

The Implementation of Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Writing at SMA 4 Solok

WIDYA SYAFITRI

English Department, IAIN Bukittinggi, West Sumatera, Indonesia

E-mail: Widyasyafitri26@yahoo.com

Abstract— This research is aimed to describe the way English teachers of SMA 4 Solok implement genre based approach in teaching writing. This research also investigates the problems found by the English teachers in implementing it and examines how they overcome those problems. The findings of this research show that the teachers have not implemented genre based approach in teaching writing optimally. Lack of comprehension about the basic principles of genre based approach has been the main cause. The teachers experienced in familiarizing grammar and vocabulary to the students. It is hard for them to find appropriate materials which are close to their life. This study was descriptive qualitative research which was conducted in SMA 4 Solok.

Keywords— Implementation, Genre Based Approach, Teaching Writing.

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of key four skills which should be mastered by students. Hammer (1998 cited in Onozawa, 2005) points out that the writing skill has finally been recognized as an important skill for language learning. Furthermore, Brown (2001) states that “writing is a thinking process”. A writer produces a final written product based on their thinking after the writer goes through the thinking process. In another way, Bailey (2004) states that “Writing is a progressive activity.” When we want to first write something, we should have thought what we are going to say and how we are going to say it. After writing, we continue to read what have been written to make changes and corrections. Thus, writing is never a one step action. It is a process that has several steps.

When we communicate through writing, we have so many ideas to express for which we consider different ways of combining and arranging them which lead us to our drafting, revising and so on. In other words, it can be said that “writing is encoding of a message of some kind that is, we

translate our thoughts and ideas into language” (Byrne, 1979). Thus writing represents our thoughts and ideas. What we think lead us to organize the sentences into a cohesive text therefore we are able to communicate with our readers succesfully.

Writing is the part of curriculum. Related to School Based Curriculum, this skill is taught through text types (genre). There are several kinds of texts that should be taught to the students. For senior high school, the students should learn twelve kinds of texts. They are descriptive, narrative, recount, report, procedure, spoof, anecdote, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, explanation and review. These genres are taught from year ten to twelve; each grade studies different and number of texts. The Genre-Based Approach is considered relevant to teach the genres.

The genre approach was developed to respond on the limitation of the process approach (Ahn, 2012). Martin (1985) developed genre based approaches relate to the theory of systemic functional linguistics which is developed by Halliday. In systemic functional linguistics, genre is seen as a staged, goal oriented social process

achieved primarily through language (Martin, 1987, cited in Callagan and Rothery, 1988). Culture influences genre to enable people get their social purposes. The purposes include satisfying basic needs such as shopping for food or telling the doctor about an illness (Derewianka, 2003).

Genre-based approach is defined as the approach to teach genres moving through stages including Building Knowledge of Field (BKoF), Modeling (MoT), Joint Construction (JCoT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT). All stages are combined and called “Curriculum Cycle”. Teaching text types will be done step by step, in order to students are easy to comprehend the different text.

Stage 1: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF)

Martin and Partridge in Lana (2009) stated that this stage is aimed at immersing students in the context of culture, social purpose of the selected genre, controlling relevant vocabularies and grammatical pattern. According to Partridge the core idea of all activities at this stage is the interaction between teacher and class or among students.

In this stage, the students are introduced to the social context of an authentic model of the text type being studied. Then the students will be expected to explore features of the general cultural context in which the text type is used and the social purposes of the selected genre.

John (2002) states the indicators of teacher’ implementation towards this first stage, Building Knowledge of Field (BKoF) as follow:

- 1) Teacher prepares students to get into the topic.
 - a. Teacher introduces a kind of text
 - b. Teacher asks the students background knowledge about the text
- 2) Teacher analyzes socio-cultural context, the objectives and what is expected through learning the text (Building cultural context).
 - a. Teacher discusses with the students the purpose of learning on meeting.
 - b. Teacher discusses with the students about socio-cultural context from the text.
- 3) Teacher shares the experiences with the students toward the text.
- 4) Teacher uses situational context to enlarge students’ vocabulary.
 - a. Teacher asks the students the situation of a text.

- b. Teacher discusses with students the useful vocabulary related to the topic.
- 5) Teacher explains the lexicon grammatical feature of the text
 - a. Teacher discusses with the students about grammar/structure of the sentence used related to the topic
 - b. Teacher discusses with the students about the characteristics of grammar related to the topic
 - c. Teacher discusses example of the grammar used related to the topic
 - d. Teacher asks the students to do communicative drill
 - e. Teacher asks the students to make the example of structure and vocabulary that they have learnt before.

Stage 2: Modeling of Text (MOT)

Modeling of text is the second stage of curriculum cycle. During the phase, the teacher strongly direct the interaction, introduces learners to models text belonging to the target genre in the context they have been exploring. The activities in this stage focuses on introducing particular genre through a model of a text that deals with the field that the students have already explored in the stage of Building Knowledge of Field (Paltridge, 2001). In addition, in this stage the students will also investigate the structural pattern, cultural context, social function and language feature of the model and compare the model with other examples of the same text type.

John (2002) clarifies the indicator of modeling of text. The indicators as the following:

- 1) Teacher gives a model of text orally
- 2) Teacher asks students to read the text comprehensively
 - a. Teacher tells a text and shows related picture or media
 - b. Teacher discusses with students about the structure used in the text
- 3) Teacher discusses the content of text (identifying lexico-grammatical features used to make the text).
 - a. Teacher discusses with the students about vocabularies used to compose the text.
 - b. Teacher discusses with the students about grammar used in the text.
- 4) Teacher discusses with the students about the generic structure of text

- 5) Teacher with the students analyze the social function of text
- 6) Teacher with students investigate the language features of the model text
- 7) Teacher compares with the other texts.
 - a. Teacher tells another text which has the same genre
 - b. Teacher discusses with students about the vocabulary and grammar used in other texts.
 - c. Teacher asks the students to retell the text.

Stage 3: Joint Construction of Text (JCOT)

The third stage is Joint Construction of Text (JCOT). In this stage, the teacher and the students write a text together, collaboratively constructing a piece of writing in selected genre, so that the students can see how the text is written (Kongpetch, 2006).

John (2002) mentions the indicators of the implementation of Genre based approach toward this stage, Joint Construction of Text.

- 1) Teacher leads students to work in group (giving opportunity to students to work in group)
 - a. Teacher divides students into some groups
 - b. Teacher asks students to be a leader of each group
- 2) Teacher leads the students to discuss, to ask questions and to edit the text
 - a. Teacher asks students to prepare a new text in their group
 - b. Teacher asks other students to prepare questions related to the text
 - c. Teacher asks the students to discuss about the text
- 3) Teacher helps the students if necessary
- 4) Teacher asks students to do peer assessment activities (discussing students' work)
 - a. Teacher asks students to discuss the vocabularies used in the text
 - b. Teacher asks students to discuss the grammar used in the text
- 5) Teacher asks students to perform text prepared in group
- 6) Teacher asks another groups to respond to the next text presented

Stage 4: Independent Construction of Text (ICOT)

The purpose of this stage is to enable students to practice their writing skills and demonstrate their

understanding of the chosen genre. Teachers ask students independently to write an essay (Kongpetch, 2006). In this stage, teacher asks and John (2002) states the indicators of the stage of Independent Construction of Text (ICoT):

- 1) Teacher guides the students to make text individually
 - a. Teacher gives a topic to students to be created into a text individually
 - b. Teacher gives instruction to students how to produce the text based on the topic
- 2) Teacher guides the students to check their own task
- 3) Teacher asks students to perform their individual text in front of the class

Hopefully, at the end of written cycle every student must be able to produce written texts of genre they are learning. For instance, if the genre is narrative, at the end of written cycle every student must be able to write a narrative text. Since the genre based approach was introduced in Indonesia, many language educator have tried to implement it. It was proved by preliminary observation in which it showed that English teachers in this school have tried to implement this approach in teaching learning process. However, the data found the students' writing ability were low.

The students' achievement were not suitable with the expectation. Only 5 of 40 students passed the Minimum Achievement Criteria (MAC). The MAC score was 78, however the fact found that 75% of students got score under 60. It indicated that there were some problems during the implementation of this approach in teaching writing.

Related to preliminary study above, during the process of implementing genre based approach, it could be assumed that the implementation of genre based approach in teaching writing did not fully successful. It may be caused by several aspects such as classroom situation, students' motivation, and their prior knowledge, their understanding about genres, teachers' preparation, media, material, facilities, their techniques and also lack of understanding in implementing genre based approach.

II. METHOD

This study was conducted at SMA 4 in Solok, West Sumatera. The English teachers of this school

were the participants in this study. There are 3 (three) English teachers in this school. This study used two instruments, namely classroom observation and interview. The classroom observation consists of observation sheet and field note. While interview consists of interview guide and interview checklist.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In implementing genre based approach, the teachers were demanded to apply the four curriculum cycle: building knowledge of field, modeling of text, joint construction of text and independent construction of field. Each step of this curriculum cycle had some activities. Based on data analysis, it was found that the teachers did not implement genre based approach properly. It could be seen from the following explanation.

Stage 1: Building Knowledge of Field (BKoF)

The first step in implementing genre based approach is building knowledge of field. The teachers were demanded to prepare students' to get in to the topic, build cultural context, share experience, enlarge students' vocabulary and building knowledge of grammar. The data that have been collected described that teachers did not teach the students with lexicogrammatical explicitly. In writing, lexicogrammatical was very essential. The students knew how to construct a sentence with appropriate word and tenses.

Stage 2: Modeling of Text (MoT)

In this stage, the teachers were demanded to do several activities, such as giving the example of text, reading comprehension, discussing the content of text, analyzing the generic structure of text, analyzing the social function, analyzing the linguistic features and comparing to another text. In fact, from observation all English teacher observed implemented this stage. 2 of 3 English teachers gave more than one example of selected genre to their students. One of the English teachers gave the jumbled paragraph and series of picture in teaching writing. After the jumbled paragraph was arranged, teacher and students read the text and identify the generic structure of the selected genre. Unfortunately, in this stage the teachers discussed the grammatical at glance. Even, one of the teachers explained the lesson fully in Indonesian. The teacher argued, in order the students were easy to

comprehend her explanation, it was caused the students had lack of vocabulary.

Stage 3: Joint Construction of Text (JCoT)

In this stage the teacher and the students were demanded to write a text together, lead the students to discuss about text, help students if necessary, asking students to peer assessment activity, ask students to perform text prepared text and ask another group to respond the text presented. In fact, the students are let to explore their knowledge to contribute and to discuss their ideas in group to construct a text. Related to interview data 2 of 3 teachers did the activity as theory. In this stage teacher divided the students become some groups and gave them a topic to be written together with the group. The teacher helped and monitored the students. Unfortunately there was no peer assessment, perform the prepared text and also asking another group to respond the text presented.

Stage 4: Independent Construction of Text (IcoT)

Independent construction of text is the last stage. The purpose is to enable the students to practice their writing skill and to demonstrate their understanding of the selected genre. In this stage, teacher was expected to be a consultant and to give guidance for students as needed. In fact, based on classroom observation, the three English teachers observed did not apply this stage as should be except giving homework to the students. The teachers argued that by doing the task at home, the students had enough time to develop their idea to write. Based on classroom observation, another phenomenon showed that the teachers implemented one selected genre in one meeting. It was not enough for the students to comprehend one selected genre in one meeting. The teacher seemed to introduce the genre only but not yet to compose a written text.

One of teachers said that he found his students was difficult to implement their idea to writing. In classroom observation, it was found that the students mostly used Indonesian to ask and to answer the questions. The interesting phenomena also found when one of the teachers explained the lesson in whole Indonesia language. The teacher argued that it related to students' ability to comprehend her explanation.

The second problem was related to teachers' ability to familiarize the grammar and to improve students' vocabulary. Based on the interview with the teachers, it was found the three English teachers observed got difficulty related to familiarize the students with grammar and to encourage the students' vocabulary. One of teachers said that he found his students was difficult to implement their idea to writing. In classroom observation, it was found that the students mostly used Indonesian to ask and to answer the questions. The interesting phenomena also found when one of the teachers explained the lesson in whole Indonesia language. The teacher argued that it related to students' ability to comprehend her explanation.

Stage 1: Building Knowledge of Field (BKoF)

In conducting the stage of building knowledge of the field, most teachers emphasized on doing the steps of preparing students to get into the topic and sharing experience. Meanwhile, the other steps such as building knowledge of the grammar and enlarging students' vocabularies were not done ideally. The teachers taught grammar at glance and only one teacher enlarge students' vocabularies. In students' vocabularies enlargement, the other two teachers only gave a few vocabularies that of course could not improve the students' vocabularies.

It seemed that the teachers applied the building knowledge of field stage partly. Related to the theory proposed by Gibbon (2002, cited in Emilia, 2005), the teacher builds up semantic web students' current knowledge of the topic. In this case, the teacher should brainstorm the students through the media, such as pictures, poster, video documentaries, text and so on. Teacher asked the questions related to content of the text and build up semantic web and teach the new vocabulary as appropriate. In this study, the teachers did not do these activities. The teacher discussed the homework about the verb process which would be useful to compose the report text but she did not explain the connection between the verb process with the report text. In addition, the teacher did not explain the lexico grammatical in detail. The explanation of lexicogrammatical plays an important role in composing the text later. This was the contrary to what Gibbon (2002) stated about the second basic principle of genre based approach,

"language learning should be explicit." Thus lexicogrammatical had to teach explicitly.

According to researcher building cultural context and students' knowledge of grammar enlargement need to be conducted because the function of conducting the step as stated by Feez and Joyce in Richards (2010) is to make students explore features of the general cultural context in which the text type is used and the social purposes the text types achieves.

Stage 2: Modeling of Text (MoT)

In giving model of the text to the students, almost all the teaching steps were applied by the teachers. However, those steps were still not ideally implemented. In giving example of the text, the teacher were really dependant on the use of model text available in students' worksheet. In contrary to what Rusman (2010) states that teacher should have more references and use multi sources in teaching to avoid students' boredom. Furthermore, the teachers also did not apply the step of the text linguistic features and generic structure analysis well. Ideally, the teachers should focus the students on exploring the prototypical elements of text structure because in the opinion of Feez in Johns (2002) in the stage modeling of the text the learners' attention is drawn to the structure and language feature of the model.

Stage 3: Joint Construction of Text (JCoT)

On the other hand, when teachers conducted the stage Joint Construction of Text, all the teachers had not been able to implement well. Actually, in this stage the teacher and the students write collaboratively. In fact, teacher asked the students to work in group to compose the selected genre. In addition, teacher did not lead the student to ask another group of students to respond to the text presented. Leading the students to respond to their friends' work give several advantages. It was strengthened by Sanjaya (2008) that this is intended to activate the learning, trigger the wider and deeper learning process and achievement, make students focus on the lesson and refresh the background knowledge the students have had and it can also improve students' participation in each learning step.

Stage 4: Independent Construction of Text (ICoT)

The last stage, independent construction of text, were not done for all English teacher observed. According to them this stage was done in form of homework. Thus, the teachers asked the students to do this stage at home. None of them guided students to check their own task. Kongpetch (2006) states that the purpose of this stage is to enable students to practice their writing skills and demonstrate their understanding of the selected genre. Furthermore, the absence of this step can trigger students become unmotivated to study English because they thought that their writing was not crucial.

It seemed that the teachers only introduce the genre but not yet produce the text. While the purpose of independent construction of text is to enable the students to practice the writing skills and demonstrate their understanding of the selected genre (Gibbon, 2002 cited in Emilia, 2005). The word demonstrate their understanding also mean the students would be asked to perform their writing orally in front of the class.

In implementing the instructional activity based on the requirement of GBA, teacher found difficulty to conduct all the steps teaching totally because students sometimes did not understand about their teaching because they had lack of vocabulary.

In conducting the stage of Building knowledge of field, teacher could not do the step building cultural context. They did not do this due to the teachers' lack knowledge about the way to implement. According to the researcher, building cultural context need to be conducted because the function of conducting the function of conducting the step as stated by Feez and Joyce in Richards (2010) is to make students explore features of the general cultural context in which the text type is used and the social purposes the text type achieves.

Most of the teachers solved the problems by doing bilingual teaching in which the teacher used English first then translated into Indonesian. Sometimes, teachers instructed the students to underline the difficult word contained in the text, and then find the meaning by consulting dictionary, and finally the students were obliged to have and bring their own dictionary

The next problem was related to teachers' ability to familiarize grammar and to enrich students' vocabulary. The teacher solved the problem by writing and discussing unfamiliar

words in white board. Another teacher tried to overcome the problem through using dictionary and guiding the students in groups.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conducting the stage of Building Knowledge of Field, teachers need to conduct the steps included in this stage. The steps are Preparing Students to Get into the Topic, Building Cultural Context, Sharing experience, enlarging students' vocabularies and building knowledge of grammar. This stage is intended to introduce the social context of authentic model of the text type being studied to the students. However, in the teachers' real teaching practice the teachers could not implement the step ideally. For instance, in building cultural context, the teacher admitted they were not able to build cultural context in every meeting due to their limited knowledge. Moreover, in building knowledge of grammar there was only one teacher did the step as required, while other teachers only discussed it at glance.

Furthermore, in Modeling of text, teachers need to conduct the steps such as reading comprehension, discussion of text content, analyzing the generic structure of the text, analyzing the social function of the text, analyzing the linguistic features and comparing to another text. It is done to help students explore the social purpose of the text, its prototypical elements of structure, and its distinctive language feature. In fact, teachers did not do the whole steps required by GBA. Most of them slightly analyzed the generic structure and linguistic features of the text and for the step of comparing to another text was done by two teachers.

In conducting Joint Construction of Text, teachers were demanded to do several teaching steps. The teaching steps are Giving Opportunity to students to work in group, leading the students to discuss about the text, helps students if necessary, asking students to do peer assessment activities, asking students to perform text prepared in group and asking another group of students to respond to the text presented. They were done in the aim of preparing students to produce a new text in the focused genre. However, in the real teaching practice all teachers did not do the step of asking students to do peer assessment activities, while other steps were conducted in any old ways.

The stage of independent construction of text that included the steps guiding students to produce the selected genre, check their own task and perform their individual text could not be conducted in the classroom due to limited time, whereas it is conducted as the achievement assessment for the students.

The problem was related to teachers' ability to familiarize the grammar and to improve students' vocabulary. Based on the interview with the teachers, it was found the three English teachers observed got difficulty related to familiarize the students with grammar and to encourage the students' vocabulary. One of teachers said that he found his students was difficult to implement their idea to writing. In classroom observation, it was found that the students mostly used Indonesian to ask and to answer the questions. The interesting phenomena also found when one of the teachers explained the lesson in whole Indonesia language. The teacher argued that it related to students' ability to comprehend her explanation.

The teacher solved the problem by writing and discussing unfamiliar words in white board. Another teacher tried to overcome the problem through using dictionary and guiding the students in groups.

V. SUGGESTION

Related to the findings and discussion of this research, there are some suggestions concerning the implementation of Genre Based Approach:

1. It is suggested to the English teachers of SMA 4 Solok to learn more about how to implement Genre Based Approach in teaching writing and the English teachers need to be creative in conducting the teaching learning process by using multi learning sources and media.
2. The researcher suggests the principle of SMA 4 Solok to equip the teaching facilities at school.
3. The findings showed that MGMP has not been enough for teacher to get the detail information related to the implementation of Genre Based Approach especially in teaching writing, thus it is suggested for the chief of educational departement in Solok town to conduct the training of genre based approach implementation for all English teachers in Solok town.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Anas Yasin, M.A. and Dr. Hamzah, M.A., M.M. for valuable and constructive suggestions. Their willingness to give time so generously have been very much appreciated.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahn, H. (2012). *Teaching Writing Skills based on a Genre Approach to L2 Primary School Students: An Action Research*. Retrieved on May, 1st 2012 from <http://www.ccsenet.org/elt>
- [2] Bailey, S. (2004). *Academic Writing A Practical Guide for Students*. USA: Roudletge Falmer.
- [3] Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (2nd ed)*. New York: Addes on Wesley Longman.
- [4] Callagan, M., and Rothery, J. (1988). *Teaching Factual Writing*. Sydney: Metropolitan East Disadvantaged Schools Program.
- [5] Derewianka, B. (2003). *Trends and Issues in Genre-based Approaches*. Retrieved on March, 3rd 2012 from <http://rel.sagepub.com/content/34/2/133>.
- [6] Feez, S. (2002). *Heritage and Innovation in Second Language Education*. In Nugroho, Taufik., and Hafrizon. (Ed). *Introduction to Genre based Approach*. Jakarta: Ministry of National Education.
- [7] Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding Language and Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*. Pounthsmouth: Heineman.
- [8] Hammond, J. A., Burns, H., Joyce, D., & Brosnan, L. G. (1992). *English for Special Purposes: A Handbook for Teachers of Adult Literacy*. Sydney: NCELTR Macquarie University.
- [9] Kongpetch, S. (2006). *Using genre-based approach to teach writing to Thai students: a case study*. Retrieved on March, 5th 2012 from http://www.amepre.mg.edu.au/docs/prospect_journal/volume_2_1_no_2/21_2_1_Kongpetch.pdf.
- [10] Onozawa, C. (2010). *A Study of the Process Writing Process*. Retrieved on February, 23 2012.
- [11] Paltridge, B. (2001). *Genre in the Language Learning Classroom*. Michigan, University of Michigan Press.