

Implementation of Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Letter Writing to Seventh Grade Students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet, East Jakarta

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the writing abilities of seventh-grade students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet through a Genre-Based Approach in teaching letter writing. This approach involves five main steps: building context, modeling, joint construction, independent construction, and connecting related texts. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collected through observations and interviews with teachers and students. This approach allows researchers to describe the learning phenomenon factually and gain deep insights into the processes and challenges faced. The results show that although students can participate in writing activities using this method, the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach still encounters several challenges. Teachers have difficulty effectively implementing the steps, and students find letter writing to be a continuing challenge. However, this method helps students understand the theory of letter writing through meaningful practical experiences. Genre-Based Approach has great potential to improve students' writing skills if implemented more effectively. With a deeper understanding and adjustments in application, this approach can become a very effective method for teaching letter writing in schools. Improvements in the implementation of each step will significantly contribute to overcoming the difficulties faced and enhancing students' learning outcomes in writing skills.

Keywords: Genre-Based Approach, writing, letter text

1. Introduction

Indonesian language learning encompasses four main skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these four skills, writing is the most challenging for Indonesian students. Therefore, an effective method is needed to address this difficulty. This research aims to improve students' writing abilities through the implementation of a genre-based or text-based approach.

Genre-based learning can be successfully implemented in the classroom when teachers are able to understand how to apply this approach. This means that teachers must have knowledge of the approach, how to implement it, and a clear perspective on its application (Wijaya *et al.*, 2020).

Genre-based approach is also known as the text-based approach because it involves understanding various types of texts used in specific contexts and ways. This approach provides students with a clear understanding of explicit language usage. The genre-based approach aims to equip students to be more successful in writing various types of texts and to help them understand the structure, language elements, and composition of texts. In other words, this approach helps students compose texts, both oral and written, as it focuses on teaching the structure and grammar of both spoken and written texts (Yunita & Harahap, 2024).

According to Feez from Saragih (2020), the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in the Indonesian language curriculum involves five steps: building context, modeling, joint construction, independent construction, and connecting related texts. For genre-based learning to be effectively carried out in the classroom, teachers must understand how to apply this approach, including the knowledge and implementation of the approach, as well as having a perspective on its application. Therefore, this study is titled "The Implementation of a Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Letter Writing to Seventh Grade Students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet."

2. Research Methods

This research will use a descriptive qualitative research design. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe factual phenomena in learning to obtain relevant information. According to Heigham & Robert A. Croker (2009), qualitative research is a highly useful methodology because it is exploratory, aimed at discovering new ideas and insights, or even generating new theories. This research does not aim to predict what might happen in the future or in other settings, but rather focuses on the phenomena, participants, or events in the setting being studied.

Qualitative research is a general term that encompasses ways of collecting, organizing, and interpreting information obtained from people using the eyes and ears as filters. This method often involves in-depth interviews and the observation of people in natural and social contexts. Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. Furthermore, the researcher will describe the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in teaching letter-writing skills to seventh-grade students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet.

This research will be conducted by observing what the teacher teaches students using the Genre-Based Approach. Afterward, the researcher will describe and analyze the teaching of writing. In conclusion, this research uses a qualitative approach because the data obtained consists of explanations, descriptions, and interpretations of the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in teaching letter writing to seventh-grade students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet.

3. Results and Discussion

Feez from Saragih (2020) outlines five steps that must be followed in the implementation of a genre-based approach, including building context, modeling, joint construction, independent construction, and linking related texts.

3.1. Building Context

In the initial stage of teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach, the teacher plays an essential role in helping students understand the context and purpose of writing letters. This stage is known as building context. The goal is to equip students with basic knowledge about various types of letters and their functions and purposes in everyday life (Nurvita & Silvy, 2020).

Class discussions serve as an important first step in introducing students to different types of letters. The teacher begins by discussing various forms of letters, including personal and formal letters. Each type of letter has different characteristics and purposes. For example, personal letters are typically written to communicate with friends or family, while formal letters are used for official purposes such as requesting permission or submitting job applications. This discussion helps students understand the fundamental differences between these types of letters and the importance of each type in different contexts.



Figure 1. Teacher Building Context

The teacher should also encourage students to share their personal experiences related to writing or receiving letters. These personal experiences can become valuable learning resources, as they allow students to relate theory to their real-life experiences. For example, a student may have written a letter to a friend living in another city or received an official letter from school. By sharing these experiences, students can better understand the relevance and real-world application of letter writing in everyday life.

3.2. Modeling Text

The next stage in teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach is Text Modeling. In this stage, the teacher actively provides examples of letters that align with the genre being studied and demonstrates how the letters are structured. Text modeling is crucial because it gives students a concrete example of how the theory they have learned is applied in writing practice. Activities at this stage include analyzing structure, explaining linguistic rules, and reading sample texts (Lasito, 2014).

The first step in text modeling is analyzing the structure of the letter. The teacher engages students in identifying and understanding the key parts of the letter being studied. For example, in a formal letter, these parts include the opening salutation, the body of the letter, and the closing. This analysis involves breaking the letter down into its component parts and explaining the function and characteristics of each section. In this way, students can grasp the basic structure that must be present in a letter and how to organize information logically and cohesively.



Figure 2. Teacher Providing Text Modeling

After analyzing the structure of the letter, the teacher continues by explaining the linguistic rules that apply to writing the letter. This includes grammar and vocabulary commonly used in the genre of the letter being studied. For example, in formal letters, the use of formal language and polite expressions is essential. The teacher also highlights differences in language style between formal letters and personal or business letters. This explanation helps students develop language skills appropriate to the context and purpose of the letter, as well as improve their accuracy and fluency in writing.

The next step involves reading and discussing sample texts. The teacher provides sample letters representing the genre being studied and reads them together with the students. During the reading, the teacher and students discuss the purpose and context of the letter. This discussion includes questions about the writer and recipient of the letter, the purpose of writing, and how the writer conveys their message. In this way, students can see the practical application of the theory they have learned and understand how context and purpose influence the content and style of the letter.

Through text modeling, students not only learn about the theory of letter writing but also see how the theory is applied in real-life examples. This helps them understand the writing process comprehensively and provides them with a clear framework to follow when they write their own letters. Therefore, Text Modeling is a critical foundation in teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach, preparing students to succeed in subsequent writing tasks.

3.3. Joint Construction

The next stage in teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach is joint construction. At this stage, the teacher and students work together to write a letter, allowing students to apply the knowledge they have gained from the previous stages with direct guidance and support from the teacher. This collaborative approach aims to develop students' writing skills through interaction and active participation. The three main activities in this stage include joint writing, group discussion, and feedback and revision.

In joint writing, the teacher takes the lead by writing a letter on the board based on input from the students. The teacher begins by determining the purpose of the letter and invites students to suggest what should be written. Each part of the letter is discussed in detail, from the opening salutation to the closing. Students contribute by offering suggestions for words and sentences to be used, while the teacher writes

them on the board. This process allows students to see how a letter is structured firsthand and understand the thought process required in letter writing.

Students are then divided into small groups and tasked with composing a letter based on a situation given by the teacher. Group discussions encourage collaboration among students and allow them to share ideas and perspectives. Each group works together to determine the content of the letter, choose appropriate words, and ensure that the structure of the letter aligns with the genre being studied. The teacher moves from group to group, providing guidance and answering questions that may arise. This activity not only develops writing skills but also fosters teamwork and communication among students.



Figure 3. Joint Construction of Text

After each group completes their letter, the teacher provides immediate feedback on the letters they have written. This feedback covers aspects such as structure, grammar, vocabulary, and alignment with the letter genre being studied. The teacher offers advice on how to improve and refine the letters, as well as points out common mistakes to avoid. Students then revise their letters based on the feedback given, improving them to achieve better results. This process teaches students the importance of revision in writing and how feedback can be used to enhance the quality of their work.

Through joint construction, students gain practical experience in writing letters with direct guidance from the teacher. This approach ensures that students not only understand the theory but are also able to apply it in real-world contexts. Collaborative activities help students build confidence in their writing and reinforce their skills in composing effective letters in the genre being studied.

3.4. Independent Construction

The independent construction stage in teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach is where students are given the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they have learned independently (Nurvita & Silvy, 2020). At this stage, students are expected to write letters on their own with minimal guidance from the teacher, developing their confidence and improving their writing skills. Key activities in this stage include writing assignments, peer review, and revision.

The first activity in the independent construction stage is the writing assignment. The teacher provides a topic or specific situation for the students to use as a basis for writing a letter. These topics or situations are designed to challenge students' abilities to compose letters that fit the genre they have been studying. For example, students may be asked to write a formal letter requesting permission or a personal letter thanking a friend. This writing task gives students the opportunity to organize their thoughts, select appropriate vocabulary, and apply the linguistic rules they have learned in a relevant context.

After completing the writing assignment, students engage in peer review. In this activity, students exchange letters with their classmates or group members to receive feedback. This process encourages students to read and evaluate their peers' work, provide constructive criticism, and receive feedback from different perspectives. Peer review helps students recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their own writing through reflection on the feedback they receive. This activity also develops critical thinking and collaborative skills, as students learn to give and receive criticism effectively.

Final step in independent construction is revision. Based on the feedback received from peer review, students make improvements and refinements to the letters they have written. This revision process covers various aspects such as correcting the structure of the letter, fixing grammar and spelling errors, and improving the clarity and cohesion of the writing. Revision is an essential step in teaching students that writing is an iterative process involving continuous improvement. By revising, students learn to enhance the quality of their work and produce better letters that meet the standards of the genre being studied.

In the independent construction stage, students have the opportunity to internalize the knowledge and skills they have learned and develop their writing abilities independently. The activities carried out in this stage not only strengthen their understanding of letter types but also equip them with writing skills that can be applied in various contexts. This stage is an important step in ensuring that students can produce effective and high-quality writing on their own.

3.5. Linking Related Texts

The final stage in teaching letter writing using the genre-based approach is linking related texts. At this stage, students are encouraged to connect the letters they have written with other relevant texts or real-life situations (Saragih, 2020). This step aims to enrich students' understanding of the letter genre, enhance their analytical skills, and provide practical experience in the use of letters. Key activities in this stage include comparison and contrast, real-world application, and reflection.

The first activity is comparing and contrasting the letters written by students with other letters from the same genre. Students are invited to read and analyze other letters, either from their classmates or sample letters provided by the teacher. In this process, students compare the structure, language, and writing style of their own letters with other letters. This activity helps students identify the strengths and weaknesses in their own writing and understand the variations in letter writing. As a result, students can improve and refine their writing skills based on critical analysis of other texts.

The next step is the real-world application of the letters they have written. The teacher can design a project in which students are required to send actual letters. For example, students can write a letter to the school principal requesting permission or expressing their opinions on a particular issue. Alternatively, they may be asked to write a letter of appreciation to a family member or friend. By applying their letter-writing skills in real-life contexts, students gain valuable experience and understand the relevance of their writing skills in everyday life.

The final activity is reflection. The teacher guides students in reflecting on the writing process, what they have learned, and the challenges they have faced. This reflection helps students internalize the writing process and understand the importance of each stage in producing effective letters. Students are also encouraged to share their thoughts and insights with their classmates, fostering a deeper understanding of the genre-based approach and how it has helped them improve their writing skills.

4. Conclusion

Implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in teaching letter writing to seventh-grade students at MTs Al Ihsan Condet aims to describe the learning process to enhance students' writing skills through a systematic and structured method. This approach involves five main steps: building context, modeling, joint construction, independent construction, and linking related texts.

Through these five structured and systematic steps, the approach not only helps students understand the theory of letter writing but also provides them with deep and meaningful practical experiences. With further improvements and adjustments, this approach can become a highly effective method in teaching letter writing in schools.

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