

**A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF READING—  
ANALYSING—WRITING APPROACH IN  
TEACHING EXPOSITORY WRITING**

By. Jufrizal

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Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FPBS IKIP Padang  
Jl. Belibis, Air Tawar, Padang 25131 Phone (0751) 51260 Pes. 262

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A Practical Application of Reading-Analysing-Writing  
Approach in Teaching Expository Writing  
by: Jufriзал

Introduction

Writing skill is one of important skills, not only in learning a language itself but also for other academic purposes. Learning to write must be one of many targets in learning a language. Language teacher in classroom should encourage learners in such a way that they know how important the writing skill is. The ability of writing is one of indicator to the success of students and teaching learning process as a whole.

In accordance with this, language teachers should be aware of the difficulties and other problems in teaching writing for students of English as a second or foreign language. Teachers of writing subject often face more difficulties then. When the teacher asks students to write in English, they are not able to write, create the text and to think in English. They just translate their own language to English. The difficulties might be caused by: first, students have limited knowledge of English, second, they have little experience in reading in it, and furthermore, there is cultural interference due to the difference in the style of literary and rhetorical patterns of expression in their native language and target language (Kang, 1995).

In general, communication (written or spoken) may be categorized into four types. Specifically, the four types of written communication are exposition, argumentation, description and narration. Exposition is chosen as the topic of this paper, that is type of written expression in which the writer intend to explain or inform something (Wyrick, 1987).

Exposition or expository writing in fact, is the most common target in teaching academic writing. Consequently, writing expository essay becomes an ideal purpose at the college of university level. In order to arrive at the expected ability in writing expository paper, teacher needs to guide and encourage students with appropriate approaches, methods, or classroom techniques. By this way students will be familiar with style of writing, paragraph development, idea, topic or other things related to rhetorical patterns in English.

As matter of fact, various approaches, methods, or techniques might be applicable in teaching writing. However, a practical application of Reading-Analysing-Writing Approach in teaching expository

writing is the central topic to be talked about in this paper.

### Expository Writing

As the name, exposition refers to kinds of writing pieces whose primary purpose is giving information. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, news magazines, text book, are the examples of expository writing. It is also possible to say that most of college works: book reports, analysis of phenomena, lesson plans, essay examinations, laboratory reports are also expository writings.

Myrick (1987:133) states that a good expository essay (writing) is more than a collection of facts, figures, and details. Each essay should contain a thesis statement, and supporting details, and should be organized in such a way that makes the essay understandable. Instead of "a thesis statement" we have a "topic sentence" in single paragraph. Furthermore, the writer's main purpose is not only to inform the readers but also to convince them that this essay explains the subjects matter truthfully.

To do this, a writer of exposition has to expose his ideas in logical way in order taht, readers are able to follow those ideas easily. In this sense, there are various ways to organize an expository essay (writing), depending upon writer's purpose. While the most common strategies of patterns of organization are the development by examples, process analysis, comparison and contrast, definition, classification, and casual analysis. (Myrick, 1987).

These patterns may be used to develop a single paragraph or and essay. However, it true that an essay is rarely developed completely by a single strategy. Therefore, we just identify the kind of expository essay by its primary strategy of development. It's stated here that to develop a paragraph the writer is suggested to follow the above strategies respectively.

### Reading-Analysing-Writing (R-A-W) Approach

R-A-W approach seems to be an approach to help students of English as a second, or foreign language in order to develop students' ability to express themselves to write in acceptable English. It has been found <sup>Farwell</sup> in the early stages (Kang, 1993). According to her, this approach is adapted because we think that reading is the most convenient way to acquire information, experience and knowledge. Seen from the learners' side, by reading any types of written materials, they will learn many things. They will get information, experience, and knowledge that could be applied latter to writing activities.

Other component of this approach is analysing. Analysing in reading process and writing process is also the important activity. Bassone (in Kang (1993)) points out that learning to write is largely a process of learning to think more clearly. By recognizing logical thinking in what they read, students will be able to use this knowledge and organize and develop ideas in their own writing. It means that after reading written materials, the learners are to analyse and recognize syntactic and rhetorical patterns from the texts. They will be familiar with the logical thinking of writer in organizing paragraphs. Consequently, are able to see the elements of paragraphs. And of course, having this skill, students are expected to apply and able to create their own writing task.

Writing is the other component of this approach. It's certain that it will be the terminal for whole activities of this approach. After the students read and analyse the written materials (texts), they are asked to write. Firstly, let them to write a short paragraph, and then continue to create paragraphs in order to come to an essay.

#### A Practical Application of R-A-W Approach in the Classroom

Since it is possible to have some practical applications of this approach, the following discussion is just one among other possible practical applications. As other language skills do, selection of materials is also important in writing class. These are some criteria suggested in selecting materials for reading and analysing activities:

1. The materials must be of some interest or informational value to the students.
2. The materials should be short-or a little longer but not too much longer than composition students are expected to write.
3. The materials should be at an appropriate level of difficulty that is within the students' ability to read and analyse.
4. The materials should be well constructed

(adapted from Kang, 1993).

Let's see now stages in teaching practice:

There are two stages in teaching procedures: language input and writing practice. Language input is expected to be the students' property before and during writing practice. Language input includes reading and analysing. While the writing practice is the application of students' information, knowledge, and experience.

#### 1. Language input

At the beginning of the teaching learning process, the teacher

gives to the students sample materials. First, students are asked to read the model carefully and answer some comprehension questions. Then they are required to analyse its organization and content. In this activities, teacher asks students to recognize a). the topic sentence, b). the supporting details, c). the method of development, and d). the technique of support.

In the analysing activities, the teacher gives students guidelines. The following guidelines are regarded as quite appropriate in this stage:

1. underline the topic sentence and circle the key words.
2. find the supporting details and the pattern of paragraph.
3. note the important elements of the paragraph.

(adapted from Kang, 1993)

Above guidelines are supposed to analyse a sample paragraph. We hope then the students will have a clear picture of what an expository paragraph is like and how the author develops his thoughts. As the continuation, it's allowed that the teacher addresses students to know more about all major rhetorical techniques of paragraph development.

For the higher level or higher grade of students, the teacher leads them to analyse an essay. To do this, first let students know how each part contributes to the structure of the whole essay. Then help them to analyse the components of an essay. Kang (1993:32) suggests to find the following essay components:

- a. the over all organization and paragraph structure.
- b. the thesis statement of the controlling idea and supporting details.
- c. devices used to ensure coherence.
- d. the method of development, and
- e. the function of each paragraph.

Having the components of the paragraph and an essay, students will learn the schematic structure or general out-line of exposition (Reid in Kang: 1993). The general schematic structure of an exposition can be shown as the following:

| Paragraph             | Essay                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Introductory sentence | introductory paragraph |
| Body<br>(details)     | Body paragraphs        |
| concluding sentences  | concluding paragraph   |

Kang (1993) also says that the main purpose of this activities is to develop students' discourse competence receptively and help them get a sense of organization. Analysis of the models consciously will enable the students to out line and write their essay (paragraph) more effectively. In the same idea, Frank (1983) supports that the out line is very important in guiding writers (students) in the construction of paragraphs.

## 2. Writing practice

With the knowledge, experience, and training acquired from the comprehensible language input, students are ready to write. During writing practice stage, the students proceed through the writing process; brainstorming-writing-revision.

a. Brainstroming. Brainstroming is a pre-writing technique whose the aim is to help students generate ideas. It happens to a writer when he begins to write, so many ideas come to his mind. All of the ideas are welcome. Limitation of the topic and state a good topic sentence of a good thesis statement is a way to control the ideas.

In the classroom, teacher may assign students a topic, and divide them into groups. Each group discusses the topic freely, jotting words down, facts and ideas related to the topic. Each students may contribute his ideas and other comments. They are also possible to put sentences and phrases in a scheme of paragraph which will be reorganized in the next activity.

b. Writing. Coming to this activity, students can begin to organize their ideas based on the rough notes. First, ask students to formulate a supported topic sentence (in a single paragraph) or a supported thesis statement (in an essay). Then ask them to expand the topic sentence or the thesis statement with supporting details. If it's in single paragraph, it is enough to support with some sentence as the details. While in an essay the thesis statement is supported by several topic sentences which will be developed into several paragraphs.

While writing, students are encouraged to pay attention to the syntactic and rhetorical patterns and writing techniques learned from the written input. This is the time for the students to apply knowledge and skill of structure, vocabulary, and other linguistic competence. They are to express ideas other experiences through words and sentences.

Revision. Ferguson in Kang (1993) claims that revision provides an opportunity for the writer to review and reexamine his work, which

is an essential part of the writing process. In order to have a good result, it is required <sup>to</sup> have three revisions. The teacher of writing class is necessary to consider the level of revisions applied to the students' composition. The three revisions are: 1. self-correction, 2. peer evaluation, and 3. the writer's consideration of the reader's views.

Self-correction in this case is that the revision done by the students himself. Each student is asked to read his composition several times carefully and critically. While the teacher is available to answer questions and to help students whenever necessary, but she allows them to first figure out on their own the reasons for their errors and how they can correct them (Wood, 1993). The point to be evaluated include the organization, coherence, language, and mechanic of composition. Teacher is suggested to give enough time to the students in revising their composition.

The second evaluation is called peer evaluation. This activity is done in pairs or in small groups in the classroom. Students exchange his/her composition with friends. Let them to read, analyse, criticize and comment their friends' work. According to Kang (1995) this evaluation process will give students more than once chance to perfect their work. The aspect to be evaluated include mainly content, organization, and language. This will have a positive input on students' writing development.

The third revision is the most important part of the final revision. It is the writer's consideration of the reader's views. The idea of this activity is that any comments, critics or other input made by reader are considered. The students writer should give attention carefully at the marks and comments of anybody else. But the final result is fully writer's decision. The student writer may have other consideration and logical thinking for the quality or the final result. On this occasion, the teacher must be the inspirator, motivator, or advisor for the further and higher quality of teaching expository writing for ESP/EFL students.

### Conclusion

The practical application of the R'AW approach can be used in any ESP/EFL class if the students have attained the necessary level of competence in English. Kang Shu-min (a lecturer in ESP at QUFU teachers University) found that this approach worked well through about two semesters experiment. And it is supposed and believed

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that this practical application can work well in the writing class of English Department IKIP Padang as well. And it is true that the lecturer of writing should make the application appropriate with the students' level.

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