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## A Genre-Based Approach to Improve The Students' Writing Skills

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### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan peningkatan siswa kelas IX MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian tindakan kelas dengan dua siklus, dan prosedur penelitiannya adalah perencanaan, tindakan dan observasi, dan refleksi. Siswa kelas 9-E MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid tahun ajaran 2020/2021, dengan jumlah siswa yang dipilih melalui teknik *purposive sampling* sebanyak 25 siswa dan seorang guru bahasa Inggris merupakan partisipan penelitian ini. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah catatan lapangan dan tes. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata nilai pre-test hanya 60,25 (pra-penelitian), tetapi meningkat secara signifikan dari siklus I ke siklus II (dari 72,50 menjadi 80,25). Untuk digarisbawahi, pada awal penelitian ini (pra-penelitian), skor tertinggi adalah 70, dan pada akhir penelitian meningkat menjadi 78-92. Sementara itu, peserta dengan skor terendah meningkat secara signifikan pada *post-test* dibandingkan dengan *pre-test*. Skor *pre-test* berkisar antara 50 hingga 70, sedangkan skor *post-test* berkisar antara 70 hingga 74.

**Kata Kunci:** pendekatan berbasis genre, penulisan, penelitian tindakan kelas.

### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to describe the improvements of the ninth-grade students at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid. This was an action research study with two cycles, and the research procedures were planning, action and observation, and reflection. The students from class 9-E at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid in the academic year 2020/2021, with a total of 25 students chosen through a purposive sampling technique, and an English teacher, were the participants. The instruments were a field note and a test. The results revealed that the mean pre-test score was only 60.25 (pre-test), but it improved significantly from cycle I to cycle II (from 72.50 to 80.25). To highlight, at the beginning of this study (pre-research), the highest score was 70, and by the end of the study, it had improved to 78-92. Meanwhile, the participants with the lowest scores improved significantly on the post-test compared to the pre-test. The pre-test score ranged from 50 to 70, while the post-test score ranged from 70 to 74.*

**Keywords:** genre-based approach, writing, classroom action research.

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning English is extremely crucial for international communication because it is a global language that everyone speaks. English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, and it has been incorporated in the curriculum of Indonesian schools (Nunan, 2003). English is taught in Senior High School to enable students to communicate effectively in English in their daily lives and assist students in understanding and applying English in many contexts (Harahap & Rambe, 2019). There are four essential abilities in teaching and studying English namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. They are receptive (listening and reading) and productive (writing and speaking). Writing is a critical skill in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). It stimulates thinking and learning, encourages communication, and makes thought available for reflection. Ideas can be reviewed, evaluated, added to, reorganized, and modified when written (Brown, 2007).

The act of writing is not just picking up a pencil and producing letters due to while expressing their feelings and thoughts, students must also write in a way that is easy to read and comprehend (Sabat & Slamet, 2019). A successful composition requires consideration of several things. Understanding the material to be developed is the first step before writing a decent piece of literature (Harmer, 2001). In addition, it is explained understanding the subject matter helps writers arrange their thoughts (Tribble, 1996). Second, the diction used must be appropriate to the subject. This is done by using appropriate vocabulary and the material is delivered using proper grammar. It could be argued that learning to utilize correct language when writing is a great way for students to strengthen their language skills since they are forced to think while they write.

Pre-observation, interviews with English teachers and students, and the findings all pointed to the fact that most students at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid struggled with their writing. Basic writing abilities were a problem for many ninth-graders. Problems with topic, structure, language, vocabulary, and the writing process were all identified as causes for their poor writing abilities. In addition, the majority of students in class 9 had a lot of difficulties finding the right words to express their thoughts. Translating terms from Indonesian into English was a popular suggestion. The students were unable to properly arrange their thoughts since they were so focused on translating words into English. Due to the disorganization of their paragraphs, their Minimum Mastery Criteria (KMM) score dropped below 76. Additionally, there were problems with spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, all of which should have been addressed.

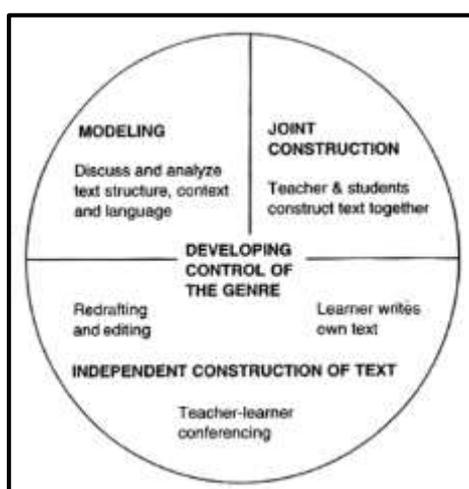
After interviewing both teachers and students, the researcher concluded that students rarely engaged in writing practices. When they got to writing, the teacher just told them to produce a piece with no tasks. During an online classroom using Google Meet or Zoom, the teacher merely discussed a few examples of texts. The specified techniques were not well-applied in the pandemic Covid-19 online classroom. As a result, the students lost interest in learning, particularly writing.

The coronavirus pandemic 2019 (Covid-19) has interrupted education globally. Since the virus was discovered in Wuhan, South China, in November 2019, the Indonesian government has closely monitored the WHO's global Covid-19 epidemic situation report (Agung, Surtikanti, & Quinones, 2020). The virus then spread swiftly worldwide. This situation has touched many areas, including education. With the advent of e-learning in schools, Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, has issued a Circular Note urging schools to temporarily cease traditional teaching and learning activities. He suggested teachers use e-learning platforms such as Microsoft teams, Google Classroom, Moodle, Zoom, and Google Meet. These e-learning platforms are also widely used and installed in Indonesia (Widodo & Slamet, 2021). Online schooling has become a prominent topic (Widodo & Slamet, 2020) and it was done also at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid.

Derewianka explains that, in line with the description above, a Genre-Based Approach (GBA) is one in which the teacher not only teaches the structure and grammatical features of spoken and written language but also allows for the development of language skills in relation to the genre through the use of various stages

(Taufik & Hafrizon, 2019). The technique may not only aid in the development of students' ability in grammar and vocabulary, but it may also aid in the growth of students' ability in reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills as well. The emphasis on teaching genre through certain stages in the approach, in particular, may be beneficial in growing students' writing ability while also serving as a crucial factor in reducing their anxiety during the learning process (Kongpetch, 2006).

GBA is also well-known as a technique that is intended to assist language learners in their socialization of language learning (Taufik & Hafrizon, 2019). The approach's learning method incorporates collaborative construction and scaffolding, in which students and teachers work together to create something new or improve something existing (Burns, 2001). As they progress through the stage, students are allowed to interact with other students through activities such as conversation, as well as with the teacher through instruction. Student collaborations take place not just among themselves, but also between students and their teachers. The term 'cyclic strategy' is used to describe the stages of teaching and learning writing using a genre-based approach (Setiadi, 2014). It is also suggested that three stages for teaching and learning including text modeling, text joint construction, and text-independent construction and could be seen in the following figure.



**Figure 1. The Hyland's Model of genre teaching and learning cycle (Source: Dirgeyasa, 2016)**

As illustrated in the figure, several steps should be followed when teaching and learning a material (Dirgeyasa, 2016). During the joint construction stage, students begin to engage in more hands-on writing activities. However, their job in genre writing is not writing at all, as they alter and twist the words they are given to deal with. In order for students to become self-sufficient writers in a particular genre, the teacher continues to coach and assist them. In practice, the development and implementation of the joint building stage can be broken down into three distinct practical processes. Finally, the students are required to compose a specific type of genre based on their existing knowledge and experiences in stage one and stage two. The student is responsible for writing a specific genre kind on his or her own. There are several qualities of a particular genre that teachers must ensure their students grasp, including the communicative aim, structure elements, grammatical patterns, relevant vocabulary, and the use of textual devices.

Given the foregoing, the researchers believe that an English instructor must use an appropriate strategy to spark students' interest in writing activities and to make the teaching-learning process more enjoyable for all students involved. To make writing class more effective, interesting, and fun for the students, they must be taught in a way that is effective, engaging, and entertaining for them. Teachers should employ proper approaches for instructing students in writing, particularly amid the implementation of online classrooms during the pandemic Covid-19 era. The teacher can make the writing process more pleasurable and accessible to students by implementing the most ideal technique for the situation. To resolve these concerns, the researchers proposed that the ninth-graders students at Mts Unggulan Al-Jadid improve their writing skills during the second semester

of the academic year 2020/2021 by employing GBA. By completing classroom action research, the researchers were able to demonstrate that GBA is a feasible method for conducting writing activities in classrooms.

There have been some previous studies conducted on GBA in educational fields, and the findings revealed that it has a significant impact when it is implemented, such as the Genre Based Approach, which aims to develop the knowledge and skill to deal with spoken and written texts in social contexts by developing the knowledge and skill to deal with spoken and written texts (1). The GBA can then assist students in improving their English proficiency. This is in addition to their ability to expand their knowledge of and proficiency in interacting with spoken and written materials in social situations (2). Then, GBA is beneficial as it allows students to enhance their writing skills (3). Following the lead of the previous research, this study focused on Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to better understand the GBA. As a result, the different methodology that was used to conduct this study is relevant and noteworthy. This research aimed to describe the ninth-graders students' improvement in writing skills at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid in the academic year 2020/2021.

## **METHODOLOGY**

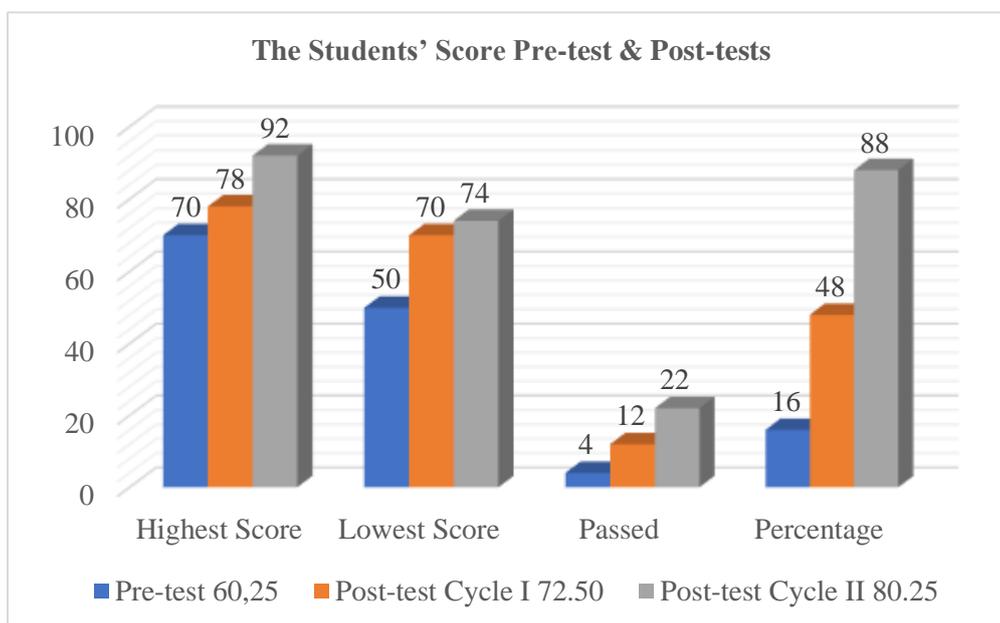
This research was conducted at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid on Jl. Jend. S. Parman V Baru No.13, Waru, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. This was a classroom action research project to empower the students to improve their writing skills. This CAR was divided into four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Arikunto, 2013). Planning is the act of representing what has been done. In the classroom, action means putting the content of action into practice. The action and the observation cannot be separated because the teacher must perform the return observation while writing what was done. The purpose of reflection was to propose what had been done. The participants are students from class 9-E at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid in the academic year 2020/2021, with a total of 25 students selected through a purposive sampling technique, and an English teacher.

The instrument of this research was a test, with the form of the test being a writing test to measure students' ability in writing text, which was given by the researcher. A test is a title used to obtain information that relates to understanding the text. The researchers then used a type of observation note sheet. Where it is necessary to obtain information about phenomena that occur during the learning-teaching process through systematic observation and measurement of noticeable phenomena (Sugiono, 2015). The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze the data. During the teaching process, qualitative data were used to describe the situation. The students' test scores were analyzed using quantitative data. The quantitative data were collected and analyzed by computing the writing test score to determine the students' writing improvement as a result of the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The observation was carried out before any preliminary research was conducted. It was done virtually using the Zoom platform during pandemic Covid-19 in the academic year 2020/2021. The class teacher greeted the researchers and the teacher warmly as they began their work. The teacher greeted and prayed before checking the attendance list as a way of both greeting and encouraging students. The teacher began the lesson by asking students to answer a series of questions about the topics covered in the online class. The teacher directly asked the students if they knew anything about certain texts, which texts, and what kind of texts. Some students participated in an energetic brainstorming session in this segment. Because writing was going to be a major topic of discussion, the teacher gave the students a pre-test before the main discussion about describing texts. According to the findings, it appeared that the majority of the ninth-grade students struggled to write the texts. As a result, only four students passed the test based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) of 76 or higher. The GBA was implemented in two cycles, with three meetings held during each cycle. According to the findings of the study, GBA aided in the improvement of students' writing abilities. Figure.1 showed the

Classroom Action Research (CAR) in the implementation of GBA. It demonstrates that, when compared to the pre-research, the writing results of the students in the first and second cycles differed significantly.



**Figure 2. The Students' Score Pre-test & Post-tests**

Figure 1 shows the results of the pre-test, post-test cycle I, and post-test cycle II tests. It can now be argued that the completion of the activity improved the performance of the students in class 9-A. The mean score at pre-test was only 60.25, but it improved significantly from cycle I to cycle II (from 72.50 to 80.25). To demonstrate, the highest score at the beginning of this study (pre-research) was 70, and by the end of the study, it had improved to 78-92. Meanwhile, the lowest-scoring participants improved significantly on the post-test compared to the pre-test. Pre-test scores ranged was 50, while post-test scores ranged from 70 to 74. The students who had passed the tests had some improvements made to them. Only four students had previously passed the test (pre-research) (16%). Although the number of students who passed the tests increased to 48% (cycle I) and 88% (cycle II), there were improvements in students who passed the tests in post-tests. A successful teaching-learning process indicates that at least 75% of students have a grade point average of 76 or higher (KKM). The use of GBA appears to have helped students improve their writing skills. During the pre-test phase, the researchers examined the students' writing as their works using GBA. The researchers then compared the students' post-test cycle I score to their post-test cycle II scores. The students' progress in writing ability was significantly improved. According to the findings of the research, the researchers determined that GBA was efficient in increasing students' writing skills for the students in class 9-E at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia during the academic year 2020/2021.

Based on the results of this research, the researchers conclude that the implementation of the GBA may increase students' writing abilities in schools, which was supported by the findings of the study. The students' performance has improved significantly. Research's findings have confirmed those of others, as demonstrated by Kongpetch's findings, who discovered that students are proficient in writing after being taught utilizing a Genre-Based Approach by their teachers (Kongpetch, 2006). One more finding that directly relates to this research comes from Setiadi, who conducted the research about GBA and determined that the students' writing abilities were aided by using a Genre Based Approach to write their writing texts (Setiadi, 2014). It is well recognized that employing the most appropriate strategy or technique will aid students in achieving their learning objectives. It is also noted by Weber (2001), who stated that strategies might be a beneficial thing for students to learn from if they are taught properly.

Concerning the findings of this research, the implementation of a genre-based approach is being considered. Furthermore, according to Batubara (2013), the implementation of a genre-based strategy is important for improving students' abilities in English writing. The researcher discovered that students' mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and text aspects is enhanced as a result of modeling the text. Additionally, Irwansyah (2016) demonstrated that the implementation of a genre-based approach is significant in improving students' ability in English writing. The mean score of the students improved from 50.93 to 80.83, and the students gradually learned to enjoy writing narrative text without the assistance of their friends and to feel confident in producing their own narrative text.

From the foregoing explanation, it is possible to conclude that the implementation of a Genre-Based Approach (GBA) can increase the students' writing skills for the 9th-grade students at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid. Based on quantitative data, it can be concluded that the students' performance improved with each test. The qualitative results, on the other hand, demonstrated that the students were engaged and enthusiastic about learning English, as well as competent at producing the texts that were assigned to them.

## CONCLUSION

On the main findings of the research, it is reasonable to conclude that teaching writing through the implementation of a Genre-Based Approach (GBA) can help students achieve greater success while producing texts. This might be argued that GBA improved the students' ability to write text based on the results of the writing test they completed after implementing GBA. It could be noted that the scores of the tests improved with each cycle. Previously to the implementation of GBA, the students' writing achievement was below average. It can be observed that there were four students who passed the pre-test and twenty-one students who failed the pre-test. Because GBA was effective and productive to the students in improving their writing achievement, it is argued that this approach was effective because the students were enjoyable and enthusiastic in the teaching process during the implementation of the GBA at MTs Unggulan Al-Jadid, Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia.

In regard to the conclusion that has been reached, the following considerations are suggested: First and foremost, it is recommended that English teachers use the GBA since it has been shown to improve students' ability to write texts that are appropriate for their respective genres. In regards to students, the first thing they need is an interest in English, so that they may enjoy themselves while learning. Then, they should demonstrate greater discipline, correctly use the time, maintain self-control during class, and more carefully choose the language that is appropriate in writing. Because this research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), it employed limited samples, and the next researcher expected to use larger samples and the method that was not conducted in this research such as investigating the effectiveness of GBA on the other English skills by applying experimental design or mix-method.

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