



ENHANCING TENTH-GRADE VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH GENRE-BASED LEARNING

Naya Candrika Purnama¹, Diani Nurhajati², Yunik Susanti³

¹ University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, Indonesia

Corresponding author's e-mail: nayacp8@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

For many students, writing is considered one of the most challenging English skills because they have to be able to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, and apply correct grammar simultaneously. This condition encouraged the writer to implement Classroom Action Research during her teaching practice at SMKN 3 Kediri. This study aimed to explain the implementation of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) in improving students' writing skills in descriptive text. The subjects of the study were 36 students of Culinary Class X-1. The instruments used in this research were writing tests and observation sheets. The writer collaborated with her peer student who did teaching practice at the same school. The writer acted as the teacher model, while the peer acted as the observer during the teaching process in the classroom. The teaching and learning process was conducted through the stages of Genre-Based Learning, namely Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT). The findings showed that GBL helped students improve their writing skills, particularly in content organization, vocabulary usage, and grammar accuracy. The students also became more active, collaborative, and confident during the learning activities. The average score in descriptive writing after they were taught using GBL was 85. This means that they had very good writing performance.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, descriptive text, Genre-Based Learning, vocational high school students, writing skills.

INTRODUCTION

This study was initiated by the result of the observations conducted at SMKN 3 Kediri, many grade 10 Culinary 1 students faced difficulties in writing descriptive texts. They often struggled to develop ideas, structure sentences coherently, and apply appropriate grammar and vocabulary. These challenges affected the quality of their written work during writing activities. Therefore, a learning approach that provides clear guidance and structured writing practices is needed to address these issues.

In fact, writing is one of the essential language skills that students need to master in learning English. Through writing, students are able to express ideas, share information, and communicate their thoughts in a structured form (Harmer, 2004; Taufiqulloh et al., 2025; D. Zhang et al., 2023). Writing is often considered a difficult skill because it requires organizing ideas, applying appropriate vocabulary, using correct grammar, and maintaining coherence in a text (Nunan, 2003; Nagao, 2019; T. Zhang & Zhang, 2021). This challenge is often experienced by vocational high school students who have varying levels of English proficiency and limited opportunities to practice writing.

In the context of English learning in vocational high schools, descriptive text is one type of text that students must learn. Descriptive text aims to describe a particular person, place, object, or phenomenon by providing detailed information about its characteristics (Knapp, Watkins, 2005; Kusmiati et al., 2025). To produce good descriptive text, students need to understand the generic structure and language features of the text. Many students still struggle with generating ideas, organizing information, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and constructing appropriate sentences. As a result, their writing performance often falls short of the expected learning outcomes (Adla, 2023; Agustin et al., 2024; Dwijayanti et al., 2025).

One factor contributing to students' writing difficulties is the teaching approach used in the classroom. Conventional writing instruction often focuses on the final product rather than the writing process itself. As a result, students receive limited guidance in understanding how a text is developed and organized (Thaksanan & Chaturongakul, 2023). Therefore, teachers need to implement teaching strategies that

provide support and opportunities for students to practice writing through meaningful learning activities (Abdel Latif et al., 2024).

Knowing the condition above, the researcher found out solution by implementing Genre-Based Learning (GBL). GBL is one approach that can be used to improve students' writing skills. This approach emphasizes clear instruction on the social purpose, structure, and language features of various text types (Hyland, 2007; Zagoto et al., 2025). According to the Genre-Based Approach, students learn to write through a series of stages: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT). These stages provide support that helps students gradually develop their writing skills (Emillia, 2011; Liu et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have reported the effectiveness of GBL in improving students' writing skills. Findings indicate that students become better able to organize ideas, use appropriate language features, and produce coherent text after participating in Genre-Based Learning activities. Furthermore, this approach encourages active participation and collaborative learning, which positively contribute to student engagement in the writing process (Emillia, 2011; Pratama, Rahmawati, 2026).

However, although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Genre-Based Learning in improving students' writing skills, limited attention has been given to its implementation in vocational high school contexts through Classroom Action Research that focuses not only on students' writing outcomes but also on their classroom participation during the learning process. Therefore, this study attempts to address this gap by investigating the implementation of Genre-Based Learning among tenth-grade vocational high school students at SMKN 3 Kediri and examining both students' writing performance and classroom participation during the learning process.

This study aims to investigate the implementation of Genre-Based Learning in improving students' writing skills in descriptive texts at SMKN 3 Kediri. The study also examined student participation during the learning process and explored how Genre-Based Learning contributed to the development of their writing skills. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for English teachers, especially

teachers who teach vocational high school students, in implementing effective writing instruction..

METHODS

This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the implementation of Genre-Based Learning in improving students' writing skills in descriptive texts. CAR is a form of reflective study conducted by teachers to improve classroom practices and enhance student learning outcomes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). This design was chosen because it allows researchers to identify problems occurring in the classroom and implement appropriate actions to address them.

This study applies the Classroom Action Research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four interrelated stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. These stages are implemented in a single cycle to address identified classroom problems and evaluate the success of the actions taken. This research was conducted at SMKN 3 Kediri from September 8 to September 10, 2025. One cycle was implemented throughout the study, consisting of the planning, action, observation, and reflection stages based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model. The stages can be seen in the figure below.

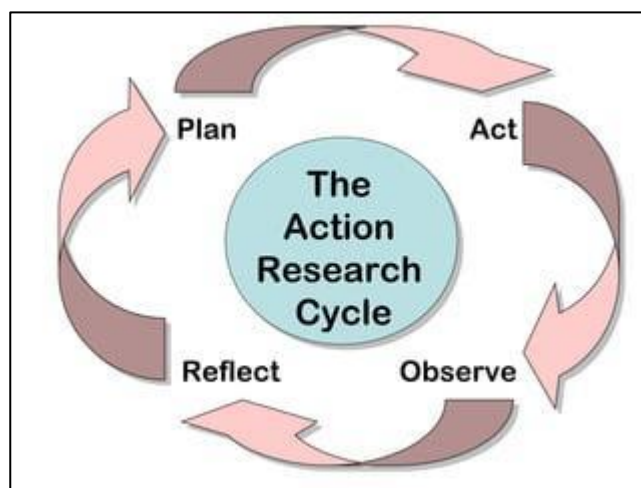


Figure 1. The Cycle of CAR

Participants

The participants in this study were 36 students of Class X Culinary 1 at SMKN 3 Kediri in the 2025/2026 academic year. The class consisted of students with varying

levels of English proficiency. Based on the researcher's observations during the teaching practicum, many students experienced difficulties in writing descriptive texts, particularly in generating ideas, organizing information, and using appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, Class X Culinary 1 was selected as the subject of this study because the students needed to improve their writing skills and were considered suitable for the implementation of Genre-Based Learning.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were a writing test and an observation sheet. The writing test was used to assess the students' writing skills in producing descriptive texts after the implementation of Genre-Based Learning. The students were asked to write descriptive texts based on a given topic. Their writing was evaluated based on five aspects of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Heaton, 1990).

The observation sheet was used to collect data by the collaborator on student participation and classroom activities during the implementation of Genre-Based Learning. The observation focused on students' engagement, interaction, collaboration, and responses throughout the learning process. The observation was conducted by a collaborator who observed classroom activities while the researcher implemented the teaching and learning process.

Procedures

The study was conducted in one cycle following the stages of Classroom Action Research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, the researcher identified the students' problems in writing descriptive texts and prepared the lesson plans, learning materials, writing tasks, and observation sheet. The learning activities were designed based on the stages of Genre-Based Learning.

The observation stage was conducted simultaneously during the implementation of the action. A collaborator observed the teaching and learning process using an observation sheet to record students' participation, interaction, collaboration, and responses during classroom activities. After the implementation of the action, the researcher and collaborator conducted the reflection stage to evaluate the

implementation of Genre-Based Learning and review the data obtained from the writing test and classroom observation.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were obtained from writing tests and observation sheets. Writing test data were analysed to determine students' writing performance after implementing Genre-Based Learning. Students' descriptive texts were assessed based on five writing aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Heaton, 1990). Scores from each aspect were combined to produce a final writing score. Student scores were then calculated to obtain a class average.

Observation data were analysed descriptively. Observation sheets were used to identify student participation, interaction, collaboration, and responses during the learning process. Observation results were used to support the findings from the writing tests and to inform the implementation of Genre-Based Learning in the classroom. Findings from both instruments were interpreted to evaluate the effectiveness of Genre-Based Learning in improving students' writing skills in descriptive texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of GBL

In the first meeting, the researcher implemented the Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) and Modelling of the Text (MOT) stages. During BKOF, the students were introduced to the concept, purpose, and characteristics of descriptive texts through discussions and examples related to familiar topics. In the MOT stage, the students analysing model descriptive texts to identify their generic structure and language features.

The observation results showed that the students actively participated in the learning process throughout the implementation of Genre-Based Learning. During BKOF stage, the students responded to the teacher's questions and shared their prior knowledge about the topics being discussed. They were actively involved in classroom

discussions and demonstrated interest in learning descriptive texts. Meanwhile, in MOT stage, the students analysed model descriptive texts to identify their generic structure and language features. The students were able to recognize the characteristics of descriptive texts and participated actively in the analysis activities guided by the teacher.

In the second meeting, the researcher conducted the Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT) stage. The students worked collaboratively with their peers to construct descriptive texts under the teacher's guidance. The teacher provided support and feedback to help the students organize ideas and apply appropriate language features.

In JCOT stage, the students worked collaboratively with their peers to construct descriptive texts. They exchanged ideas, discussed vocabulary choices, and assisted each other in organizing information into coherent paragraphs. This stage encouraged students to participate more actively and develop confidence in writing.

In the third meeting, the Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT) stage was implemented. Students independently wrote descriptive texts based on the topics provided by the researcher. At the end of the meeting, the students completed a writing test to demonstrate their ability to write descriptive texts after participating in GBL activities.

During ICOT stage, the students independently produced descriptive texts based on the given topics. The students completed the task successfully and demonstrated greater confidence in expressing their ideas in written form. Overall, the observation results indicated that Genre-Based Learning promoted active participation, collaboration, and engagement throughout the learning process.

Students' Writing Performance

After the researcher conducted teaching writing using GBL, the students' writing ability were assessed. The results of the assessment are presented in Figure 1.

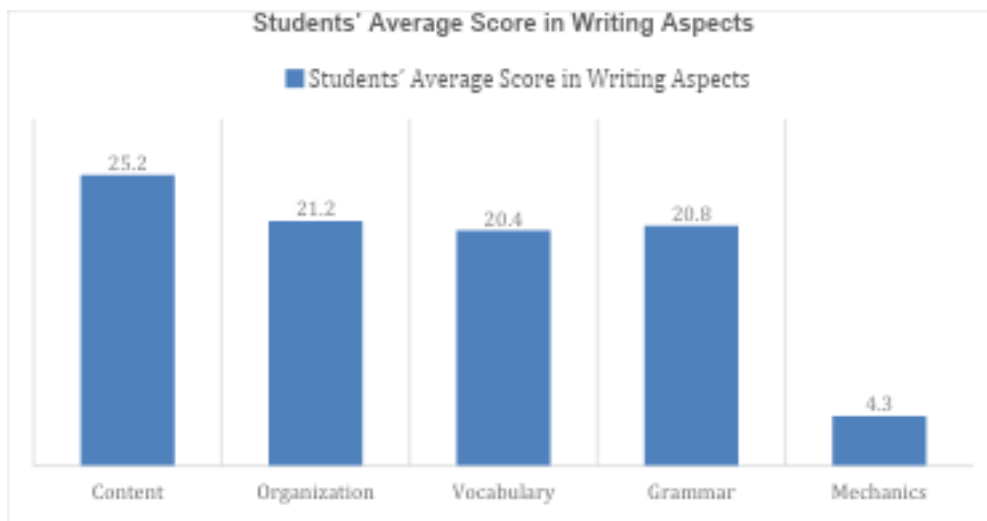


Figure 1. Students' Average Score in Writing Aspects

A writing test was administered at the end of the Genre-Based Learning implementation to assess students' ability to write descriptive texts. Students' writing was evaluated based on five aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The assessment results are presented in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, content achieved the highest average score (25.2), indicating that most students were able to develop relevant ideas and provide adequate descriptions in their writing. Organization achieved an average score of 21.2, indicating that students were generally able to organize their ideas logically and follow the generic structure of descriptive texts.

The average scores for grammar and vocabulary were 20.8 and 20.4, respectively. These results indicate that students were able to use appropriate vocabulary and construct grammatically acceptable sentences, although some errors were still found. In terms of mechanics, students achieved an average score of 4.3, indicating that spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were generally used correctly. Overall, the students achieved an average writing score of 85, indicating an excellent level of writing performance after the implementation of Genre-Based Learning.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of GBL contributed positively to the students' writing skills in descriptive texts. The students achieved an average score of 85, which indicates a very good level of writing performance. The

results suggest that the students were able to develop and organize ideas more effectively after participating in the learning activities.

The improvement in students' writing performance can be attributed to the systematic stages of Genre-Based Learning. During BKOF stage, the students were introduced to the topic and activated their prior knowledge, which helped them generate ideas for writing. In MOT stage, the students learned the generic structure and language features of descriptive texts through the analysis of model texts. This process provided clear examples that guided students in understanding how descriptive texts are constructed.

JCOT stage allowed students to work collaboratively with their peers and receive guidance from the teacher. Through discussion and cooperation, the students were able to organize information and develop their ideas more confidently. In ICOT stage, the students applied their knowledge independently by producing descriptive texts. This stage provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate their understanding of the text structure and language features that had been learned in the previous stages.

The observation results also revealed that the students actively participated in the learning process. They were engaged in classroom discussions, collaborative activities, and writing tasks throughout the implementation of Genre-Based Learning. Their active participation may have contributed to the positive learning outcomes, as students were given opportunities to interact, share ideas, and practice writing in a supportive learning environment.

These findings support Hyland's (2007) view that genre-based instruction provides explicit guidance on the purpose, structure, and language features of a text. The findings also align with Emilia (2011), who argues that GBL helps students develop writing skills through a series of scaffolded learning activities. Therefore, GBL can be considered an effective approach for improving students' writing skills in descriptive texts, particularly for vocational high school students.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) in improving students' writing skills in descriptive texts at SMKN 3 Kediri. The findings indicated that the implementation of GBL contributed positively to students' writing

performance, as reflected in the average writing score of 85. The students showed satisfactory achievement in content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics after participating in the learning activities.

In addition, the observation findings demonstrated that the students actively engaged in the learning process throughout the implementation of Genre-Based Learning. The structured stages of Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT) provided scaffolding that helped students understand the characteristics of descriptive texts and gradually develop their writing skills.

The findings of this study imply that Genre-Based Learning can provide practical benefits for English language teaching, particularly in vocational high school settings. The structured and scaffold learning process not only supports students in improving their writing performance but also promotes active participation, collaboration, and confidence during classroom activities. Therefore, GBL can serve as an alternative instructional approach for teachers who aim to create more engaging and effective writing instruction.

Based on these findings, Genre-Based Learning is recommended as an effective instructional approach for teaching descriptive writing, particularly in vocational high school contexts. Future studies are also recommended to investigate the implementation of GBL with different text types, larger participant groups, and longer periods of implementation to provide broader evidence regarding its effectiveness in improving students' writing skills.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Naya Candrika Purnama is a researcher at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. Her research interests include English language teaching, applied linguistics, and teacher professional development.

Diani Nurhajati is a lecturer at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. Her research interests include English language teaching, applied linguistics, educational technology, and teacher professional development.

Yunik Susanti is a lecturer at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. Her research interests include English language teaching, applied linguistics, educational technology, and teacher professional development.

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