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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING STUDENTS' PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTING GENRE-BASED LEARNING (GBL) IN DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING FOR WRITING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines students' practices, perceptions, and challenges in learning English writing through Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) in two Senior High Schools in Bekasi Regency. Using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with twenty students, the research explores how genre writing steps, model texts, and differentiated tasks support the development of writing skills. The findings indicate that GBL and DI help students understand text structure, construct clearer sentences, and generate ideas more effectively. Students perceived the instructional guidance as clear and supportive, and reported increased motivation when writing tasks were varied, collaborative, and aligned with their ability levels. However, students also experienced difficulties such as limited vocabulary, grammatical challenges, spelling errors, and adjusting to different writing genres. To overcome these barriers, they employed various strategies, including using dictionaries, searching for examples online, and seeking assistance from teachers or peers. This study provides practical implications for English teachers to integrate structured guidance and differentiated support in writing lessons. It also contributes to existing literature by demonstrating how GBL and DI can enhance writing competence and learner engagement in the Indonesian EFL high school context.

Keywords: Genre-Based Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Practice, Perception, Writing Skills.

EKSPLORASI PRAKTIK DAN PERSEPSI SISWA DALAM MENERAPKAN PEMBELAJARAN BERBASIS GENRE (GBL) DALAM PEMBELAJARAN BERDIFERENSIASI UNTUK PENGEMBANGAN KETERAMPILAN MENULIS

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Abstrak: Penelitian kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi praktik, persepsi, dan tantangan siswa dalam pembelajaran menulis bahasa Inggris melalui integrasi metode Genre-Based Learning (GBL) dan Differentiated Instruction (DI) di dua Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) di Kabupaten Bekasi. Dengan menggunakan observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap 20 siswa, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana tahapan penulisan genre, penggunaan teks model, dan pemberian tugas yang terdiferensiasi dapat mendukung pengembangan keterampilan menulis siswa. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kombinasi GBL dan DI membantu siswa memahami struktur teks secara mendalam, menyusun kalimat dengan lebih jelas, serta mengembangkan ide secara lebih efektif. Siswa menilai bimbingan instruksional yang diberikan guru bersifat jelas dan suportif. Selain itu, motivasi belajar siswa meningkat ketika tugas menulis disajikan secara bervariasi, kolaboratif, dan disesuaikan dengan tingkat kemampuan masing-masing. Meskipun demikian, siswa masih menghadapi beberapa kendala, seperti keterbatasan kosakata, hambatan tata bahasa, kesalahan ejaan, serta proses adaptasi terhadap berbagai genre teks yang berbeda. Untuk mengatasi hambatan tersebut, siswa menerapkan berbagai strategi, antara lain menggunakan kamus, mencari referensi contoh secara daring, serta meminta bantuan dari guru maupun teman sejawat. Studi ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pengajar bahasa Inggris mengenai pentingnya mengintegrasikan bimbingan terstruktur dan dukungan terdiferensiasi. Selain itu, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur pendidikan dengan menunjukkan bahwa GBL dan DI mampu meningkatkan kompetensi menulis serta keterlibatan siswa dalam konteks pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: *Genre-Based Learning*, Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi, Praktik, Persepsi, Keterampilan Menulis.

INTRODUCTION

Writing plays a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it integrates linguistic knowledge, cognitive skills, and cultural understanding. Through writing activities, students' express ideas, organize arguments, and develop logical and coherent thinking. Writing also allows learners to refine language accuracy, cohesion, and coherence while supporting academic achievement and communicative competence in various contexts. According to Harmer (2007), writing enables language learners to reflect on and internalize linguistic forms through meaningful expression. Similarly, Hyland (2016) explains that writing is not merely the final product of language learning but a process that contributes to linguistic, cognitive, and social development. In Indonesia, particularly in Bekasi Regency, writing instruction is strongly emphasized in senior high school education under the Merdeka Curriculum. However, many students still struggle to produce well-structured texts, highlighting the need for effective instructional strategies to improve writing competence (Brown, 2001).

Developing writing proficiency remains a significant challenge for many EFL learners. Students often experience difficulties generating ideas, organizing content, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary, which frequently leads to fragmented and incoherent texts. Limited writing practice, insufficient feedback, and low motivation further hinder students' progress. In heterogeneous classrooms, differences in language proficiency can also create anxiety and reduce students' confidence in expressing ideas in English. Weigle (2002) emphasizes that writing in a foreign language is cognitively demanding because learners must simultaneously manage linguistic knowledge, writing conventions, and ideas with limited proficiency. Furthermore, Graham & Perin (2007) argue that effective writing instruction should provide structured guidance through stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and reflecting. In addition, differences in students' backgrounds and prior exposure

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to English in Bekasi Regency often influence their writing performance, making scaffolded learning essential in accordance with the sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978).

Genre-Based Learning (GBL) offers a systematic approach to teaching writing by emphasizing the social purposes, structures, and linguistic features of different text types. Through the analysis of model texts and guided practice, students learn how to construct coherent writing based on genre conventions. Martin & Rose (2008) explain that genre-based pedagogy helps learners understand the relationship between form, function, and meaning in writing. Likewise, Hyland (2007) states that GBL connects meaning, form, and context through explicit instruction and scaffolded stages such as Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of Text (MOT), Joint Construction of Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of Text (ICOT). However, implementing GBL in classrooms with diverse proficiency levels can be challenging. Derewianka (2003) notes that genre pedagogy requires adaptation to accommodate students' varied readiness levels, especially in heterogeneous classrooms such as those found in Bekasi Regency.

To address these differences, Differentiated Instruction (DI) provides a flexible teaching approach that adapts learning activities, materials, and assessments according to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. DI ensures that all learners can engage with tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty while receiving adequate support. Gregory & Chapman (2013) argue that differentiation promotes inclusivity by tailoring instruction to meet diverse learning needs. Similarly, Tomlinson (2017) describes DI as an approach that personalizes learning experiences through tiered activities, flexible grouping, and varied instructional strategies. Research by Santangelo & Tomlinson (2009) further highlights that differentiated learning increases students' motivation, engagement, and autonomy. When combined with GBL, DI enables teachers to provide structured genre instruction while accommodating the diverse abilities of students in multicultural and multi-level classrooms.

Several previous studies support the effectiveness of the Genre-Based Approach in improving writing skills. Research by Tarigan (2023) demonstrated that scaffolded instruction in GBA significantly improved students' understanding of text structure and linguistic features. Similarly, Indrawati & Subadiyono (2019) developed the Process Genre-Based Approach (PGBA), which integrates process writing stages with genre instruction to enhance academic writing competence. Studies by Syafitri (2016) and Rahmadani et al. (2022) revealed that the implementation of GBA improves students' ability to organize ideas and produce coherent texts, although challenges such as limited vocabulary, time constraints, and teacher training remain. Additionally, Listiyawati et al. (2025) found through a mixed-method study that GBA significantly improved students' writing performance and motivation. While these studies mainly focus on GBA alone, the present research aims to explore the integration of Genre-Based Learning and Differentiated Instruction to address diverse student needs. By adopting a qualitative descriptive approach involving classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis, this study seeks to examine students' practices and perceptions of implementing GBL within DI in senior high schools in Bekasi Regency, providing deeper insights into writing development in the local EFL context (Creswell, 2014).

In conclusion, in Merdeka Curriculum the integration of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) offers a promising pedagogical framework for enhancing students' English writing skills. By combining the structured stages of genre-based pedagogy with the flexibility of differentiated learning, this approach effectively addresses students' diverse needs, readiness levels, and learning preferences. The use of explicit modelling, scaffolded guidance, and adaptive learning tasks enables students to construct well-organized, coherent, and meaningful texts. Furthermore, integrating GBL with DI fosters students' writing performance, engagement, and local challenges among learners, thereby contributing to the development of more competent and independent writers in the EFL context. In light of these considerations, the researcher aims to explore the research under the title: "Exploring Students' Practices and Perceptions of Implementing



Genre-Based Learning (GBL) in Differentiated Instruction for Writing Skill Development (A Qualitative Study at State Senior High Schools in Bekasi Regency)”.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative research design, specifically employing a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how Genre-Based Learning (GBL) integrated with Differentiated Instruction (DI) is utilized in teaching writing skills at state senior high schools in Bekasi Regency. By applying the principles of Creswell (2013, 2018), the study moves beyond quantifiable outcomes to capture an in-depth understanding of students' lived experiences, beliefs, and practices at SMAN 9 and SMAN 2 Tambun Selatan. Through the iterative thematic analysis suggested by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), the research identifies recurring patterns in student engagement and development, ensuring that findings authentically reflect their voices. Ultimately, by prioritizing the credibility and trustworthiness emphasized by Patton (2002), this study provides a rich, contextual account of how differentiated writing tasks and genre-based guidance influence student competence, offering a nuanced perspective rather than a broad generalization.

This research explores the practices and perceptions of state senior high school students regarding the integration of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) for writing skill development in Bekasi Regency. The process began with selecting a focus on EFL writing through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Differentiated Learning, followed by a comprehensive literature review to identify existing research gaps in the Indonesian context. After developing a theoretical framework and qualitative instruments, including semi-structured interviews, classroom observation checklists, and document analysis protocols, purposive sampling was used to select participants from SMAN 9 and SMAN 2 Tambun Selatan. Data collection involved interviewing students, observing English lessons, and analyzing instructional artifacts, which were then processed through thematic analysis and triangulation to ensure validity. Ultimately, the findings were synthesized to highlight the role of integrated GBL and DI in enhancing writing competence, leading to a final report that offers practical recommendations for teachers while reflecting on research limitations and proposing future longitudinal studies.

The subjects of this research were senior high school students who were learning writing through the integration of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). The study aimed to explore how students practiced writing within the GBL framework and DI strategies, as well as to investigate their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of these instructional approaches in improving their writing skills. The selected participants were tenth-grade students from SMAN 9 Tambun Selatan and SMAN 2 Tambun Selatan, both located in Bekasi Regency. These students had prior experience participating in writing activities through the integration of GBL and DI in their English lessons, including analysing model texts, collaboratively constructing texts, and independently producing texts across various genres. In addition, the students were involved in differentiated learning tasks designed to accommodate their individual learning levels and needs.

The criteria for selecting participants included their exposure to GBL and DI in their English writing classes and their willingness to provide detailed insights into their writing practices, challenges, and perceptions of the integrated approach. This research employed purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. A total of 20 students were selected, consisting of 10 students from each school, all of whom had actively participated in writing instruction through the combined GBL & DI approach. Purposive sampling was chosen because it enables the researcher to select participants who are most knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied and who can provide in-depth insights based on their experiences (Creswell, 2013). This non-probability sampling technique focuses on selecting participants based on their relevance to the study rather than random selection. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling allows researchers to focus on individuals who possess essential characteristics that can help in understanding the research phenomenon.

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The primary data collection methods for this research were semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. According to Creswell (2018), interviews are an effective way to gather in-depth, meaningful data, as they provide an opportunity to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, and practices in depth while maintaining flexibility. In this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insights into how students practice writing through Genre-Based Learning (GBL) integrated with Differentiated Instruction (DI) and to explore their perceptions of these instructional methods in enhancing their writing skills. The interviews enabled students to share their experiences with writing tasks, the strategies they used, and the challenges they faced when engaging with GBL and DI. By using open-ended questions, the interviews generated rich qualitative data that reflected students' personal insights into their learning practices and perceptions of the instructional methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, derived from coding and thematic analysis of interview transcripts, classroom observations, and supporting documents, identified ten major themes related to students' writing practices, perceptions, and challenges in English writing lessons implemented through Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI). These themes include teaching practices, task appropriateness, student participation, helpfulness of writing steps, student motivation, key elements supporting writing development, writing difficulties, challenges in completing varied tasks, strategies for overcoming difficulties, and students' suggestions for improvement. Overall, the analysis highlights how students engage in genre writing activities, how they perceive instructional support, and the interconnected nature of participation, motivation, and learning strategies in the writing classroom.

Students' practices in English writing instruction revealed that they engaged in structured and guided activities under the implementation of GBL and DI. Writing lessons typically began with reading or analyzing model texts, followed by observing teacher demonstrations, and finally composing their own sentences or paragraphs. Students such as S1 and S5 noted that these practices helped them understand correct spelling and follow examples provided by the teacher, while S11 and S15 emphasized applying what they learned independently after observing models. These findings indicate the use of a gradual release model, where teacher support serves as a foundation before students transition to independent writing.

Regarding task appropriateness and level of difficulty, most students perceived the writing tasks as suitable for their ability levels. S1 mentioned that the tasks were relatively easy to complete, while S5 acknowledged that although most tasks were appropriate, some parts remained challenging. Similarly, S11 and S15 confirmed that the assignments matched their capabilities. These responses suggest that GBL and DI effectively calibrated task difficulty, ensuring that students could complete tasks with appropriate support while still experiencing meaningful challenges that promote learning.

Students' participation and engagement in writing activities were dynamic and varied. Some students actively helped peers, while others followed teacher instructions and engaged in collaborative discussions when facing difficulties. S1 highlighted helping classmates, S5 emphasized discussion with peers, and S11 noted correcting mistakes based on teacher feedback. S15 expressed enthusiasm for writing due to engaging and varied activities. These patterns demonstrate that GBL and DI fostered a collaborative and interactive classroom environment that encouraged active participation and responsibility in learning.

In terms of perceptions, students reported that the writing steps provided through GBL and DI were highly helpful. Structured stages such as identifying topics, outlining, analyzing texts, and constructing sentences made the writing process more organized and manageable. S1 appreciated the step-by-step process, while S5 highlighted the clarity gained from organizing ideas into structured sentences. S11 and S15 also noted that these steps supported their understanding and engagement.



Overall, these findings show that systematic instructional guidance improved students' confidence and reduced confusion in writing.

Student motivation toward varied writing tasks was generally positive. Many students expressed enthusiasm, particularly when tasks were interesting, diverse, and aligned with their interests. S1 felt motivated by learning new things, S5 enjoyed engaging tasks, S11 showed intrinsic motivation due to interest in English, and S15 appreciated varied themes that prevented boredom. These findings indicate that task variation, novelty, and relevance significantly contributed to students' motivation and engagement in writing activities.

Students also identified key elements that supported their writing development, including sentence structure guidance, teacher-provided examples, vocabulary development, and idea generation. S1 emphasized the importance of clear sentence structure, while S5 highlighted the usefulness of examples in constructing correct sentences. S11 mentioned a combination of ideas, structure, and vocabulary, and S15 reinforced the importance of sentence organization. These results suggest that structured instructional components play a crucial role in improving students' writing skills within GBL and DI frameworks.

Despite these positive aspects, students encountered several difficulties when writing English texts. Common challenges included spelling, vocabulary selection, grammar accuracy, and translating ideas from Indonesian into English. S1 struggled with correct spelling, S5 faced difficulties with vocabulary and grammar, S11 experienced limitations in translating ideas, and S15 found word choice challenging. These findings indicate that linguistic limitations remain significant barriers in the writing process, even with structured instructional support.

Students also faced challenges in completing varied writing tasks, particularly when adapting to different genres such as descriptive texts and simple past narratives. S1 noted difficulties in remembering spelling and pronunciation, while S5 emphasized the challenge of adjusting writing styles across genres. S11 highlighted difficulties in constructing sentences according to required structures, and S15 pointed out challenges in aligning ideas with different writing types. These findings show that genre variation increases cognitive and linguistic demands, requiring continuous scaffolding.

To overcome these difficulties, students employed various strategies, including using digital tools, consulting dictionaries, seeking help from teachers and peers, and practicing through online platforms. S1 used social media and language applications, S5 combined dictionary use and online searches with peer and teacher consultation, while S11 and S15 relied on guidance from teachers and peers. These strategies reflect a combination of independent learning and collaborative support, indicating students' active efforts to improve their writing skills.

Students also provided constructive suggestions for improving writing lessons. They recommended clearer instruction, more practice opportunities, visual aids, engaging activities, and the inclusion of games or collaborative tasks. S1 emphasized the need for additional time and manageable exercises, S5 suggested visual examples and group work, while S11 and S15 recommended games and interest-based topics. These suggestions highlight students' preference for interactive, supportive, and engaging learning environments.

The discussion of these findings aligns with established theories and previous research. The structured writing practices reflect scaffolding theory (Gibbons, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978) and the writing process model (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Students' experiences also demonstrate key principles of the Genre-Based Approach (Emilia, 2010; Derewianka, 2003), where modelling and joint construction precede independent writing. Previous studies by Syafitri (2016) and Rahmadani et al. (2022) support these findings, confirming that genre-based instruction improves writing structure, vocabulary, and organization.

Furthermore, students' positive perceptions and motivation align with differentiated instruction theories (Gregory & Chapman, 2013; Heacox, 2019) and research by Graham & Perin (2007), which emphasize the importance of structured guidance and feedback in enhancing

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engagement. However, the challenges students faced are consistent with Harmer (2007), Hyland (2004, 2016), and Martin & Rose (2008), highlighting common EFL writing difficulties. Supported by studies in Indonesian contexts (Cenrikawaty et al., 2020; Indrawati & Subadiyono, 2019; Listiyawati et al., 2025; Tarigan, 2023), this study reinforces the effectiveness of integrating GBL and DI. It emphasizes the need for continued teacher development, adequate resources, and interactive strategies to enhance students' writing proficiency, confidence, and engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

This research explored students' writing practices, perceptions, and challenges during the implementation of Genre-Based Learning (GBL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) in English writing lessons at SMAN 9 Tambun Selatan and SMAN 2 Tambun Selatan. Using a qualitative descriptive approach supported by interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, the study examined how students engaged in guided writing activities, how they perceived the instructional support provided by GBL and DI, and what challenges they encountered when completing writing tasks. The findings indicate that integrating GBL and DI offers meaningful insights into students' learning experiences and demonstrates the effectiveness of structured writing instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

The results revealed that students actively participated in writing activities through guided stages such as observing model texts, following teacher instructions, constructing sentences, and drafting texts with scaffolded support. Collaborative learning also played an important role, as students frequently worked with peers to clarify difficult aspects of writing tasks. These practices show that the integration of GBL and DI creates structured learning pathways that gradually guide students from supported writing activities toward independent text production. As a result, students were able to build confidence, develop writing skills, and better understand genre-specific text organization.

Theoretically, this research supports and extends several existing writing theories, including the concept of scaffolding proposed by Gibbons (2002), the cognitive writing process model developed by Flower & Hayes (1981), and genre-based pedagogy discussed by Emilia (2005) and Derewianka (2003). Practically, the findings suggest that teachers should strengthen the integration of GBL and DI through explicit modelling, visual scaffolds, collaborative learning, and differentiated tasks. Schools should also support teachers through continuous professional development and adequate instructional resources to enhance writing instruction in EFL classrooms.

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