

## **INTEGRATING TOPIC TYPE STRATEGY TO INCREASE VOCATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS WRITING SKILL**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study is aimed to describe topic type strategy as effective strategy to teach writing for Vocational Higher Education students. This strategy is designed not only to achieve students' competence in obtaining English for academic matters but also achieving skilled aspect for preparing learners for industrial practice especially when dealing with correspondence matters. This is in line with the tendency of maximizing 60% of practical session for English Learning at Vocational context. Thus, topic type strategy should be delivered to achieve goals in gaining students' skill and competence of writing skill. The methodology used in this research is descriptive through conducting several library studies. This approach is used to present topic types strategy techniques to encourage students in generating idea and also help them in managing ideas before writing. The result of implementing this technique is very useful to occupy students to gather information before starting to write a particular topic and can improve students' individual learning styles and make personal choices to gather ideas about any writing topics.*

**Keywords :** *Topic Types, Vocational Students, Writing*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vocational Higher Education has goal not only for introducing English in academic level, but also gaining students' interest to place the four notions of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) (Brown & Coombe, 2015; Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Lange & Brown, 1996) as a part of individual practical use in industrial practice (Basturkmen, 2006). This becomes a massive challenge for those teachers in EFL classroom to build interest and unleash students' motivation for making use of English in daily life activity.

Unfortunately, it is seen that from the four skills, writing seems difficult to be mastered by some vocational students. The reason is because many students find it is hard to unleash their idea in a written form (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The problem may arise because a learner doesn't know the characteristics of the text or the information that is needed or existed in the particular text (Hinkel, 2002). As a result, it is seen that a large number of students does not have a high awareness to get

challenge in unleashing the ideas and them view writing is boring. This is in line with (Weigle, 2016) which stated that the act of writing is not only individual product but also social and cultural context. Thus, a specific strategy should be undertaken to achieve this needs.

This barrier precisely violates the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Otherwise, in vocational teaching, the concept of 60% practice and 40 percent theory emerges and the concern still relates with encouraging students in balance to master the skills including writing. However, this work seems challenging to be accomplished by English teachers as to encourage learners to write is clearly difficult and the . Therefore, a direct solution is needed to solve this problem. The solution should be designed to solve the problem.

Refers to the resistances above, the following solution is designed based on the current students' need and correlate with students' problem in unleashing ideas in writing. The idea of *topic types* by (Nation, 2008) is emerged to help students in improving their writing skill. This technique is very useful as it provides students to gather information before starting to write a particular topic. In addition, topic types provide strategies for learners to take notes before starting to write about the topic given. Applying topic types in the classroom will guide students to easily brainstorm ideas about what to write.

The appliance of topic types in accordance with the four principles of teaching writing by (Nation, 2008). The principles are meaning focused input, meaning focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. The correlation of each principle with teaching topic types in vocational teaching can be seen as follow. Topic types center its understanding in meaning focused input in which vocational higher education students should bring their experience and knowledge (Nation, 2008) to their writing especially when taking notes to gather information; meaning focused output takes place when these students are asked to produce different kinds of writing while using topic types technique; language-focused learning is seen from the strategies in topic types which can be used by students

learners to get in touch with the writing process, and fluency development principle display its role when students may have a chance to increase the writing speed by using topic types technique. All principles above are precisely integrated in the dimension of topic type technique where students can improve their individual learning styles and make personal choices to gather ideas about any writing topics that are provided to them.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In regards to the methodological aspect of this research, it was agreed that a descriptive study through library research from several important sources was integrated to occupy the goal of this study (George, 2008). This due to consideration that this study may enrich the technical framework of presenting good strategy in teaching vocational higher education students.

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Before beginning to see the steps how to use topic types for teaching writing in senior high school, it is better to place the main concept about the definition of topic types. (Nation, 2008) explains that a topic type is the main information which is stated in particular text from texts even though these texts are having different topics. In another word, it can be implied that topic types is the feature of concept about the information of the text from different kinds of topic but the information remains the same concept.

The concept of topic types above support the evidence about the use of topic types to encourage students in generating idea especially to help them in managing ideas before writing. There are two reasons to support this assumption. First, students know the concept of to what direction the writing is going to be expanded. For instance, teacher asks students to make procedure text about how to make a cake. If students have already known that this topic will represent characteristics of “process” topic types, these students won’t get doubt anymore to expand their idea as in topic

types the guidance are settled (see appendices about parts of the topic types by (Nation, 2008)). Second, applying topic types in the classroom will help teachers to develop students' potency at the beginning to write genre because several topic types display about any characteristics in these types of text. (Nation, 2008)

Moreover, it is also important for teachers to know any following topic types considerations before using topic types to teach students to write. First, teachers should make sure that students are familiar with the topic types and some areas that represent this technique in genre-based approach. Next, it is also crucial for students to be able to critically correlate a particular topic with suitable topic types. Hence, a planned goals and objectives have to be prepared before teaching and learning process takes place. Besides goals and objectives, a proper structure of activities should be arranged in order to prevent the chaos. Ultimately, the following techniques can be used to apply the concept of topic type strategy to teach writing for senior high school students. The techniques are below

**Technique 1** : Predicting from the title of the text

This strategy can be used by teacher in pre-writing activities in the classroom. This activity is useful to teach students in gathering information before beginning to write. The process is as follows. The teacher tells the learners the title of the text, for instance the title is "the photosynthesis". If the learners have already known about the topic types, then teacher may ask students to decide about what topic type of the text is. The way to identify the topic types are students can draft the questions based on their expectation of topic types, then try to provide answers about those questions which are related to the topic of the text.

Next, if students do not know about the topic types, teacher may help students to brainstorm their idea by giving students a general question about the topic type. This activity is ideally done in joint construction phase in which students work in a group to suggest answers of the questions they have made. When students have already finished answering the questions, teacher can give the complete length of the text and provide open discussion toward the students' prediction about the text.

### **Technique 2:** Taking notes from a text

This technique is the combination of reading and writing in which students are asked to use their critical ideas to write about what the topic type of the text which is given to them. Analogically, analyzing topic types of the text is slightly giving questions about “what is information that is supposed to learn from this text?” Therefore, to answer this question, asking students to take notes are needed. The procedure to do this technique is described as follow. Teacher gives students a text with several options of topic types. Then, teacher asks students to decide which topic type is suitable with the text given. In this occasion, it is suggested that students are worked individually or pairs in order to defend the efficiency.

### **CONCLUSION**

Finally, this strategy is expected to help senior high school students in encouraging their ability to brainstorm ideas before the writing process is held. Using topic type strategy is predicted able to help learners to gather information of particular topic before starting to write. Furthermore, working with other colleagues is needed as some ideas need a collaborative teaching with another teacher from another major of study. Ultimately, this strategy is hoped can help teachers in creating a better atmosphere in teaching and learning English

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