

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROCESS APPROACH:  
A CASE STUDY IN TEACHING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT  
TO FIRST GRADE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

Penelitian ini berhubungan dengan implementasi pendekatan proses dalam pembelajaran menulis, yang dilaksanakan di level sekolah menengah pertama. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif karena fokusnya adalah mengamati proses menulis yang berlangsung di dalam kelas, dan terkonsentrasi untuk mencari-tahu bagaimana langkah-langkah dalam pendekatan proses mampu meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidimpuan, dengan jumlah partisipan sebanyak 35 siswa. Dan hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan proses dalam banyak hal ternyata mampu meningkatkan kemahiran siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Namun demikian dalam konteks pembelajar EFL. Demikianlah, sangat diharapkan penelitian yang berskala lebih besar sehubungan dengan pendekatan ini, untuk memperoleh hasil yang lebih signifikan.

**Kata Kunci:** *descriptive text, process approach dan teaching writing.*

**A. Introduction**

As a complex set of cognitive behaviour, the central focus in teaching writing is the writer's behavior, during, and after the act of writing<sup>2</sup>. Then various classroom activities in learning writing are believed to promote the development of writing skills.<sup>3</sup> This means that the stages in teaching writing might determine the success of learners in producing a well-written piece, because the focus in learning writing is the process, and not the products. Regarding this, Richards<sup>4</sup> then argues that learning to write well is a difficult and usually inducing anxiety

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<sup>2</sup>Czerniewska, P., *Writing: Process Approach in Bernard Spolsky: Concise Encyclopedia of Educational Linguistics*, (Glasgow: Cambridge, 1990). P.40.

<sup>3</sup>Nunan, D., *The Learner Centered Curriculum*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988).p.25.

<sup>4</sup>Richards, J., *The Language Teaching Matrix*, (USA: Cambridge, 1990).p.80

for many learners, or in other words, learning to write in order to be able to produce a good piece of writing usually give stress and frustration for the students.

But, however learning stages according to a process approach in learning writing during the process of composing texts, seems to give advantages for learners to do their task well. Jordan<sup>5</sup> claims that the writing stages in the process approach might encourages individuals to be more responsibilities, for by means of discussing topic, drafting, and revising, students can find a clearer direction in their writing. Thus, since a learners-centeredness is involving learners closely in the decision making regarding what they need, the opinion above indicates that teacher's interaction by performing the explicit writing stages might offer opportunity for students to find their focus in writing, and also might reduces their anxiety, stress, and frustration during a learning process.

Regarding the current English curriculum in Indonesia nowadays, dealing with teaching writing in EFL context, Rose<sup>6</sup> then reports that students have most problems with written English grammar if English is not their first language or if they are struggling with writing. Then, Brown<sup>7</sup> adds that EFL students in particular encounter more problems in producing a good piece of writing for their insufficiency knowledge about text features. This means that, EFL students might find many difficulties in producing a well-written piece for the lack of knowledge in grammar and text features. Thus, as writing is one of the four language competences that is considered to be the most difficult to be learnt, it is important to teach how to write a good text in junior high school level.

Still related, texts suggessted in junior high school level are in the form of short functional texts and long functional texts. The term long functional text is rarely used in communication. This term usually used only to make the counterpart of the previous term, i.e. short functional text. For in daily speech,

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<sup>5</sup>Jordan, R. R., *English for Academic Purpose: A Guide and Resource Book for Teachers*, (USA: Cambridge, 1997), p. 123.

<sup>6</sup>Rose, D., *Reading to Learn: Accelerating Learning and Closing the Gap*,( 8, [www.readingtolearn.com.au](http://www.readingtolearn.com.au). At October 20,2008 retrieved on 10 pm)

<sup>7</sup>Brown, H. D., *Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. (New York: Longman, 2001),p.16.

there are many types of functional texts, not only in the forms of short functional texts such as prohibition, invitation, greeting cards, short message, etc., but also in the forms of long functional texts or essays. Short functional texts (referred to henceforth as SFT) are types of informational texts to help the information receivers or readers grasp the information quickly, that intended to make the readers understand the texts quickly. In this case, SFT is usually characterized by the use of clear, simple, and concise sentences, pictures or symbols and the use of particular words or letters.

Moreover, talking about long functional texts, the genre are so called due not only to the length in the writing, but also the process of the interpreting which requires specific recognition of their structures and situation. As a text will be meaningless if it is taken apart from its structure and situation, long functional texts are classified on the basis of the intention of the communicator. Thus, based on its communicative purposes, text varies in the course of its function, generic structure, language feature, and vocabularies. In a simple explanation, it can be used to communicate purpose, where ones may construct texts in specific structures and use certain linguistic features in conjunction with particular vocabularies.

As descriptive text comes to be one of genre which is needed to be master by students in junior high school level, the students need to know how to write a good simple descriptive text and to understand well the schemetic structure and the language features of the text. Therefore, the skill could be achieved by developing their knowledge and skill in a proper sequences of writing technique of the text, so they will able to produce the simple witten long functional text easily.

Finally, based on the description above, a pilot study has been conducted by the researcher to first grade students in SMP negeri 2 Padangsidempuan related to the issue. It was found then that, the process of learning writing in the classroom was still passive. The students did not understand clearly about a descriptive text, the generic structure, the language feature, and how to write a

good descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher intends to make a further study related to how to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text in junior high school level, by applying the process approach.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Process Approach in Teaching Writing**

There are four language skills in English learning namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing as one of the four language competences that considered to be the most difficult. Richard<sup>8</sup> assume that for the second language learner writing is a difficult task for they need not only to know about what idea to write, but also need to have competences to arrange their ideas into a good readable text. Thus, writing needs hard working. A good writer needs to know how to choose words, to arranges sentences, and to know how to composea good paragraph. As writing process is perceived to be one of the most essential aspect that influence students' achievement in learning language, the following elaboration then attempts to discuss the stages in teaching writing according to some experts of process approach.

Ronk<sup>9</sup> proposes the writing stages as pre-writing, writing a first draft, sharing, revising into a second draft, and editing into a final draft. Graves<sup>10</sup> says it in term of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Murray as cited in Richard, distinguishes three stages in writing as rehearsing, drafting, and revising. Then, Brown and Parris summarize the process as prewriting, drafting, and revising. In addition to that, Kroll<sup>11</sup> encourages students to do some activities during pre-writing namely brainstorming, clustering, strategic questionnaire, sketching, free writing, interviewing, and information gathering.

The above classification then explains that Murray, Brown, and Parris propose the writing stages in three stages and Graves and Ronk offer it in five. If

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<sup>8</sup>Richards, J., *The Language Teaching Matrix*, (USA: Cambridge, 1990), p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Ronk, T., *Essay Writing: Step-by-Step*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p.89.

<sup>10</sup>Graves, D., *Children Want to Write*/, (Victoria: Primary English Teaching Association, 1983), p.132.

<sup>11</sup>Kroll, B., *Teaching Writing in the EFL Context*, (Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1991), p.90.

Murray, Brown, and Parris suggest the stages as prewriting or rehearsing, drafting, and revising, Ronk adds sharing and editing, and Graves adds publishing besides editing. Derived from the above categorization, despite the fact that the experts offer different kinds of stage, it appears that the most prominent stages might be prewriting or rehearsing, drafting, and revising. Regarding this, the following description will present further discussion of the three stages according to Kroll, Murray, and Parris.

If Murray<sup>12</sup> suggests that rehearsing or prewriting involves finding topic, thinking about the topic, and thinking about the audience and the purpose of writing, Parris describes the stage deals with gathering ideas, choosing a purpose and audience, and ordering the ideas. Then, Kroll offers the prewriting in detail, which includes brainstorming, clustering, and strategic questionnaire, sketching, free writing, interviewing, and information gathering. Therefore, drawn from the experts' opinions above it seems that prewriting deals with finding and ordering ideas by brainstorming, clustering, etc, and at the same time thinking about the audience and the purpose of the writing.

Regarding activities during the prewriting, Kroll suggests that brainstorming involves students call out interesting topic as many as possible and other students or teacher jot down the ideas. In clustering, students and teacher cluster similar words and choose appropriate words related to chosen topic. Then, during strategic questionnaire, students answer a set of questions designed to guide their writing. Moreover, in free writing, students write non-stop on a topic for a set of time. In interviewing, students interview each other or go outside of the classroom to interview people on the chosen topic. The last, during information gathering, students collect information about the chosen topic through library research

For the second stage, Murray and Parris have a rather similar opinion. Murray says that drafting involves getting ideas onto paper in a rough form, and then the writer sketches out the idea, plants, and goals, until the process of writing

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<sup>12</sup>Murray, D.F., *Literacy as Sociocultural Phenomena Prospect*, Vi (1), (New York: Prentice Hall, September, 1990), p.134.

creates into own meaning, and Parris explains that the stage involves putting ideas down on paper and exploring new ideas during writing. Thus, drafting deals with putting ideas in a rough form and elaborating the ideas until the process of writing finds its direction. Concerning revising as another main stage in teaching writing, Murray suggests that revising involves evaluating and making deletion or additions as necessary, and Parris proposes that the same stage involves editing, proofreading, and polishing.

For details of the revising, Parris describes that editing refers to considering and organizing the idea, and proofreading refers to correcting errors such as sentence structure, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Hence, revising stage involves some activities in evaluating piece of writing from drafting process, and the activities include editing, proofreading, and polishing. Then, although the central focus in teaching writing is the process, the aim of the process itself is to help students in producing a final written product. Since the process of writing leads on a final well-written piece, in this case, Rose proposes some required competences in producing a good piece of writing.

Rose says that to be successful in writing, a writer must have all language patterns at his/her disposal. He explains that at the level of text, a writer must be able to select all elements in a text (story or factual text) and organize them into a coherent sequence. At the level of sentence, a writer must select words that are appropriate to topic and arrange them in meaningful phrases. At the level of word, a writer must have a variety of appropriate words to choose and know how to spell them. Rose describes that a well-written piece is an incorporation of the elements of writing in such as way that readers can experience a writer's intended meaning, readers understand a writer's premise, and readers accept or reject a writer's point of view.

### **A Descriptive Text**

As described above, a descriptive text is one kind of a long functional text which portrays the image of a certain thing from which a writer wants to transfer it to readers. Mostly descriptive texts depict or describe the image of a certain

person, animal, things, and location or place. The social function of description text is to inform the readers about the illustration of certain persons, places, or some things in specific ways.

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**The Generic Structure of Descriptive Text**

<b>Text Elements</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Identification</b>	An introduction to the objects/things described which includes who or what, when, where.
<b>Description</b>	A description of an object. For example the color, the size, the smell, the taste, etc. For persons: what they look like, what they do, how they act, what they like or dislike, what makes them special. For something: how it looks, sounds, feels, smells or tastes, where it is seen or found, what it does, how it is used, what makes it special.

**Language Features**

The language features of descriptive text include the following indicators:

1. Certain nouns, such as teacher, house, my cat, bridge, etc.
2. Simple Present Tense.
3. Detailed noun phrases to give information about a subject, such as It was a large open rowboat, a sweet young lady, the deaf person, etc.
4. Various adjectives which are describing, numbering, classifying such as two strong legs, sharp white fangs, her curly hair, etc.
5. Relating verbs to give information about a subject, such as My mum is really cool; It has very thick fur, the rest remains at home, etc.

6. Thinking verbs and feeling verbs to reveal the writer’s view, such as  
 The police believe the suspect is armed; I think it is a clever animal,  
 etc.
7. Action verbs, such as Our new puppy bites our shoes; It eats soft  
 food, etc.
8. Adverbs to give additional information about manner, such as fast,  
 gradually, at the tree house, etc.
9. Figurative language, such simile, metafor, e.g. John is white as chalk,  
 sat tight, etc.

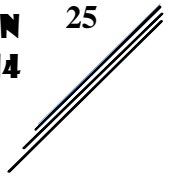
For further explanation of the language features, Simple Present Tense, detailed noun phrases to give information about a subject, such as It was a large open, rowboat, a sweet young lady, the deaf person, etc. Various adjectives which are describing, numbering, classifying such as two strong legs, sharp white fangs, her curly hair, etc. The relating verbs to give information about a subject, such as My mum is really cool; It has very thick fur, the rest remains at home, etc. The thinking verbs and feeling verbs to reveal the writer’s view, such as The police believe the suspect is armed; I think it is a clever animal, etc. The action verbs, such as; our new puppy bites our shoes; It eats soft food, etc, adverbs to give additional information about manner, such as fast, gradually, at the tree house, etc. And the figurative language, such simile, methapore, e.g. John is white as chalk, sat tight, etc.

The following are the examples of Descriptive Text

**a. Text 1**

<b>My Pet</b>	
<b>Identification</b>	I have a pet. It is a dog, and I call it Brownie. Brownie is a Chinese breed.
<b>Description</b>	It is small, fluffy, and cute. It has got thick brown fur. When I cuddle it, the fur feels soft. Brownie does not like bones. Every day it eats soft food like steamed rice, fish or bread. Every morning I give her milk and bread. When I am at school, Brownie plays with my cat. They get along well, and never fight maybe because Brownies





	does not bark a lot. It treats the other animals in our house gently, and it never eats shoes. Brownie is really a sweet and friendly animal.
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**b. Text 2**

<b>Macquire University</b>	
<b>Identification</b>	Macquire university is one of the largest university in Australia. This year, in 2004, it celebrates its 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary.
<b>Description</b>	The universty is located at the North Ryde Greenbelt, Sydney, where the New South Wales government sets aside 135 hectares for the institution. In 1964, Macquire area was rural retreat on the city fringe, but today the campus and its surrounding have evolved beyond recognition. The North Ryde District has grown into a district of intensive occupation anchored by a vibrant and growing university.

**C. The Methodology**

Since this study is as an classroom action research (CAR), this study applies in three cycles, dan was designed by follows the classroom action research phases namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Then, There were two techniques of collecting data in this study namely observation and text analysis. The data was analyzed by applying qualitative method. In this case all the finding will be described and analyzed according to the genre' theories.

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidimpunan, which located in Kota Padangsidimpunan Sumatera Utara. This school was chosen as the field of the study because as one of the English teacher in the school, the writer has access to make a research in the sechool. Then, there were 35 students in the first grade technics program as the subject of this study. They are 20 boys and 15 girls. And the researcher herself was a researcher observer who performs the treatments and do the observation. Some instruments applied to obtain data in this study. Reserach applied pre-test and post-test to findout students' ability in producing a descriptive text. The researcher records the learning activities on a vidio. And also makes some field notes to complete the observation data.

Then, According to Suharsimi Arikunto a classroom action research is an action research which is carried out at the classroom that aims is to improve

learning practical quality. Then he adds that an action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers or researchers, principals, and school counselors in teaching-learning environment to gather information about (a) how their particular school operates, (b) how teachers teach, and (c) how well their students learn. Based on the description above the implementation of classroom action research is this study is to improve the students' ability in writing by practicing the stages of process approach in writing.

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This study employed a qualitative case study design. A statement from Maxwell tells that a qualitative study is appropriate in understanding process by which events and actions take place. Regarding educational research, Nunan explains that a research can be characterized as a qualitative program evaluation if in the study the researcher created and then implemented a teaching program. This study is also categorized as a case study since Merriam states that a case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. In line with educational research, a case study was carried out in a small single case that focused on educational experience or practice where the researcher acted as teacher.

Relevant to the statements above, the researcher applied a qualitative case study method because this study investigated a '*process*' of teaching to write narrative texts by a genre-based approach implementation. In this case, the researcher created and performed the teaching program, and concentrated to find out how the teaching stages in the approach help in developing students' achievement in writing narrative texts, and to identify encountered problems during the process. To enhance the construct validity for this study, the researcher

employed two data collection techniques, namely: interview, and classroom observation.

### **Research Instruments And Data Collection**

This study aimed to enable the researcher to find out the benefits of a genre-based approach implementation, particularly how the teaching stages in the approach help in developing students' achievement in writing narrative texts and to elaborate students' and teachers' encountered problems during the writing process. The researcher collected data from many sources based on criteria, a genre-based approach, narrative text, teaching writing, and systemic functional grammar. After doing the initial data collection, the researcher interviewed teachers, gave a diagnostic test, and at last performed the teaching program. The research schedule can be seen in Appendix 1, and further details to the procedure are as follows.

### **The Finding of the First Cycle**

After the interviewing and made a pre-test about students' ability in writing a descriptive text, the researcher found that it was still difficult for the students in technics Program to produce a good simple descriptive text. And then the researcher also found that it was important to arrange a proper stages in teaching students to write the text. So the researcher made some preparations such as made the teaching design, found the most appropriate medias, discussed the prepared stages with the other English teacher, and then entered the chosen class to socialize students about this research. In the second meeting, the researcher explained about genre, kinds of genre, short functional text, long functional text, and then focusing to the descriptive text. And then, before closing the class the researcher informed the students that they are going to learn how to write the chosen text in the next meeting.

In the third meeting, the researcher explained about the process of writing. By using power point, the researcher gave a brief explanation in how to

process a good writing piece according to the process approach theory. The researcher explained again about descriptive text, the social function, the generic structure, and then the language feature. And then for the first time the researcher asked students to produce their descriptive text. Thus, during the fourth meeting in the first cycle, the researcher joined the students to do their drafting, revising, and editing.

### **The Finding of The Second Cycle**

Before conducting the second cycle, the researcher analyzed the video recorded of the first cycle, and then analyzed the students' texts. After that, the researcher explained again about the descriptive text especially the generic structure and the language features. Explaining further about the writing stages according to the process approach, using some clusters which were shown by OHP. Discussing some problems found by the students. And asked the students again to follow the process of writing in order to produce their next descriptive texts. And then along with the researcher by applying the process approach for the next three meetings, the students do their drafting, learn how to edit the piece of writing, and to revise and revise again, until at last the researcher collected the writing products.

From this second cycle, the researcher found that although the students' participation to do the writing process had gotten better and it seemed that they had understood the social function and the generic structure of a descriptive text, some of the students still were not took attention to the sentences arrangement. They made mistakes in punctuation. They ignored about the dictions. And most of all, it was still strange for them to follow the rule of stages in writing according to the theories of process approach.

### **The Finding of the Third Cycle**

For the third cycle, first the researcher analyzed the result from the second cycle includes the texts and the video recorded. After that, in the first meeting of the third cycle, the researcher upBefore conducting the second cycle, the

reseracher analyzed the vidio recorded of the first cycle, and then analyzed the students' texts.

After collecting the teks andp analyzed the vidio recorded, it soon found that the students gave their best participation during the lesson. The process of writing followed the right rules. And the students' texts got improving in many aspects. The students seemed to understand clearly about the social function of the text, the generic structure, the relevant language features. They made significant improvement in punctuations, distions, sentence arrangement, the topic chosen, and they had been able to produce a readable simple descriptive text.

#### **D. The Conclusion And Suggestion**

Thus, derived from the above descriptions, the researcher concludes that in producing a good piece of writing, students might not only require teachers' encouragement and the performing of explicit writing stages but also need to know about features, language pattern, and adequate vocabularies of the focus text. In other words, the success of learners-centeredness in teaching writing might be also determined by students' sufficiency knowledge of the language grammar, patterns of lexical, and text notion. Concerning the text notion, students entail knowledge about the types, the purpose, the schematic structure, and the linguistic features.

Therefore, in implementing the approach to teach students how to write a descriptive text, teacher needs to have an adequate knowledge about the focus text, and itu also important to make another study for this issue in a large scale in order to gain the a better conclusion.

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