

## GENERIC STRUCTURE IN PRE- AND POST-TEST COMPOSITIONS OF IC 2012 STUDENTS

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### Abstrak

Menulis dengan menggunakan generic structure yang tepat sangatlah diperlukan karena ini akan membantu pembaca untuk bisa memahami teks dengan baik. Bagaimana kualitas tulisan siswa dalam hal penerapan generic structure?. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif karena tidak menggunakan angka dalam penyajiannya. Subyek penelitian ini merupakan 27 siswa Intensive Course Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tulisan siswa-siswi IC 2012. Data di ambil dari tulisan pre- dan post- test IC 2012. Rubrik juga digunakan untuk menilai tulisan siswa dalam hal generic structure. Berdasarkan penelitian yang telah dilakukan, dari 27 siswa yang dijadikan sampel. Ada 6 siswa yang kemampuannya meningkat selama IC. 9 siswa lainnya menurun, dan 12 orang lainnya tidak menunjukkan perbedaan kemampuan yang signifikan. Ini berarti bahwa Intensive Course 2012 tidak terlalu mempengaruhi kemampuan penulisan siswa dalam hal generic structure. Meskipun penggunaan generic structure telah diajarkan secara implisit melalui latihan selama program berlangsung, namun tetap tidak memberikan perubahan yang berarti terhadap kemampuan menulis siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** *Intensive Course, Kemampuan Menulis, and Generic Structure.*

### Abstract

Writing in a correct generic structure is needed because it will help the reader in understanding the text better. How is the quality of the students' compositions in term of generic structure? This study was a descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this study were 27 participants of Intensive Course 2012 in English Department of State University of Surabaya. The data used in this study was the students' compositions in IC 2012 program. The data was taken from the result of students' compositions in the pre test and the post test of Intensive Course 2012. A prompt and rubric were also used to examine the students' compositions in term of generic structure. Based on the result of the study, from 27 samples taken, in terms of generic structure there were 6 students which ability improved during the IC program. The other 9 decreased and the other 12 did not have difference. It means that IC did not influence the quality of students' compositions in terms of generic structure. Even though the use of generic structure has been taught implicitly through the practice, but still, it did not make significant difference in the use of the generic structure.

**Keywords:** *Intensive Course, Writing Ability, and Generic Structure.*

## INTRODUCTION

IC program has been applied for many years at State University of Surabaya. Intensive Course (IC) aims to balance the students' English Proficiency who are quite diverse. Balancing here means to increase the ability of the students who are just in the elementary level to be in the intermediate level and keep the ability of the students

who are in the intermediate level. IC is important because in IC, English Department students are prepared to face the more difficult level. The materials will then be more and more difficult in the next semester. The materials will be taught specifically based on the skills and later the students are expected to be in the intermediate level. For writing skill for instance, writing will be taught in IC program in the first semester. Later in the next semester

the students will get more difficult material such as academic writing 1, academic writing 2, and proposal seminar.

From four language basic skills, writing is considered as the most difficult skill compared to the others. It is supported by Richard and Renandya (2002) who stated that writing was the most difficult skill for L2 learners. Brown (2001:339) also stated that in school, writing was a way of life. It has been taught since the first time the students learn English, since Junior High School up to the University. Writing is a complex skill because it does not only include an aspect such as the ability to find a good and interesting topic, but also the ability to manage and organize sentences so that it will be easily understood by the reader. This is supported by Feez (2002:103) who stated that writing skill was considered as one of the most difficult language skills since it was a productive skill. Nunan (1999:271) also stated that in terms of skills, producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing was probably the most difficult thing to do in language.

Writing is difficult but it can be learned. Boardman (2004:79) stated that writing was a process. Oshima and Hogue (2002:55) also stated that the writers had to write about what they think in their mind and stated it on a piece of paper by using the correct procedure. Nunan (2003:88) also stated that writing was a mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express and organize them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear for the readers. In other words, writers must organize their paragraph in a certain pattern so that the readers can catch the message easily. Somehow, Indonesian students seem to have difficulty in organizing their paragraph.

According to Kaplan (Cahyono, 2001: 42) there are 5 rhetorical patterns of different language. Those are English, Semitic, Oriental, Romance, and Russian. Indonesian way of writing is categorized as oriental style that is also called as a spiral way. It means that Indonesians do not write directly to the point. But the way they write is moving around; indirectly approach the main idea. The problem is, English pattern is totally different from the oriental one. In English pattern, the ideas are strictly flowing from the first to the last sentence. And this pattern is known as generic structure.

Generic structure not only helps a writer to keep focus on the main idea, but also helps reader to understand the text better. These are things that makes generic structure to be important to be mastered. Eventhough generic structure is not taught directly in IC, the pattern will automatically show up when the students use it in writing. Besides, the evaluation which is given from the lecturer will be very useful to lead the students to use an English pattern as the way they write. This is a

challenge for IC team. The challenge is to teach them using an English pattern while they have oriental pattern as the way they write in their daily life.

The similar research was conducted by Eka Hardian Suharko in 2009. He conducted a study on the analysis of generic structure of exposition composition made by 2007 IC students of UNESA. He found out that the students' compositions were mostly not started by applying the thesis statement. There were only eight students who wrote the recommendation and there were only four students who wrote the ending by stating the argument appropriately. It shows us that writing a composition in an appropriate generic structure is still difficult for the students.

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Intensive Course program in improving freshmen's compositions in terms of generic structure. Writing skill is chosen because writing was considered as the most difficult skill. So, it was assumed, when the students' writing was already good, it means that IC program was successful in improving the students' ability in the most difficult part of the language skills.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study was a descriptive qualitative. It was descriptive qualitative because it explained the use of the generic structure in writing result of pre and post test of Intensive Course 2012 by without using numerical data to answer the research questions. It was a descriptive because this study describes the writing result between pre and post test of IC 2012 deeply. The data of this study were in the form of compositions in pre and post test. Therefore, descriptive analysis on the result of the compositions was needed.

### Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study were 27 participants of Intensive Course 2012 in English Department of State University of Surabaya. The writing result of pre and post test was taken as the data of this study. This study use 9 students who were in Elementary group, 9 students in Pre-Intermediate group, and 9 students in Intermediate group randomly in each group. The purpose was to investigate IC 2012 students' ability to arrange the text based on the generic structure on each group.

### Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique used in this study was by taking the documents of the students' compositions. The data used in this study was the students' compositions in IC 2012 program. The data was from the result of students' compositions in the pre test and the post test of Intensive Course 2012. The pretest was held on

September 2012 and the post-test was held on December 2012.

After doing the pre test, the students attended IC program for one semester. Then a post test was held as an evaluation of the program. It was held on 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. The students were given similar question as pre test to see the students' development after joining the IC program. After the lecturers assessed the students' compositions, the original compositions were copied and analyzed for this study.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

There were three points which were stated in the instruction of the pre and post test. The students were asked to write an essay about themselves, their English ability, and their expectation in joining English Department. The three instructions were clearly guide the students to describe themselves, their English ability, and their expectation in joining English Department. Therefore, it can be concluded that from these three instructions, the students were expected to arrange their essay as a descriptive text based on its generic structure.

In a descriptive text, there are title, identification, and descriptions. The instruction of the test was to write an essay about themselves, their English ability, and their expectation in joining English department, therefore, the suitable title for the essay could be "my expectation" or "my hope in joining English Department".

After collecting the data, all compositions were analyzed word by word. The compositions was read to find the identification and the features by using a rubric. Rubric was used to differentiate the students' ability in using generic structure. The rubric consisted of a set of criteria to measure the quality of the students' paragraph in terms of generic structure. The criteria were divided into three groups; excellent, fair, and poor. Therefore, the students' paragraphs were classified into three groups; excellent, fair, and poor based on the rubric. The students who were grouped into Excellent group are those who had good arrangement on the paragraph and understandable ideas based on the rules of generic structure. The students who were grouped into Fair group are those who had good arrangement on the paragraph based on the rules of generic structure but the ideas on the paragraph were confusing. The students who were grouped into Poor group are those who did not have good arrangement on the paragraph based on the rules of generic structure and did not have understandable ideas on the paragraph.

The process of analysis were done through five steps. First, the students composition produced in the pre-test were identified to find the identification and the features, The features were describing themselves, their English ability, and their expectation in joining English Department. Second, the pre-test compositions were separated into three different level: excellent, fair, and poor. Third, students compositions wrote in the post test were classified in the same step as the pre-test. Fourth, the compositions in post-test were classified into excellent, good, and poor. Then, the pre and post test

were compared to analyze the progress. The students' compositions were classified into three: students with less quality in post-test than pre-test, students without any significant difference in pre- and post-test, and students with more quality in post-test than pre-test.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Of the 27 students taken as samples there were twenty six students wrote identification in their compositions. Then, there was no student who wrote all features (describing themselves, their English ability, and their expectation in joining English Department) completely. Twenty four students wrote the first feature of the paragraph. Twenty one students wrote the second feature and there were only nineteen students who wrote the third feature in their compositions. The result shows that the students wrote the identification in their compositions but they tend to write two features only rather than writing the whole features in their compositions. There were fourteen students who did that. Mostly, the students forgot to write the last feature in their compositions. For the rest of students; twelve students wrote their compositions completely. They wrote the identification and all three features in their compositions. There was only one student who did not write the identification in their compositions.

There were fewer students who wrote the identification in their compositions. There were only eighteen students who did that. Somehow, number of students who wrote the second and the third feature was increasing. Twenty five students wrote the second feature and twenty four students wrote the last feature in their compositions. There were sixteen students wrote the identification all features completely. There were two students who did not write one of the features and there were nine students who did not write the identification. Mainly, the students wrote the identification and the features completely.

From twenty seven compositions in pre-test, one composition was categorized into poor, fourteen compositions were categorized into fair, and twelve compositions were categorized into excellent. There were twenty seven compositions in post-test too. They were from the same students as in the pre-test. After analyzing the compositions in post-test, the result showed that nine compositions were categorized into poor, two compositions were categorized into fair, and sixteen compositions were categorized into excellent.

Based on the analysis, the result revealed that there were only six levels from twenty seven compositions in pre- and post-test. There was one composition categorized into poor to poor, five were categorized into fair to poor, two were categorized into fair to fair, seven were categorized into fair to excellent, three were categorized into excellent to poor, and nine



were categorized into excellent to excellent. These result was then divided into three different group; students with less quality in post-test than pre-test, students without any significant difference in pre- and post-test, and students with more quality in post-test than pre-test.

### Generic Structure of The Students' Compositions

nine students had *less* quality, twelve students had *similar* quality, and seven students had *more* quality in their compositions. The analysis of the quality of the students' compositions could be seen in the table below which was explained as follow.

Tabel 1. Quality of The Students' Compositions

Students	Category in Pre Test	Category in Post Test	Quality
1	Fair	Poor	Worse
2	Fair	Poor	Worse
3	Excellent	Poor	Worse
4	Excellent	Poor	Worse
5	Fair	Poor	Worse
6	Fair	Poor	Worse
7	Fair	Poor	Worse
8	Excellent	Poor	Worse
9	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
10	Poor	Poor	Similar
11	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
12	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
13	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
14	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
15	Fair	Fair	Similar
16	Fair	Fair	Similar
17	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
18	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
19	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
20	Excellent	Excellent	Similar
21	Fair	Excellent	Better
22	Fair	Excellent	Better
23	Fair	Excellent	Better
24	Fair	Excellent	Better
25	Fair	Excellent	Better
26	Fair	Excellent	Better
27	Fair	Excellent	Better

### Students with worse quality in post-test compared to the pre-test

The compositions had *less* quality were written by Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. In their pre-test compositions, they stated the identification of the paragraph. Somehow, this could not be found in the post-test compositions. In the compositions written by Student 1, for example, she also did not mention the identification in her post-test composition.

In terms of generic structure, descriptive text consists of identification and description. In example 1, the first sentence was "My name is ...." This sentence could be categorized into identification because this sentence identified the phenomenon to be described; in this case

was the description of Student 1 and all about her herself. The composition also only explained about the writer herself without giving explanation about her English ability and her expectation while studying in UNESA.

In example 2, the first paragraph of the post-test composition written by Student 1 was "before I join with this department". It showed that she did not try to describe but she tried to tell her story in this composition. Since she tried to tell her story, her composition would be categorized into a narrative text. Therefore, her composition did not answer the question prompt and had no identification. Since the composition written by Student 1 had an identification in the pre-test but not in post-test, the quality of the composition was *worse* quality.

### Students who had not any difference both in pre- and post-test

Besides *worse* quality, twelve other compositions were categorized into *same* quality in post-test compared to pre-test which means both pre- and post-test were having same quality in term of generic structure. The compositions belonged to Student 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Intensive Course seemed to give less influence to the students' writing ability so that they have the *same* quality in terms of generic structure n both pre- and post-test. The example 3 and 4 below were the compositions written by Student 10. Student 10's composition in pre-test (example 3) did not have the identification as what a descriptive text should have. Eventhough it had an opening, the opening still did not explain the subject described. So, it could not be stated as an identification of a text. It the first sentence, Student 10 stated her gratitude for joining the English Department. In writing a descriptive text, Student 10 should mention the subject described which was known as an identification, in this case is the student herself. Her composition in post-test also had the similar problem. In example 4, Student 10 talked about her reason in joining English Department despite the description of herself. She did not mention the identification too. Since the compositions in the pre- and post-test did not have any identification, the quality of the compositions composed by Student 10 was *same* quality.

### Students with better quality in post-test compared to the pre-test

The last group was *better*. There were seven compositions in this group. They were written by Student 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. In the pre-test, they made compositions without explaining all features asked. But in the post-test, they explained all three features (explained themselves, their english ability, and their

expectation while studying in English department). Example 7 below was the example of the pre-test composition written by Student 22. The composition had an identification. But in the end, Student 22 told his experience in searching for school instead of his expectation while studying in English department. Furthermore, he did not explain the last feature which asked him to explain his expectation while studying in English department. Example 8 could be said as one of the best compositions made by IC 2012 students. It was short, had an identification, and told all things asked (explaining all features). Therefore, his compositions had *better* quality in terms of generic structure.

### Discussion

After analyzing the data, the result of the study shows that there were fewer students (18 students) who wrote the identification in their post test composition compared to the pre-test composition (26 students). Number of students who wrote the identification and all features completely is increasing (12 students in pre test and 16 students in post test). Somehow, most of the students have similar quality in the pre and post test compositions. The result shows that from 27 students, 12 students do not show the significant progress in their compositions after the course, 6 students' compositions quality in the post-test are better than those in pre-test, and the quality of 9 students' post-test compositions are less than those in the pre-test. It shows that IC 2012 mostly do not give any significant effect on the improvement of the students' compositions in terms of generic structure of a descriptive text. It is influenced by several problems which is occurred in the learning process of IC.

The less quality in the students' post-test compositions compared to the pre-test in terms of generic structure may be caused by the time limitation given to the students. In pre-test, students have a lot of time to write but not in the post-test because they only have 30 minutes to finish the writing test. The time limitation in the post-test may affect the students' concentration which makes them become less focus on the use of generic structure. Since writing is difficult, the students may tend to finish their composition on time. Therefore, not all students can pay enough attention into the structure of their compositions. As a result, the time limitation affects the students' concentration on what aspect that should be concerned first. It is related to the monitor hypothesis (Krashen, 2009:16) which implies that in order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language performer needs to have sufficient time. For most people, a test does not allow enough time to think about and use rules. The over-use of rules in the test can lead to trouble, i.e. the inability to think about the aspects

in writing that should be concerned more. Attending the IC program may give little effect to those students. As a result, the quality of their compositions in post-test are less than in the pre-test in terms of generic structure.

Most sample shows that there is no significant difference in the quality of the students' compositions which means there are also students who have bad compositions both in pre- and post-test in terms of generic structure. It is caused by the students' ability in applying the generic structure which is also influenced by the rethoric style. According to Cahyono (2001), Indonesian learners tend to know the rhetorical components of an essay. An essay should contain a thesis statement, developmental paragraphs, and topic sentences. However, the rhetorical development of ideas in the essays does not entirely conform to the expectations of English-speaking readers. Most Indonesian students are affected by Asian rethoric style which means that the way they write is beating around the bush. Unfortunately, it will be much easier for them to follow the Asian rethoric style because they get used to write in that style rather than following the the new pattern as in English rethoric style. Simply it will be more difficult for the students to follow the English pattern which is not their native rather than to follow Asian pattern which is their native.

On the other hand, there are students who have fair composition both in pre- and post- test. These students may get used to writing by following the pattern of the generic structure, even before they joined English department. They have a deep understanding in the generic structure which means, any time limitation do not give any effect on their writing quality in terms of generic structure. The ability in applying generic structure might be caused by the lesson they got in Junior high school. In a simple way they have learned and understanding the use of generic structure for years since they were in Junior High School. Thus it enable them to apply generic structure in writing fluently. It can be seen from the Standar Kompetensi of second semester in grade 7 of Junior High School which clearly mention the rethoric style as one of important thing to be learned in writing descriptive text:

"Mengungkapkan makna dan langkah retorika dalam esei pendek sangat sederhana dengan menggunakan ragam bahasa tulis secara akurat, lancar dan berterima untuk berinteraksi dengan lingkungan terdekat dalam teks berbentuk *descriptive* dan *procedure*".

A previous study related to the descriptive text had also been conducted by M. Bagus. Nawawi in 2011. He conducted a classroom action research in improving students' writing skill of descriptive text through guided questions. He conducted in study in one of the junior high

school in Tangerang. He found out that the students had difficulties in writing the ideas that they wanted to write though they knew very well about the topic given. The result then showed that guided questions had improved the students' ability in understanding the material and making the paragraph. As an addition, students had the lesson about the generic structure about the generic structure. Therefore, some students must have the ability in writing a composition through the experience that has been got since in Junior High School that will give more experience in writing for the students.

As an addition, Diab (2006:1—2) also states that the feedback that is given should focus on the organization and content rather than the traditional error correction (explicit error correction of surface-level errors such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar). The fact is generic structure is not taught directly in IC 2012. Students writing practice in IC is by making a composition and giving the result to the lecturer. Then, the lecturer revises it and gives feedback to the students. There may be some possibilities that the lecturer often gives feedback that encourages the students to focus on the organization of the paragraph without giving many marks on the students' surface level errors. So, students will be able to evaluate themselves and improve their ability without concerning about their score related to the surface level error itself. In this situation, the use of generic structure is one focus for the lecturers. Students will also learn about the use of generic structure from the feedback given by the lecturers. In other words, the use of generic structure should come up through the practice which means the treatment given during the IC program is successful in developing the quality of the students' compositions in terms of generic structure.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the result of the study shows that there were fewer students (18 students) who wrote the identification in their post test composition compared to the pre-test composition (26 students). Number of students who wrote the identification and all features completely is increasing (12 students in pre test and 16 students in post test). Somehow, most of the students have similar quality in the pre and post test compositions. In general, based on the result of the study, from 27 samples taken, in terms of generic structure there were only only 6 students which ability improved during the IC program. The other 9 decreased and the other 12 did not have difference. It means that IC did not influence the quality of students' compositions in terms of generic structure. Even though the use of generic structure has

been taught implicitly through the practice, but still, it did not make significant difference in the use of the generic structure.

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