

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING  
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT USING GENRE BASED APPROACH  
(GBA) AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP ISLAM  
TERPADU FITRAH INSANI**

**Siti Masitoh & Dasep Suprijadi**  
STKIPSiliwangi Bandung

**ABSTRACT**

Based on the phenomena that students have difficulties in writing descriptive text, students could not write because the students do not have any ideas when they are asked to write. So, they need some ways which could help them in writing. The problems in writing can be solved by implementing some strategies in teaching writing. One of the approaches that teachers can use to help students write a good text is GBA. The main objective of this study is to find out if GBA can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. The research method used is quantitative research, or more specifically quantitative with one group pretest-posttest design. Pretest was given before the students received treatment and posttest was given after students received the treatment. The sample is one class (VIII Al Quds) in SMP ISLAM TERPADU FITRAH INSANI and test as the instrument. Data analysis shows that the observed value of  $t$  (9.474) is bigger than the critical value of  $t$  (2.07). GBA has a significant impact on improving students' ability in writing descriptive text. The teacher should apply the GBA as the alternative for teaching writing descriptive text.

**Keywords:** Improving, Writing, Descriptive text, and Genre Based Approach

**A. Introduction**

Writing is one of the four language skills that can be measured from literacy development in a country, but that condition is not for all countries, especially

in Indonesia. The writing skill is regarded as the most difficult and complex language skill because it requires extent of perception and involves thinking process extensively.

Furthermore, writing differs from other skills. It is unique. Harmer (2004:31) states “ Writing encourage students to focus on accurate language use and because they think as they write, it will provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their minds”.

In fact, most Indonesian students face some difficulties in writing including developing ideas, unenthusiastic student’s attitude to the lesson, and difficulty in grammar. In writing English text, they have to consider the grammar to make their writing understandable. Therefore, some of English text require different tense, so students have to know some tense according to the text they are going to write.

The curriculum in Indonesia requires students to be able to write some kind of text like recount, report, discussion, explanation, exposition, new item anecdote, narrative, procedure, description, and review. Descriptive text is one of the genres taught for the eighth grades students at Junior High School. The problems in writing can be solved by implementing some strategies in teaching writing. One of approach that teacher can use to help students write a good text is GBA.

The genre approach to language learning is first developed in Australia through the work of educational linguists and educators who have been working with disadvantaged groups of students. The approach is now widely used in all sectors of education.

In the 2013 curriculum there are three types of text that should be taught in junior high school, they are descriptive, recount and narrative. Process genre based approach make students comprehensively understand the texts as a whole, including the schematic structure and linguistic features of the genre in general. Process genre based approach can help students learn English language specially on the writing skill.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **a. Theoretical Framework**

#### **1. Writing**

According to Brown (2001: 336), writing is a thinking process. Furthermore, he states that writing can be planned and given with an unlimited number of revisions before its release. Linse (2006:98) also stated that writing is a combination of process and product of discovering ideas, putting them on paper and working with them until they are presented in manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers. Thus, it is be stated that writing is a thinking process of discovering ideas then written on the paper.

According to Harmer (2004: 4-5) writing process has four main elements : planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising) and final version.

The first is planning. Planning is any activity that encourage students to write. It is become a way of warming up writers brain before write. Writers have to think about three main issues. First, they have to consider the purpose of their writing. Secondly, writers think of the audience they are writing for and thirdly, writers have too consider the content structure of the piece.

The second is drafting. In the drafting. Writer 'go' at text is often done on the assumption that it will be amended later. At this stage, the writers focus on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft.

Third is editing (reflecting and revising). In this process, writer read through what they have written to see where it works and where it doesn't. The teacher does not need to be the only person to give students feedback, their classmate, caregivers, or classroom aides can help students revise. Revising is not only checking for language errors, but also improve global content and the organization of ideas so made clearer the reader.

The last is final version. It means that writers have edited their draft and produce their final version. They edit their own or their peer's work for grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure and accuracy of supportive textual material such as quotations, examples and the like.

## **2. Descriptive Text**

### **a. Definition of Descriptive Text**

Kane (2005:352) states "description is about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception."

Gerot and Wignell (1995:208) define "descriptive text is kind of text which is aimed to describe a particular person, place or things.

It can be conclude that descriptive text is a text for describe person, place or a thing by visual experience. It is used to create a visual image of people, place, even of time days or season. It may also be used to describe the outwards appearance people. It may tells about their traits of character and personality

### **b. Social Function of Descriptive Text**

The social function of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place or thing.

### **c. Generic Structure of Descriptive Text**

Gerot and Wignell (1994:208) state that the Generic structure of descriptive writing are:

- a) Identification which identifies phenomenon that will be describe
- b) Description which describe parts, qualities, or characteristics of something or someone in detail.

### **d. Grammatical Features of Descriptive Text**

Knapp and Watkins (2005:98-99) write there are several grammatical features of descriptive writing as the following:

- a) In descriptive text, the present tense is predominantly used
- b) Although present tense may be used in literary description, it is past tense that tends to dominate
- c) Relational verbs are used when classifying and describing appearance/qualities and parts/function of phenomenon.
- d) Action verbs are used when describing behaviors/ users.
- e) Mental verbs are used when describing feeling in literary descriptions.
- f) Adjective are used to add extra information to nouns and may be technical, everyday, or literally, depending on the text.
- g) Personal and literary description generally deal with individual things.

## **3. Genre Based Approach (GBA)**

The genre approach is concerned with providing students with explicit knowledge about language. It values teacher – learner interaction as well as interaction between students.

The approach is now widely used in all sectors of education. The cycle of teaching and learning activities in the genre approach consists of a number of stages which the teacher and students go through so that students gradually gain independent control of a particularly text-type.

This cycle consists of four main stages; they are building knowledge of field, modeling of text, join construction of text and independent construction of text. It aims to provide support for learners as they go through each stage of the cycle. The following elaboration of the teaching and learning cycle is adapted from Paltridge (2001: 31).

#### **1. Building knowledge of field (BKoF)**

This stage focuses on building up a shared experience and cultural context about the topic of text.

#### **2. Modeling of text (MoT)**

This stage focuses on introducing particular genre though a model of text that deals with the field that the students have already explored in the stage of building knowledge of field.

3. Joint construction of text (JCoT)

In this stage, teacher and students work together to construct texts that are similar to the text that have already being learnt in the previous stage.

4. Independent construction of text (ICoT)

In this final stage, students are ready to work independently to produce their own text within the chosen genre.

First stage are functioned as the pre activities such as pre-listening, reading, speaking and writing. It called starting point. The core idea of all activities at this is the interaction between teacher and class or students and students.

For the second stage, modeling of the text, focuses on introducing the target text through a model of text by exploring the text's social function, text organization and linguistic features. It points out that the activities involve analysis of rhetorical staging on the text, the lexical and grammatical resources used.

At the third stage, teacher and students work together to construct the text of the focused genre. In constructing the text, attention should be paid to the schematic structure, linguistic features and knowledge of the field of the text. At the last stage, referred as Independent Construction, students work independently and individually to produce the chosen genre. In the other word, at this stage, each student produces the text, as addition. It can be done ideally if the students have successfully produced a jointly constructed text or understanding of the text.

**b. Previous Studies**

There are two previous researches that are used by the researcher, they are:

1. Research entitled Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts Through A Picture Series-Aided Learning Strategy of tenth grade of SMA Negeri I Kembangbahu Lamongan, Indonesia in the Academic year of 2010 by Halimatus Sa'diyah. It is explained that using picture as a media in teaching descriptive text is very helpful in producing the words or sentences because the students can see something through picture which give imagination for students to describe something or place, so they are able to choose the appropriate vocabularies according to the description based on the picture. The result of her research is increased from 56.86 prior to the teaching learning process to 77.87 at the end of the treatment. The similarity are that this research focused on writing descriptive text and use picture as media.
2. Thesis entitled Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text Through Wholesome Scattering Game of eight grade of MTs Sunan Ampel Patean Kendal in the Academic year of 2010/2011 by Widodo Hami. It is explained that drill wholesome scattering game can help

students to imagine the ideas in writing and develop their sentences. The similarity are that this research focused on writing descriptive text and research of eight grade students in junior high school.

Based on two previous studies, there are similarity with the writer title is improving students' ability in writing descriptive text, but there are differences method the previous studies with the writer. The first is using picture series-aided learning and second is using wholesome scattering game, while the writer is using GBA. The writer is using GBA to know whether beside that two method, GBA can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text.

### **C. Research Methodology**

#### **1. Research Design**

The research used experimental design. "An experimental design is the traditional approach to conducting quantitative research" (Cresswel, 2012:294). There are three experimental which can use to find out the data, namely: Pre-Experimental Design, True Experimental Design and Quasi-Experimental Design.

The research took place as quantitative one group pretest-posttest design. "One-group pretest-posttest design is a single group measured or observed not only after being exposed to a treatment of some sort, but also before", Fraenkel et al (2012:265). Pretest ( $O_1$ ) were given to the students before get treatment using genre based approach (GBA) (X) and posttest ( $O_2$ ) were given after the students get treatment.

One group pre-test post-test design described below.

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
$O_1$	X	$O_2$

#### **2. Research Method**

In this research the writer using quantitative method. "Quantitative research methods are used to examine questions that can best be answered by collecting and statistically analyzing data that are in numerical form" (Crowl, 1996:16).

#### **3. Population and Sample**

"Populations are groups consisting of all people to whom a researcher wishes to apply the findings of a study" (Crowl, 1996:15). The population of this research is the eighth grade students of SMP ISLAM TERPADU FITRAH INSANI. The sample of the research is class VIII Al Quds. "Samples are

subsets of people used to represent populations” (Crowl, 1996:15). The sample was selected by using random sampling technique.

#### **4. Instrument**

In this research the writer used pretest and posttest. The writer gave pretest before the teaching learning process and give posttest after the teacher learning process has been completed.

#### **5. Data Collection Technique and Analysis**

This information obtained through a set of work sheet paper which given to the students. The data took from the result of a writing test pretest and posttest. The data collection processed approximately in January 2015 until February 2015.

Variables employed in this research are the data obtained from the students' worksheet paper concerning the use GBA in learning genre of text material. The variable of the research are both in interval scale. As it was seek for mean comparison, the best analyzing statistic is the test.

The writer analyzed and processed the data using SPSS to get the result. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009:186) SPSS is a computer program that can be used to calculate many of descriptive statistic that we describe in text, including means and standard deviations, z scores, correlations, and regression equations. SPSS can also be used to conduct many hypothesis tests, including independent and repeated measures t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and chi-square tests. In this case the writer counted the data to see the homogeneity and normality of the instrument before the writer give the pre test, treatment and post test to the student.

### **D. Result and Discussion**

#### **a. Result**

##### **1. Pretest and posttest scores**

Pretest was administered to the students in class VIII Al Quds before they received the treatment and after it students received the posttest to find out the result of treatment.

The treatment are:

Treatment 1

- Students are given a descriptive story in Indonesian language. This activity helps students to get to know what text descriptive
- Students are given a descriptive story in English
- Students are encouraged to be able to see the similarities between the two stories formation

Treatment 2

Explicitly teachers explain the generic structure and linguistic features of the text form of descriptive text. Teachers make text analysis table to enable students to easily assess the generic structure and lexical grammatical every sentence. In addition it is also presented the text seen communicative purpose of social purpose.

Closed with students assess their own texts that have been provided and write in the journal

#### Treatment 3

This meeting is intended to look at a series of recursive writing process. Teacher gives some images that should be in the text descriptive made by students in groups. Teachers and students are discusses together. Teachers revise if there a wrong text.

#### Treatment 4

Students are given a 'picture cards' students are welcome to choose the images they wish to develop into a text. They are expected to demonstrate an understanding and expertise in writing the text descriptive after attending a series of activities above.

The pretest and posttest scores were presented in the table below:

Table 4.1

The scores of pretest and posttest of VIII Al Quds

No	NAME	SCORES	
		Pretest	Posttest
1	Student 1	48.8	71.6
2	Student 2	47.6	82.4
3	Student 3	51.2	83.6
4	Student 4	59.2	76.8
5	Student 5	49.6	80
6	Student 6	48.8	72.8
7	Student 7	44	82
8	Student 8	44	76.4
9	Student 9	32	76.4
10	Student 10	76	80.4
11	Student 11	75.6	85.2
12	Student 12	48.4	84.4
13	Student 13	59.6	82
14	Student 14	20	86.4
15	Student 15	76.4	84.8
16	Student 16	49.6	81.6
17	Student 17	64	84.8

18	Student 18	48.4	77.6
19	Student 19	50.4	79.2
20	Student 20	62.4	82.4
21	Student 21	71.6	91.2
22	Student 22	65.6	78.8
23	Student 23	66	84.4

## 2. The Testing of Normality Distribution

The testing of normality distribution was aimed at finding out whether or not the research population was normally distributed. That population is normally distributed means that the sample is drawn from the same population.

The normality distribution has been tested using SPSS. The result of calculating the normality test for the pretest and posttest scores is presented in the table below:

**Table 2. Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.165	23	.104	.938	23	.160
Posttest	.110	23	.200*	.975	23	.805

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

\* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The table shows that the value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov in pretest is 0.104 and posttest is 0.200. This data is normally distributed, because the both of values are higher than 0.05. Field (2009:144) states “if the test is non-significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) it tells us that the distribution of the sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution (i.e. it is probably normal). If, however, the test is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) then the distribution in question is significantly different from a normal distribution (i.e. it is non-normal)”.

## 3. The Testing of Homogeneity of Variance

After testing the normality distribution, the next step was to analyze the homogeneity of variance. According to Field (2009:152) homogeneity of variance is the assumption that the spread of scores is roughly equal in different groups of cases, or more generally that the spread of scores is roughly equal at different points on the predictor variable. The result of calculating the homogeneity test using SPSS is presented in the table below:

**Table 3. Test of Homogeneity of Variance**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest Based on Mean	18.691	1	44	.000
Based on Median	11.506	1	44	.001
Based on Median and with adjusted df	11.506	1	25.988	.002
Based on trimmed mean	19.519	1	44	.000

From the test of homogeneity of variance above, the significant values for probability based on mean is 0.000, the probability based on median is 0.001, the probability based on median and with adjusted df is 0.002, and the probability based on trimmed mean is 0.000. The probabilities are less than 0.05 shows that the variances are significantly different. Field (2009:152) states “If Levene’s test is significant (Sig. in the SPSS table is less than 0,05) then the variances are significantly different in different groups.

**4. The Analysis of T-test**

The result of T-test calculation for pretest and posttest scores are presented in the table below:

**Table 4. Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

Pair 1	Pretest	54.7478	23	14.00327	2.91988
	Posttest	81.0957	23	4.53386	.94538

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest & Posttest	23	.305	.157

Table 4.4 shows that the correlation between the students' scores before and after the treatment was  $r = 0.305$  with probability (sig) = 0.157. This means the students score before and after the treatment had a strong correlation since  $r$  value was close to 1. According to Field (2009:57),  $r = 0.10$  was small effect,  $r = 0.3$  was medium effect and  $r = 0.5$  was large effect.

**Table 5. Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-2.63478E1	13.33720	2.78100	-32.11526	20.58039	-9.474	22	.000

From the table, the significant value (sig. 2 tailed) was 0.000, the value  $< 0.05$ , thus was significant and  $t$  obtained was 9.474 at the significant level of 0.05 and the degree of freedom 22. It means that there was significant in writing descriptive text using genre based approach. Field (2009:333) has stated "If the value is less than 0.05 then the means of the two conditions are significantly different".

**5. Progress of student achievement**

Progress of student achievement on the use of the test were analyzed by using the normalized gain score formulas and calculations as follows :

$$g = \frac{\text{skor posttest} - \text{skor pretest}}{\text{skor ideal} - \text{skor pretest}} \quad (\text{Meltzer, 2002: 183})$$

$$= \frac{81.0957 - 54.7478}{100 - 54.7478}$$

$$= 0.58 \%$$

Table 4.6  
Classification N-Gain

N-Gain	Interpretation
$g > 0.7$	High
$0.3 < g < 0.7$	Medium
$g < 0.3$	Low

(Hake, 1999)

The result indicate that there is progress of student between pretest and posttest, the normalized gain is 0.58. It means treatment has succeeded.

**b. Discussions**

After the writer conducted the research in SMP ISLAM TERPADU FITRAH INSANI in class VIII Al Quds, the writer found the following on the improving students' ability in writing descriptive text using Genre Based Approach (GBA).

As described in early chapter, the mean of posttest was higher than the mean of pretest. Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected because based on the table 4.5,  $t_{\text{observed}}$  was 9.474 at the significant level of 0,05 and the degree of freedom 22 and the critical value of  $t_{\text{table}}$  2.07, it can be seen that  $t_{\text{observed}}$  9.474 was higher than critical value of  $t_{\text{table}}$  2.07. It shows that the alternative hypothesis was supported and null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, GBA can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text.

The research has related to the previous studies, entitled "Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts Through A Picture Series-Aided Learning Strategy of tenth grade of SMA Negeri I Kembangbahu Lamongan" and "Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text Through Wholesome Scattering Game of eight grade of MTs Sunan Ampel Patean Kendal". Hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that improving students' ability in writing descriptive text using GBA has shown positive significance. This study confirmed the previous study that beside

using picture and wholesome scattering game, using genre based approach is significantly to improve students, ability in writing descriptive text.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **A. Conclusions**

Based on the data result of analysis, it can be concluded that using GBA can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text in junior high school. It is proved by the students' score of  $t_{\text{observed}}$  (9.474) and  $t_{\text{table}}$  (2.07). It can be seen that  $t_{\text{observed}}$  9.474 was higher than the critical value of  $t_{\text{table}}$  2.07. In addition, it was clear that the alternative hypothesis was accepted, there was significant,  $p$  value was 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other word, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Using GBA to improving students' ability in writing descriptive text is easier and more understandable. It helped students to write a descriptive text easily and accurately to write the parts and characteristics of the object. This way can also help the teacher develop their ideas about text.

### **B. Suggestions**

In relation to the conclusion given, some points are suggested as follow:

1. It is advisable for English teacher to apply the GBA because it was proved can improving students' ability in writing text based on genre, especially descriptive text.
2. For students, the first is students have to interest in English first, so they will feel enjoy along learning. The second students should be more discipline, use the times correctly, control themselves during the class, and more carefully to use the words that appropriate in writing descriptive text.
3. For the readers, may this study will bring good understanding to the readers in helping them how to improve students' writing achievement by applying the GBA.
4. For the next researcher, this research use one group pretest posttest it employees limited samples, thus the next researcher expected to use the more large samples, and this technique not only conducted in the eighth grade of junior high school, but also appropriate to students in different grade.

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