THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN SMP NEGERI 1 MALANG
GRADE VIII ACCELERATION CLASS

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ABSTRACT: This study focused on the implementation of the process-genre approach in teaching writing in SMP Negeri 1 Malang. It was based on the process-genre approach proposed by Guo Yan (2005). The result shows that the implementation was not effective. Of six stages (preparation, modelling and reinforcing, planning, joint constructing, independent constructing and revising), only the first was partly effective.

Keyword: process-genre approach, writing

The writing skill has been getting a lot of attention from researchers and experts in English language teaching because it plays an important role in our personal and professional lives (Massi: 2001). Writing involves some stages of composition tasks (Chen: 2002) including a complex process of learning, thinking, and organizing ideas (Widodo: 2008).

In order to help students to improve their writing skill, English teachers can adopt the product approach, process approach, or genre approach. The product approach focuses on the written product, the process approach focuses on the process of improving writing skills instead of fixing mistakes for the final products (Susser, 1994: 34-35), and the genre approach allows students to study grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purpose of the genre (Yan: 2005). However, teachers can also combine the process and genre approaches into a process-genre approach. This approach allows students to benefit from the process of writing and get familiar with the texts they are going to produce.

The research problem is formulated into the question: How is the implementation of the process-genre approach in the teaching of writing in SMPN 1 Malang grade VIII acceleration class? This research problem is elaborated into six specific research problems: (1) How is the implementation of the preparation stage? (2) How is the implementation of the modeling and reinforcing stage? (3) How is the implementation of the planning stage? (4) How is the implementation of the joint constructing stage? (5) How is the implementation of the independent constructing stage? and (6) How is the implementation of the revising stage?

In order to incorporate the insights of product, process, and genre approaches, Badger and White (2000) propose a model of the process genre approach involves (1) knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), (2) knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in the genre approach), and (3) skills in using the language (as in the process approach). Yan (2005) elaborates the model proposed by Badger and White (2000) into six stages, including: (1) preparation, (2) modelling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing, and (6) revising.

In the preparation stage, the activities aim to: 1) define a situation that will require a written text and place it within a specific genre, and 2) allow students to anticipate the structural features of a particular genre.
The modelling and reinforcing stage aims to (1) to introduce a model of the genre and let students consider the social purpose of the text, including who the audience will be and (2) to make the students understand how the text is structured and how its organization develops to accomplish its purpose (Yan: 2005).

In the planning stage, meaningful activities are expected to activate the students’ schemata about the topic, including brainstorming, discussing, and reading related material. The aim is to help the students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience (Yan: 2005).

The joint constructing stage allows teacher and students to work together and start writing a text. The goal of this stage is to produce a final draft which provides a model for students to refer to when they work on their individual compositions. The independent constructing stage enables the students to compose their own texts on a related topic individually (Yan: 2005).

The last stage is revising. After independently constructing a text, students have a draft for final revision and editing. This stage does not always require the teachers to collect all the papers and mark them one by one (Yan: 2005). Students may check, discuss, and evaluate their work with fellow students, under the teacher’s guidance.

This study was conducted to find whether or not the implementation of the six stages of the process-genre approach was effective. There have been some previous researches about process-genre writing and its use in the primary schools. However, the researcher could not find any research about the model on how to implement process genre writing approach in Junior High School especially in acceleration class in Indonesia. Therefore, this study is very important to conduct.

METHODS

This study adopted descriptive research design. The researcher acted as the key instrument. The research instruments include field notes, observation checklist, and interview guideline.

This study was conducted in grade VIII, Acceleration Class of SMPN 1 Malang, which is located at Jalan Lawu 12 Malang, East Java. The subject of the study is the English teacher of the acceleration class. The teacher claimed that she used the process-genre approach in teaching writing. The teacher usually took materials from the internet to provide various examples of text types.

The collected data in this research were analyzed using a model of data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984: 21). This data analysis model consists of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation or display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

FINDINGS

The Implementation of the Preparation Stage

In the first meeting, the teacher began the preparation stage by asking the students about what they did in the holiday. One of the students, answered, “I go to Bali last holiday.” The other students corrected by saying “I went.” Then the teacher asked why they changed “go” into “went”, and the students answered, because it happened in the past.
In the second meeting, the teacher opened the preparation stage by asking the students about the types of recount text that they knew. The teacher asked the students if they thought biography is a type of recount text. Some students answered “yes”, but more students answered “no”. However, when they were asked to explain why they answered “yes” or “no”, they did not respond. The teacher then explained that there were two types of recount text: past experience and biography. In the third meeting, the teacher skipped the preparation stage and directly went to the modelling and reinforcing stage.

**The Implementation of the Modelling and Reinforcing Stage**

The teacher conducted the modelling and reinforcing stage twice in the first meeting. The teacher introduced recount texts by explaining that recount texts tell about past events. The teacher then provided an example of recount text on the LCD screen. One of the students was asked to read the text aloud while the teacher corrected her pronunciation errors.

Still in the first meeting, the teacher gave another example of recount text on the screen. She asked her students to read it carefully. Then, she explained once more the generic structure of a recount text and applied it to the sample text. After that, the teacher explained another language feature, the connectives.

In the second meeting, this stage was skipped. The teacher thought that the students already understood all the materials through the modelling and reinforcing stage in the previous meeting.

In the third meeting, the teacher explained about the past tense to the students. After that, she showed some biography texts in the present tense on the LCD screen and asked the students to change the verbs into past tense. Then, the teacher discussed some new words and taught the students how to pronounce it.

After the discussion, the teacher gave some biography texts for the students to discuss in a group of four. Each group was asked to change the verb from the present tense verbs into the past form.

**The Implementation of the Planning Stage**

The planning stage was conducted once in the first meeting. The teacher asked the students to think about their last holiday. They were asked to discuss their ideas in groups. After a while, the teacher asked them to write down their ideas in the form of phrases or sentences on a mind map. While doing this task, some students were doing something else. They were talking to each other and one of them was playing a game with his laptop.

**The Implementation of the Joint Constructing Stage**

The joint constructing stage was conducted once in the first meeting. The teacher asked the students to compose a recount essay in groups about their unforgettable memories. The teacher went around the class to help the students when they had problems with their writing. The students consulted the teacher about their writing problems, most of which were in vocabulary. Some of the students showed their work to the teacher and asked her what they should improve or correct.

**The Implementation of the Independent Constructing Stage**

The independent constructing stage was conducted once during the teaching of recount text. At the end of the third meeting, the teacher assigned the students to write a biography of their favorite idol and submit it in the following meeting.
The Implementation of the Revising Stage

The revising stage was conducted in the second and fourth meetings. In the second meeting, the students were asked to re-write sentences that they had made in the joint constructing stage in the previous meeting. These sentences were discussed by the class. During the discussion, the teacher and the students focused on accuracy. Three main corrections included: (1) the most frequent error in pattern which was “to + infinitive”, (2) the use of passive and active sentences, and (3) the sequence of subject, e.g. “My family and I”, not “I and my family”. The teacher then explained the rules of “to + infinitive” using the LCD screen.

During the discussion, most of the students were passive; they only responded to the teacher’s questions when the teacher addressed their name. After the discussion, the students were asked to revise their work based on the discussion and feedbacks given by the teachers. They were allowed to work with their friends. After all of the students finished their writing, the teacher asked them to exchange their work and check their partner’s work and give feedbacks.

In the fourth meeting, there was a test on recount text. The test consisted of 40 items and lasted for 70 minutes. After the class ended, the researcher interviewed the teacher about her evaluation of the process genre approach that she implemented when she was teaching recount text. She said that she had some difficulties in: (1) encouraging the students to be more active in the class, (2) handling a lot of students’ works, because she also had to do many other of things, such as drafting new curriculum with other teachers, and drafting items for midterm test, and (3) displaying the students’ final work, due to the moving class system.

DISCUSSIONS
The Implementation of the Preparation Stage

In the first meeting, the teacher conducted the preparation stage through discussion. She explained to the students that recount text is written to tell about personal experience that happened in the past, and initiated a discussion about what the students did in the previous holiday. She allowed students to anticipate the structural features of a particular genre by asking the students about why they should change the verbs into the past forms so that the students could anticipate that they were going to use the past tense for recount text. This indicates that the teacher reached the goals of the preparation stage (Yan: 2005).

In the second meeting, the teacher used discussion for the preparation stage. However, the content of the discussion was not relevant to the stages that followed. The preparation was about another form of recount text (biography), but the following stages were still about the previous topic (past experience). This implementation was in contrast to Badger and White’s (2000:158) statement that teachers need to replicate the situation as closely as possible to the genre. As a consequence, students were unable to anticipate the social context/situation of the recount text and its language features. Therefore, the goals of the preparation stage in the second meeting were not achieved.

In addition, this stage was not implemented well because most of the students remained passive in the discussion. The teacher said that acceleration class students had the tendency to be passive because they thought that they could do it without further discussion. However, the teacher should have tried other
strategies if the discussion could not work well as teacher’s creativity in providing supporting environment is one of the teacher’s responsibilities in discussion (Lowman 1984).

The preparation stage was not conducted in the third meeting. The discussion about biography in the previous meeting should have been conducted in this meeting because the topic was suitable with the other stages in the third meeting.

**The Modelling and Reinforcing Stage**

In the first meeting, the teacher explained the purpose of the recount text in general, introduced an example of recount text on an LCD screen and asked a student to read the text aloud while the teacher corrected her pronunciation errors. However, displaying a text on the LCD screen for around five minutes might not be enough for the students to grasp the meaning of the text. Therefore, the first goal of this stage to introduce a model of the genre and let students consider the social purpose of the text, including who the audience will be (Yan: 2005) was not achieved.

The teacher did not explain the generic structure of the text. The language features were neither analyzed nor discussed. The past tense which was mentioned in the preparation stage was not discussed further in the modelling stage. Therefore, the second goal of this stage to make the students understand how the text is structured and how its organization develops to accomplish its purpose (Yan: 2005) was not accomplished. In fact, in the end of the class, the students said that they still had difficulties in starting to write.

In this stage the teacher did not explain the genre concept of field, tenor, and the mode which is actually necessary in this stage (Depdiknas: 2005). Moreover, according to Steele (2004), after a model text is read, the features of the genre should be highlighted because it is important to let the students understand the purpose of the text, its language features and the field, tenor, and the mode so that they can write a good recount text.

The text modelling was conducted twice in the first meeting. The second model text was displayed on the LCD screen for five minutes and students were asked to read it. After that, the teacher explained the generic structure and the connectives. Although the text modelling was conducted twice, the reinforcement was lacking, since the teacher did not give any exercises about the generic structure or the past tense. Although the teacher explained about one of the language features (the connectives), it was lacking in reinforcement. It was only discussed once, and there were no other exercises or re-explanation about it. While actually, the students may do some comparisons with other texts to reinforce what they have learned about the particular genre (Yan: 2005).

In the second meeting, this stage was skipped because the teacher thought that the students already understood all the materials through the modelling and reinforcing stage in the previous meeting. It was contrary to the fact that some of the students still had difficulties and asked their friends or the teacher about the past tense.

In the third meeting, the teacher conducted several exercises for the reinforcement of the past tense. The choice of group discussion strategy to reinforce the topic of past tense is good as it is recommended to promote long-term retention of information, to motivate students toward further learning, and to

Although the reinforcement stage in the third meeting was conducted well, overall, the implementation of modeling and reinforcing stages in all of the three meetings did not reflect the concept of a genre, including field, tenor and mode (Depdiknas, 2005). They were only discussing a part of genre field; “when”; other parts of field, tenor, and mode were not discussed.

The language features discussed were also only connectives and simple past tense, while other feature of recount text, such as subject specific terms, adjective, conjunctions, passive voices were not discussed. The teacher could not explain the distribution of language features of recount text in two years of study. One of the reasons might be the absence of lesson plan.

The Planning Stage

The planning stage was conducted only once in the first meeting. The planning method was carried out in the form of mind mapping. However, the process of planning could not work well because there were some students who did something else. This stage should have been controlled better by the teacher. In addition, the teacher should have asked the students whether they had difficulties during the process of planning. At the end of this stage, not all of the students made a mind map. Therefore, the aim of the stage to help the students develop an interest in the topic by relating it to their experience (Yan: 2005) was not achieved.

The Joint Constructing Stage

The joint constructing stage was conducted only once in the first meeting. Not all of the students finished writing a model text for the next stage. The students were too shy to say that they had not finished writing. The teacher should have checked all the students’ work before going to the next stage. In fact, although the teacher had conducted joint constructing stage once and modeling and reinforcing stage twice, the students still had difficulties in many aspects of text writing steps. Therefore, the goal of this stage to produce a final draft which provides a model for students to refer to when they work on their individual compositions (Yan: 2005) was not achieved.

There were two types of recount texts which were introduced: past experience and biography. Since these two types have different characteristics, the teacher was should have conducted two different processes of joint constructing stage, so that there would be two different models of text. Conducting the stage only once was not sufficient.

The Independent Constructing Stage

The joint constructing stage and independent constructing stage are closely related. The problem in the implementation of independent constructing stage here was the students’ insufficient knowledge and practice of writing a text from the previous stages. In independent constructing stage, the students are expected to have experienced writing a model text through the joint constructing stage (Yan: 2005).

In the teaching of the first type of the introduced recount text (past experience), the teacher did not conduct the independent constructing stage which became one of the reasons why the students had a lot of difficulties in writing a text in the end of meeting two.
In the teaching of the second type of the recount text, biography, the teacher went directly to the independent constructing stage, skipping the joint constructing stage. As a result, the students faced a lot of difficulties in writing a biography in the end of meeting three.

The teacher assigned the students to write a text independently for homework to be submitted in the next meeting. The problem was, in the next meeting, the teacher planned to conduct a test on the topic, so, there was no opportunity for the students to consult their work to the teacher. Therefore, the quality of the final product was not checked and the goal of this stage to ensure that the students are able to compose their own texts on a related topic individually (Yan: 2005) was not achieved.

**The Revising Stage**

The revising stages were implemented in the second and fourth meetings through class discussion, peer editing, using teacher’s feedbacks and test. In the class discussion in the second meeting, the class only focused on the linguistic competence, especially on the grammar accuracy, and the students were not actively participating in the discussion.

Although the students liked the peer editing activity, the peer editors did not know what to edit and which aspects they should focus on. Another problem was that the instruction was unclear whether the students had to write their feedbacks under their partner’s work or not. Therefore, although the teacher expected them to do so, they did not write anything on their partner’s book.

After the third meeting was conducted, the teacher asked the students to submit their books. The teacher assessed the students’ recount texts both on the past experience and the biography. Because there was no lesson plan made by the teacher for this cycle, there was no clear indicator of what aspects to assess from the students’ writing. Therefore, it was very hard to determine the reasons why a certain student got particular mark for his/her work.

However, from the teacher’s way on assessing the students’ written text, it can be seen that the teacher only focused on the grammar accuracy and mechanics (for example, punctuation). The teacher did not elaborate her feedback; therefore, it could be very hard for the students to revise their work based on the feedbacks. In fact, a number of researchers have reported that feedback is significantly more effective when it provides details of how to improve the answer, rather than when it just indicates whether the student’s work is correct or not (Bangert-Drowns et al.: 1991; Pridemore & Klein: 1995, Shute: 2007).

The final test consists of 40 multiple choice items on recount text. There was no particular test to display the students’ ability in writing a recount text. Therefore, it was hard to determine the students’ ability in writing recount texts after the process genre approach was implemented. The teacher confirmed that the score on the final products were taken from the unrevised version that the students submitted. It means that, the final products were not yet produced.

In general, the revising stages did not cover all the components of writing skills required by BSNP (2006). In the process of revising, the teacher and the students only focused on the linguistic aspects. The socio-cultural, strategic competence and discourse competence of students’ work were dealt with. In addition, the revising stages only discussed the students’ ability to use correct sentences (syntax), proper vocabulary, and mechanics. While there were actually
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. First, of the two implementations of the preparation stage, one did not achieve the goal. That was due to the irrelevant topics of the preparation stage and the following stages. Another problem came when the students were not actively participating in the discussion, and the teacher could not improve the class atmosphere.

Second, the teacher’s effort to conduct the implementation of modelling and reinforcing stages deserves appreciation, as the stages were implemented using various media. However, the stage failed to cover all the required materials. At the end, the students could not achieve the goal of this stage and they still had difficulties in starting to write.

Third, the teacher’s decision to conduct the planning stage only once was insufficient, because this stage was supposed to be conducted before every session of joint constructing or independent constructing. Moreover, the planning stage was not properly controlled by the teacher, so the implementation could not work well and the goal of this stage was not achieved.

Fourth, the goal of the joint constructing stage, which is to give a model for each student to independently write a recount text, was not achieved. Not all of the groups or pairs were able to finish their writing in this stage.

Fifth, the implementation of the independent constructing stage was not conducted well because the students had insufficient knowledge and practice of writing a text from the previous stages. Moreover, there was no opportunity for the students to consult the text they wrote to the teacher.

Sixth, the revising stage consists of three strategies; (1) class discussion, (2) peer editing, (3) using teacher’s feedbacks, and (4) test. The system of class discussion did not run well because not all the students had participated actively in the class. The peer editing was not conducted well because the students did not understand the function of peer editing. The teacher’s feedbacks were given to each student. However, since the teacher did not have any lesson plan or review guide, the feedbacks only focused on accuracy when there were actually more complex aspects that she should have considered. The test was also not suitable for the writing cycle because it consisted of mainly reading items.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the researcher proposes some suggestions. First, the English teachers of acceleration class in Junior High Schools should make the students focus in the discussion. In addition, the teacher should be careful in giving fair attention to all of the students, so that they would not be distracted.

Second, the English teachers in general who want to use process genre approach for teaching writing should vary the activities in each stage of the approach. Third, researchers are recommended to study the implementation of the process-genre writing approach in other genres. There are also some possibilities to compare the process-genre approach and other approaches in teaching writing, to find the best approach for the teaching of writing in the acceleration class.
REFERENCES


