THE COMPETENCE OF EFL TEACHERS IN MASTERING GENRE-BASED TEXTS

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Abstract: This study aimed to find out the junior high school English teachers' competence in mastering genre-based texts. The study was conducted to 13 English teachers of Junior High Schools in the districts of Kahayan Hilir, Maliku, and Jabiren Raya in Pulang Pisau Regency. The data were obtained from test and questionnaire. The result of the test shows that the teachers' mastery in all genre-based texts was at the 'fair' level with 65.38. The average score in each genre varied with 79.23 (good) for recount text; 68.46 (fair) for procedural text; 65.77 (fair) for descriptive text; 64.23 (poor) for narrative text; and 46.54 (very poor) for report text. Meanwhile, the result of the questionnaire revealed that there was no training for teachers on genre-based texts. The finding of this study recommends the need of training in mastering genre based texts for Junior High School teachers for better students' achievement in mastering genre-based text and for better preparation for National Examination.

Key Words: competence, curriculum, EFL teacher, genre-based approach,

School-based curriculum or *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* was established in 2006 and focuses on developing students' competence on knowledge, skill, and attitude. This curriculum is the result of improvement in the competence-based curriculum of *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK)* which has been put into Law No. 22 Year 2006 on list of Standard of Content Law, No. 23 Year 2006 on list of Standard of Graduate Competence and Law No. 24 Year 2006 on the Implementation of Standard of Content and Standard of Graduate Competence in Curriculum. Therefore, this 'improved' curriculum requires schools to develop their curriculum based on the Standard of Content and Standard of the Graduate Competence (*Permen Diknas No. 24, ayat 2: 2006*).

The change of school curriculum has brought a consequence to the English teachers' quality. The teaching of English at school according to *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* or School Level Based-Curriculum is to put English into meaningful

contexts and communicative functions. The School Level-Based Curriculum is an operational curriculum which is arranged and done by each education unit. To reach this goal, the focus of the teaching has shifted from forms to meanings and language functions. Consequently, to enable the students to acquire this skill, the teaching must cover both language components (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) and language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing).

One of the efforts in improving the teaching of English in Indonesia is at the approach within the implementation of curriculum. The Competence-Based Curriculum recommended the Genre-Based Approach (Agustien, 2006). It is an approach used to conduct the classroom activity in the process of teaching and learning based on genre and focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres of texts. This approach has become popular since the 1980s along with the notion that student writers could benefit from studying different types texts (Halliday, et

al., 1985). Teaching and learning around text genres has become increasingly influential in a number of situations, including "primary, secondary, professional and community teaching contexts "involving native speakers of English as well as English as a second language and English as a foreign language learners". Genre approach shows a powerful response to the deficit of process models.

Genre as means for analyzing text has become a means for better pragmatic and linguistic understanding of texts. It also supplies possible pedagogical applications. Halliday (1976) defines text as a unit of connected speech or writing, especially composed of more than one sentence, that form a cohesive form. When words are used to make meaning the text is created. According to Derewianka (1990), there are thousands of texts around. The text can be classified into genre through three characteristics, they are purpose of communication, organization structure and language features. The purpose of communication or social function is the reasons why we speak or write or create the text. Organization structure of the text or generic structure is the text organization or text arrangement. Language features or lexical grammar that is such things as the grammar, vocabulary and connectors used.

Genre or type of the text is a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of a culture (Paltridge 2001). According to Martin (1989), genre represented a stage or goal-oriented social process: "genre are referred to as social process because members of culture interact with each other to achieve them; as goal oriented, because they have evolved to get things done; as staged because it is usually takes more than one step for participants to achieved their goals". The other rational for adopting genre-based approach is that, genre-based approach facilitates clear links to the student' purposes for writing beyond the writing classroom.

To teach genres, the proponents of Genre-

Based Approach propose the framework of teaching looks like a cycle or wheel, so that it is known as the curriculum cycle. The cycle consists of a number of stages as described by Heinemann (2004) and colleagues as follows: (1) Building knowledge of field, (2) Modelling of text, (3) Join construction of text, and (4) Independent construction of text. Each lesson unit or cycle has its central focus a chosen text type or genre, and consists of a fixed sequence of stages. The descriptions of the cycle vary in minor ways, but four phases essential for developing control of a genre may be identified, namely: (a) Context Exploration, (b) Text Exploration-Based on Model Texts, (c) Joint Construction of a Text, and (d) Individual Application.

By introducing genre into curriculum based competence, curriculum writers, materials developers, teachers can work together to develop discourse competence or the ability to communicate with different purposes in different contexts. By introducing genres the kinds of basic texts expected students to master and, therefore, at the end of the day, students can describe something, report something, recount past experiences, present news, discuss important issues, and explain something and so on. There are five genre or types of texts should be taught at Junior High School, they are descriptive, report, narrative, recount, procedure texts.

In curriculum based competence, junior high school students are introduced to genres such as descriptive, report, narrative, recount, and procedure. These genres are likely to be developed together with topics that are relevant with what students usually talk about in and out the schools (Bakhtin, 1986).

Most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes; a personal letter starts with a cordial question in a friendly mood because its purpose is to maintain good relationships with friends, and an argument essay emphasizes its thesis since it aims at making an argument. Each spoken genre

has a specific goal that people should achieve through several steps. Thus, the specific social goals become main focuses when genre was discussed. It also implies that before writing, the context of a situation should be considered and analyzed in order to anticipate what linguistic features are required (Byram, 2004).

Besides constitutes particular conventions for communicative purposes, common sets of linguistic features can constitute a text type. According to Anderson and Anderson (2003), text type was as a class of texts having similarities in linguistic forms regardless of the genre. For example, the characteristics of several genres and categorized them according to similarities in text types: recipes are known to have the text type of procedure; personal letters are used to tell private experience; advertisements deal with description; news articles have the text type of recounting; and presenting reports; are likely to have embedded clauses.

This means that different text types involve distinctive knowledge and different sets of skills, so teachers should introduce a variety of genres to have students understand and practice different sets of skills. A text created in a context of situation is a discourse because a text in one way or another, is a representation of context of situation. The context of situation has three variables Paltridge (2001): (1) Field: The features of the situation; (2) mode: the channel used in communication; and (3) tenor: the relationships between the participants.

All genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes. Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

The centrality of text is understood as semantic unit. It means that an exchange or a piece of writing can be considered as communication or a communicative event only

when it makes sense. When people talk or write, and the talks and the essays make good sense, they create texts. When English learners talk in English and the interlocutors do not understand them, they do not create text; they do not communicate. When people talk, they exchange meanings; they try to mean; they try to create texts. In other words, communicative competence is the competence of creating different texts in different contexts of situation (Halliday, 1978).

In addition to that, the configuration of meanings, which “reside” in people’s minds, can only be understood by others if they are realized according to the conventions used by the community, and these conventions are represented in the lexico-grammatical system of language. Thus, when a person is capable of pronouncing English sounds, for instance, s/he still needs to learn the lexico-grammatical system of a language. The words and the grammar a person chooses are realized in sounds or characters. Within the communicative competence framework, lexico-grammar also falls into the area of linguistic competence.

Without grammar, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to create meanings or text because to be called a text a piece of language needs to be meaningful. In short, phonology, graphology and lexico-grammar are the basic systems that can make meanings physical and observable, and, thus, communicative or understandable. In the second language context, a curriculum based competence considers lexico-grammar is an important element to develop learner’s ability to communicate in real sense. The kind of lexico-grammatical system exposed to the students is the one that helps them realize different kinds to texts that are most relevant to their academic and daily lives as formalized in the government regulation mentioned earlier (Bakhtin, 1986).

According to Swales (1990), there are four levels of literacy: *performative level* (can read, write and speak with the symbols are used),

functional level (can use language for fulfil daily basic requirement such as reading newspaper, reading manual, etc), *informational level* (the person can get access of knowledge with his language) and *epidemic level* (the person could transform knowledge in certain language). The graduates of Junior high school are expected to reach *functional level* for 'survival' communication's goal.

The students are expected not only able to produce texts which not only literally and grammatically correct, but also semantically correct. In the effort of communicating using the text (either in speaking or writing), they must follow particular conventions of the particular text to be produced. However, the ability does not develop automatically even among native speakers of English. From childhood, native speakers learn how to write different texts with different communicative purposes. The ability to write does not develop out of the blue as long as the learners know how to produce grammatical sentences. Junior high school graduates are expected to reach functional literacy level in the sense that they are able to participate in daily 'survival' communications such as conducting transactional conversations, simple monologues, read manuals, popular science, and write short functional texts (i.e. greeting cards, notices, etc.) and basic genres such as descriptive, report, narrative, recount, and procedure. Junior high school graduates are expected to be able to conduct more formal transactional conversations, sustain interpersonal conversations, read and write short functional text (i.e. announcements, advertisements, etc.) and genres that prepare them to access information at school. Those genres include descriptive, report, narrative, recount, and procedure. More capable students may experiment with combining genres to create more extended texts (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). Therefore capable, highly motivated and highly determined teachers are needed in order to provide appropriate scaffold for

the students.

This is certainly not a simple task. In order to make the students speak and write well, consequently the language educators must be able to speak and write well, besides being capable in planning, implementing and evaluating the lesson. The teachers must provide appropriate scaffold in assisting and guiding the students to achieve the competence. In other words, to meet the demand of the curriculum the teachers must be able to determine what competence they try to develop, the expected performance to be established, and the way in achieving the goal. Obviously, this ability is not automatically owned by the teachers. They need direction and guidance in the form of training.

The first training for Junior High School English Teachers was *Pelatihan Terintegrasi Berbasis Kompetensi* or Competence-Based Integrated Training which conducted in 2005. The length of the training was determined by the teachers' competence. One week for teachers at the level 70 – 79%, two weeks for teachers at level 50 – 69%, and three weeks for teachers at level 30 – 49%. The material given in the training was mostly types of texts, such as : descriptive, report, narrative, recount and procedure. After the School-Based Curriculum implemented, there were more trainings which focus not only in how to teach text-types but also in how to develop schools' administration and teachers' administration (*Panduan Pelaksanaan Pelatihan se Kalimantan Tengah*, 2009). The content of trainings are vision, mission, purpose, subject, extra curricular, academic calendar and to develop syllabus and lesson plan.

To see the quality of teachers in Central Kalimantan the Quality Assurance of Education Institution or *Lembaga Penjamin Mutu Pendidikan* (LPMP) held competence test for all Junior High School teachers in central Kalimantan. The test was also as a need analysis for conducting a teacher training in four levels: Pre-Elementary/Basic (score <40, Elementary

(score ≤ 40 to < 60), Intermediate (score ≤ 60 to < 80 and Advance (score ≥ 80). The grading of the score are: ≥ 60 (*qualified*) and < 60 (*unqualified*). The result showed that 99 English teachers, 23 (23.23%) were qualified teachers and 76 (76.77%) were unqualified teachers. Then it was concluded that the ability of the English teachers was still below average (< 40). On the contrary, the average result for English National Examination showed contradictory result. In Pulang Pisau regency the percentage of students who passed examination for the Junior High School are above 80 with 83.429% in 2005/2006, 99.642% in 2006/2007, and 98.034% in 2007/2008 (*LPMP Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah*). This contrast gives inspiration to the writer to study the Junior High School English teachers' competence in mastering the genre-based texts for junior high school students. A context of culture produced some genres or types of text (*Depdiknas* 2003:63). The types of texts include descriptive, report, narrative, recount and procedure.

METHOD

13 English teachers of 9 state Junior High School in the districts of Kahayan Hilir, Maliku, and Jabiren Raya Pulang Pisau regency

(SMP 1, SMP 2, SMP 3, SMP 4, SMP 6, SMPN Satu Atap 1 Kahayan Hilir, SMP 3 MALIKU, SMP 1, SMP Satu Atap 1 JABIREN RAYA) were the subject of the study.

100 multiple choice items test and questionnaire were chosen as the instrument of the study. The test was used to measure the teachers' competence in mastering five junior high school text-types: descriptive, report, narrative, recount, and procedure, while the 12 close-ended items questionnaires was used to identify the teachers' identities, to test the teachers' knowledge of genre-based texts and to see about their English teacher training held by LPMP.

The data in the form of teachers' answer sheets both from the test and the questionnaire were analyzed using microsoft excel program. The scores then were interpreted using the criteria of category standard technique in Lis Bulkis (2008: 29) namely 0%-34% (Very Low); 35%-54% (Low); 55%-64% (Average); 70%-84% (High); 85%-100% (Very High).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented below were the result of the multiple choice test and the questionnaires. From the answer sheets of the test

Table 1. The Percentage of Teachers' Mastery in each Genre-Based Texts.

No.	Teachers' code	Descriptive text	Recount text	Narrative text	Report text	Procedure text
1	A1	40%	65%	45%	35%	60%
2	A2	70%	85%	80%	40%	70%
3	A3	65%	55%	65%	40%	70%
4	A4	60%	65%	45%	55%	65%
5	A5	45%	90%	65%	40%	60%
6	A6	50%	90%	70%	40%	65%
7	A7	70%	75%	70%	40%	65%
8	A8	70%	75%	60%	40%	85%
9	A9	65%	85%	85%	50%	80%
10	A10	80%	60%	65%	60%	65%
11	A11	70%	95%	60%	60%	60%
12	A12	75%	100%	70%	45%	85%
13	A13	95%	90%	55%	60%	60%
Total		855%	1030%	835%	605%	890%
Average		65.77%	79.23%	64.23%	46.54%	68.46%

revealed that there were 6 teachers who got average mastery level, 6 teacher got high mastery level, and only 1 teacher got low mastery level. The score for each text-types reflects variety in teachers' competence with 64% for narrative text, 68% for procedure text, 65.77% for descriptive text, 46% for report text, and 79.23% for recount text. The average score of the teachers in all text-types was 65%. Then, it could be concluded that the junior high school English teachers' mastery in genre-based texts for junior high school students was at the average level as in the following table.

The result of the questionnaire showed that 12 of 13 teachers hold undergraduate degree in English education, but only a few of the teachers who had ever joined training in genre-based text type. The questionnaire also reflected the teachers' level of understanding toward genre-based text. 10% of the teachers were at the A level of comprehension (0%-20%), 26% of teachers at the B level (21%-40%), 26% of teachers at the C level (41%-60%), 18% of teachers at the D level (61%-80%), and 20% of teachers at the E level (82%-100%). Meaning that most teachers understand the five text type well.

Finally, the questionnaire requires the teachers to state the suitability of teaching material for National Examination. From the 13 teachers, only 2 teachers or 15% considered the teaching material to be relevant with the National Examination by 61%-80%. It can be concluded most Junior High School English teachers in the districts of Kahayan Hilir, Maliku, and Jabiren Raya Pulang Pisau Regency believe that their teaching materials are not appropriate to the national examination.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

To meet the demand of the curriculum and to equip the students with the ability in comprehending genre-based text, the teachers should have prime skills themselves in consequence. However, the finding of the study

revealed that the competence of the English teachers in the district of Kahayan Hilir, Maliku, and Jabiren Raya in Pulang Pisau regency is at the average level. Moreover, the insuitability of the teaching material with the National Examination and the minimum quantity of training in genre-based texts for these teachers contribute to their 'fair' competence. Furthermore, the findings reflect the need of training in genre-based text for better teaching quality and better achievement of the students.

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