

Genre-Based Approach in Practice: Pedagogical Insights from Indonesian Junior High School Teachers

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Genre-Based Approach, GBA theory, EFL	Genre-Based Approach (GBA) receives more attention in recent years in Indonesia. This approach has been selected as the default approach to teach English as stated in the current and previous national curriculums. Consequently, it is essential for the Indonesian English teachers to understand the approach to effectively teach the subject. The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of GBA by junior high school teachers in teaching activities. Descriptive qualitative with case study design was employed in conducting the study. In collecting the necessary data regarding the implementation of the stages in GBA in the teaching activities, four English teachers from a junior high school were given a set of questionnaires followed by a semi-structured interview. The findings from the questionnaire show that even though all participants have implemented GBA, all stages were implemented incompletely. The aforementioned finding is strengthened by the interview results which exposed that almost all participants unconsciously employed GBA due to the unfamiliarity with the theory. From this study, it can be concluded that most of the participants still have difficulties in implementing GBA relevant with the theory in their teaching activities. This study offers pedagogical implications for the GBA practitioners to keep on enriching and reflecting their GBA practices and for the policymakers to make enrichment programs related to GBA or EFL in Indonesia in general. This is an open-access article under the CC-BY-SA license. 

Introduction

The genre-based approach (GBA) has gained more attention in recent years in Indonesia. It can be seen from its fundamental set within the Indonesian national curriculum. Since the application of the national curriculum named *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) in 2006 until the current national curriculum named *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the English teaching and learning activities were based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics Genre-Based Approach (SFL GBA), which is more popularly known as the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) or Text-Based Approach in Indonesia. It is recorded in the *Capaian Pembelajaran* (Learning Outcomes) of the

English language subject that implies English teaching and learning activities are genre-based or text-based. This implementation was indeed aimed at boosting the level of English proficiency of the students in Indonesia.

Consequently, schools and English teachers in Indonesia must follow the government's guidelines outlined in the curriculum to ensure quality teaching and learning activities. By incorporating GBA into the recent national curriculum, the set learning objectives are aimed to be achieved through it. Thus, the teacher's mastery of the approach will be a pivotal point in achieving the expected learning outcomes. Therefore, this study tried to investigate the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach in the Indonesian EFL teaching context and, at the same time, address the issues surrounding its implementation, which is mandated by the curriculum.

The genre-based approach that has become the basis of the current national curriculum of Indonesia originated in Australia. This approach was popularized by M. A. K. Halliday and his colleagues in the 1980s based on his work on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Emilia, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Martin, 1989).

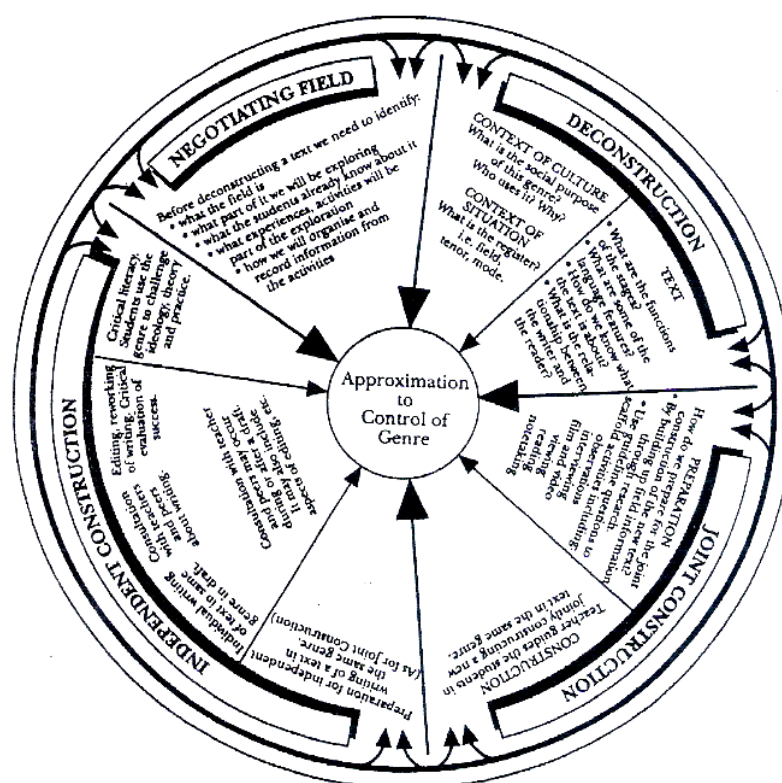
Emilia (2011) stated that there are key concepts underlying it that teachers must understand to employ the approach appropriately. First, learning a language is a social activity. It means that, essentially, language learning aims to enable students to use it in communication. Second, the teacher must teach the expected learning materials explicitly. This concept holds that language skills, especially writing, cannot be mastered by students alone. Consequently, explicit teachings from teachers are expected when they use this approach. Lastly, language learning is a scaffolded developmental process and must be taught as a recursive process. Because of that, the process cannot be displayed in a linear figure but rather in a circular one.

Numerous previous studies on GBA have explored its effectiveness, yet teachers' perspectives on the matter have sometimes been overlooked. This issue is no less important, as the teacher's understanding of the approach determines the appropriateness of its use, which ultimately affects students' performance. For that reason, this study tried to answer the following question:

How do junior high school teachers implement the Genre-Based Approach in Indonesian EFL classrooms?

This study is expected to yield findings that will be beneficial for both English teachers and researchers interested in this topic. For teachers, this research hopefully provides further understanding of the implementation of the Genre-based Approach, especially in the Indonesian EFL context. For other researchers, the study can hopefully serve as a source for further research on the implementation of GBA in the EFL teaching process.

There are many models for the Genre-Based Approach. However, according to Emilia (2011), the GBA implemented in Indonesia adopted the Rothery model of the genre teaching and learning cycle in 1996, as shown in Picture 1. It consists of four steps, namely Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF), Modeling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction, which are performed in a recursive process.



Picture 1. The Rothery Model of Genre

The explanation of each stage in GBA, according to Emilia (2011), is as follows.

1. Building Knowledge of the Field/ Negotiating Field is also known as the preparation step. In this step, the students are prepared to get into the topic of the text by identifying the field, exploring what they will do, recalling the students' prior knowledge of the text, and organizing the information they will get so it can be used in the next step.
2. Modeling/ Deconstruction stage is targeted to familiarize the student with the text. It can be attained by asking about the text's social function and its practical use in the real world. Besides, the teacher can introduce them to the text's language features and generic structure.
3. Joint Construction is the step for the students to try to produce their text. To do that, the teacher has to prepare them further by giving them guidelines or leading questions. This

cycle can also be done in a group, depending on the activities the teacher prepares.

4. The Independent Construction stage enables the students to make their language product. Within this step, the students are encouraged to do peer reviews or simply ask the teacher. They will probably revise their text and critically evaluate it to improve their writing each time their previous writing is evaluated.

The stages explained earlier are not as rigid as they seem, because teachers can start from wherever necessary according to students' needs (Emilia, 2011; Hyland, 2004). If the students are ready and have sufficient knowledge to start from Modeling stage, the teacher must not force to start from the BKoF.

Numerous studies have investigated the influence of GBA on teaching and learning activities. Many of them argued that GBA helps the teaching and learning process from the preparation (Nugraha, Emilia, & Gunawan, 2024; Trisanti, Astuti, & Alif, 2019), during the process (Nugraha et al., 2024; Riswanto, 2021; Sunarti, Puspita, & Rachman, 2019), until the assessment (Nugraha et al., 2024; Ismail & Haleludin, 2022; Visser & Sukavatee, 2020).

Moreover, the implementation of GBA is also reported to support the development of the language skills such as listening (Aswani, Simatupang, Yusuf, & Adha, 2023), speaking (Rahmi, Muslem, & Daud, 2020), reading (Nabella & Rini, 2023; Puspitaloka & Kholifah, 2025), and writing (Fatmawati, Irdiansyah, & Sofyan, 2022; Mastura, Arsyad, & Koto, 2020; Simanjuntak & Tambunan, 2025; Visser & Sukavatee, 2020).

However, there are many challenges faced by the educators in implementing it such as insufficient knowledge of the approach (Hang, 2021; Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021; Nurlaelawati, Lengkanawati, & Gunawan, 2020; Ramadhan, Ficayuma, & Darmawan, 2024; Rustipa, Yulistiyan, & Mulatsih, 2021; Suharyadi & Basthomi 2020; Suharyadi, Widiati, & Basthomi, 2021), student's English proficiency (Amalia, Abdullah, & Fatimah, 2021; Hang, 2021; Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021), source of teaching materials (Amalia et al., 2021; Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021; Rustipa et al., 2021), time management (Amalia et al., 2021; Hang 2021; Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021), and mastery of teaching and learning tools (Cholifah, Pustika, & Winanta, 2022).

With the theory and previous studies discussed, it is necessary to mention that GBA is a popular topic in Indonesian EFL landscape. Thus, it is necessary to further pursue the issues revolving GBA in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. It was selected because this study sought to develop a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach by EFL teachers, along with the difficulties encountered in both offline and online classroom

settings. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), a qualitative study enables the researcher to delve deeper into the topic.

To collect the data, this study involved four English teachers of a junior high school in West Bandung. They were chosen as they portray the English teacher in Indonesia as a general group, as they have taught English for many years and received relatively equal knowledge, information, and socialization regarding the implementation of GBA in the English language teaching and learning process.

Creswell & Creswell (2017) and Cohen et al. (2018) stated that some applicable data collection techniques for this method are surveys or questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis. With these options, this study employed a closed-ended questionnaire as an exploratory tool to obtain an initial view of the necessary data and a semi-structured interview as the main technique to uncover the required data.

The set of questionnaire was created based on the cycle of Genre-based teaching adapted from the Rothery model of genre teaching and learning cycles (Emilia, 2011). As a result, the questionnaire was developed as a set of statements reflecting the steps of GBA implementation, as shown in Table 1. The statements developed for the first two stages are more than for the rest because Emilia (2011) stated that those stages are the most difficult to conduct, since they involve all the groundwork for the construction stages. Because of that, those stages may take longer to complete than others.

Table 1. Questionnaire Items

GBA Stages	Statements adapted from Rothery's model of GBA teaching and learning cycle (Emilia, 2011).
BKoF	I always start the teaching and learning activity by stating the topic and learning objectives to the students.
	I always ask the students about what they know regarding the topic before going further.
	I always encourage the students to share relevant experiences regarding the topic.
	I always connect the student's previous product of language with the current topic.
	I always list and explain the vocabulary the students will face during the teaching and learning process.
Modeling	I always show authentic target products that the students will make.
	I always give the students more exposure to the target products by conducting some activities, such as reading and listening activities.
	I always discuss the product's functions or benefits.

GBA Stages	Statements adapted from Rothery's model of GBA teaching and learning cycle (Emilia, 2011).
	I always discuss the product's organization.
	I always discuss the grammatical forms and the language features of the product.
Joint Construction	I always guide students in researching the information they need to make the product.
	I always give students guiding questions to help them create the product.
Independent Construction	I always ask students to start making the product after they have passed the previous steps.
	I always give students opportunities to consult with their peers or me about their product.
	I always give the students chances to edit or revise the product before collecting or performing it.

To assess the degree of each participant's responses, a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) was used. To allow participants to answer each statement at will and without restraint, the questionnaire was designed to be completed anonymously. At the end of the questionnaire, there is a specific question to ask the participant's availability for an interview session.

The interview was conducted in Indonesian in a semi-structured format to allow participants to express their thoughts and perspectives without restriction. The guiding questions were developed to supplement the required data that were missing from the set of questionnaires for analysis.

The interview consists of four guiding questions. The first question concerns their awareness when identifying the statements in the questionnaire. Then, whether they realized it or not, the question about their background knowledge related to GBA was also asked. Since, from the questionnaire, they have implemented the approach in their teaching, the third question asks about their reason for choosing GBA. Next, the question of their difficulties in implementing it was also asked.

In conducting the data collection stage, several steps were taken to ensure its success. Before the questionnaire was published, prospective participants were asked about their willingness to participate in the study. After obtaining their consent to be participants, the questionnaire was distributed. Once the time available for participants' interviews was determined, the interview dates were scheduled. The interview stage was not conducted on the same day due to the participant's availability. With the help of online recording tools, it was conducted using the guiding questions as the compass to retrieve necessary data.

After the data was collected, it was analyzed to retrieve the result. As stated by Creswell & Creswell (2017), there are several steps to analyzing qualitative data. They are data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The data collected through the questionnaire were presented descriptively for each item to serve as the grounding for the interview. As for the results of the interview, it was analyzed by transcribing the answers and translating it into English. After the audio was transcribed into written documents, it was coded and analyzed to reveal what the questionnaire could not show. Furthermore, it was categorized into several sections based on themes related to the research question.

As part of the data analysis, triangulation was conducted to compare the results from the questionnaire and interviews. This action was completed to improve the validity of the collected data by comparing the results (Cohen et al., 2018).

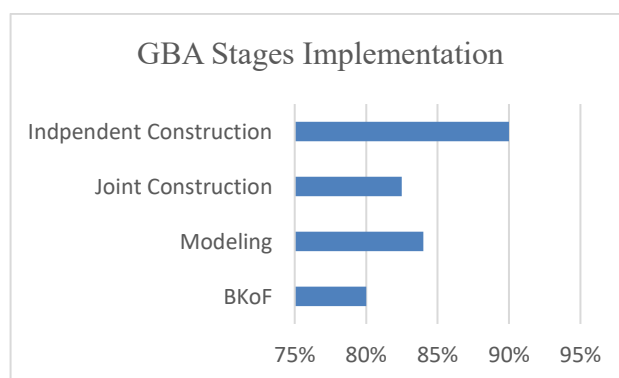
Result and Discussion

1. Result

The results presented are divided into two: the results from the questionnaire and the results from the interview. The questionnaire results are presented first.

a. Questionnaire Results

The first data collecting technique employed was a set of questionnaires developed from the example of the GBA stages activity. The results are presented as follows.



Picture 2. Questionnaire Results

According to the questionnaire results, all participants have implemented all stages of GBA in their teaching and learning. The first stage of GBA, BKoF, has the lowest implementation rate among all participants – 80%. This is not a good sign in terms of GBA theory understanding, as BKoF is very important in the cycle because it serves as the foundation for the next stages by explicitly stating the expected goals, familiarizing the vocabulary, and connecting the students with the previous experience. As for the Modeling of the Text stage, all participants have also conducted it. The percentage is higher than the BKoF, 84%. This can be perceived as a sign of the importance of exemplifying the final text understood by the teachers. The percentage for the Joint

Construction stage is slightly higher than the BKoF, 82%. This means that the stage has been implemented but is incomplete. The last stage, Independent Construction, has the highest percentage, 90%. All participants have fully implemented this stage, from the independent construction process through revisions to the final product. This should be employed as GBA is a recursive cycle.

From this questionnaire, it can be perceived that overall, all participants have employed the Genre-Based Approach in their teaching activities. Even for some items, they disagreed with the statements, which reduced the percentage for the stage; for most of the statements, they answered Agree to Strongly Agree. Therefore, the results suggest that the participants are familiar with GBA implementation in teaching EFL.

b. Interview Results

As the questionnaire data did not provide all the necessary results, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participants. It was conducted with only three participants because one was unavailable for the interview. Before the interview, the participants were given highlights of the questionnaire items to remind them of the statements.

1) Awareness of GBA Implementation

The following excerpt shows the participants' answers to the first question of the interview - their awareness of the GBA steps in the questionnaire.

Excerpt 1. Awareness of GBA implementation

I : (Recalling some questionnaire items).....As you may realize, the questionnaire items are an adaptation of the steps in implementing a kind of teaching model. Do you know what is it?

P1 : ... Yes, I got the gist that they were some kind of model implementation, but I don't know what it is. *laugh*

P2 : Whoa, hm... let me recall. I think I know- eh, no, no, I don't know.

P3 : As far as I know, it is GBA, isn't it? I know because I have implemented it in my teaching.

According to the answers, most participants did not realize that the questionnaire they completed before the interview was based on the GBA cycle steps. The results show that the participants were not aware of the terminology unique to GBA and indicate their limited knowledge of GBA.

2) GBA Learning

After mentioning that the questionnaire items were adapted from GBA, the next question was asked. The answers to question number two about the source of their knowledge on GBA are presented in Excerpt 2 below.

Excerpt 2. GBA learning

I : Where did you learn GBA?

- P1 : Back when I was still an undergraduate student..., GBA is quite popular as the government endorsed it in the national curriculum. ...when I would start to do my pre-service teaching in semester 7, ...used it in my pre-service teaching time...
- P2 : ... I learned more about it when I attended the teacher training. ...the assignments were always connected to the implementation of GBA since Kurikulum 2013 is related heavily with GBA. When I did my bachelor's degree too...
- P3 : ...many years ago. ...I focused my study in SFL. ...when I took my master's degree in Linguistics, ...specialized ...in linguistics education ...SFL that gave birth to GBA.

It can be inferred from the answers that all participants learned about this approach during their undergraduate studies. They also tried to master and implement it correctly during that time.

3) Reason of Implementing GBA

The question regarding their preference in employing GBA was also asked to know their reason in selecting it over other approaches or methods. The participants' answers are presented in Excerpt 3 as follows:

Excerpt 3. Reason for implementing GBA

- I : Why do you choose to implement them in your teaching?
- P1 : ... in my undergraduate degree I did employ GBA in my teaching activities, and I thought this was the best, ... I kept on using it even until now. ... because of the government mandate.
- P2 : Because if we teach text-genre, I think the best option is GBA.
- P3 : Because SFL that I learn ... because the target or focus in our education is still test that depends on text ... With this approach also, the teaching is well-structured ...

From the answer, it can be inferred that they implement GBA in their teaching activities because of the knowledge they gained during their undergraduate degree. Besides that, with the demand and mandate from the curriculum, they stated that this approach is the best choice they have in teaching the materials, and to achieve the learning outcomes set in the beginning.

4) Challenges of Implementing GBA

Some challenges faced by the participants during the GBA implementation is presented as follows in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4. Challenges of GBA implementation

- I: Do you encounter any difficulties implementing GBA in your teaching?
- P1 : Overall, I have never had any difficulties since I have sufficient knowledge of implementing it. ... But ... probably this is a difficulty. If I have to teach lower-achieving students, the cycle always takes much longer to complete.

P2 : So, if the students are low achievers with low exposure to English, it will be hard to implement GBA. ...and critical thinking capacity. ... since the full GBA cycle can take a long time, I tend to skip some steps. ... because the limited time ... because of my lack of understanding of the theory...

P3 : ... sometimes I forget to implement some steps ... I am overwhelmed. ...I want to make the feedback as detailed as possible, but ... limited time ...some that are sketchy. ... lack of vocabulary disrupts the implementation of GBA.

Regarding the difficulties the participants faced during the implementation, from their answers, they can be categorized into two: the teacher's side and the student's side. On the teacher's side, some realized they lacked sufficient knowledge of GBA. Because of that, they tend to miss some steps in the GBA cycle or even implement it incorrectly. On the students' side, the participants agreed that insufficient English proficiency was the main difficulty. This difficulty posed a main problem they encountered: time-management. To ensure all students' understanding of the materials, some activities in the GBA cycle must be repeated.

From this interview, it could be implied that each participant has learned about GBA before, which enables them to still employ it even when they gradually lose the theories. Moreover, all of them agreed that this approach is the best in teaching the learning materials mandated by the curriculum. However, the difficulties faced by the participants in the GBA implementation were diverse.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings presented above, it can be stated that most participants didn't realize that the example steps in the questionnaire were adapted from the Genre-Based Approach. It should also be noted that each participant has background knowledge of GBA, as they studied the approach to some extent, mostly during their undergraduate degrees. Emilia (2011) and Hyland (2004) stated that there are four stages in a full GBA cycle, namely BKoF (Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction). However, most of them have already forgotten about the GBA theory, especially the stage terms and what to do in certain stages. Interestingly, the data showed that they have implemented it in their teaching activities. Thus, it could be perceived that most of them unconsciously had employed GBA in their teaching activities (Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021; Nurlaelawati et al. 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2024; Suharyadi & Basthomi 2020; Suharyadi et al. 2021).

The drive to use this approach was mostly from the mandate of the national curriculum – Kurikulum Merdeka. In the English subject CP of Kurikulum Merdeka, English teaching and learning activities are text-based or genre-based. That's why the participants in this study tried to study it comprehensively. Another reason the participants employed GBA was that they realized this approach was the best way to use the materials mandated by the curriculum. This is

in line with Nugraha et al. (2024), Trisanti et al. (2019), Sunarti et al. (2019), and Visser & Sukavatee (2020) studies, which argued the effectiveness of GBA to teach English.

Besides that, the participants faced some difficulties in implementing GBA in their teaching activities. First, they believed they lacked sufficient knowledge of the approach. They had previously understood it, but over time, they lost it, resulting in a lack of knowledge. This resulted in ineffective GBA implementation, such as missing some activities in certain stages or even skipping one of the stages (Nadjib & Triastuti, 2021; Nurlaelawati et al., 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2024; Suharyadi & Basthomi, 2020; Suharyadi et al., 2021). This is the answer to the findings from the questionnaire stage – the participants' unconsciousness was caused by a loss of understanding of GBA theory over time. Another issue faced by the teacher was the difficulty of giving standardized feedback to students during the Joint and Independent Construction stage due to time constraints in class. This is in line with what Amalia et al. (2021) revealed in their study: the teachers are overwhelmed because, on one hand, many students are waiting for their work to be assessed, and on the other hand, the time is limited.

The difficulties caused by the student factor also occurred. Most cases happened because of the students' levels of English proficiency. When teaching students with low levels of English proficiency, the participants had to devote extra time to certain stages of the cycle, which made some parts of the cycle take longer than they should. However, Emilia (2011) stated that the first two stages of GBA, BCoF, and Modeling are the most important, which is normal if those stages take more time than the others, especially when teaching lower-achieving students, as they need more preparation time before producing their product. Because the main problem was the students' basic level of English, i.e., their vocabulary, the participants had a hard time conducting the Modeling stage and Joint Construction, as the students faced difficulties analyzing the texts. Amalia et al. (2021), Hang (2021), Nadjib and Triastuti (2021), and Puspitaloka & Kholifah (2025), in their studies, also found a similar problem: a lack of vocabulary and overall English proficiency disrupted time management at each stage. As Amalia et al. (2021) and Rustipa et al. (2021) observed in their studies, this problem occurred due to insufficient teacher explicit teaching, which Emilia (2011) consistently encouraged in GBA implementation and overall GBA mastery.

Conclusion

This study tried to investigate the implementation of GBA in the EFL classroom. Based on the results of the questionnaire, GBA has been implemented by the participants, even though the stages are conducted incompletely. The lowest incompleteness in implementation is the Building

Knowledge of the Field (BKoF) – the first stage of GBA cycle, while the highest is the Independent Construction.

After further investigation conducted by interview, the reason for the incompleteness of the stages is due to the participants' insufficient comprehension of the GBA theory. Thus, interestingly, this phenomenon means that the participants are unconsciously conducting the EFL class using GBA without them fully realizing it.

It can also be inferred that all participants still have difficulties implementing GBA appropriate to the theory in their teaching activities. Even though they had received and understood the GBA theory before becoming teachers, their understanding gradually faded over time, leading to issues in implementation. Hence, the enforcement of GBA theory and practice must be conducted frequently to ensure quality and avoid potential difficulties.

A number of issues were faced by the participants during the GBA implementation. The causes came from both them and the students. The issues arising from the participants are the insufficiency of the GBA theory understanding and the difficulty in delivering standardized feedback caused by the limited time in the class. As for the main issue arising from the students, it is their low English proficiency, which disrupts time management in each cycle.

The findings of this study show that frequent enrichment to the theory of GBA and how it is implemented in the classroom are necessary, even if the teachers have been teaching for years. Thus, this calls for personal reflections and a GBA enrichment program for teachers by the policymakers. They are important because the approach is mandated by the national curriculum.

To enrich the results of this study, several recommendations for further research should be considered. First, it will be best for the researcher to use direct classroom observation as the primary data-collection technique to observe the GBA implementation firsthand. Second, more participants should be involved in similar studies to determine whether the findings of this study are applicable to larger settings. Third, adding more variables to the research, such as comparing different learning media or different grade levels in teaching GBA, will likely yield a more comprehensive understanding of the matter. Lastly, it is advised to conduct a similar study with more focused objectives to observe the teacher mastery and implementation of the nationally mandated EFL approach.

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