
Genre Based Approach An Alternative in Teaching Comparison and Contrast Essay

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A B S T R A C T

Writing as one of the productive skills is offered as a required course in many English language programs at many universities. However, research showed that teaching writing skills faced some challenges. Therefore, this article offered an approach that shed the light. The article discussed a description of a comparison and contrast essay in general, the definition of Genre Based Approach in teaching writing, and the application of GBA in teaching comparison and contrast essay. The article serves as a reference for teachers in teaching comparison and contrast essays for academic writing and other purposes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing as one of the productive skills is offered as a required course in many English language programs at many universities. To name some, Paragraph Writing and Essay Writing are courses offered by the Department of English, State University of Malang (Universitas Negeri Malang, 2019) while Academic Writing 101 is offered as one of the courses focusing on writing at Binus University (Binus University, 2018). Those are some examples of courses offered by universities focusing on teaching writing skills. Even before university level, writing skill is taught with other skills under an English lesson (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016). However, the goal of writing class focuses more on the final result and neglect the process of writing. The teaching of writing tends to be a product-oriented. As the consequence, students use all means to earn good grades. Cheating on someone else's work or having someone else do a writing assignment are one of the examples that students do to achieve it.

Teacher-centered teaching in which the teacher's role is more dominant in the class has shifted to more student-centered teaching that allows students to be more active in the classroom. Previous studies have shown how changing has improved the quality of a writing class (Sun & Feng, 2009; Indrilla & Ciptaningrum, 2018). To name some, the advantages of student-centered learning in writing are creating a more engaging classroom and lead to two-way communications both between teachers and students or among students within their class (Indrilla, 2018). Besides, the learners' roles have shifted from passive to active learners (Kassesm, 2018).

In writing class, students learn how to compose paragraphs that describe similarities and differences of things through comparing and contrasting. Through comparing and contrasting, students think critically about things they write. This happens because students analyze two things that are visibly the same but, these two things have differences. Students often have difficulties during writing this type of essay (Hammann & Stevens, 2003; Toba, Noor, & Sanu,

2019). Therefore, due to the intricate process of writing this essay, the Genre Based Approach can be an alternative to teaching in a writing class.

The teaching steps used in this approach are sequenced. The first thing a lecturer does in applying this approach is to build students' knowledge by doing inquiry such as giving probing questions. Then the lecturer gives a Comparison and Contrast essay model to students after the lecturer explores background knowledge from students. Students and lecturers continue the teaching-learning activities by analyzing the modeling text. After students understand the text generic structure including the structure, the tense, and the language components used in composing the texts, the lecturer invites students to make another example of a Comparison and Contrast essay. In this stage, students work in groups to collaborate working on composing the text. After that, one representative from the group presents the group's work in front of the class. Other students respond by giving suggestions or feedback. The lecturer oversees the course of the discussion, gives responses, and explains what is considered still unclear. After the discussion ends, students are asked to work individually to make their Comparison and Contrast essays. The whole process makes students learn gradually without relying fully on the explanation from the lecturer.

This article wants to describe a comparison and contrast essay in general and the application of GBA in teaching comparison and contrast essay.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Writing a Comparison and Contrast Essay

Comparison and Contrast essay is one of writing academic essays taught at the university level to assess students' ability to express ideas or thoughts in written form. Students find this type of essay as a complex type of writing since they have to compare and contrast a phenomenon or an issue they are interested in. Also, students are required to compose this essay under several conditions. One of these provisions includes the number of words in the essay ranging from 2,000 to 5000 words (Alphacrucis College, n.d.).

By definition, writing a comparison and contrast essay means that writers do not only look for the similarity of two objects, but they have to also look for the difference between the two objects. In detail, Comparison essays tend to look for similarities in something compared, whereas contrast essays are highlighted more on differences (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

2.1.1 Comparison and contrast essay writing structure

The paragraphs of a comparison and contrast essay have the same writing structure as in writing other types of essays. This type of essay contains opening paragraphs (introduction), contents (body), and closing (conclusion). The difference lies only in the content of the essay. As in general the structure of writing an essay begins with an opening paragraph (introduction). The contents of the opening paragraph are a general description of what will be discussed in the essay. The end of the opening paragraph will be a thesis statement or the main issue that will be discussed in the overall essay. The thesis statement is the most important part of the opening paragraph. It is the central idea of what the whole will talk about. This whole idea is then broken down into more specific ideas that are the main idea in each paragraph of the body of an essay. The thesis statement will direct the structure of the essay.

The body of a comparison and contrast essay contains some paragraphs that provide a detailed explanation of what has been stated in a thesis statement. Each paragraph of the body

has the main idea which is the central point of a paragraph. The main idea is stated in the first sentence of a paragraph.

The number of paragraphs in the body of a Comparison and Contrast essay might vary. It depends on the number of sub-topics to be discussed. Further, the number of paragraphs depends on the author whether he/she writes a Comparison essay, a Contrast essay, or combining the two into a paragraph Comparison and Contrast Essay. Finally, the number of paragraphs of content also depends on the method of writing.

There are two types of writing methods to write a body of a Comparison and Contrast essay. They are Organization or Block Arrangement, and Point to point or Altering Arrangement (Comparison's, 2011). In general, the Organization or Block Arrangement method will have the organization of an essay that contains four paragraphs. They consist of one paragraph for opening, two paragraphs for the body of the essay, and one closing paragraph. For example, a comparison and contrast essay discusses the difference between a mountain excursion and a beach excursion. The points discussed between an excursion on a mountain and the beach have to be the same. For example, the second paragraph discusses activities that can be done while doing mountain excursion. The third paragraph has to also tell the same idea that what activities people can do when they are at the beach. Table 1 is the example of an outline using Organization or Block Arrangement in which the essay would like to compare the difference between having a vacation at a mountain and a beach.

Tabel 1. Example of an Outline using Organization or Block Arrangement.

Paragraph	Content of the Paragraph
I.	Contains an opening paragraph and concludes a thesis statement about the difference between vacationing on a mountain and a beach.
II.	Mountain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State of the weather b. Activities that can be done c. Example of tourist sites
III.	Beach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State of the weather b. Activities that can be done c. Example of tourist sites
IV.	Closing

In addition to using the Block Arrangement method, there is another method for developing content paragraphs for a Comparison and Contrast essay, namely the Point-to-Point or Altering Arrangement method. The difference between the two methods is the number of

paragraphs. The Point-to-Point method allows the writer to discuss one point compared or contrasted in one paragraph. Using the same topic as seen in Tabel 1, below is the example of an outline using the Point-to-Point or Altering Arrangement method.

Table 2. Example of an Outline using Point to Point or Altering Arrangement.

Paragraph	Content of the Paragraph
I.	Contains an opening paragraph and concludes a thesis statement about the difference between vacationing on a mountain and a beach.
II.	The first difference is the weather condition A. Mountain B. Beach
III.	The second difference is the kinds of activities that can be done A. Mountain B. Beach
IV.	The third difference is an example of tourist sites A. Mountain B. Beach
V	Closing

Both methods of writing the contents of the comparison essay paragraph above can be applied when writing a contrast essay paragraph or a whole comparison and contrast essay. The difference is what is discussed in the paragraph as explained at the beginning.

Writing a comparison and contrast essays as one joint essay needs transition signals. The transitional signals serve as a separator between comparison paragraphs and contrast paragraphs. The transitional signals are written individually in a paragraph. The use of a transitional signal can be seen in the excerpt (complete paragraph in Appendix 3) below in which the original essay using the Block Arrangement method:

...and private school is focusing on the aim or it. By teaching English to students, they will much more get prepared to face the final exam so they will not fail in it. English is an international language. It means that by teaching English, teachers will guide the students to get many big chances of studying abroad.

Despite the three similarities that have been explained above, there are also three differences in teaching English in public and private schools.

Firstly, most public schools only have few facilities to support teaching English such as language laboratory, computers, TV or a projector. Those things are really....

The sentence written in bold in the above paragraph fragment is an example of a transition signal. This paragraph functions as a separator of the previous paragraph. Although its function is to mark the passage of paragraphs from comparing to contrasting essays or the other way around, this paragraph also functions to connect between paragraphs before and after the transitional signal.

The last part of an essay is a concluding paragraph. It consists of a summary of what has been discussed in the essay. The writer also restates the thesis statement using other words in the concluding paragraph. Additionally, the author generally provides a final comment or personal opinion. The closing paragraph has easily observable characteristics. Usually, this paragraph begins with words such as 'to conclude the paragraph', 'as the conclusion', and 'in the end'. In a concluding paragraph, it is not allowed to introduce new ideas but reaffirmations and opinions from the author.

2.2 Genre Based Approach

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) is not new in the educational setting. This method believes that if someone wants to learn English, they must learn from various kinds of genres. The ultimate goal of learning using this approach is that students are expected to be able to develop communication competence both oral and written. Therefore the teaching-learning process is recommended to apply the oral cycle and the written cycle.

The GBA is divided into several stages. BKoF (Building Knowledge of Field), MoT (Modeling of Text), JCoT (Joint Construction of Text), and ICOT (Independent construction of Text) are stages in this approach. One stage can take around 4 x 45 minutes. If all skills are taught, there will be four stages and two cycles that take 8 x 4 x 45 minutes. However, the possible time needed to teach also depends on the students' understanding of the lesson. In other words, the teaching and learning time can adjust in accordance to the classroom needs.

Teaching Comparison and Contrast essays with the GBA begins with the first stage called BKoF (Building Knowledge of Field). At this stage, the lecturer activates students' background knowledge before entering to the topic discussed. The second stage is MoT (Modeling of Text). At this stage, the lecturer gives an example (model) of what is discussed. Models can be written or in other forms. The third stage is called JCoT (Joint Construction of Text), which is the stage where students are asked to work in groups to write a text or look for other examples similar to what has been given in MoT. The last stage of the GBA is ICOT

(Independent Construction of Text). At this stage, the lecturer assigns a task to develop the same text discussed individually.

The following is an example of the application of GBA to teach Comparison and Contrast essays for semester III English Department students. The topic is Miss Universe 2008 and 2009. The first step is the BKoF (Building Knowledge of Field. This stage involves an introduction to the topic. A discussion is a popular activity in this stage. The lecturer acts as a stimulator to explore the background knowledge of students. This activity involves active communications between the lecturer and students, and among students themselves.

To dig up knowledge, the lecturer can display pictures of the winner of Miss Universe 2008 and 2009 and asks students to look for similarities and differences between them. The lecturer can begin his/her question by giving probing questions to the class about the figures. Another way is to directly ask students if they know Dayana Mendoza or Zulyka Rivera, the winner of Miss Universe 2008 and 2009.

At this stage, the lecturer guides the students to the topic Comparison and Contrast essay that will be discussed. Reading books or using other learning resources is possible. If the lecturer feels that the students already understand that they will learn the Comparison and Contrast essay, then the lecturer can continue to the next stage. However, the lecturer can still explore the background knowledge of students if it is deemed necessary. It happens when students are still lost in understanding what the topic is all about. If the time is not sufficient, the lecturer can immediately give the topic of the lesson which is studying a comparison and contrast essay through comparing and contrasting Miss Universe 2008 and 2009. This decision is taken as long as the lecturer has tried to do building knowledge before.

Then, the next step is MOT (Modeling of Text). At the Modeling of Text stage, the lecturer can give a written example of comparison and contrast essay example (Appendix 1, 2, and 3). The lecturer can give an explanation of what a comparison and contrast essay is all about such as the definition, the organization of the paragraph, and the grammar aspect through the example. The lecturer has to ensure that the students understand those aspects. Giving another example of a comparison and contrast essay and asks students to determine the parts of an essay can be an option of activity that can be done in this stage.

In addition to lecturers giving an example of a comparison and contrast essay, the lecturer can also explain steps for writing this essay. This can be started by choosing a topic. After the topic is decided, the lecturer invites the class to form a thesis statement and make an outline. The lecturers should make sure that students understand how to outline a comparison and contrast essay. If students still find difficulties, the lecturer can add more explanation of writing the outline. The examples of an outline can be seen in Table 1, Table 2, and Appendix 4.

At this stage, listening and reading activities are more dominant. When the lecturer asks students to read, reading activities become more dominant. Reading activities can be in form of reading aloud by appointing one of the students to read or asking the class to do a silent reading. Listening activities become more dominant when reading aloud happens. Another activity in

which listening practice is more dominant is when the lecturer explains the structure of comparison and contrast essay to the class.

In this stage, the lecturer can start dividing the class into small groups. For example, if there are 30 students in a class, the lecturer can divide them into six groups. The group division foster group discussion in which they can discuss things related to the topic received. Additionally, the group member can share ideas or knowledge during the discussion. They can have a question and answer session within the group. However, it is still possible to involve students to ask questions if they have difficulty in receiving explanations from lecturers especially when students find no answer to the questions.

After students understand the organizational structure of writing the essay, the lecturer can proceed to the next stage. If students' understanding is not enough, the lecturer can give another and repeat the explanation. If the repetition stage is unsuccessful, the lecturer can use the other modeling stages. Asking one of the students to teach their friends in front of the class and explain the structure of writing the essay or ask students to work in a group to look for other examples of comparison and contrast essay to be analyzed are the other examples of activities during Modeling of Text.

JCOT (Joint Construction of Text) is the next stage. Joint Construction of Text is the stage when students collaborate writing a text. This activity can be done by asking students to work in groups or pairs. They can start to write an outline of the paragraph they will make. To check the work, the lecturer asks students to present their work to the class or he/she can mingle and check students' work. The advantage of asking students to do a presentation is allowing the member of the class to comment and give feedback to their friends' presentations. However, the role of the lecturer as a facilitator in this stage is still necessary to add the comment and feedback of students' work. Then, students can work on their tasks composing the essay with their pairs or group using the updated outline.

At this stage, the lecturer acts as a place to ask if students encounter difficulties in learning. The lecturer also acts as an observer whether all group members carry out their respective duties when they are developing the outline or the essay. The process of presentation and giving feedback will recur during composing the essay. After this stage is completed, the lecturer can go to the next stage or the last stage of the GBA, namely Independent Construction of Text.

The independent construction of the text (ICOT) stage is the last stage. Here, students are expected to be able to write their comparison and contrast essays using grammar and writing structures they studied. Often time, students do the ICoT as homework and they have to a consultation with the lecturer. Peer evaluation can also be a good way to check the work among students.

From the explanation above, below are some advantages obtained when a lecturer applies the GBA approach to teach a comparison and contrast essay. They include:

1. Communication is carried out both ways, between students and the lecturer, and among students when teaching and learning activities take place. This is seen when the BKoF process is ongoing.
2. Lecturers are not the main source of learning because students can utilize other learning resources such as the internet. Even they can learn among their peers.
3. Lecturers are required to be more creative in organizing classrooms and creating pleasant teaching and learning climate.
4. This method guides students to learn gradually because each stage must be passed. Lecturers may not enter the next stage if students do not understand the materials.
5. The relationship between students and lecturers or students and students becomes tighter, especially seen at the Joint Construction of Text stage.
6. Students can express themselves since they can choose any topic when composing their essays. They are not awkward in presenting work or putting up their work.

3. CONCLUSION

Various teaching methods exist and are created to advance the world of education. Lecturers as educators can choose or combine existing methods to deliver class lessons. Learning to write an essay no longer encounters difficulties. The GBA method with its four stages can guide students to understand and ultimately direct them to be able to write a paragraph of their comparison and contrast essay.

This method provides an effective and effective alternative learning method for students. In addition to its flexible method which does not force students to study, this method is also able to arouse the creativity of students conveying their ideas in a paragraph of a comparison and contrast essay.

The writer believes that this article can be a good reference for lecturers and teachers in teaching writing especially teaching comparison and contrast essays in academic writing and other purposes. Furthermore, it is suggested that future research can focus on the implementation of GBA in teaching other types of essays in academic writing.

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Appendix 1

The example of Comparison Essay

Vacationing at the Beach or in the Mountains

People are always looking forward to their vacation period. There are many options where to choose from. I think that the two most common places people choose for taking a vacation are the beaches and the mountains. Both places offer a variety of fun activities. The beach offers activities that the mountain cannot offer and vice versa. The mountains and the beach are different. The purpose of this essay is to contrast the climate, types of activities, and locations of beaches and mountains.

I'm going to discuss the mountains first. The three aspects I'm going to discuss are climate, types of activities, and location. Climate is always important to enjoy vacations. If a person dislikes cold weather, he or she might have a hard time in the mountains. The cold climate in the mountains is the first barrier to enjoying them, but the climate and the temperature of these zones also determine the types of activities they offer. Snowboarding, mountain climbing, mountain biking, hiking, and skiing are some activities people can enjoy when going to the mountains. Many regions have mountains where people can go and have a great vacation. Canada is a country located in North America and contains many mountain vacation sites where people can go and have fun.

I'm going to discuss the beach second. The three aspects I'm going to discuss are climate, types of activities, and location. A warm climate is one of the most important features that the beach has. Sun and fun are two words that describe the beach. The temperature in those places is always hot. The sea and the warm climate determine the activities that are available at the beach. People can swim, play volleyball, play soccer, and ride water bikes. In most coastal sites, there are discos and restaurants where people can dance or party throughout the night. Mexico offers many amazing coastal sites to visit. Acapulco and Cancun are two of the most beautiful and famous beaches in the world.

It doesn't matter what place a person decides to choose. The fun is 100% guaranteed. People often choose one of these two options to spend their vacations. Depending on what the person likes is what he or she will choose. I like the beach better than the mountains, but sometimes it is better to take a risk and try a different place to enjoy.

Appendix 2

The example of Contrast Essay taken from

<https://www.coursehero.com/file/p12erdk1/Consuming-Fresh-Foods-Instead-of-Canned-Foods-Eating-is-an-activity-that-we-as/>

Consuming Fresh Foods Instead of Canned Foods

Eating is an activity that we as humans do at least two times a day. We live in a world where the variety of food is immense, and we are responsible for what we eat. We decide what we are about to eat and how it will affect our bodies. The purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast the differences between eating fresh foods instead of canned foods. The three main differences are flavor, health benefits, and cost.

The most notable difference between these two kinds of foods is their flavor. Fresh foods have great flavor and taste because they keep all their natural conditions. Canned foods however lack a lot of its flavor characteristics because there are some other chemical products added to the natural foods. Logically, the fresh foods will have a greater taste and flavor when consumed just because of the time in which they have been prepared.

Comparing both types of foods we notice another difference. There is a health factor that affects both of them. Canned foods lose some of the original fresh food nutrients when stored, and also it has to be tinned with many conservatives and chemical factors that prolong the shelf life and apparent freshness of the food but could also become toxic if consumed too often.

Yet another difference between these two types of foods is the cost. Canned foods are much more expensive than fresh foods. Here the benefit of buying tinned foods is that they are easier to find, for example, in a supermarket instead of the market like fresh foods, and they require less work to prepare than fresh foods, just open and serve.

Here are the main three differences between buying fresh foods and buying canned foods. As we can see it comes down to a personal choice, based on the time each person has, the money, and the importance he/she gives to his/her.

Appendix 3

The example of Comparison and Contrast Essay.

Three in Three

Public and private schools are three institutions that are provided for students to study. Both public and private schools teach English to their students. Although teaching English in public and private schools remains the same in terms or three similarities, it also brings three differences.

Both private and public schools' teachers give the same teaching English to their students. Before asking their students to do some exercises in their book, teachers explain the lesson so students will understand the lesson and they can do the exercises well. If this way does not work, teachers will use the other way. It is called a group discussion. In this way, teachers guide the students upon their discussion where they can share the lesson. Those are the first similarities of teaching English in public and private schools. Another similarity is the curriculum that is used. It is named KTSP (Kurikulum Satuan Pendidikan). In teaching English based on this curriculum, teachers in both schools give students many opportunities to enlarge their knowledge besides getting them from schools. In this curriculum, teachers do not only just focus on giving the theory but also focus on practicing such as by asking the students to have a conversation between students or with native speakers, write their daily journal, or by asking them to do a small debate. The last similarity of teaching English in public and private schools is focusing on the aim of it. By teaching English to students, students will get much more prepared to face the final exam so they will not fail in it. English is an international language. It means by teaching English to students, teaches will guide the students to get big chances to study abroad.

Despite the three similarities that have been explained above, there are also three differences in teaching English in public and public schools.

Firstly, most public schools have only a few facilities to support teaching English such as a language laboratory, computers, TV or a projector. Those things are needed and schools have to provide them for the teaching process runs well. In contrast, private schools have most of those facilities. Even they provide each table of their language laboratory with a computer for one student. Secondly, in public schools, most of the teachers are local indigenous so most of them speak English but it is influenced by their mother tongue. Their students, sometimes, just count on listening to western songs or movies to get pure English in terms of pronunciation the English words. However, teaching English in private schools, students will be taught by some native speakers besides the local teachers. They are accustomed to English by this. Finally, if we talk about the books or references that those schools use, we will also find the differences. In public schools, teachers use only one or two books as a compulsory book and most of them are produced in Indonesia. Students need more references when they use KTSP as the curriculum. On the other hand, many sources are used in teaching English at private schools. They use English and Indonesian references so in teaching English, teachers do not stag on one or two books like what public schools do. When they do discussion, they have many resources from books that they have already read. It also implies that in private schools, they do not have a compulsory book. Even if they have it, it is written in English and imported from abroad.

From the explanation above, we can conclude. Public and private schools bring three differences and three similarities in terms of teaching English to their students such as the way of teaching, the curriculum and the aim of teaching English as the three similarities, facilities, using natives speakers as teachers, and the kind and amount of their books as the references as the three differences.

Appendix 4

The example of the outline Comparison and Contrast Essay model Block Arrangement.

Thesis statement

Although teaching English to public and private schools remains the same in terms of three similarities, it also brings three differences.

- I. Three similarities or teaching English in public and private schools.
 - A. The same way of teaching.
 1. An explanation from the teacher.
 2. Guiding students by holding a group of discussion.
 - B. Using the same curriculum, KTSP.
 1. Focusing on practicing, not theory.
 2. Allowing students to find other sources of a lesson.
 - C. The aim of teaching English.
 1. Preparation for a final exam.
 2. Giving many big chances of studying abroad for students.
- II. Three differences in teaching English in public and private schools.
 - A. Giving the facilities to their students.
 1. Having fewer facilities in public and private schools.
 2. Having more facilities in public and private schools.
 - B. Native speakers as teachers.
 1. No native speakers.
 2. One or two native speakers as a teacher in public schools.
 - C. Kinds of books or references and the amount of them.
 1. Using one or two books that are written and produced in Indonesia.
 2. Using no compulsory books because they have so many references.

Conclusion: The way of teaching, the curriculum, and the aim of teaching are three similarities of teaching English in public and private schools besides three differences that we can find in teaching English in both of the schools

