

EXPLORING EFL VOCATIONAL STUDENTS IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH JOINT CONSTRUCTION OF GENRE BASED APPROACH: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

In writing class for EFL students, there are numerous factors to consider. These factors include students' learning styles, the role of the teacher, and the teaching methods used. There have been various researches that advocate genre-based approach and perceived it as effective to help EFL students improve their writing skills. However, the role of Joint Construction in this context is not specifically documented. While there are many possible reasons for this, one of them is that the role of collaboration and interaction in text production remains unexplored. As a concern to that, this research aimed to explore how joint construction of Genre based approach assists student in writing descriptive text. This research used case study research in the ten-grade of a vocational high school. To collect the data, the researcher conducted observations, reflective journals, and interviews which were analysed by thematic analysis. The finding revealed Joint construction engages students in enthusiastic learning experiences that help to overcome social isolation. The interaction that occurred also has an impact on their ability to understand the text content. Collaborative learning emerged as a factor made students pleased with the learning process. Most of the students voiced that by holding discussion, they had the opportunity to explore ideas and knowledge. The positive responses shown by the students implied the joint construction positively contributes to building a more effective and diverse writing learning process for EFL vocational students.

Keywords: Genre Based Approach; Joint Construction; Descriptive Text; Students' Engagement; Students' Response

INTRODUCTION

According to the existing views, writing is generally important in people's daily lives both individually and socially. At the same time, writing is mentioned as a target skill in formal education language learning. In line with Elashri (2013), it has been argued that writing is an important skill for individuals to have. This refers to its role as a productive skill that encourages the articulation of thoughts, opinions, and ideas. Writing also involves critical review, correction, and reproduction which are the reasons of students encounter difficulties. Language learners find it difficult to master the skill of writing, especially writing in a foreign language since English is considered a foreign language for Indonesian learners. The differences in linguistic elements cause them to face difficulties, one of which is writing skills.

Based on the researcher's experience through the Mandiri MBKM programme at one of Vocational Schools in Karawang, students have experienced difficulties in writing English. The most obvious reason for the difficulty is that students are confused about where to start. Teachers focus more on providing grammar and vocabulary related to the writing topic, rather than guiding them step by step. Students tend to be confused about where to start and what to end with. Students need help to be able to generate ideas, make sentences, arrange words into

paragraphs in accordance with the generic structure. However, teachers can encourage this confusion through the learning process. Students get over their difficulties in writing through their learning experiences (Bulqiyah et al., 2021)

In this era of education, the government of education and culture encourages the implementation of genre-based approaches in the classroom. It goes hand in hand with the Merdeka curriculum's genre-based English learning. Awareness to genres and their underlying language features can be developed through the teaching process explicitly. Roseshine (1987, as cited in (Damayanti et al., 2023)) describes explicit teaching as "a method of systematic teaching with an emphasis on taking small steps, checking for a sense of understanding, and leading to active action and successful engagement by all students". The nature of this kind of teaching incorporating step-by-step skills demonstration, guided practice, and providing feedback on a regular basis (Archer & Hughes, 2011), is considered to refer to genre-based pedagogy.

Several researchers have discussed the Genre Based Approach, such as Ramadhani et al., (2022) as she found that the steps in the Genre Based Approach can help explore creativity in finding idea. This is supported by Widyasari (2021) in a study that found that the practice of Genre Based Approach in teaching English writing can be used to engage students in the classroom. Alabere & Shapii (2019) discovered the effectiveness in the learning process of English academic writing by using the Genre Based Approach. In his research, the effectiveness was demonstrated by impressive performance achieved as compared to those who learnt through conventional methods. In addition, Genre Based Approach is an approach that is believed to be able to improve students' ability in writing.

Besides, students can enrich their ideas, they play a role in understanding the structure of the text linguistically and socially (Lail, 2022). The Genre-Based Approach allowed teacher to give students holding discussions with peers. Furthermore, the discussion will help students find out how to enrich their ideas. They can exchange viewpoints. Therefore, this approach has been applied to teach in the English writing learning process and been agreed to promote teacher effectiveness in teaching (Aswani et al., 2023; Dinh & Huong, 2023). According to Hammond et al. (1992) indicated there are four stages in the GBA instruction: Building knowledge of the field (BKoF), modelling of text (MoT), joint construction of text (JCoT), and independent construction of text (ICoT). In the activity student must be able to produce written texts of genre they are learning. For example, if the genre is descriptive, at the end of activity all of student must be able to write a descriptive text or to describe particular thing. However, the researcher only focuses on student activities at the joint construction stage, in accordance with the research question. Therefore, students can explore their ideas, think in a broad manner, exchange ideas and provide feedback.

In addition, the response of students to the teaching style of teachers, strategies or media used in the classroom is important to note. students' views on effective language learning seem to be able to consciously direct their opinions in the form of actions that support their own learning. Kourieos & Evripidou (2013)) stated that when students have a clear view of how best to learn a language, they tend to take appropriate steps to support their learning process, such as implementing learning strategies that are considered effective. Therefore, identifying students' response is an important part of how to evaluate the learning process in class. The researcher aimed to find out students' response about the Joint construction of genre-based approach in writing descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher conducted a research entitled **"Exploring EFL Vocational Students in Writing Descriptive Text through Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach: A Case Study"**.

METHOD

Researcher used a qualitative approach to observe how the learning writing descriptive text through joint construction of genre based approach is carried out in the classroom. The research approach is conducted as a way to understand social experiences in certain contexts or situations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). In line with Mcmillan et al (1993) qualitative research design is concerned with understanding human society from the participants' viewpoints. To answer the research questions in exploring how joint construction assist student in English descriptive writing, a case study is conducted. . It represents an approach to describe the phenomena that arise in the learning process where the joint construction of genre-based approach is applied for vocational schools (Ary, Jacob & Sorensen, 2010). Case studies offer reports that aim to understand a phenomenon using data that can be collected in a variety of ways, such as interviews, observations, and document reviews. Case study is conducted in this research based on the theory of (Bassey, 1999) and (Yin, 2018).

This research was conducted at one of the Vocational High School in Karawang involved tenth-grade students of Welding Major as the school is equipped with a social context learning approach in line with the direction of the independent curriculum. In addition, the English teachers in this school apply genre-based media which is deliberately explored by the researcher. The researcher use purposeful sampling which involves individuals and settings as a result of being selected based on particular criteria to study or understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The criteria refers to different levels, i.e high, medium and low achieving students. This helps the researcher to select those who can provide the information needed toward the case, answer the research questions, and address the research objectives (Burke Johnson; Larry Christensen, 2002).

In this current research, researcher use multiple instruments (more than one instrument) as a support for obtaining data, as a basis for building validity and trust in the data obtained (Fusch et al., 2018). The researcher used observation, interview, and documentation as instruments to collect the data. In the observation part, the researcher observes the learning process among the students during the learning activities. Observational checklist is used to provide concern in observing the conditions that occur. According to Zaare (2013) an effective form of monitoring the classroom environment and events is based on observation sheets. In this study, the aspect of in-class engagement is a reference for how observations are made which includes three aspects, i.e. affective, cognitive, and behavioural (Williams et al., 2023). This allowed for factual and rich information to be obtained. Furthermore, to explore students' response to the joint construction stage of Genre Based Approach, the researcher conducted interview and reflective journal. This research adopted Braun & Clarke (2021) thematic analysis approach framework to analyse the data. This process involves grouping the data based on emerging themes to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic. To begin the analysis process, the researcher identified, analysed and described the themes in the data. The process was divided into six steps as follows: Familiariszing; Generate initial codes; Search for themes; Review themes; Define and naming themes; Write up the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Students' Engagement in the Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach

In the first stage, the teacher provided students with various activities that could expand and strengthen knowledge of the text genre being studied, which in the context of this research is descriptive text. This refers to information that will build students' understanding of the text. Students learn to understand about the components of descriptive text that refer to the linguistic

structure, along with the linguistic elements. Based on the observation, it was found that the majority of students paid attention to the teacher's explanation, but there were some students who were distracted, such as those sitting at the back.

Move to the next stage which specified for modelling text, the teacher provided two texts as demonstrations. A descriptive text model was shown to the students. Student engagement is more visible at this stage as they discuss the content of the model text. The students agreed that the modelled texts helped them to understand the structure of the text type in preparation for writing. This is shown in the students' statements below.

Q: At which stage in your learning did you find it helpful?

M: There was a session where the teacher gave me an example of a text, so that helped me get a better idea of what the text was like.

(Interview data 2)

E: It was quite helpful because the teacher gave an example of the text.

(Interview data 5)

Students were more enthusiastic and active In the third stage, joint construction, which the class was encouraged to write a descriptive text together. Students wrote the text together in groups to facilitate collaboration. Working in groups allowed students to build a shared understanding of a concept or topic. As students were assigned to compose the text in group, they looked happy, relieved and excited. The students' enthusiasm was reflected when they all participated in their to discuss. Some students even expressed that group discussion was a helpful activity as they were able to share their ideas and understandings with each other, as stated below.

Q: At which stage in your learning did you find it helpful?

S: The joint construction is helpful that we can discuss and exchange opinions with each other even though at the end we have to write on our own.

(Interview data 1)

M: It helps when I can exchange ideas and discuss with my friends.

(Interview data 2)

V: I was helped by the method because the steps were complete and gradual. There was also a joint exercise before.

(Interview data 3)

E: The stages that were discussed together helped so that we could exchange opinions and knowledge.

(Interview data 5)

N : There is also practice so it helps. So it's not just theory

(Interview data 6)

NW: I felt having fun and enjoyed the class. The experience I felt learning was fun and not too nervous.

(Reflective journal)

In order to fulfil the previous stages, the independent writing stage was implemented. Each student was given the freedom to express their ideas and thoughts according to their own creativity. Apart from the teacher's role to assist and observe, the teacher still provided space for students to ask questions or ask for feedback regarding their writing. Although the enthusiasm wasn't as hype at the stage where they were writing together, students engaged with focus and comfort since they already knew what to do. The following image is an example of a student's final draft that has progressed to the independent writing level.

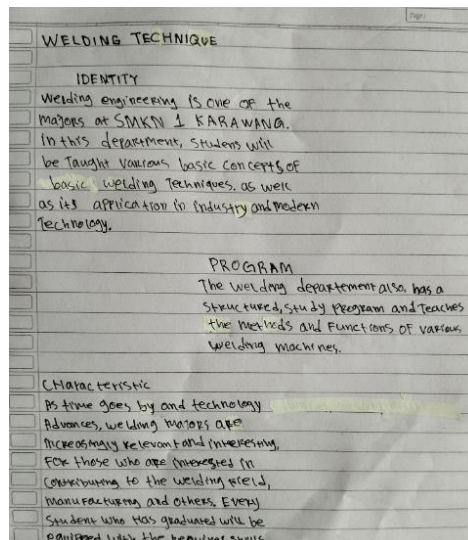


Figure 1. Student's writing draft

2. Students' response in learning writing descriptive text assisted by Genre-based approach

The researcher revealed the students' response findings in learning descriptive text using Genre based approach refers to affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects. According to Steven M Caffé, the affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects are reflections on the type of response (as cited in (Diasti, 2020))

a) Students' Affection in Learning Descriptive Text through Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach

Based on the data, it showed that students feel excited, interested, encouraged, enjoy, and unnerved in the affective aspect. The affective aspect of students' learning process relates to the feelings arising during the learning process. Students showed interest and being enthusiastic towards the stages of the learning process of writing descriptive text.

Table 1. Students' statement based on affective response

No	Code	Data	Initial	Statement
1	Enthusiastic	Reflective journal	MN	The learning was fun and exciting. I can write descriptive text better.
2	Interested	Reflective Journal	S	The method was interesting and helped us to share our thoughts on writing.
3	Nervous	Interview	S	I understood the material, because the learning was comfortable and relaxed so I wasn't nervous and it was easier to understand.
4	Enjoy	Reflective Journal	NW	I felt having fun and enjoyed the class. My learning experience was fun and I didn't feel awkward with the teacher.

Based on the data, students appeared to show enthusiastic feelings and interested in the learning process. The interaction made them enjoy the learning experience as they managed to overcome their nervousness in facing the learning activity of writing descriptive text.

b) Students' Behaviour in Learning Descriptive Text through Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach

Based on the data, it is mentioned that the behavioural aspects that appear related to students' statements refer to the behaviour of activeness, interaction, solving difficulty, and how students pay attention from stage to stage of the learning process. The statement can be seen from the following data.

Table 2 Students' statement based on behaviour response

No	Code	Data	Initial	Statement
1	Active	Reflective Journal	SA	The learning experience was easy to understand, the learning methods were interesting and I did not hesitate to ask questions.
2	Open Discussion	Reflective Journal	S	As a benefit in the learning process, we were able to discuss and exchange opinions with each other even though in the end we had to write individually.
3	Solving the difficulty	Reflective Journal	NW	I have difficulty finding or deciding on words to describe inanimate objects
			V	I had difficulty finding the idea of what to write about, but luckily we were able to discuss it with other friends.
4	Pay attention	Observation Checklist		Students pay attention to the teacher implemented GBA to teach

Based on the data, Students claimed actively followed the stages of writing descriptive text through joint construction. The discussion stage in writing learning can prevent students' passivity and nervousness in expressing ideas. It is also related to students' openness in asking questions so that they can overcome their incomprehension of learning content. Students stated that the discussion process helped them in writing activities.

c) Students' Cognition in Learning Descriptive Text through Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach

Based on the data, the cognitive aspect showed that students understood the material presented. Students were even able to interpret the material points, i.e. related to the structure of descriptive text consisting of identification and description as well as the use of language features including the use of adjectives, verb 1, specific participant, and so on. The researcher showed the data in the table.

Table 3 Students' statement based on cognitive response

No	Code	Data	Initial	Statement
1	Understanding	Reflective Journal	SA	The learning experience that I felt was that learning was easy to understand, the learning

				method was very exciting and I was not shy to ask questions.
2	Idea Exploration	Interview	V	I got difficulty to explore ideas on what to write about, but luckily we were able to discuss with other friends.
3	Comprehe nd to Interpretati on	Reflective Journal	DF	I have learnt the adjectives and structure of descriptive text consisting of identification and description.
			NW	I have learnt about descriptive text. There are four things to note such as the use of adjectives, verb 1, simple present tense, and object specificity.

Based on the description of the findings, it is clear that students have demonstrated better understanding. Through the data obtained, students were seen to be able to interpret their understanding well.

Discussion

1. Students' Engagement in Joint Construction of Genre Based Approach

The finding revealed that the use of Genre-Based Approach helps and has a positive impact on students' engagement in the English teaching and learning process. The effectiveness of students' writing learning process is facilitated by their engagement with genre knowledge, writing stages, and feedback from peers and teachers. Furthermore, of all the stages, joint construction is the stage that engages students the most. According to Hammond (1992), the most prominent enthusiasm and activeness of students can be visualised through observation at the joint construction stage. As stated by Ummah (2019) that Joint construction engages students the most because it actively involves them in the learning process through collaboration and interaction. Working in groups is imperative for students to build a shared understanding of a concept or topic. Elashri (2013) reported that writing in groups allowed students to access each other's ideas and knowledge. Students work together to construct texts of a particular genre which fosters a sense of co-operation and self-responsibility. It helps students learn from each other and build teamwork skills.

A number of scientific studies have been conducted that show the positive impact through the implementation of joint construction (e.g. (Hasanah et al., 2022; (Arlinayanti & Sariyani, 2022); Mauludin, 2017), each of which findings indicate the effectiveness of joint construction in the writing class. Joint construction creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment that encourages student engagement and fosters a deeper understanding of writing skills. It is in line with Hasanah et al (2022)that claimed joint construction that is well implemented helps students in developing and exploring ideas. The outcome integrating students can share knowledge and ideas in discussions. This is supported by the findings of Arlinayanti & Sariyani (2022) which stated that there are

significant differences in the abilities of students who learn to write collaboratively. It was also aligned with Mauludin (2017) who stated that the stages are effective and well received by students as they engaged and got enhanced for the writing skill. Hence, the joint construction plays an important role in student engagement in the learning process.

2. Student's Response to the Process of Learning Writing Descriptive Text through joint construction of GBA

Research findings showed student's response based on several aspects. The aspect that researcher used as an indicator refers to three aspects, include affective, behavioral and cognitive. It is also accordance with Steven M Chaffe as cited in Diasti (2020) that consideration of student responses in class can be explored through aspects of cognition, affection, and behaviour.

a) Affective Aspect

Related to students' response in learning to write descriptive text through joint construction of GBA, it showed a positive affective response. They felt enthusiastic and enjoyed to the learning process. They argued that the stage is a helpful and interesting part of learning to write. In addition, the data also explained that the stages were fun process for them, easy to understand, and could prevent nervousness. Helena (2024) stated students' enthusiasm and activeness were found in the process of students writing texts together in joint construction.

b) Behavioural Aspect

Student's responses based on emergent behaviours determined a positive orientation. Students were actively involved in the stage of the learning process. Discussions with peers have an impact on how they cope with nervousness. It ultimately results in students' effective engagement in the learning process. Pham & Bui (2021) argues that the discussion phase of Genre Based approach provides an opportunity to eliminate the isolation of feelings in the classroom.

c) Cognitive Aspect

Based on the description of the findings, it is clear that students have demonstrated good understanding. Through the data obtained, students were seen to be able to interpret their understanding well. This is in line with Lail (2022) who stated that the students gave a satisfactory response to the implementation of joint construction in GBA, and believed that could improve students' understanding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is found that students showed a positive response and were able to follow the activities in each stage in the writing process. The findings revealed that joint construction was the stage students were most engaged in. This is related to the opportunity for students to learn collaboratively in sharing ideas and knowledge. The observation results also showed that activeness was built. Students were not hesitant to hold discussions to compose a text. The interaction encouraged an active learning experience to argue, discuss and give feedback to each other. These facts ultimately provide confidence related to students' creativity in expressing themselves independently. At the same time, it can be drawn based on the findings of this research lead to student responses based on affective, behavioural, and cognitive. All three aspects indicate a positive response in line with the three aspects that are interconnected with each other. Students had an interesting experience and were motivated in joint construction. The experience allowed them in handling their nervousness, which in turn influenced their interaction during the learning process. It impacted on their behaviour to respond to the learning process. The research also realised the behaviour had an impact on the

understanding and thinking gained. Students show good understanding of the learning outcomes

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