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English Language Learning and Teaching in the Digitization Era

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THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN GENRE-BASED WRITING TEACHING

Sri Mulatsih & Katharina Rustipa

ABSTRACT

This study is focused on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Genre-Based Writing teaching. To achieve this purpose, 25 English department students of Dian Nuswantoro University and 25 English department students of Stikubank University taking Genre Based Writing course were chosen as the object of this study. In the teaching and learning process, the students were given a lecture which consists of four stages, those are building knowledge of the field (BKOF), modelling, joint construction and independent construction. In BKOF stage, the students were invited to explore their prior knowledge of certain phenomenon by giving them some questions related to that phenomenon. In this stage the lecturer also gave some information related to the text type the students would write. In modelling stage, the lecturer gave the students a model of certain text. In joint construction stage, the students were demanded to search certain text types from the internet and present what they had found. They had to present the social function, schematic structure, and lexicogrammatical features of certain text using ICT. And in independent construction, the students were asked to write certain text types individually and after that they had to send them to the lecturer's email to be checked. The result showed that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has a positive effect on the students' motivation to learn writing, and improve the students awareness of writing several text types.

Keywords: Genre-Based Writing Teaching, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Text Types.

INTRODUCTION

English language is regarded as one of the most widely used means of human communication in the world. It has been in use in almost all fields of human life. English language teaching methodology is influenced as much by linguistic theories as by advances in science and technology. Sophisticated computers, multimedia computers and word processors have virtually contributed a lot for actual practice of language teaching.

Due to the rapid growth and expansion of information and communication technology (ICT), the world is becoming smaller and smaller. This is why; we can view the world with a single click of a mouse. This characteristic of information technology facilitates English language teaching through the use of computers. The learners can get a variety of opportunities to brush up themselves in various skills and aspects of the English language.

One of the skills taught in English classroom is writing. Writing is fundamental in learning to think and express one's thoughts in ways that reach others. The ability to use language coherently and powerfully and to write in ways that connect with others across cultural boundaries and within communities is essential to active citizenship and to success in almost any profession.

In teaching Writing, especially in Genre-Based Writing, the students are asked to write texts in certain genre. In this case the students are not only to write texts they want, but they have to consider the texts' social function, schematic structures, and their lexicogrammatical features.

Genre is one of the most important and influential concepts in language education, signifying what Ann Johns in Hyland (2004:3) has recently referred to as "a major paradigm shift" in literacy studies and teaching.

Genre-based writing teaching is concerned with what learners do when they write. An understanding of the concept allows writing teachers to identify the kinds of text that students will have to write in their target occupational, academic, or social contexts and to organize their courses to meet these needs. Curriculum materials and activities are therefore devised to support learners by drawing on texts and tasks directly related to the skills they need to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom.

For writing teachers, genre pedagogies promise very real benefits. The concept of genres enables teachers to look beyond context, composing processes, and textual form to see writing as an attempt to communicate with readers – to better understand the ways that language patterns are used to accomplish coherent, purposeful text. For writing teachers, therefore, genre is a useful concept because it pulls together language, content, and contexts, offering teachers a means of presenting students with explicit and systematic explanation of the ways writing works to communicate.

In genre-based writing teaching, the students study in contexts where English is taught as a second or foreign language and they learn to write for different purposes and in different genres.

In genre-based writing teaching, the teaching-learning cycle is based on the assumption that in order to write effectively, students first need to have an extensive understanding of and familiarity with the topic they are writing about. They also need models of the genre they are learning to write, in order to have clear idea of what it is that they are working towards. They need some support and guidance in learning how to organize what they know about the topic into an appropriate written text. They need opportunities to apply what they have learned about writing the text, as they 'go it alone' and write independently (Hammond, 1992: 21)

There are four stages in genre-based writing teaching. (Hyland, 2004:128) They are:

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)

This stage is the point at which overall knowledge of the cultural and social context of the topic is built and developed. It is important for all learners to have an understanding of the topic before being expected to write about. Classroom tasks and activities at this stage enable learners to:

- a. Explore cultural similarities and differences related to the topic or text type.
- b. Practice grammatical patterns relevant to the topic or text type.
- c. Build up and extend vocabulary relevant to the topic or text type.

2. Modeling of Text

This stage involves introducing the learners to a model of the genre they will be writing. In this stage, there is explicit focus on analyzing the genre through a model text related to the course topic. This stage involves preparing the learners for writing by:

- a. Focusing on genre
- b. Discussing the social function/purpose of the genre
- c. Discussing the schematic structure of the genre
- d. Discussing the grammatical features of the genre.

3. Joint Construction of Text

At this stage, the aim is for the teachers to work with the learners to construct a similar text. The teacher first need to assess the extent of the learners' knowledge and understanding of the field. Further work may need to be done before the actual construction of the texts begin. For example: gathering relevant information, researching the topic through additional reading, etc.

The emphasis at this stage is on the teacher providing guidance and support in order to convert and reshape language from spoken to the written mode.

4. Independent Construction of Text

Before moving on to this stage, the teacher needs to assess if the learners are ready to construct the text independently. Independent construction occurs only after group or pair construction has shown that the learners have gained control of the field and the mode. Classroom tasks and activities at this stage enable learners to: incorporate knowledge of schematic structure and grammatical features into their own writing, produce written texts that approximate control of the genre, read other examples of the genre in contexts outside the classroom, feel confident about writing the genre in contexts outside the classroom.

To support this teaching, the use of Information and Communication technology (ICT) is very needed to know whether this technology will increase the students' motivation and also their awareness in writing several text types.

METHOD

Subjects

This research was conducted in the Advanced Genre-Based Writing course of the fourth semester English department students of Faculty of languages and Letters Dian Nuswantroro University and STIKUBANK University in 2012. The subjects were 50 students taking the course. 25 students were those of Dian Nuswantroro University and 25 students were the students of STIKUBANK University

Research Procedure

The research was done by implementing genre -based approach in the teaching of writing. Genre-based writing teaching was implemented by applying four stages, they are building knowledge of the field, modeling, joint construction, and independent construction. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also applied in this teaching.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in Genre-Based Writing Teaching

As mentioned in the previous part, genre-based writing teaching approach which consists of four stages was implemented in order that the students were able to write several text types correctly.

In the first stage, the students were given explanation about certain text type they have to write; in the second stage, they were given a model of certain text type; in the third stage, they have to present certain text type in a group and explain it in front of the class, and in the last stage they were asked to write certain text type individually.

Information Communication and technology is needed to be applied in Genre-based Writing teaching. This technology increases the students motivation in the teaching and learning process. Kinds of ICTs that were applied in this teaching and learning process are:

The use of internet to access some information about certain text types

The internet has become a chain of a huge network of connected computers, linked across the globe. The World Wide Web (www) is the part of the internet where information can be accessed. It contains ever expanding number of pages which we navigate by using web browsers such as internet explorer, Mozilla, Netscape, Safari, or Google's chrome. Email, as a part of internet, is a means of communication rather than accessing information. Internet offers many opportunities for students and teachers to compose materials other than using paper-pencil works. We teachers or our students largely depend on the hard copy materials, such as books, teachers' note, etc. In this regard, internet provides a diverse form to the pedagogical orientation than the traditional practices.

In this teaching and learning process the use of internet very important. In joint construction stage the students were asked to work in group and to find the examples of certain text types from the internet and they had to present it in front of the class.

The use of power point for presentation

The use of power point was usually used in the second, and third stage, that is in modelling and joint construction stage.

In modelling stage, the lecturer gave explanation of certain text type they had to write and showed the students an example of certain text. The teacher showed the social function, the schematic structure, and linguistic features of the text. The use of ICT in this stage was expected that the students really understood the type of text they had to write.

In joint construction stage, the students had to present the text in front of the class using power point. They had to present the social function, the schematic structure, and the linguistic features of the text.

The use of email to send the students' assignment

After the students finished writing certain text type in independent construction stage, they had to send their writings to the lecturer's email to be checked. This step was done to make the students not only aware of writing certain text type but also the use of ICT.

Kinds of Genre Written by the Students

In this study the students were asked to write four text types (genres), they are: argument, exemplum, narrative, and news item. Their writings then were scored based on their social function, schematic structure, linguistic features of the text.

The result of their writing can be seen below:

Students' Arguments

Argument is a text type aiming at taking a position on some issue and justify it. It should have the following schematic structures: thesis, arguments and summing up.

Of 50 arguments written by the students, 30 arguments are categorized into very good and good (the score is 70-100) and the rest are fair (the score is 60-69). The mistakes commonly found in their arguments are about the idea development, the schematic structures and linguistic features. The argument they wrote is not clear enough, some grammar mistakes such as tenses are still found in their texts.

Students' Exemplums

It is a text type which deals with incidents that are in some respects out of the usual, the incidents are dealt with so that they point to some more general value in the cultural context, and it invokes a moral judgement about a noteworthy event. The schematic structures of this text should be (Abstract or Synopsis), Orientation, Incident (s), Judgement (s), (Reorientation plus Coda).

The score in the students' exemplums is better than those in arguments. Kinds of mistakes made by the students deal with schematic structure and linguistic features especially about tense. Some students wrote their arguments in present instead of past.

Students' Narratives

It is a non-factual text used in a variety of modes to amuse, entertain, and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Stories deal with events that are problematic and which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind. Unlike exemplum, the significance of the events lies in the manner of their construction in the text (how the story is told). The schematic structure of narrative should be orientation, complication, and reorientation.

There are only five students who made mistakes in schematic structure. The mistakes occurred in the absence of resolution, and utterances within their narratives. The wrong linguistic features are also found in their texts.

Students' News Item

News item is a text type that is used to inform readers or listeners about events of the day which are considered newsworthy or important. The schematic structure of this text are: headline, summary of event, background of event, and sources. The scores of the students news item is better compared to those three texts above. The mistake they made was only the use of tense. They use present tense instead of past tense.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that genre-based writing teaching gives the students several advantages because it is explicit, systematic, supportive, empowering, critical, and conscious raising. It makes clear what is to be learned to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills, provides a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts, ensures that course objectives and content are derived from student needs, gives teachers a central role in scaffolding student learning and creativity, provides access to the pattern of possibilities of variations in valued texts, provides the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourse, and increases teacher awareness of texts to confidently advise students on their writing. By using genre-based approach, the students are able to write several text types with the correct social function, the schematic structures, and the linguistic features.

The use of ICT in the genre-based writing teaching really increases the students motivation in studying. It could be seen from the students' activities inside and outside the class. The use of ICT also improve the students awareness in writing several text types.

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