
Genre-Based VS Problem-Based Approaches: A Comparative Study in English Classrooms for Junior High School Contexts

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Abstract

Approaches, strategies, and methods are significant elements that highly divine the successful teaching and learning process. Having been concerned with two different teaching approaches, this research study aimed to explore the comparison between the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) implementation in English subjects for junior high school students. This research used a comparative descriptive study located at MTs Negeri 1 Malang and MTs Negeri 2 Malang. In-depth interviews and direct observations were two primary data collection techniques in this research. The data analysis was conducted using data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The findings revealed key distinctions in implementation: GBA at MTsN 1 Malang followed four stages (BKoF, MoT, JCoT, and ICoT) with modifications like peer-review activities and interactive modeling, which enhanced students' listening, writing, speaking, and collaboration skills. In contrast, PBL at MTsN 2 Malang emphasized critical thinking through authentic problem-solving tasks in five stages, including guided investigations, group presentations, and reflections, which fostered critical thinking, communication, and cooperation. Both methods were effective in improving English skills and fostering collaboration, though GBA focused more on building individual understanding, while PBL prioritized problem-solving and group interaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that having the ability to master English is very fundamental in today's era. As an international language, English is the most widely used language globally, commonly called *Lingua Franca* (Thariq et al., 2021). English is one of the benchmarks in receiving education in universities, both national and international. English can also help a person get a better job position (Istifadah et al., 2022). Furthermore, Susanto and Nanda (2018) agree with this by stating that English can support a person's ability to improve their quality to compete globally and open up many opportunities for career paths worldwide.

In terms of learning English, students must master its four basic skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Those whole-language aspects are strongly interrelated and intertwined (Aydoğan & Akbarov, 2014). Some studies claim that students should have opportunities to simultaneously use all four aspects (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in meaningful, functional, and cooperative activities (Carrasquillo, 1993; Farris & Kaczmariski, 1988). However, increasing sensitivity to one's lexical abilities takes long habituation, especially in learning English as a foreign language. This statement aligns with Arndt and Woore (2018) who explained that a person's ability to write, improve lexical resources, and improve grammatical accuracy is also influenced by how long they take to familiarize themselves with reading in the target language. That is why, in Indonesia, English language learning is pursued starting from the first level of education.

In teaching at school, each essential skill in English requires different treatment. This treatment is based on educators' approaches, strategies and methods. Approach is a systematic insight used to determine strategies, methods, and techniques (procedures) to achieve targets following the learning objectives. An approach can also be interpreted as a perspective or way of looking at something (Seknun, 2013). Strategy and method are two components of the approach used as tools to achieve learning objectives (Trianto, 2007). Gerlach and Ely (1980) define learning strategies as ways to deliver subject matter in a particular learning

environment, including the nature, scope, and sequence of activities that can provide learning experiences to students. However, learning strategies are also still broad, consisting of all components of learning materials and learning procedures.

Meanwhile, a method is a way that is specifically procedural as a tool to achieve learning objectives, both for teachers (teaching methods) and for students (learning methods). The better the method used, the more influential the achievement of goals (Surakhmad, 1986). Since implementation, these approaches, strategies, and methods are interrelated. Therefore, using the three in the learning process must be very concerned to obtain an effective learning process. This reason then underlies this research that the exploration of an approach, strategy, or method that teachers in the classroom are implementing needs to be done.

The two learning approaches and methods often used in English language teaching are the Genre-Based Approach and Problem-Based Learning. Many studies have proven the success of these two approaches and methods. Genre-Based Approach is a genre-based learning approach that focuses on teaching language based on text types (Reppen, 1994). Meanwhile, Problem-based learning is a learning model in which students are exposed to real problems to learn to find solutions to these problems (Ardianti et al., 2021). The fundamental difference between this learning model and the Genre-Based Approach is that it can be used in any educational discourse. Thus, this fundamental difference is the second basis for researchers to explore further.

Based on previous research conducted on February 10, 2023, at MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Malang, English learning in class VII MTsN 1 Malang applies a Genre-Based Approach. In addition, seventh-grade English language learning in MTsN 2 Malang applies problem-based learning. However, the next question is whether implementing both approaches or strategies can provide good results, mainly if Problem-Based Learning is carried out in language learning. What are the differences between implementing PBL and GBA as an approach specifically for language learning? The answer is still unknown. What is clear is how well various factors determine the learning outcomes. Therefore, to determine the factors that affect student learning outcomes, it is necessary to compare the application of the two methods in English language learning.

Some previous studies have discussed the application of GBA and PBL in junior high schools, such as research by Abbaszadeh (2013); Estrini (2021) which discussed the application of GBA; and Ali (2019); Saidi (2022) which discussed the application of PBL. There are similarities in the final results of the research on applying GBA. This approach can improve students' communicative competence in language learning and influence collaborative skills through group-based learning. Their final results highlighted the benefits of GBA in enhancing students' learning experience and learning outcomes. In addition, the third and fourth studies related to the discussion of PBL methods both emphasize the effectiveness of using PBL methods in student development. The similarity of the two studies also highlights the importance of teamwork during learning. Thus, the similarity of the research results of the two PBL-related studies is that both show PBL as a practical approach to improve student learning outcomes, emphasize real-life problem solving, teamwork, and the importance of teacher training in applying PBL in language learning.

Thus, from the four studies above, this is the first time anyone has specifically compared the application of GBA and PBL learning methods directly in two schools in English language learning at the junior high school level. Therefore, matching the two methods is expected to provide a new picture for educators, especially in English subjects at school, to assess which method application can provide maximum output on students' language skills, especially at the junior high school level.

Therefore, this study aims to address the issues about the implementation of English teaching methods at two educational institutions, namely MTs Negeri 1 Malang and MTs Negeri 2 Malang. Specifically, the research seeks to explore how the implementation of these methods differs between the two schools, examine the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the process, and analyze the English skills that are elaborated during the learning process by using the particular methods. By doing so, the study sets out two primary objectives: first, to identify the key differences in the implementation of English teaching methods between MTs Negeri 1 Malang and MTs Negeri 2 Malang; and second, to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this implementation at each institution. These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive

understanding of the practical application of the curriculum in fostering English language education in these schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Genre Based Approach (GBA)

In learning English, there is a need for a learning approach adapted to students' context and needs. GBA is a learning approach considered appropriate for improving students' language competence. According to Feez and Joyce (1998) GBA is reciprocal language learning between teachers and students. The meaning of this is that the role of each teacher and student is significant in achieving the determined learning objectives. Using genre as a means for communication and pedagogy, GBA intends to be a bridge in learning language contexts to achieve social and textual functions. Richard et.al (1993) in Pujiati and Tamela (2018) stated: "A genre is usually characterized by its communicative purpose(s) in general, associated themes, conventions, the channel of communication, audience types, and sometimes the roles of the writer and readers" .

The application of GBA in learning has two cycles and four stages (Hammond et al., 1992). The first cycle begins with the Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) stage, where teachers and students help each other build cultural contexts, share stories of experiences, and discuss vocabulary appropriate to the material to be discussed. In the second stage, namely Modeling of Text (MOT), students are given examples by the teacher, which can be in the form of conversations or teaching materials adapted to the predetermined learning objectives. At this stage, students only respond by listening to explanations or examples given by the teacher. After students provide a communicative response in the form of listening, the next stage is Joint Construction of Text (JCoT). In the JCoT stage, students begin to develop the examples given with help from peers and teachers, such as having group discussions about the material presented at the MOT stage. After passing the JCoT stage, they enter the Independent Construction of Text (ICoT) stage, where students can convey the results of discussions with peers accompanied by the teacher. Thus, this first cycle combines students' speaking and listening skills.

The second cycle focuses on the goal of developing students' writing skills. The second cycle is similar to the first cycle, the second cycle also goes through four stages as in the first cycle. The difference lies in the Modeling of Text (MOT) stage, where students are presented with written text during the second cycle. At this MOT stage, students can develop reading skills, which later at the Joint Construction of Text (JCoT) stage, students can develop in the form of writing texts in groups accompanied by the teacher. Moreover, in the final stage, Independent Construction of Text (ICoT), students can produce written text independently. Thus, the GBA model includes the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students can speak based on what they hear, then read based on the topics discussed, and write based on what they have read.

2.2. Problem Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning method adopted from the principles of constructivism. PBL focuses on solving problems given to students so that students are actively involved in the learning process. PBL learning aims to train students' critical thinking skills in solving given problems and learning to become more independent in dealing with problems (Ikawati, 2023). PBL emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and collaboration abilities. It also emphasizes a deeper understanding of the learning material because students must apply their knowledge to solve real problems. PBL also develops lifelong learning skills as students learn how to learn effectively through this process.

According to the theory developed by Barrow as quoted in Mayasari et al. (2022) PBL has five main characteristics, namely: (1) student-centred learning, learning that is independent and centred on students is the main focus; (2) authentic problems, the problems raised are authentic or come from complex and unstructured real-world situations; (3) self-directed learning, students learn from direct sources, whether books or other sources of information; (4) small group learning, learning is carried out in small groups; and (5) teachers are facilitators, teachers only act as facilitators. These five characteristics are accommodated in the following activities (Saputra, 2020): (1) student orientation to problems; (2) organizing students to study; (3) guiding individual and group inquiry; (4) developing and presenting work results; and (5) analyze and evaluate the problem-solving process. In the learning process at school, students

listen to teacher lectures and participate in discussion activities. Students also explore by reading books in the library, searching on websites, or asking for direct sources (Mayasari et al., 2022). More than that, collaboration, communication and cooperation between students are highly emphasized in PBL-based learning (Saidi, 2022).

3. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a comparative method or comparative study. Sukmadinata (2017) defines a comparative study as comparing two or more conditions, variables, events, activities, or similar things with similar concepts (apple to apple). Comparative research seeks fundamental answers about causality by analyzing the factors that cause the occurrence or emergence of certain phenomena (Nazir, 1988). In this case, the comparative study compares two implementations of learning methods in English subjects in two schools: Genre Based Approach and Problem-Based Learning. The comparison here emphasizes the method or approach used during English learning. It seeks the difference between those methods and the skills students acquire through the learning activities.

The types of data in this study are divided into two: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data that, every time it is taken, becomes something new in the scientific discipline (Hox & Boeije, 2004). Meanwhile, secondary data is other than primary data, usually previous research articles that help validate the research results (Rabianski, 2003). In this case, primary data in the study was obtained from (1) field observations in two classes, in the form of data from observations of implementing English learning methods using GBA and PBL; (2) interviews with two English to collect data on the implementation of the methods in English subjects. Then, secondary data in this study includes documents in the form of articles, books, proceedings, or other scientific readings used to analyze and support the validity of the study results. The research subjects in this study were two English teachers, one from MTsN 1 Malang and one from MTsN 2 Malang.

The data collection used observation and in-depth interviews. At the interview stage, the researcher used a semi-structured interview type where the informants knew transparently the purpose of the interview, and the interview items could increase or decrease along with the

informants' answers. The results of the interviews were recorded in an interview guideline sheet and a voice recorder. The development process of the semi-structured interview instrument rubric begins by formulating a clear and transparent interview purpose, so that the informants understand the intent and objectives of the interview. This rubric is designed to allow flexibility in the interview process, with the ability to expand or reduce questions based on the answers provided by the informants (Alijoyo et al., 2021)

The questions formulated cover various aspects related to the implementation of the Genre Based Approach (GBA) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methods in English language teaching. Based on the research objective, which is to identify the differences in the implementation of GBA and PBL across the four skills of English language learning, the rubric is initially based on the aspects of method implementation during the learning process. These questions then serve as a reference for the researcher during the observation process.

Then, observations were made in class VII during English language learning. The observations were made in detail, starting from the place, actors, activities or learning sequences, time, goals, and the interaction and behaviour of teachers and students during the learning process. The observation results were written on the sheet and interpreted after the field research. To ensure the observations were systematic and focused, systematic observation methods. The researcher conducted systematic observations guided by an instrument designed specifically for the study. This approach was employed as the primary method for collecting data (Jayanti, 2020).

First, the key aspects to be observed were identified, focusing on teaching methods, teacher-student interactions, and the use of the media to support the learning process. Next, specific indicators were formulated based on relevant literature to guide the observation process. The rubric was then structured in a table format for clarity and ease of use, including columns for observation details and rows for each indicator. Before its finalization, the rubric was tested in a trial session to ensure clarity and effectiveness. Based on the trial feedback, necessary revisions were made, such as refining ambiguous wording and adding additional indicators. Once finalized, the rubric served as a reliable and structured tool for systematically recording observations during the field research.

To analyze the data, researchers must capture, record, interpret and report the information obtained. Researchers must analyze the data as soon as possible to determine the following data collection. According to Huberman and Miles (1984) there are three forms of activities in data analysis: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Fadli, 2021). The data reduction stage is done by summarizing, selecting the main things, focusing on the essential things, looking for themes and patterns, and then leaving unnecessary data while still adhering to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2011). At the data presentation stage, researchers present the data according to each problem formulation that must be answered. Data presentation can be in descriptions, charts, or connecting categories.

According to Huberman and Miles (1984) narrative text is the most commonly used data presentation format in qualitative research. Therefore, in qualitative data results, researchers will present data in descriptions. The last step researchers take in the data analysis is concluding and verifying the data. In this case, researchers are required to present a conclusion that is a new finding that has never existed before. According to Sugiyono (2011), these findings can be in the form of a description of an object that was previously unclear so that after the research was carried out, the object became clear.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The implementation of Genre-Based Approach at MTsN 1 Malang

The implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in English learning at MTsN 1 Malang is based on the results of observations and interviews. Observations were carried out twice in English learning in class 7A, with one deepening of learning material and one introduction. Meanwhile, the English teacher of class 7A, Miss A, was interviewed.

Based on the observation in the first meeting, the BKoF stage began with greetings and attendance checking, such as "Good Morning" and "How are you today?" to build students' enthusiasm and create a positive learning atmosphere. The teacher then presented an interactive video of the song *Noodle & Pals*, which was relevant to the material. The video was played two to three times, with the first playback helping students adapt to the lyrics and rhythm, and subsequent playbacks encouraging them to sing along. This activity revived students' energy, considering the afternoon schedule, while enhancing their listening skills as they followed

the song and engaging their speaking skills as they actively participated. The teacher followed up with recall questions like "What did we learn last meeting?" and "What do we say when we meet someone for the first time?" to activate students' prior knowledge and encourage verbal responses, which further strengthened their speaking ability and prepared them for the core material.

After the students' enthusiasm rose, the teacher began the core activities by recalling the learning material in the previous meeting about greetings or "Greetings. "The recall activity was carried out by the teacher asking several questions to students such as "What did we learn last meeting?", "What do we say if we meet someone for the first time?" and "What do we say if we meet someone we have known before?". Next, the teacher asks the students sparking questions about the material "Introduction," such as "So, when you meet someone for the first time, what will you do?" "What do you usually say when you get acquainted?" "What is your name, what else?", and similar questions.

These questions are intended to provide students with an initial overview of the specific material to be learned. Those two sequence activities remained the first stage to gain students' attention at the beginning of the class so they could achieve better focus and understand the background knowledge of the materials. It aligns with Narasintawati et al. (2020), who explained that the first step of GBA is BKoF (Background Knowledge of the Field), in which English teachers can ask students to listen to them and identify certain words related to the material being studied.

Before entering the next activity, the teacher briefly describes the learning outcomes of the "Introduction" material and the types of assessments they will do. Then, the teacher divides the students into groups of 4-5 to watch the video the teacher will show. The video is a short video that shows an example of an introduction using English. In groups, students are asked to listen carefully and find details of information in the video in the form of what needs to be conveyed in an introduction, such as greeting sentences, name, age, date of birth, place of residence, parents' occupation, number of siblings, favourite colour, favourite fruit, favourite lesson, favourite food, and hobbies.

In groups, students are also asked to pay attention to the sentence structure exemplified in the video. The information details will be used as

a reference for students to compose their introduction script, which will be presented individually in front of the class. After the video is finished playing, the teacher explains the details in the video and the proper sentence structure by continuing to apply the discussion and question and answer system with students. The teacher lists English vocabulary from various categories, such as professional vocabulary and subjects. In addition, the teacher also provides contextual examples following students' real-life situations.

This activity depicts the second stage of GBA, namely MoT (Modelling of Text). The teacher provides the modelling through the related video materials and the teacher's explanation of the details. Not only can it provoke students to be active, but it is also beneficial for developing students' prior knowledge and increasing their enthusiasm for the whole learning process. In line with that, Estrini (2021) explains that at the MoT stage, the teacher must be able to maintain the dynamics of student activeness. This activity not only improved students' listening comprehension as they focused on the video content but also developed their writing skills as they drafted self-introduction scripts based on the video model. In order to create an interactive learning atmosphere and motivate students to participate actively, teachers can provide opportunities for students to express their opinions so that they can interact actively with their learning environment. In this case, the teacher modified the process by dividing students into groups earlier and projecting the outcome that students must achieve after watching the videos and listening to the teacher's explanation. This modification aimed to simultaneously prepare students for the third stage of the GBA, which involves group tasks.

After finishing the material, the teacher distributes a worksheet to each student containing a list of overlapping sentences about the introduction. The overlapping part of each sentence must be filled in according to each student's personal information, such as name, date of birth, age, and other related parties. During the working stage, the teacher monitored the students' progress by going around the class to check the answers and answering students' questions if they asked. When finished, students are asked to practice introducing themselves to their respective groups according to the completed worksheet.

The learning activity continues with the practice of introduction by representatives of each group. The teacher ensures that each representative is ready and asks other students to give feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their friend's practice based on the completeness of information, pronunciation, grammatical errors, voice intonation, and expression. This can effectively enhance critical thinking and listening skills, as students identify strengths and weaknesses in their classmates' presentations, deepening their understanding of the material. After all representatives of each group had finished practising, the teacher gave an example of a good and correct introduction followed by all the students. These activities illustrate the third stage of GBA, JCoT (Joint Construction of Text), which allows students to understand further material in groups with the aim of honing students' collaboration skills (Rofi'i, 2020; Sulastri, 2010). In this activity, the teacher also provides a learning modification by providing peer review activities, which are carried out by identifying weaknesses and the advantages of each student's presentation to each other. The peer review modification aims to strengthen students' understanding and uplift their listening and critical thinking skills by observing others' work results and providing positive assessments (Sya, 2015).

In the next meeting, with the same materials, the teacher invites students individually to come to the front of the class to practice introducing what they have learned. At this stage, each student must pay close attention to their friend's performance because the teacher instructs students on each bench to assess their friends practising in front of the class. Therefore, reinforcing their listening skills while simultaneously improving their speaking fluency and confidence. Thus, student practice scores are obtained from the average accumulation of teacher scores and scores given by students. Again, this peer review practice is a teacher modification to improve students' understanding of the material. It is a trick to indirectly make students pay attention to every detail of their friends' presentations. This final stage also represents the application of ICoT (Individual Construction of Text), the fourth stage of the GBA application theory. This stage aims to train students to independently produce oral and written texts and ensure that everyone comprehensively understands the materials (Sofyan & Komariah, 2016).

From the overall implementation, the English learning activities in the classroom by using GBA at MTs Negeri 1 Malang have been in line with the theory brought by Hammond et al. (1992), where GBA consists of four stages, namely BKoF, MoT, JCoT, and ICoT. Each stage of GBA contributed to the development of specific skills: listening and speaking skills during BKoF and ICoT, reading and writing skills during MoT and JCoT, and collaboration and critical thinking during JCoT through peer-review activities. The peer assessment modification also provided additional opportunities for students to engage critically and independently with the material. Thus, the data supports the claim that English learning using GBA enhances students' listening, writing, speaking, and reading skills while deepening their collaboration, critical thinking, and individual understanding of the material.

4.2. The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning at MTsN 2 Malang

The implementation of the Problem-Based Learning method in English learning is based on the results of observations and interviews. Observations were carried out twice in English learning in class 7A, with one deepening of learning material, namely about Thanking and Apologizing. Meanwhile, the interview was conducted with the English teacher whose class was the object of the research, Miss D, in class 7A.

Based on the interview results and observation, the teacher applied problem-based learning (PBL) as the primary method of transferring knowledge in the learning process. At the beginning of the class, the teacher asks some questions related to the material or gives a few light games that can arouse students' enthusiasm and motivation to follow the learning activities. Having been motivated by the teachers in groups, the teacher gives one problem case related to the material being studied: "Thanking and Apologizing". Within 15 minutes, each group must discuss the five conditions that require someone to say "thank you" and "apologize". Next, the teacher provides further stimulus through a worksheet containing five short stories for each group to identify the implications of each story and determine which attitude between thanking and apologizing is appropriate for each story.

This activity aims to spark students' critical thinking about the material by providing problems to be solved through collaboration skills.

Esema (2012) and Ikawati (2023) explain that PBL learning aims to train students' critical thinking skills in solving the problems given, teach them to be more independent in dealing with a problem and trigger their collaborative skills. This statement also aligns with one of the characteristics of PBL developed by Barrow, as cited by Mayasari et al. (2022) which is small group learning.

Having completed the group assessment given by the teacher, two representative students from each group came to the front of the class to present the results of their group writing with direct practice. While the representatives of each group presented, other students were asked to respond to the work of their friends. In this case, the teacher made observations to provide a formative assessment of students' speaking skills. Afterwards, the learning activity ends with reflection. In reflection, the teacher appreciates students' slightest progress in understanding the learning material. Then, teachers provide specific treatment for students who have yet to achieve learning outcomes by providing more practice and remedial during the Integrated Daily Test (UHT) week. This Integrated Daily Test (UHT) also becomes the teacher's summative assessment reference.

Holistically, these three main activities above reflect the three aspects of the PBL stages mentioned in Darmawan (2021); Mayasari et al. (2022); Saputra (2020); Sofyan & Komariah (2016): (1) guiding individual and group investigations, (2) developing and presenting work, and (3) analyzing and evaluating the problem-solving process. However, based on Barrow's theory, the overall learning process has fulfilled the five characteristics of PBL: (1) student-centred learning, described by active discussions, presentations, and feedback between students (2) authentic problems, which are presented through the first activity, namely identification problems based on real-world situations; (3) self-directed learning, where learning still refers to book sources provided by the school, as well as authentic experiences from each student in the group; out in small groups and (5) teachers are facilitators, teachers only act as facilitators who supervise the course of learning (Mayasari et al., 2022; Saputra, 2020). Moreover, critical thinking ability, collaboration, communication, and cooperation between students are also highly emphasized through this method (Saidi, 2022).

Then, the characteristics of authentic problems, self-directed learning, and teachers as facilitators are shown by the teacher through providing contextual problems following everyday life through videos, extracting sources of information from various sources, one of which is the dictionary and teaching modules, and the teacher becomes a facilitator who not only provides explanations through lectures but also monitors the development of student performance in the classroom (Tanjung et al., 2022; Trianto, 2007).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results that have been presented, the comparison between GBA and PBL implementation in English for junior high school is as follows:

The GBA can be implemented by Building the students' Knowledge of the Text (BKoF), followed by Modeling of the Text (MoT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT), which simultaneously combine group and individual works to strongly emphasize the materials' understanding not only from groups interaction but also from individual practices. In this section, PBL learning also commits similar patterns by providing small group interactions and individual practices during problem-solving and presentation activities. While the GBA is more focused on building the students' knowledge about the materials, especially individually, the PBL is enormously concerned with students' critical thinking through problem-solving activities. Both methods can maximize students' listening, writing, speaking and reading skills, followed by deepening collaboration and critical thinking skills.

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