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THE PORTRAIT OF TEACHING WRITING IN THE CONTEXT OF ELT IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS TRYING OUT THE COMPETENCE-BASED CURRICULUM

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Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pengajaran menulis dalam konteks pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMA yang mengujicobakan KBK di Kabupaten Jember. Desain *multi-case study* dipilih dalam studi kualitatif, sedangkan desain *survey* dipilih dalam studi kuantitatif. Data kualitatif dianalisis dengan prosedur: (1) pembuatan *field notes*, (2) pengkodean *field notes*, (3) pembuatan *ringkasan*, (4) pembuatan matriks, dan (5) penarikan kesimpulan. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan distribusi frekuensi, dan tes distribusi *chi-square* (χ^2). Secara umum ditemukan bahwa pengajaran menulis oleh guru bahasa Inggris di SMA yang mengujicobakan KBK di Jember dinilai kurang efektif. Pada studi kualitatif ditemukan bahwa strategi guru dalam mengajarkan menulis belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan ketentuan KBK. Pada studi kuantitatif terungkap bahwa: (1) model linear pengajaran menulis cenderung diadopsi oleh guru, (2) materi pokok dalam KBK yang seharusnya diajarkan guru belum mencukupi. Direkomendasikan agar dipilih nara sumber berlatar belakang Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam *in-service training* program.

Key words: teaching writing, competence-based curriculum, senior high schools

Introduction

To build the national system of education, the government has decided to improve the management of education and developed the curriculum oriented towards life-skill education. For such a purpose, school-based management has been stipulated to replace the centralized management system of education, while the competence-based curriculum (CBC) has been stipulated to replace the 1994 English curriculum beginning from 2004/2005 academic year. Through the CBC, it is expected that school graduates in Indonesia will have a set of competencies which are competitive and meet the demands of the global era.

In the context of the CBC, the attainment of communicative competence (CC) has become the goal of ELT since the 1984 English curriculum. This results from the fact that at the level of philosophy, the CBC still adopts the theory of language as a means of communication. By adopting this language theory, the goal of language teaching in Indonesian secondary schools is directed towards the students' attainment of CC, consisting of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence,

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discourse competence, and strategic competence. Consequently, 'communicative competence' must be used as a foundation to develop models of language teaching and its evaluation system (Saukah, 2004).

In designing English instruction adopting the CBC, English teachers are required to have deep understanding on the concept of CC as well as the currently used approach of teaching. Basically, teaching approaches can be divided into two big divisions: the conventional and constructivist approach. The conventional approach emphasizes on bottom-up instruction, while the constructivist approach to teaching emphasizes top-down instruction (Slavin, 1997). In bottom-up instruction students need to learn the basic skills prior to learning more complex ones, whereas in top-down instruction students begin with complex problems to solve and then work out or discover the basic skills required. In teaching writing, the traditional approach equals to the product approach (Paulston & Bruder, 1976; Bowen, et.al., 1992), while the constructivist approach equals to the process approach (Gorel, 1991; Ede, 1992). The product approach views writing as a *linear* process, while process approach views writing as a *recursive* process of finding ideas, drafting, and revising. Product approach focuses on the end result of learning (product), whereas process approach focuses on the process the writers go through in composing texts.

The different views of teaching writing produce different techniques in teaching writing. The product approach produces the techniques that sequence from controlled, guided and free writing techniques. Controlled and guided writing are commonly applied to teach elementary and intermediate levels, while free writing is suggested for advanced learners. On the other hand, the process approach tends to apply techniques that give students opportunities to produce texts through the activities of generating ideas, drafting, and revising text. The teaching and learning activities are characterized by the presence of modeling, group work, conferencing, and self-assessment. In deciding which techniques selected to be used, Gebhard (1996) posits that beginning learners usually have more controlled techniques, whereas free techniques are suitable for more advanced learners. In addition, in selecting techniques of teaching writing Brown (2001) suggests the teachers to balance process and product and to teach the *rhetorical* and formal *conventions* of writing.

In designing English instruction in the CBC, teachers are required to develop English syllabus and lesson plan. Syllabus contains the units or groups of basic competencies having been ordered logically following a particular technique of organization. On the basis of the developed syllabus, teachers are required to write (daily) lesson plan for one or two meetings applicable for classroom use (Nurhadi & Senduk, 2003).

Although it is compulsory to teach writing, writing is not seriously handled by the English teachers. In the feasibility study in two senior high schools in Jember, it was revealed that the teachers tended to choose the types of writing activities which were practically conducted. Other writing activities such as writing short descriptive and narrative paragraphs, writing letters which were also targeted in the curriculum were avoided by the teachers. In support of teaching writing in the context of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), Scot & Ytreberg (1992) state that writing should be an integral part of FLT since writing activities can give the students the chance to express their personalities, help to consolidate learning in the other skill areas, and allow for conscious development of language mastery. Related to the development of thinking skills, Williamson (1991) posits that writing is an excellent tool to help students reason and analyze ideas with clarity, precision, and accuracy through a four-stage writing process: prewriting, composing, revising, and sharing. Besides, with the adoption of free market by ASEAN countries in 2003, and by APEC in 2018, the ability to communicate in the international arena becomes an unavoidable need.

In relation to the teaching of writing, the previous studies revealed that most studies on teaching writing were conducted at the university levels in ESL/EFL contexts. In ESL context a study by Winer (1992) examined the process of changes in the negative behaviors and attitudes of the graduate students towards writing and the teaching of writing. Peyton, et al. (1994) examined teachers implementing writing workshop with ESOL students. In EFL context, Cahyono (2001b and 2001a) examined the students' productivity in writing through the application of thematic writing and examined the effectiveness of journal writing.

The unavailability of empirical data on teaching writing conducted in senior high school in EFL context has given a room to investigate the area of study, whereas the temporary findings about the teaching practice of writing in two senior high schools by the English teachers in the feasibility study in Jember have given more opportunities to do in-depth investigation for the sake of understanding better the teaching of writing in the context of teaching English in senior high schools in Indonesian context. An understanding in the teaching of writing in this study was also unique as the subjects of the study were the English teachers whose schools were instructed to try out the CBC which would be formally implemented nationwide in the academic year 2004/2005.

In reference to the background of the study, the general objective of this study is to *evaluate* the teaching of writing by the English teachers trying out the CBC in the Regency of Jember. More specifically, this study is intended to *evaluate*: (1) the strategies in teaching writing employed by the

English teachers of senior high schools trying out the CBC; (2) the effectiveness of strategies employed by the English teachers of senior high schools in the students' attainment of the basic competence of writing; (3) the adequacy of writing materials taught by the English teachers of senior high schools trying the CBC ; (4) the effectiveness of technique in teaching writing of senior high schools trying out the CBC. The findings would provide evaluative information concerning the teaching of writing in the tryout of the CBC in 2003/2004 academic year.

Research Method

In evaluating the effectiveness of teaching writing, the present study applied the qualitative and quantitative methods. The logic of adopting the qualitative method is a need for obtaining in-depth information, whereas the quantitative method served as a confirmatory study *verifying* the findings of the qualitative study. In the qualitative method, the design of multi-case study was applied, while in the quantitative method the design of survey was applied. The qualitative data were collected from three SMA English teachers modeling the implementation of the CBC , while the quantitative data were collected from nine English teachers in non model senior high schools, selected using random sampling technique.

In the qualitative study, the main instrument to collect data is the researcher by conducting document analysis, in-depth interview and non participant observation. The quantitative data were collected from questionnaire developed in a closed question format. The process of qualitative data analysis begins from writing field notes, coding the field notes, writing summary, creating matrices, and drawing a conclusion based on the patterns emerging from the data. The performance of English teachers in designing strategies in teaching writing is evaluated based on the adequacy of teachers' knowledge and skills in using theory of materials organization, writing tasks, learning experiences, and writing assessment. In obtaining the trusted data, the present study applied a number of procedures, such as spending a great deal of time in the field, data triangulation, peer debriefing, and member check (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) The quantitative data were analyzed using the frequency distribution, and *chi-square* (x^2) test of a distribution. To know whether the obtained value is significantly different, the obtained value of x^2 is tested using 5 % significance level.

Results

Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Writing

In organizing writing materials in the syllabus, the MGMP forum has developed the syllabus based on the CBC published by the Center of Curriculum, 2002. As a communicative ELT syllabus, the basic competencies of English are grouped into the basic competence of listening, reading, speaking, and writing using themes as the umbrella for integrating the four language skills. In semester one, there were four themes (i.e. Education, Environment, Family Life, and Health) used as the scope of designing the language activities. In the syllabus, *writing* is always given a place in each unit of the English lesson. In detail, three basic competencies of writing targeted to be attained are: (1) writing English sentences, (2) writing short messages, (3) and filling in the forms related to public services. The attainment of writing English sentences is indicated by answering questions dictated by the teacher, writing free sentences dictated, and writing sentences in a paragraph to be dictated. The attainment of writing short messages is indicated by writing a message to be dictated, and writing a message based on the pictures. Lastly, the attainment of writing forms related to public services is indicated by filling in the forms related to public services or receipt. The basic competencies of writing are sequenced orderly, following the principle of complexity. The principle of complexity is indicated by applying hierarchical skills as shown by the placement of simpler writing materials at the beginning of a course.

In designing writing tasks, Teacher 1 (T1) designed task types under the category of guided and free writing tasks. Writing a story based on the picture series about dirty rivers is categorized as a guided writing task. Writing educational story of their own, describing a family of other classmate, and writing a letter for other family members are categorized as free writing activities. In terms of task *objectives*, writing tasks designed by T1 are intended to develop students' writing skill above the sentence levels, i.e. students' ability to express ideas in paragraph forms. In terms of *forms*, T1 designs three forms of narrative writing and one form of descriptive writing. Three of the writing tasks categorized as narrative writing are telling the educational background, telling a story based on the pictures, and telling about her conditions. One descriptive writing is describing a family of a classmate.

In terms of task *types*, the writing tasks designed by Teacher 2 (T2) can be grouped as a controlled writing task, guided writing tasks, and a free writing task. Writing answers of the text comprehensions can be grouped as the controlled writing task, writing a paragraph based on the pictures as guided writing tasks, and writing a short paragraph about staying healthy is

classified as free writing tasks based on particular topic. In terms of task *objectives*, answering the comprehension questions of the texts is intended to monitor students' understanding of the reading texts (display writing); guided writing tasks via pictures aim to develop students' ability to produce English texts in limited contexts. Next, writing a short paragraph about staying healthy aims to develop students' ability to explain a process of staying healthy. In terms of writing *forms*, there are three forms of writing developed by T 2 (i.e. descriptive and expository writing). Writing stimulated by pictures of unordered rubbish and the differences of the two families is grouped as descriptive writing. Lastly, a writing task explaining the tips to stay healthy is categorized as expository writing.

In terms of task *types*, the writing tasks designed by Teacher 3 (T3) can be grouped as a controlled writing task, guided writing tasks, and a free writing task. Writing English sentences in the simple past tense can be classified as a controlled writing task, while writing a message based on pictures and a habit of wearing helmet are categorized as guided tasks. Lastly, writing a procedural text about a recipe can be categorized as a free writing task. In terms of task *objectives*, writing English sentences in the simple past tense aims to develop students' ability in writing grammatically correct sentences. Writing a message based on the pictures aims to develop skills in writing paragraph, while writing a procedural text aims to develop paragraph-writing skill. In terms of writing *forms*, writing via pictures is used to develop descriptive writing, whereas writing a procedural text belongs to expository writing. In conclusion, T3 employs the graded strategy in developing students' writing skills.

In designing learning experiences, T1 always begins with pre-writing activities by asking students to collect information related to the writing tasks. To gather information for carrying out the writing tasks, T1 used the techniques of questioning, observation, interview, and reflection. Asking students about their elementary education, asking students to observe pictures, to interview a friend, and to reflect on their conditions are the examples of pre-writing activities designed by T1. Having gathered the ideas to be written, students are asked to write those ideas. Feedback is given from the samples of students' writing.

In designing writing tasks, T2 also frames the design of teaching writing in the conventional procedure. In collecting information related to the writing tasks, T2 used the techniques of observation, questioning, cooperation, and reflection. Observing and commenting on the pictures related to the topics, asking questions related to students' background knowledge on the topics discussed are samples of prewriting activities designed by T2. These techniques are used by the teacher for the purpose of

facilitating students in finding ideas for writing. Lastly, students receive feedback from the teacher classically through samples of students' writing.

In designing learning experiences, T3 is also influenced by the linear view of composing process. Learning activities are formatted in prewriting stage, drafting stage, and publishing stage. In prewriting stage, T3 activated students' background knowledge through picture, model text and sharing ideas. In writing a message, the teacher used the picture of SMA 7 building as a stimuli; in discussing simple past tense the teacher asked students to observe the texts; in discussing procedural texts the teacher asked students to observe the language and organizational features of the model text. Having activated students' background knowledge, T3 instructed the students to write and collect the finished composition.

Through learning experiences designed by T1, T2, and T3, it is concluded that the teaching of writing employed by the English teachers at the three senior high schools modeling the CBC in Jember is categorized as the linear model. Visually, the linear pattern of teaching writing can be diagrammed in Figure 1. On the basis of learning experiences designed by the teachers, it is concluded that the teachers in the model schools still could not design learning experiences that are appropriate with the targeted writing tasks they designed.

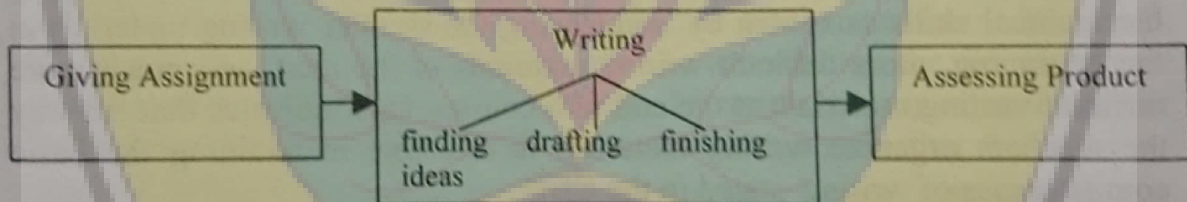


Figure 1 Patterns of Learning Experiences Designed by Three English Teachers

In assessing students' writing performance, T1 only assessed students' finished composition. T1 consistently assessed students' product for the purpose of providing feedback. For measuring the students' attainment of basic competence in writing, T1 consistently gave a formative test at the end of each unit. The result of the test was used to categorize students having mastered the basic competence and those having not mastered the basic competence.

As done by T1, T2 did not correct all compositions but took only samples of students' compositions. T2 also assessed the product of writing, intended to provide feedback. For measuring the attainment of basic competence in writing, T2 also consistently gave a formative test at the end

of each unit. It was a paper-pencil test designed to measure four language skills. In this case, speaking is tested indirectly through the objective test in multiple choice and completion formats. Apart from that, some writing skill was also tested indirectly in the formative test. Of the four formative tests, composition task was given once at the end of unit 3. From the result of the test, students who have mastered the basic competence and those who have not can be identified.

In assessing students' writing performance, T3 consistently assessed students' writing tasks for giving feedback. In correcting the writing tasks, T3 used the strategies of the whole-class correction, correction on all students' writing tasks, and correction on the samples of students' writing tasks. T3 also consistently assessed the product of writing intended to provide feedback as done by T1 and T2. For measuring the attainment of basic competence in writing, T3 also consistently conducted formative test at the end of each unit. It is the paper-pencil test designed to measure four language skills.

Effectiveness of the English Teachers' Strategies in Attaining the Basic Competencies of Writing

By analyzing the contents of writing materials in the English syllabus, it is revealed the teachers organize the writing materials by following the principle of complexity. The principle of complexity is indicated by applying hierarchical skills as shown by sequencing the simpler writing materials at the beginning, more difficult writing materials in the next, and much more difficult writing materials at the end of a course. This indicates that the way the teachers organize writing materials is effective in attaining the basic competencies of writing stated in the CBC.

Most writing tasks designed by three English teachers do not comply with the basic competencies of writing and the indicators written in the curriculum. The inappropriateness of the writing tasks deals with the neglect of the performance indicators in each basic competence. The skill of writing English sentences as indicated by the students' ability to write sentences to be dictated and to write sentences in a paragraph to be dictated, for example, are not designed by three English teachers as the writing tasks. Other examples that are also neglected by the teachers have to do with writing a short message to be dictated, and writing forms related to public services or receipt. This indicates that the writing tasks designed by the teachers are not effective to attain the basic competencies of writing targeted in the CBC.

Concerning learning activities, it can be identified the learning experiences designed by the English teachers in three senior high schools in Jember follow the linear model of writing process. Via this model, students

are expected to produce texts that meet certain standard of prescribed English rhetorical style, reflect accurate grammar, and be well-organized (Brown, 2001). By comparing the writing tasks designed by the teachers and the learning activities designed to attain the objective of writing tasks, it is concluded that such simple activities may not be effective in attaining the writing objective.

Concerning writing assessment, it is identified that the English teachers assess students' writing skill through the text written by the students. Aspects to be assessed deal with ungrammatically correct sentences, while feedback is mostly given to samples of students' writing and once given to all students' writing. With respect to the criteria used to evaluate students' product as well as the coverage of writing to be corrected, it can be inferred that the assessment techniques used by the teachers are not effective. The absence on the use of process approach assessment is a strong indication of the teachers' unfamiliarity with the new model of assessment.

Adequacy of Writing Materials Taught by the Teachers

The score distribution of writing materials taught by the teachers in the teaching of writing is presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows that one English teacher teaches 75 % - 100 % writing materials stated in the CBC or under the category of very adequate. Six English teacher teaches 50 % - 74 % or under the category of adequate, one English teacher teaches 25 % - 49 % or under the category of inadequate, one English teacher teaches 0 % - 24 % or under the category of very inadequate. To test whether the distribution of score in each category is significantly different, the chi-square test of distribution is applied. The result of computation shows that the obtained value of χ^2 is 8.333, while the critical value of χ^2 with 5 % significance level (df 3) is 7.815. As χ^2 value is higher than the critical value of χ^2 ($8.333 > 7.815$), it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the adequacy of writing materials designed and taught by the four groups .

Table 1. Category of Writing Materials Taught by the Teachers and Its Frequency Distribution

Category	Score interval	Percentages of writing materials Taught by the Teachers	Frequency
Very adequate	20-22	75 - 100	1
Adequate	17-19	50 - 74	6
Inadequate	14-16	25 - 49	1
Very inadequate	11-13	0 - 24	1

Effectiveness of Techniques in Teaching Writing

Table 2 summarizes scores obtained from the questionnaire for inferring the adoption of technique in teaching writing. In the table it is revealed that seven English teachers follow 0 % - 33 % procedures of teaching writing in the process approach, one English teacher follows 33.4 % - 66.6 % procedures of teaching writing in the process approach, and one English teacher follows 66.7 % - 100 % procedure of teaching writing in the process approach. This means that most of the English teachers tend to teach writing under the category of the linear model.

Table 2. Category of Technique in Teaching Writing and Its Frequency Distribution

Category	% of teaching procedures in the process approach followed by the teachers	Frequency
Linear model	0 - 33.3 %	7
Neither linear nor recursive model	33.4 - 66.6 %	1
Recursive model	66.7- 100 %	1

To test whether the three groups of score are significantly different, the chi-square test of distribution is applied. The result shows that the obtained value of χ^2 is 8.000, whereas the critical value with 5 % significance level (df 1) is 5.991. As the obtained value of χ^2 exceeds the critical value (8.000 > 5.991), it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the adoption of technique in teaching writing among the three groups.

Discussion

In designing English syllabus, schools are already given autonomy and English teachers have developed syllabus through the MGMP forum. Nevertheless, at the level of implementation, most of the teachers do not follow the syllabus written by the MGMP forum. This may happen due to incomplete understanding of the CBC and the absence of CBC implementation model.

In designing writing tasks, the findings strongly indicate that the English teachers may not understand the CBC. Conceptually, performance indicators serve as a minimum target that must be attained. So, paragraph writing activities taught by the teachers will not be in contradictory with the CBC designed by the teachers as long as the minimum target as stated in the curriculum has been attained. Other possible explanation concerning the teachers' misinterpretation is that when the teachers follow some training on the CBC, they become more confused as they are instructed to use another

kind of CBC published by the Directorate of Basic and Middle Education (draft form).

In designing learning experiences, it is revealed that teachers reflect the application of product approach in teaching writing. This pattern emerges entirely in the controlled writing activities, guiding writing activities, and semi-free writing activities. This could happen as the indicators stated in the CBC published by the Center of Curriculum, 2002 explicitly direct the teachers to apply the product approach and the teachers may be familiar with the conventional model of teaching writing. Besides the product approach, the teachers can employ process approach emphasizing the formation of fluency instead of accuracy. The solely use of product approach in teaching writing may have some impacts on students' writing skill as both the grammatical accuracy and fluency are equally important in the formation of writing skill.

In designing assessment techniques, the teachers only employ the product assessment for assessing the quality of students' composition. With a rapid development of assessment procedures, it is expected that the teachers understand the system of evaluation used in the competence based curriculum. In assessing the students' compositions, the teachers did not use the scoring guide to categorize *very good work*, *good work*, *average work*, *poor work*, and *very poor work*. Without scoring guide, different raters may give scores which possibly can be far different from one another. The absence of a scoring guide may affect the reliability of scores obtained by the students.

As there are significant differences in the adequacy of writing materials taught among the four groups, it can be inferred that the English teachers trying out the CBC neglect the required writing materials to be taught. As reflected in the data, a small number of English teacher who falls under the category of *very adequate* indicates the seriousness in the neglect of the writing materials required to be taught by the teachers. Inadequacy of writing materials taught by the teachers might threaten the attainment of 70% mastery learning of subject matter achieved by students.

The adoption of the linear model of teaching writing by the English teachers in the Regency of Jember is due to several factors, such as the teachers' familiarity with the product approach in the teaching of L2 writing, and teachers' unfamiliarity with the process approach in teaching writing.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In general, it is concluded that the teaching of writing by the English teachers in senior high schools trying out the competence based curriculum

in 2003/2004 academic year is judged to be ineffective, except their competence in organizing writing materials. In detail, it is revealed that the English teachers: (1) could not design writing tasks that are relevant with the targeted indicators stated in the CBC, (2) could not design learning experiences that are appropriate with the targeted writing tasks they designed, (3) could not conduct writing assessment correctly. The teachers' strategies in designing writing tasks, learning experiences and assessment techniques are ineffective. In teaching writing, the English teachers in non-model schools have a tendency to adopt the linear model of teaching writing under the product.

On the basis of the findings, Department of National Education is recommended to hold in-service training program by inviting competent facilitators having English education background. The English Teachers Forum (MGMP) is recommended to do collaboration with the English Education Department to discuss the issues related to the implementation of the CBC. English Education Department is recommended to adjust its curriculum with the needs of stakeholders.

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