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CONSTRUCTING RUBRICS FOR GENRES AND SHORT FUNCTIONAL TEXTS: (A New Challenging Task for English Language Teachers)

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Abstract

To enable the students of junior and senior high schools in Indonesia to write such short functional texts as announcement, message, advertisement, brochure, and letters; and such genres as narrative, recount, news item, report, descriptive, explanation, procedure, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, discussion, is the main target of the teaching of writing skill (Curriculum 2004, 2006, and 2013). To reach this target, of course, teachers should teach all theoretical concepts related to these kinds of texts and ask students to write. However, teachers prefer to give only the examples of each short functional texts and genres; and in the real classroom evaluation, students are required to answer a multiple-choice question that is similar to reading comprehension. This condition also happens in the school-leaving exams and national exam. Consequently, students got difficulties to write a grammatical and well-organized genres as well as short functional texts; even the teachers will have no experiences at all on how to construct a fit, proper, and feasible rubric for those texts. This is due to fact that more than 50% of new students (i.e. freshmen) of English Department Faculty of Education and Teacher Training University of Riau Pekanbaru have moderate to low levels ability in writing skill, particularly in terms of genres, short functional texts including essays or projects (Results of Writing Course I, Academic Year 2014/2015). In relation to this, about most English teachers of Province of Riau attending Education & Training of Certification (18-27 October 2015) said that they had difficulties to construct rubrics for a specific short functional text. This paper will try to disclose how to construct and apply rubrics for those texts that will be a new challenging task for English language teachers within Riau Province and Indonesia.

Key words: constructing, rubrics, genres, short functional texts

A. The Nature of Genres and Short Functional Texts

According to Curriculum 2004, 2006, and 2013, the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia focuses on the understanding of English genres and short functional texts. For the students of junior high schools (SMP/MTs), for example, they learn such genres as the *texts of procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, and report*; and the genres including *the texts of news item, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, and discussion* belong to the students of senior high schools (SMA/MA). However, both types of schools (junior and senior high schools) teach similar such short functional texts as *schedules, e-mails, announcements, short message services, advertisements, brochures, letters, greeting cards, menus, memos, notices &*

warnings, invitations, menus, prays, poems, and the like (Depdiknas, 2004; Yustisia, P.T. (2008).; Kemendikbud, 2013).

Then, in terms of teaching-learning process, teachers need to teach all of these kinds of genres as well as short functional texts through four language skills: *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* integrated or discretely. Discretely means that genres or short functional texts is taught in one specific skill; while the integrated focuses on the combination of two or three skills at the same time, for example, *listening – speaking; listening – writing; listening – speaking – writing; reading – writing; reading – speaking,* and so forth.

B. Generic Structures of Genres and Specific Aspects of Physical Appearances of Short Functional Texts

Each genre has a specific generic structure as in the following (*Competency standard for High School graduates*, Kemendikbud, 2009):

Genres	Generic structure
Text of procedure	introduction/goal, process
Text of descriptive	identification, description
Text of recount	orientation (who, where, and when), events (chronological), re-orientation
Text of narrative	orientation (introduction to actors, place, and time), evaluation (optional), complication (conflict), resolution (finishing conflict), re-orientation (optional)
Text of report	general classification, description
Text of news item	newsworthy event (core), background event, sources
Text of explanation	general statement, sequenced explanation, conclusion
Text of analytical exposition	thesis (opinion statement), arguments (point + elaboration), reiteration (re-stated the position of the writer)
Text of hortatory exposition	thesis (issue being discussed), arguments (reasons for attentions and recommendation), recommendation (how it should be or not should be like that
Text of discussion	issue, arguments for, arguments against, conclusion/recommendation

Unlike Genres, each Short functional text does not have a fixed generic structure but it may contain its *specific aspects of physical appearances* that vary from one to another. *School-learning schedules,* for example, may have more aspects of physical appearance than that of *e-mail.* So that the number of *specific aspects of physical appearances* will be highly dependent on such aspects as *the main functions* as well as *the scope of using* that kind of short functional text. The followings are the *specific aspects of physical appearance* of each kind of short functional text.

Short functional texts	Specific Aspects of Physical Appearances
Schedules (e.g. school)	days, time/period, session/subject, room, teachers
e-mails	account code of sender, account code of receiver, news
Announcements/ memos	sender, receiver, headline/theme/topic, complete news
short message services	phone no. of sender, (name of sender), phone no. of receiver, (name of receiver), short message

Advertisements/ brochures/leaflets (business matters)	location, price, size, type, methods of payment, contact person/agent phone no., facilities, etc.
Letters (formal/informal)	sender, (sender address), receiver, (receiver address), date, salutation, content, closing, signature, (number & subject, carbon copy for formal letter)
greeting cards	words of celebration, sender, receiver,
notices	topic/theme, positive words/tone/attitude,
warnings	topic/theme, negative words/tone/attitude,
invitations	event, time, day, date, inviter, invitees, location,
Menus	list of food/drinks/price, name of restaurant, phone no., restaurant address

C.   Constructing Rubrics for Genres and short functional text

In a general concept, rubric is *a set of rules or instructions* (Collins Cobuild Essential English Dictionary, 1989:694). In relation to this, the construction of rubrics can be characterized as a set of rules containing reliable, measurable, universal, rational, practical, accurate, holistic, analytic and valid wide-ranging aspects. The wide-ranging aspects in this case concern with generic structure in terms of genres and specific aspects of physical appearances in terms of short functional texts (Adapted from: Mertler, 2001; Moskal, 2000; Moskal, & Jon, 2000; Moskal, 2003; Tierney & Marielle, 2004; Shohamy, 1985; Hughes, 2003, Popham, 1995, Angelo & Cross, 1993, Brooks, 2002, Brown, 2004).

Then, since the rubrics deal with the measurement and assessment of English writing skill, it is a compulsory to include the aspects of grammatical rules as well as punctuations and capitalization (i.e. writing mechanics). Therefore, the construction of genres (in terms of analytic rating scales) are as in the following examples:

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
		5	strongly suitable
		4	suitable
	Goal	3	adequately suitable
		2	unsuitable
		1	strongly unsuitable
		5	well-organized
Text		4	organized
of	Process	3	adequately organized
procedure		2	unorganized
		1	really unorganized
		5	mostly correct
		4	partly correct
	Grammatical rules	3	nearly correct
		2	incorrect
		1	mostly incorrect
		5	strongly accurate
	Writing mechanics	4	accurate
	(punctuations,	3	adequately accurate
	capitalizations, sentence	2	inaccurate
	connectors, choice of	1	strongly inaccurate
	words, spelling)		

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
		5	strongly identified
		4	identified
	Identification	3	adequately identified
		2	unidentified
		1	strongly unidentified
		5	strongly correct
Text		4	correct
of descriptive	Descriptions	3	adequately correct
		2	incorrect
		1	strongly incorrect
		5	mostly correct
		4	partly correct
	Grammatical rules	3	nearly correct
		2	incorrect
		1	mostly incorrect
	Writing mechanics	5	strongly accurate
	(punctuations,	4	accurate
	capitalizations, sentence	3	adequately accurate
	connectors, choice of	2	inaccurate
	words, spelling)	1	strongly inaccurate

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
		5	strongly oriented
		4	oriented
	Orientation	3	fairly oriented
	(who, where, when)	2	disoriented
		1	strongly disoriented
		5	well-arranged
		4	arranged
	events (chronological)	3	fairly arranged
		2	unarranged
		1	really unarranged
Text		5	strongly re-oriented
of		4	re-oriented
recount	re-orientation	3	fairly re-oriented
		2	disoriented
		1	strongly disoriented
		5	mostly correct
		4	partly correct
	Grammatical rules	3	nearly correct
		2	incorrect
		1	mostly incorrect
	Writing mechanics	5	strongly accurate
	(punctuations, capitalizations,	4	accurate
	sentence connectors, choice of	3	adequately accurate
	words, spelling)	2	inaccurate
		1	strongly inaccurate

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
		5	strongly oriented
		4	oriented

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
Text of narrative	orientation	3	fairly oriented
		2	disoriented
		1	strongly disoriented
	evaluation (optional)	5	strongly evaluated
		4	evaluated
		3	fairly evaluated
		2	unevaluated
		1	strongly unevaluated
	complication (conflict)	5	strongly conflicted
		4	conflicted
		3	fairly conflicted
		2	non-conflicted
		1	strongly non-conflicted
	resolution (finishing conflict)	5	strongly finished
		4	finished
		3	fairly finished
		2	unfinished
		1	strongly unfinished
	re-orientation (optional)	5	strongly re-oriented
		4	re-oriented
		3	fairly re-oriented
		2	disoriented
		1	strongly disoriented
	Grammatical rules	5	mostly correct
		4	partly correct
		3	nearly correct
		2	incorrect
		1	mostly incorrect
	Writing mechanics (punctuations, capitalizations, sentence connectors, choice of words, spelling)	5	strongly accurate
		4	accurate
		3	adequately accurate
		2	inaccurate
		1	strongly inaccurate

Genre	Aspects to be measured	Scores	Descriptions
Text of report	general classification	5	strongly classified
		4	classified
		3	fairly classified
		2	unclassified
		1	strongly unclassified
	description	5	mostly described
		4	partly described
		3	fairly described
		2	poorly described
		1	nothing described
	Grammatical rules	5	mostly correct
		4	partly correct
		3	nearly correct
		2	incorrect
		1	mostly incorrect
	Writing mechanics (punctuations, capitalizations, sentence connectors, choice of words, spelling)	5	strongly accurate
		4	accurate
		3	adequately accurate
		2	inaccurate

				1		strongly inaccurate

Different from the scores as well as the descriptions of genres, the rubric for short functional texts is much simpler (i.e. it operates only two scores: 1 and 0). Score 1 means that the aspect to be evaluated is available; and score 0 if the aspect is unavailable. Look at the following rubrics:

Short functional text	Aspects to be measured	Scores		Descriptions
Schedules (e.g. for a school)	days	1	0	1 = available
	time/period	1	0	
	session/subject	1	0	0 = unavailable
	room	1	0	
	teachers	1	0	
		1	0	
	Spelling	1	0	1 = accurate
				0 = inaccurate

Short functional text	Aspects to be measured	Scores		Descriptions
e-mails	account code of sender	1	0	1 = available
	account code of receiver	1	0	
	news	1	0	0 = unavailable
	Spelling	1	0	

D. Appeals for Teachers

Since the teaching of writing is always through genres as well as short functional texts, you are cordially encouraged to construct a reliable, measurable, universal, rational, practical, accurate, holistic, analytic and valid rubric. Make sure that only you…yourself know your needs how to assess your students' writing products as well as project. Therefore, please do not hesitate to practice constructing your own rubric. Be success and have a good try!

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