004:31) states that writing is as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing) has always formed parts of syllabus in the teaching of English. Furthermore, Langan (2001:13) describes writing as a process of discovery involving a series of steps and those steps are very often a zigzag journey. Writers do not discovery just what they want to write about until they explore their thoughts

in writing. Moreover, he says that when a writer writes, he/she may suddenly switch direction or double back. He may be working in a logic sentence and realizes suddenly that it could be his concluding thought. Siahaan (2007:215) states that writing is a piece of a written text about a topic in a writer in a context. Then, Pollard (2008:49) says writing is a productive skill and as such the way we treat it in class has some similarities with the teaching and learning of speaking.

Moreover, writing as a process of expressing ideas or thoughts in words should be done at our leisure. He says that writing can be very enjoyable as long as we have the ideas and the means to achieve it (Leo, 2007:1). According to Hernowo (2004:43), writing is an activity in which learners form graphic symbols, arrange them to form words, and put the words in order and link them together in a certain way to produce a logical sequence of sentence. Talking about writing, Moreover, Brown (2001:335) states that there are several important components in writing which should be considered to measure the final product: content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical consideration such as spelling and punctuation. Therefore, some of students tend to have the same opinion that writing skill is the most difficult skill among the other skills.

Meanwhile, in English education study program of Tarbiyah Faculty and Teacher Training at State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN hereafter) of Raden Intan Lampung, writing is so needed and must be mastered by the students due to the requirements of making paper, task, and even thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for bachelor. Besides that, they are expected to be a teacher in future, they are introduced with some kinds of text. Specifically, the English curriculum of Senior High School stated that students should be able to comprehend and produce short functional texts in forms of narrative, recount, narrative, report, descriptive, procedure, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review. Therefore, writing must be considered as one of main subjects that the students should do practice.

In a fact, the students underwent some problem in writing, such as the number of paragraph in piece of writing is shorter; the number of sentences were not adequate to support main idea in each paragraph in their writing; difficulties to unify each of paragraphs relevance to the title; and many grammatical mistakes.

Referring the problems mentioned above, it is necessary to apply genre based approach as a way to improve students' writing ability. According to Byrne (1984: 28), genre based approach is defined as a framework for language instruction based on examples of a particular genre. Genre-based approach is an approach which is also known as text based instruction. While, Feez & Joyce (1998), Genre-based approach is a methodology which is designed to support language learning as a social process. According to Tuan Trong LUU (2011:123-124), Some characteristics of the genre-based approach. *Firstly*, the genre-based approach emphasizes the importance of exploring the social and cultural context of language use on a piece of writing. The context decides the purpose of a text, an overall structure of a text in terms of language features and text features often in the form of linguistic conventions (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001; Hyon, 1996).

*Secondly*, this approach highlights the magnitude of the readers and the linguistic conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership (Muncie, 2002). According to this approach, any student who wants to be successful in communicating in a particular English-language discourse community needs to be able to produce texts which fulfill the expectations of their readers in regards to grammar, organization, and content. *Thirdly*, it underscores that writing is a social activity. This notion originated from the socialcultural theory initiated by Vygotsky (1978). According to this theory, knowledge is best constructed when learners collaborate together, support one another to encourage new ways to form, construct and reflect on new knowledge. In this case, social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing new knowledge. In the writing classes, students are encouraged to

participate in the activities of meaning exchange and negotiation with peers and the teacher. Learning writing in this way, as it is believed, can remove the feeling of isolation which bothers many learners when writing and, at the same time, help student writers have positive reinforcements about the knowledge of linguistics, content and ideas in the composing of texts.

*Fourthly*, a genre-based approach to writing instruction looks beyond subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers. This approach is concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing. Its central belief is that “we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purpose” (Hyland, 2002, p. 18). In this approach, student writers are requested to take the overall social purposes of a text into account when composing a text. Fifth, this approach emphasizes the important role of writer-reader interaction on a piece of writing (Reid, 1995). Sixth, the teacher’s role in this approach is viewed as authoritative rather than authoritarian (Rothery, 1996). As an expert in the classroom, the teacher provides students with systematic guidance and careful support through various activities so that students ultimately gain the control of written genres. At the same time, he/she also recognizes the importance of students’ contributions to the teaching-learning process.

*Last but not least*, the genre-based approach emphasizes the explicit teaching of the linguistic conventions of the genre for second language novice student writers (Christie, 1990). It is argued that students cannot produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with respect to language features and schematic structure. Therefore, making known these conventions to student writers, especially at the first stage of the instructional modules of particular text-types, is a very important task of genre-based teachers. In the classroom, teachers following genre orientation often employ the teaching-learning cycle that comprises the three phases, namely, modeling of a

“sample expert” text, joint-negotiation of text with teacher, and independent construction of text by individual student (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

According to Hammond et.al (1992:18-23) states that there are four stages in teaching learning cycle which virtually based on genre approach. They are building knowledge of the field, modelling of the text, join construction of the text, and independent construction of the text. Hayland (2004) sees the advantages of a GBA instruction that can be summarized as follows: (1) Explicit. Makes clear what is to be learned to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills; (2) Systematic. Provides a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts; (3) Needs-based. Ensures that course objectives and content are derived from students needs; (4) Supportive. Gives teacher a central role in scaffolding student learning and creativity; (5) Empowering. Provides access to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts; (6) Critical. Provides the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourses; and (7) Consciousness raising. Increases teacher awareness of texts and confidently advise students on their writing (10-11).

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Reason and Bradbury (2006) describe action research as an approach which is used in designing studies which seek both to inform and influence practice. Hopkins (2002) maintains that action research combines a substantive act with a research procedure and that it is action disciplined by enquiry and a personal attempt at understanding, while engaged in a process of improvement and reform. According to Carr and Kemmis (in McNiff, 1992:2) define that action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, students or principals, for example) in social (including educational) situational in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social and educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situation (and institution) in which these practices are carry out. Another definition is stated by Kemmis and

McTaggart (in Richards, 1996:12) that action research refers to teacher-initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning, and to bring about in classroom practices. Furthermore, Kemmis and McTaggart (Burns, 2014:91), describe action research as a cyclical or spiraling process and the key steps are plan, act, observe, and reflect. The model that is proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart can be seen in figure 1.

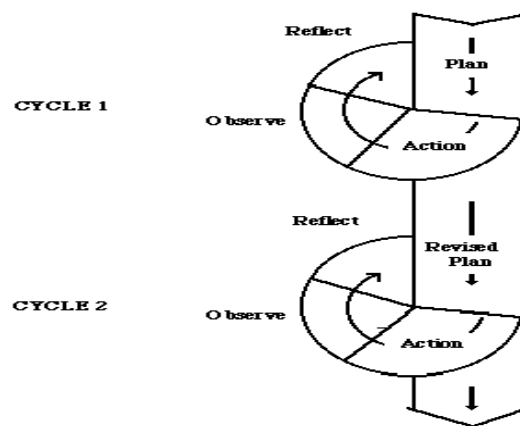


Figure 1. Steps in Action Research

There were some reasons for the use of action research conducted by teachers or education practitioners. Mertler and Charles (2008) explain that the action research pertinent directly in teaching learning practices. The results provide immediate solutions. The research derives understanding of teaching learning practices in whole. Besides, it develops the quality of the practices. Action research gives some alternative ways in gaining educational objectives. According to Koshy (2010:1), purposes of conducting action research are: (1) Action research is a method used for improving practice. It involves action, evaluation, and critical reflection and – based on the evidence gathered- changes in practice are then implemented; (2) Action research is participative and collaborative; it is undertaken by individuals with a common purpose; (3) It is situation-based and context specific; (4) It develops reflection based on interpretations made by the participants; (5) Knowledge is created through action and at the point of application; (6) Action

research can involve problem solving, if the solution to the problem leads to the improvement of practice; and (7) In action research findings will emerge as action develops, but these are not conclusive or absolute.

Therefore, there are several reasons why classroom action research was chosen in this research. *Firstly*, there were academic problems that it is important to solve that problems faced by the students. *Secondly*, doing action research is one way of the improvement in teacher's teaching practice. In this case, the improvement of teaching English is expected to improve the quality of teaching and learning process too. According to Nunan (in McKay, 2006:29) states that action research typically has three major characteristics: it is carried out practitioners (i.e., classroom teachers), it is collaborative, and it is aimed at changing things. While, Burns (1999:30) states that the essential of action research can be summarised as follows. (1) Action research is contextual, small-scale and localized-it identifies and investigates issues within a specific situation; (2) It is evaluate and reflective as it aims to bring about change and improvement in practice; (3) It is participatory as it provides for collaborative investigation by teams of colleagues, practitioners, and researchers; and (4) Changes in practice are based on the collection of information or data which provides the impetus for change.

Mills G. (2003) adds that other characteristics of action research are (1) action research is participatory and democratic; (2) action research is socially responsive and takes place in context; (3) action research helps teacher researchers examine the everyday, taken-for-granted ways in which they carry out professional practice; and (4) knowledge gained through action research can liberate students, teachers, and administrators and enhance learning, teaching, and policy making. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 164) in their seminal text on action research included the underlying principles of the action research approach. These include its participatory character; democratic impulse; and simultaneous contribution to social science (knowledge) and social change (practice). Kemmis and Mc. Taggart

(Burns, 2014:91) describe action research as a cyclical or spiraling process and the key steps are plan, act, observe, and reflect. It was made a plan about what kind of action which was aimed to overcome the problem as follows:

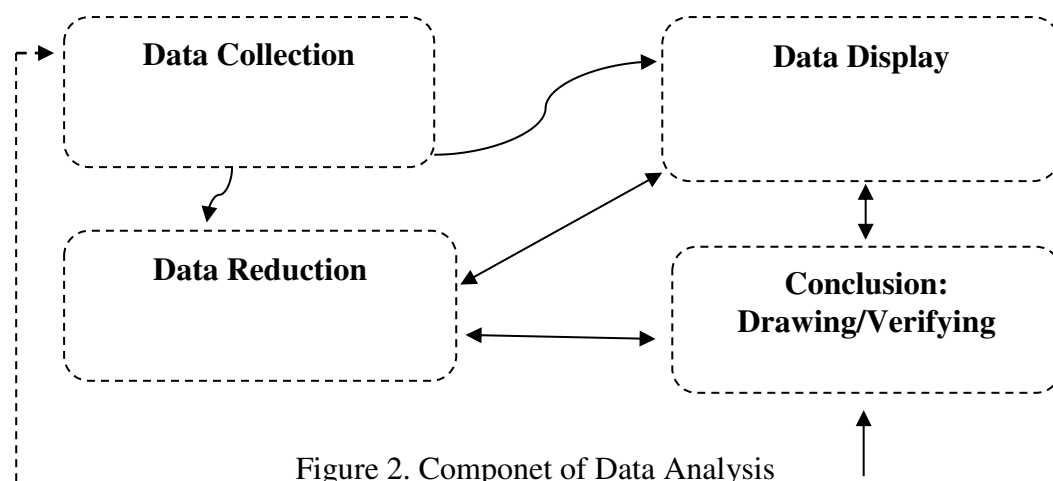
1. Make lesson plan and designs the steps in doing the action, prepares material such as model of the text, teaching material, students' assignment sheet, exercises.
2. Prepare list of students' name.
3. Prepare observation sheet.
4. Prepares test instruments and its scoring rubric. The test was writing test in which students were instructed to write a recount text about their experience in the past. The time was 90 minutes.

According to the kinds of the data, there are two kinds of collecting the data, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative Data was obtained through the writing test. Arikunto (2006:223) states that tes is a set of questions, exercises, or others to measure the skills, knowledge, intelligence, achievement or attitude of an individual or group. The students of writing test with the range between 0 to 100. It was score based on the criteria of scoring writing consists of 5 components, namely content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Jacobs in Jeihan, 2014, 25-26). The goal of this test was to know whether the students' writing ability is able to improve or not when the action was applied in writing recount text. In evaluating the students' writing, the researcher used five aspects, namely, content, organization, language use (grammar), vocabulary, and mechanic. Then, the qualitative data were all of information about the classroom situation and the strength and weakness of the implementation of genre based approach. The qualitative data were collected by using observation, interview, and fieldnote.

Meanwhile, There are two kinds of data must be analyzed: qualitative data and quantitave data. Quantitative data describes the result of test. It was taken from pre-test and post-test scores. To find out the students' mean score, it was used statistical



technique to analyze it. Moreover, the qualitative data analysis was used to interpret and use the data for supporting their research. There are many techniques for analyzing the results or the data. The implementation of qualitative data analysis is useful in classroom action research. It was based on the Miles and Huberman Model (1984). As stated by Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2012: 48) that the activities in analyzing qualitative data are conducted interactively and continuously. There are some steps of analyzing the qualitative data, namely data reduction; data display; and conclusion. It can be shown in figure 2.



### C. RESEARCH FINDING

The implementation of action research by using GMT and GBA also improved the students' writing skill aspects, including content organization, vocabulary, and mechanics, including spelling and pronunciation. The overall improvement of students' mean score of writing recount text and each aspects of writing is drawn in table 1. It can be seen that the students mean score of writing constantly increased from pre-test, cycle I, to cycle II. Each aspects of writing skill also improved, especially the aspect of grammar.

Table 1. The Improvement of Students' Mean Score of Writing

Aspects of Writing	Pre-test		Post-test I		Post-test 2	
	Rater I	Rater II	Rater I	Rater II	Rater I	Rater II
Content	15.05	15.54	16.50	16.81	17.85	18.19
Organization	12.73	13.38	14.19	14.81	15.42	15.81
Grammar	11.85	12.35	13.85	14.50	15.58	16.46
Vocabulary	12.31	12.46	13.65	13.77	14.62	15.00
Mechanics	3.58	3.77	3.81	4.15	4.04	4.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>55.62</b>	<b>57.50</b>	<b>62.00</b>	<b>64.04</b>	<b>67.50</b>	<b>69.54</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>56.56</b>		<b>63.02</b>		<b>68.52</b>	

The improvement students' writing ability by using genre based approach gives more opportunity for students to solve their problems. In GBA, students become effective participants in their academic and professional environment as well as in their broader communities (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001). Furthermore, Hyon, (1996) states that a genre-based approach placed great emphasis on the relationship between text-genres and their contexts. It means that students can only produce a composition to be successfully accepted by a particular English-language discourse community once they take the context of a text into account into their own writing papers. The student who wants to be successful in communicating in a particular English-language discourse community needs to be able to produce texts which fulfill the expectations of their readers in regards to grammar, organization, and content.

As stated by Muncie (2002) that GBA highlights the magnitude of the readers and the linguistic conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership. Therefore, in writing, the students should pay attention to their grammar because grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words (Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979:3). In GBA, that writing is a social activity. It means In this case, social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing new knowledge. In the writing classes, students are

encouraged to participate in the activities of meaning exchange and negotiation with peers and the teacher. Learning writing in this way, as it is believed, can remove the feeling of isolation which bothers many learners when writing and, at the same time, help student writers have positive reinforcements about the knowledge of linguistics, content and ideas in the composing of texts. This notion originated from the socialcultural theory initiated by Vygotsky (1978).

A GBA to writing instruction looks beyond subject content, composing processes and linguistic forms to see a text as attempts to communicate with readers. It means that GBA concerned with teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose writing. Hyland, 2002: 18) states that we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purpose. It shows that student writers are requested to take the overall social purposes of a text into account when composing a text.

GBA emphasizes the important role of writer-reader interaction on a piece of writing (Reid, 1995). It means that student writer in this approach is requested to specify or think about the intended and/or potential readers when writing in order to be able to select or anticipate appropriate content, language and levels of formality. In GBA, the teacher provides students with systematic guidance and careful support through various activities so that students ultimately gain the control of written genres. At the same time, he/she also recognizes the importance of students' contributions to the teaching-learning process. As stated by Rothery, the teacher's role in this approach is viewed as authoritative rather than authoritarian (1996).

In GTM, the students are able to analyze their ability in mastering grammar by applying the grammatical rules on the read texts. Therefore, the students more understand grammatical rules. Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979) state that one important aspect of GTM is that students can apply the grammatical rules on the

read text. Moreover, They memorize native-language equivalents for target language vocabulary. This statement is supported by Richards & Rodgers (1986: 3-4), that Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization. Furthermore, in GBA also, the students practice grammatical rules that have been learnt. They practice grammatical patterns relevant to the topic or text type (Hammond et.al.,1992:18-23).

GBA emphasizes the explicit teaching of the linguistic conventions of the genre for second language novice student writers (Christie, 1990). It means that students cannot produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with respect to language features and schematic structure. Therefore, making known these conventions to student writers, especially at the first stage of the instructional modules of particular text-types, is a very important task of genre-based teachers. In the classroom, teachers following genre orientation often employ the teaching-learning cycle that comprises the three phases, namely, modeling of a “sample expert” text, joint-negotiation of text with teacher, and independent construction of text by individual student (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

Finally, supporting the students’ improvement in writing skill and achievement is the teacher. During the implementation of error analysis based action research by using GBA and GTM to teach writing, the researcher is facilitator and coach. As facilitator, the researcher creates model of the text, good environment, and problem solving. Meanwhile, as a coach, the researcher provides feedback, gives clues or hints, and helps the students’ problems. In other words, he provides them with the right amount of help when they need it. Knowledge is created through action and at the point of application (Koshy, 2010:1). As a result, it was really beneficial for the students to improve writing skill, especially in grammar.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The implementation of error analysis based action research by using genre based approach in writing class improves students' grammar in writing recount text. The students were given plenty of opportunity in the process of planning their writing. They were able to decrease their error in writing. It resulted in the better quality and quantity of the compositions. The students felt more confidence in writing. In addition, it was known that the scores of all five aspects of writing covered content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics increased thoroughly.

The implementation of action research by using GBA effects the teaching and learning process. By having a look at the fact that there was significant improvement achieved by the students and there were many benefits when genre based approach was implemented in the classroom activities. It implies that genre based approach with four stages such as building knowledge of the field, modelling of text, join construction of text, and independent construction of text followed by grammar translation method with three stages, including presentation, practice, and production was badly needed to improve the students' writing ability.

In addition, it is necessary to give some recommendation to teachers, students, and also others who contribute towards to education.

a. Teachers

1. Give more attention and sufficient writing practice regularly to the students in order to understand the text organizations by applying the rule of grammar in the logical development of the topic;
2. Pay attention to all five elements of writing covering organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics including spelling and pronunciation;
3. Pay attention to the students in class because it gives more problems when the lecturers less attendance;

4. Implement genre based approach with four stages such as building knowledge of the field, modeling of the text, joint construction of text, and independent construction of text.

b. Students

1. Follow the lecturer's instructions obediently and critically when they are being trained to write a text.
2. Have motivation to write a composition well.
3. Be aware and give attention in writing because grammar is one of important parts in composition. Grammar is regarded as an essential textual component not only to create organized texts but also to render the content comprehensible to the reader.

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