

The Development of English Writing Learning Material through a Genre Based Approach for English Department at University

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Abstract

Generally, this research attempts to find out the relevant English writing learning materials in order to develop a genre-based writing course for college students at English Department at university. Particularly, its objectives are 1) to know the existing phenomena of teaching and learning writing process, 2) to find out the relevant English writing learning materials, 3) and to develop a genre-based writing course. The research is done by applying research and development (R&D) method. The respondents of this research are active students, alumni, and lecturers. The data are collected by documentary sheet, questionnaire, and in depth interview. The data are analyzed by descriptive analysis. The results of the research show that 1) in general the process of teaching and learning of genre based writing is not optimally yet such as the teaching strategies used by lecturers, inadequate and less relevant writing materials, and assessment method, 2) the genre writing learning materials are classified into two categories—short functional texts and long functional texts, and 3) the physical structure of a genre-based writing course consists of two parts—preliminary and main parts. The preliminary has preview and the main part consists of 1) Getting Started, 2) The Orientation and elaboration, 3) Teaching and learning strategy, 4) following up, and 5) Assessment.

Key words : Genre based writing, learning material, and English

A. Introduction

Teaching English writing through genre approach or genre based approach seems to be relatively new in English department at university level. This condition is little bit different from teaching English writing in high school. In high school, the genre based writing has already been conducted since the implementation of KTSP curriculum years ago. On the other hand, at university especially at English Department of State University of Medan, it has been done approximately in the last five years. In short, it can be concluded that generally university always tends to be late to respond the reality either at school or job market.

Even though, university, in particular English Education Program at State University of Medan has already implemented the genre based approach to teaching and learning writing at university in the last five years in order to meet the needs of market (schools) as amended by KTSP curriculum 2016 and also complied in the latest 2013 curriculum, still there are some problems and gaps appearing dealing with the process of teaching and learning writing through genre based approach at university level. Tentatively some gaps and problems are as follows.

First, the availability of genre based writing learning materials and or course books is not adequately and appropriately provided. The lecturers apparently use simple and limited genre based writing learning materials. In addition the materials also do not cover the needs both for the students at university and school. In fact, learning materials significantly determine the achievement of teaching and learning. Learning materials also provide competences and skills which will be mastered and consumed by the students as well (Tomlison, 2003); (Oemar, 2008). Tomlison (2003) further states :

Learning material refers to anything which is used by the teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of the language, the learning materials can obviously be cassettes, video, CD-Rom, dictionaries, grammar books, readers

workbooks or photocopied exercises, newspapers, instructions given by the teachers, etc.

Second, most lecturers teaching writing views that genre based writing is only as matter of product or type of writing which has its own typical and unique difference compared to writing through process, structural, and content approach. They seem to have lack of knowledge and understanding. In fact, the genre based approach to writing cover both as a product of writing and as a process of writing. So, that is why they tend to focus on genre writing as product (*what to teach*). Consequently, they do not teach genre based writing through genre approach as a strategy of writing (*how to teach*). In line with genre based writing, Badger dan White (2000); Ann (2003) states that the genre based writing provide two dimensions of writing that is genre as a text or product or type of writing and genre as a process of teaching and learning writing. By doing so, the genre based writing approach actually the teaching and learning process conducted in the classroom does not only provide the students knowledge, competence and skill in writing but it also emphasizes on the process as well and bridging the gap between academic and workplace <http://www.handbook.uts.edu.au.subject>.

Third, in terms of assesment of writing, it is still found that the assessment of writing used by the lecturer is not in accordance to genre based writing assessment. The lecturers tend to use synthetic method of assessment rather than anlytical one.

Fourth, it seems that the lecturers teaching writing have no enough knowledge, horizon, and competences about genre based writing. They learn genre based writing othodidacally. This happends because when they were students before, they did not get subject matter or course about genre based writing. This condition tends to lead sometime misunderstanding and misinterpretation when they are teaching. In fact, the genre based writing approach significantly help students to understand the reality of the language use contextually and it also provides the concept of link and match (Yasin, 1999); Hyland (2003); (Ann, 2003) dan (Pardiyono, 2007). In additon, Thoreau (2006) simply says that the genre based writing is a sort of writing having typical style with its porpuses and target audience. The Thoreau's statement implies three important points dealing genre writing such as style, audience, and porpuse.

As a matter of fact, theoretically and empirically, the genre based writing approach is assumed to be effective and significant help the students to write contextually and meaningfully in terms of real life and social circumstance. In line with the effectivness of the genre based writing approach, Firkins, et al (2007) in his research reports that the genre based writing approach either as a product of writing or a process of teaching and learning sicgnificantly help dan facilitate the student to write better. By the genre based writing approach students know what to write and how to write in line with the rules of the writing itself. Then, he aslo argues that the genre based writing approach positively can help much to those having lower level of cognitive, entry behavior of English proficiency, low learning motivation, and poor learning style.

In line with above statement, Pardiyono (2007); Saragih (2006); Johns (2002); state that genre based writing is not only a matter of expressing message, idea, and information grammatically correct, but message, idea, and information must be designed and packed by the convention. The genre based writing has three distinctive features that is a) purpose, generic structure and or rethoric structure, and linguistic features. Then, this means that every genre has its typical purpose or communicative purpose, generic structure or rethoric structure, and the realization of the lunguistic features.

In term of genre as a process of teaching and learning writing, Hyland (2003) describes that genre based writing approach as a process, basically provides cyclic contextualizing-modeling-negotiating-constructing. The contextualizing-modeling-negotiating-constructing is shown as figure 1 below.

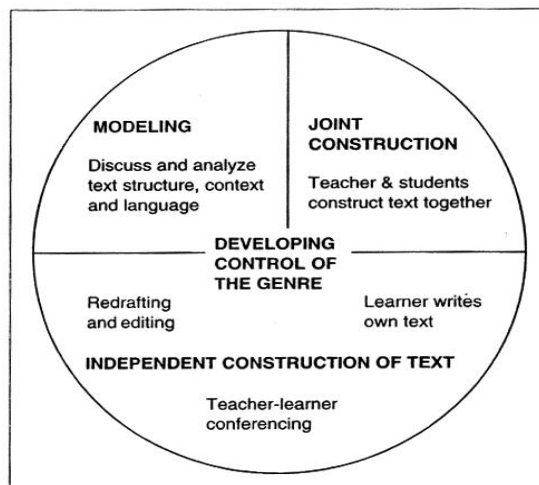


Figure 1 The Teaching and Learning Genre Menurut Vygotsky

Finally, based on the students daily and weekly writing, it seems that they still can not write properly in of genre writing. Simple observation and survey aslo note that they can not really understand the concept and knowledge of genre based writing approach. Referring to low students' achievment in teaching and learning process, Nunan (1997); Harmer (2000) propose there are a number of factors influencing the success of failure of learning such as students entry behavior, learning motivation, lecturer's comptences both professionally and pedagogically, teaching strategy, assessment, and learning materials, etc.

So, referring to above statement, learning materials is one component for teaching and learning process. By this, it is also positively as a determining factor to the success and failure of learning. Learning material is the main core in teaching and learning process and it also shows competences and skills which must be mastered and gained by the students Tomlison (2003); Oemar (2008).

In line with above objective conditions, generally this research attempts to find out the relevat English writing learning materials in order to develop a genre-based writing course for college students at English Department at university.

This research is done by applying research dan development (R&D). This research is done in three phases that is 1) evaluation and need analysis of teaching and learning of genre based writing, 2) need analysis or need assessment, and 3) the development of genre based writing learning material (hereafter is called genre based writing course. The respondents of this research are active students, alumni, and the lecturers,. The data are collected by documentary sheet, questionnaire, and in depth in interview. The data are analyzed by descriptive analysis.

In order to know the level needs of the genre based writing learning materials, this research uses the following indicators or paramters as shown by table 1 below.

Table 1 Indicators of the level of needs of genre based writing learning materials

No	Ranges	Categories
1	0 – 0,5	Not needed
2	0,6 – 1,5	Less needed
3	1,6 – 2,5	Fairly needed
4	2,6 – 3,5	Needed
5	3,6 – 4,0	Strongly needed

Hatim (2000)

B. Discussion

Based on the results of the research, this section discusses the following points in accordance to the phase and specific objectives of the research, the following points are 1) the existing objective and phenomena of teaching and learning of genre based writing, 2) the need

analysis of teaching and learning of genre based writing, and the 3) the development of genre based writing materilas (genre based writing course).

1) The existing objective and phenomena of teaching and learning of genre based writing

Referring to the existing objective and phenomena of teaching and learning of genre based writing, the availability of genre based writing learning materials is categorized available and the materials mostly are relevant to the students' and stakeholders' needs. But the adequacy and the variety of learning materials are categorized less adequate and various. The result of the research also shows that there is only one book or handbook used by both the lecturer and students. In fact, the role and function of learning materials are very important and determining toward the learning achievement. In line with the learning materials, Tomlison (2003); Oemar (2008) state that the learning material is the main core in teaching and learning process and it also provides the skill which must be mastered and gained by the students. In addition, Hyland (2002) proposes that learning or teaching materials are the main point because it does not only provide the content but also it can motivate and encourage the sprit and motivation for the students to learn writing in particular.

Then, also teaching strategy implemented by the lecturer is not optimal yet especially in terms of teaching strategy applied by the lecturer. The teaching and learning strategy is regarded monotonous and less creative and inovative. The students' motivation and involment and participation during the class are regared enough and poor reaching respectively (41.53%) and (24.61%). Whereas respectively (38.36%) and (24.61%) of respondents assumes that teaching strategy can improve the critical thought and analytical thought fairly and less significantly and only (23,07%) of the respondents states it significantly improves the critical and analytical thought.

By writing assessment method, the lecturers still apply sythentic method. In addition, documentary data of assessment aslo shows that writing assessment implemented by lecturers does not yet refer to typical genre writing yet. In fact, it is suggested that the assessment should adjust the generic structure of the genre writing covering a) communicative purposes), b) textual elements atau generic structure, and c) linguistics features or lexicogrammar.

When the students are asked about problems and difficulties in teaching and learning genre based writing, they still face some problems and difficulties in teaching and learning genre based writing as shown by table 2 below.

Table 2 The problems and difficultites faced by the student during teaching and learning process

No	Description	F	Percentage
1	The lecturer's knowledge of genre and genre based writing	18	29.50
2	Generic structure	14	22.95
3	Typical characteristics and features of genre	12	19.67
4	Types of genre writing	9	14.75
5	The terminologies in genre based writing	8	13.11
	Total	61	100

Referring to table 2 above, most respondents (29.50%) states that they tend to be confused because every lecturer seems to have different knowledge and understanding about the nature of genre and genre based writing. This conditiona nd reality lead the students to be confused. This means that the lecturers teaching genre based writing needs improving their knowledge and understanding about it. As a matter of fact, this finding is actually not surprising because they did not have good and adequagte enough about the genre based writing during their academic studies.

The other significant problems and difficulties faced by the students during the class respectively the understanding of generic structure and typical characteristics and features of genre reacing (22.95%) and (19.67%).

2. The need analysis of teaching and learning of genre based writing

The need analysis of teaching and learning of genre based writing is classified into two categories such as the process of teaching and learning through genre based approach and the materials or contents of the genre based writing.

a) The process of teaching and learning through genre based approach

The need analysis level in terms of the nature of genre based writing is relatively various one another as shown by table 3 below.

Tabel 3 The need analysis of the nature genre based writing

No	Decription	Score	Category
1	The concept of genre and genre based writing	3.72	Strongly needed
2	Generic structure	3.46	Needed
3	Linguistic features	2.66	Needed
4	Communicative purpose	2.96	Needed
5	Register	1.01	Less needed

Table 3 above shows that need of the concept of genre and genre based writing is categorized *strongly needed* reaching (3.72) of (4) for the highest range of score. As mentioned previously, the height of level of need of the nature of concept of genre and genre based writing is really relevant to table 2 point 1 above in which it becomes the most problem and difficulties in teaching and learning genre. This happens because the lecturer's knowledge and understanding the concept of genre are relatively different one another and they have lack of illustration, details and examples when they are teaching. Then, the needs to understand the knowledge of the generic structure, linguistic features, and communicative purpose is categorized *needed* which respectively reaches (3.46), (2.66), and (2.96).

When the students are asked abotu the genre a matter of product writing and a kind of teaching and learning strategy, none of the respondents knows it. The lecturers just provide them knowledge and understanding about the genre writing. The respondengts just know that the genre writing is only a type of writing or a kind of text itself. So when the students are provided a typical strategy of teaching and learning writing through genre based approach, they all are surprised that genre based writing cover both the product of writing and the strategy for teaching and learning.

Consequently, the three main steps or phases of genre approach or strategy for teaching and learning writing such as 1) Modeling text, 2) Joint Construction, 3) Independent learning are given to the students, all steps and phases are categorized *strongly needed* reaching (3.82) point. In line with the teching and learning genre writing, Vygotsky in Hyland (2003) adds that genre based approach to teaching and learning writing is a matter of cyclic design consisting three main phases like a) modeling a text, b) joint construction of a text, and c) independent construction of a text. By this model, the actual process of teaching and learning writing follows the path of contextualization-modeling-negotiating, and constructing (Hyland, 2003).

The classromm interaction which is *strongly needed* (3.9) point is peer review model, Student-centered learning and cooperative learning especially in the small group are catgegorized with respectively (3.8) and (2.45) points. The peer review model of classroom interaction actually really helps the students improve their knowldge and competence to write. By peer review substantially, students learn to write with their learning material resources so that they can feel 'home' to learn because they learn from what they know, what they write, and what they don't know. In addition, by peer review model of classroom interaction students consequently know the strength and the weakness of their writing works.

In terms of the authenticity of the writing learning materials, the students think that the authentic materials are also *strongly needed* (3.90) point. Whereas the materials developed and modified by the lecturers are regarded needed (2.5) point. In line with the height of the level of need of authentic materials, theoretically and empirically, authentic materials provide real context and situation when and how the language is used in a real life. Authentic materials also provide the students to use language in the actual purpose.

Theoretically, every type of genre based writing has its own linguistics features. Research also shows that the study and the knowledge of linguistics are *strongly needed* (3.8) point by the students to write proper writing. Why are the linguistics features strongly needed when to write genre based writing. Most of them state that every genre based writing has its own distinctive linguistics features. By its typically distinctive linguistics features, they do not only learn about the types of genre writing but also the linguistic features as well.

b) The materials or contents of genre based writing

Unlike the needs of teaching and learning process in genre based writing including the teaching teaching strategy, assesment method, and class room interaction, etc, the needs of materials or contents of genre based writing refer to the content and substances of materials dealing with types, themes and topics of genre based writing.

In terms of types of materials of genre based writing, the functional texts of genre based writing are classified into two types- short functional text and long functional text. Based on the research, it is found that there are eleven functional texts needed by the students with different level of need as shown by table 4 below.

Tabel 4 The types and level of need of short functional text of genre based writing

No	Decription	Score	Category
1	Adverstisment	3.82	Strongly needed
2	Annoucement	2.62	Needed
3	Notice	2.56	Needed
4	Short message	2.25	Needed
5	Letter	3.92	Strongly needed
6	Brochure	3.67	Strongly needed
7	Leaflet	2.26	Fairly Needed
8	Graph	1.50	Less Needed
9	Greeting card	2.85	Needed
10	Nutrition facts	1.10	Less needed
11	Label	1.60	Fairly needed

Based on table 4 above, there are three types of short functional text that are *strongly needed* by the students respectively adverstisment (3.82) point, letter (3.92) point and brochure (3.67) point. The label (1.60) point and leaflet (2.26) point are categorized *fairly needed*. Whereas two functional text such as nutrition fact and graph are *less needed* by the respondents. The rest are normaly needed with slightly different points among them.

Like the short functional text or writing, the long functional text is categorized to have different various level of needs. Table 5 below shows the level of variety of needs for the respondents.

Tabel 5 The types and level of need of long functional text of genre based writing

No	Type of genre	Score	Categories
1	Description	3,6	Strongly needed
2	Report	3,6	Strongly needed
3	Explanation	3,8	Strongly needed
4	Review	2,96	Needed
5	Analytical Exposition	3,6	Strongly needed

6	Discussion	3,90	Strongly needed
7	Hortatory exposition	2,8	Strongly needed
8	Procedure	3,7	Strongly needed
9	Narrative	2,6	Needed
10	Anecdote	3,5	Needed
11	News item	3,1	Needed
12	Recount	3,6	Strongly needed
13	Spoof	2,3	Fairly needed
14	Comentary	1,6	Fairly needed

Referring to table 5 above, the level of needs of the types of genre needed by the students can be classified into three categories such strongly needed, needed, and fairly needed. But most of the types of genre are at the level *strongly needed* with slightly differences of score such as a descriptive text (3.6) point, Explantion text (3.8) point and discussion text (3.9) point. However, spoof and comentary genre are classified as *fairly needed* respectively reaching (2.3) and (1.63) point. The rests are normaly needed respondents.

3. The Genre Based Writing Learning Material Design

After the two phases-evaluation and need analysis have been done, the next step is to design a genre based writing learning materials (hereafter a genre based writing course). Primplinary, the draft of genre based writing course consists of four parts that (1) Competences, (2) Orientation, (3) Teaching and learning strategy, and (4) Assessment. The materials of the genre based writing course are mostly derived and developed from the data found in the two previous phase activities. A complete design of genre based writing course is shown by figure 2 below.

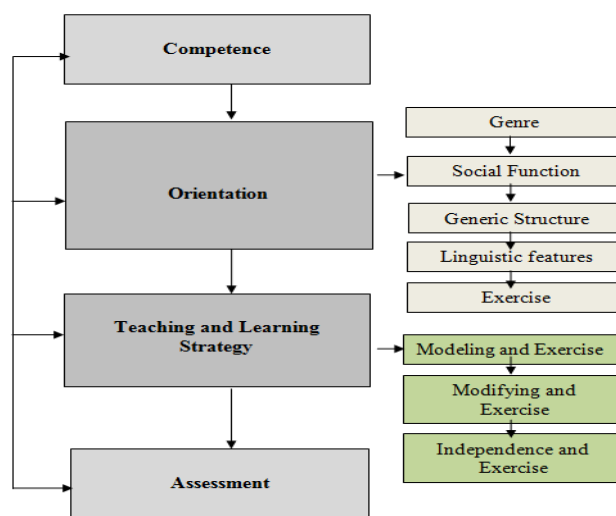


Figure 2 Preliminary draft of Genre Based Writing Course

After the draft has beend completed in line with the minimum standard of course design, then the draft of genre based writing course is reviewed by peer review. The instrument for reviewing is a questionnaire consisting of five options by Likert Scale. The aspects reviewed by peers includes the four main aspects that is 1) the content), 2) the process), 3) the linguistics features, and 4) the design or layout. This review is done in order to find out input, correction, and enrichment form the peers who are judged having similar comptences and experiences the writer.

Based on the review done by the peers, there are some corrections and inpuat and enrichments as well needed to be added and adjusted in order to provide better genre based writing course. The corrections, inputs, and enrichments such as the improvement and depth

description of linguistic features, the improvement variety of exercises, etc. They also recommend to design materials showing the active and participatory involvement of the students during the class and providing the clear and operational instruction and guide between lecturer and students.

In addition, peer review also recommends to change the term ‘competence’ with ‘preview.’ The preview recommended has to provide two main points that a) an overview about the type of genre that will be learned and b) also competence that will be mastered by the students.

In addition, peer reviewers also add an additional part of the genre based writing namely Getting Started. The Getting Started consists of three sub-sections such as Brainstorming, Think and Share, and Select the Relevant Topics. Whereas the Following up section is added by the researcher describing the sharing ideas with other students after they learn some concepts and do some exercises in the previous section. A complete design of genre based writing course after reviewed is shown by figure 3 below.

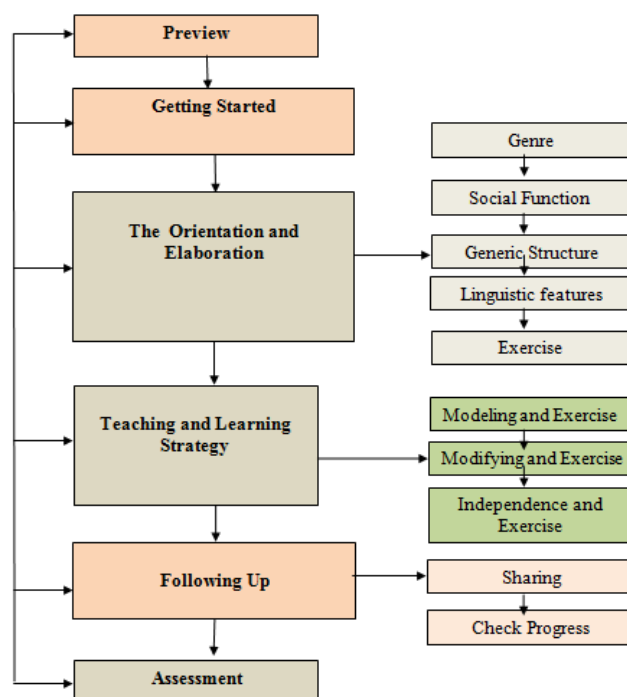


Figure 3 A complete design of genre based writing course after reviewed is shown by figure 3 below.

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the description, elaboration, and discussion of the previous sections, some concluding remarks are taken into accounts. First, overall, the existing phenomena of teaching and learning process of genre based writing does not run optimally yet. Some aspects need improving such as the teaching strategy, assesment method, the bredth and depth of the materials presented, etc. Second, by this condition, some problems and difficulties such as the various differences level of the lecturers’ knowledge and understanding of genre based writing, lack of the lecturer’s competences and knowledge are faced by the students during the process of teaching and learning. The different level of the knowledge and understanding often lead the students to be confused about the subjects discussed and learned. Third, the students’ needs in terms of the process of teaching and learning genre based writing and the types, themes and topics of genre based writing relatively slightly different among others. Finally, the physical structure of a genre-based writing course consists of two parts-preliminary and main part. The preliminary has preview and the main part consists of 1) Getting Started, 2) The Orientation dan elaboration, 3) Teaching and learning strategy, 4) following up, and 5) Assessment.

Referring to the above conclusion, it is suggested that 1) the evaluation of the real existing phenomena and the need analysis or need assessment are a must and they have to be done at the prior study in order to provide the relevant and reliable learning materials, 2) the lecturers should explain the two aspects of genre either as a product of writing or as process to teaching and learning a genre based writing, 3) the lecturer should improve their knowledge, understanding and capacities about the nature of genre based writing because the lack of understandings and knowledge and the different level of understanding and knowledge of genre based writing tend to lead the students to be confused about the genre based writing.

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