

## **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS IN IMPLEMENTING A GENRE-BASED APPROACH TO ENCOURAGE DEEP LEARNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in fostering deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum, a crucial topic because although the GBA is formally recommended, many teachers still face challenges in effectively applying it to achieve depth of understanding in the classroom. This study aims to explore teachers' perceptions and challenges regarding the integration of these two concepts through a qualitative case study design, in which data were collected via semi-structured interviews and observations of two English teachers at the junior high and senior high school levels in Garut. The findings reveal that teachers hold positive perceptions and view GBA as a systematic framework capable of supporting students' deep understanding through a learning process that is meaningful, mindful, and joyful. Teachers believe that the GBA cycle stages are highly effective in helping students master the material progressively. However, the main challenges identified relate to time management and the diversity of students' abilities, which hinder the implementation of all GBA stages in their entirety within a single class session. In conclusion, GBA holds great potential for supporting deep learning, but its effectiveness is highly dependent on practical classroom conditions and on-the-ground implementation support.*

**Keywords:** Genre-Based Approach, Deep Learning, Kurikulum Merdeka, Teachers' Perceptions

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi Genre-Based Approach (GBA) dalam mendorong deep learning pada Kurikulum Merdeka, sebuah topik yang krusial karena meskipun GBA direkomendasikan secara formal, banyak guru masih menghadapi hambatan dalam menerapkannya secara efektif untuk mencapai kedalaman materi di kelas. Studi ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi persepsi dan tantangan guru terkait integrasi kedua konsep tersebut melalui desain studi kasus kualitatif, di mana data dihimpun melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur serta observasi terhadap dua guru bahasa Inggris pada jenjang SMP dan SMA di Garut. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa guru memiliki persepsi positif dan memandang

GBA sebagai kerangka sistematis yang mampu mendukung pemahaman mendalam siswa melalui proses belajar yang bermakna, berkesadaran, dan menyenangkan (meaningful, mindful, joyful). Guru meyakini bahwa siklus tahapan GBA sangat membantu siswa menguasai materi secara progresif. Namun, tantangan utama yang ditemukan berkaitan dengan manajemen waktu dan keberagaman kemampuan siswa yang menghambat pelaksanaan seluruh tahapan GBA secara utuh dalam satu pertemuan. Simpulannya, GBA memiliki potensi besar dalam mendukung deep learning, namun efektivitasnya sangat bergantung pada kondisi praktis kelas serta dukungan implementasi di lapangan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Genre-Based Approach, Deep Learning, Kurikulum Merdeka, Persepsi Guru*

### **A. Introduction**

Indonesia's education system is currently undergoing a transformation through the Merdeka Curriculum, which prioritizes student-centered learning, creativity, collaborative synergy, and critical thinking (Putri, 2023; Widiyantoro, 2024). The core of this curriculum is to foster deep learning, a pedagogical process that goes beyond surface-level mastery of content to focus on the construction of meaning, problem-solving efficacy, and the relevance of knowledge to real-world contexts (Cholifatunisa et al., 2025; Fathimah et al., 2025). In English language learning, this paradigm shift requires educators to move away from traditional instructional patterns toward approaches that stimulate active engagement and meaningful learning

(Barokatin Ahsani, 2024; Solikhah & Sofi, 2023).

Responding to these demands, the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) is a highly recommended methodology within the framework of the Independent Curriculum (Lestari et al., 2023; Ramadhan et al., 2024). GBA focuses on teaching language through different types of texts by integrating social functions, rhetorical structures, and linguistic elements (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Fajar & Gintings, 2020). Through GBA, students are guided to understand the use of language in authentic interactions instead of simply memorizing grammatical rules in isolation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Nahid et al., 2018; Wanudya & Ummah, 2019). This is in line with the vision of deep learning because GBA encourages critical analysis and text production

that strengthens literacy and active participation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Ismail & Helaluddin, 2022; Nabella & Rini, 2023). Systematically, GBA is implemented through the BKOF, MoT, JCoT, and ICoT stages.

However, the implementation of GBA in the classroom still faces challenges. EFL practitioners in Indonesia tend to remain tied to teacher-centered approaches, resulting in suboptimal student engagement (Nadjib & Triastuti, 2023). A study in Jepara also found that teachers have not fully internalized the new methods and remain stuck in rote memorization patterns (Niam & Darnoto, 2024). In fact, the ideal implementation of GBA has been shown to enhance Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and communicative competence through an understanding of the relevance of the material (Bahri et al., 2024a; Fajar & Gintings, 2020). Therefore, teachers' professional readiness and perceptions are the primary determinants of the success of this approach (Bahri et al., 2024).

Several studies confirm that deep learning can enhance student motivation and character, although its implementation is hindered by

infrastructure and classroom management issues (Rahmawati & Yulianti, 2023; Inggitasukma et al., 2025; Risal et al., 2025; Astuti, 2025; Mubarok et al., 2024; Pade, 2024). Meanwhile, GBA is considered aligned with national policy, although there are discrepancies between regulations and practice (Maharani & Widhiyanto, 2025; Sarkio et al., 2025). On the other hand, challenges related to assessment, time management, and institutional support often hinder teachers despite their positive attitudes (Rini et al., 2021; Cholifah et al., 2022; Nabilah & Emilia, 2023; Nadjib & Triastuti, 2023), a phenomenon also reported globally (Liu & Chen, 2022; Zohbie, 2024; Osawa, 2025; Abdel Latif et al., 2024; Zhai & Razali, 2023). Therefore, well-developed instructional design and continuous professional development have become urgently needed (Triastuti, 2022; Averina & Kuswandono, 2023).

Although GBA was introduced during the 2004–2013 curriculum period, the existing literature remains dominated by a focus on teachers' writing skills or procedural understanding alone. There is a research gap regarding teachers'

specific perceptions of GBA integration to foster deep learning under the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes collaboration and creativity. Based on this gap, this study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of GBA implementation in fostering deep learning and to identify the practical challenges faced, thereby contributing both theoretically and practically to more meaningful English language education.

## **B. Research Methods**

This study employs a qualitative case study design to explore teachers' perceptions and challenges in implementing the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) to foster deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. The study was conducted at a junior high school (SMP) and a senior high school (SMA) in Garut, West Java. Two English teachers were selected as participants through purposive sampling based on their experience in applying the GBA. The participants were NN, a senior junior high school teacher with 28 years of experience, and SBA, a senior high school teacher with a similar background in using the GBA framework. To capture a

comprehensive picture of the teachers' experiences, perspectives, and actual classroom practices regarding the principles of deep learning and the GBA, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct field observations.

The data analysis process followed the qualitative analysis procedures developed by Creswell and Poth (2016), which included the stages of data transcription, coding, categorization, and theme development. To ensure consistency and strengthen the credibility of the data, interview results were compared with observation results using triangulation techniques. This analysis focuses on identifying patterns related to teachers' perceptions, instructional practices, and challenges in integrating GBA to achieve meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## **C. Finding and Discussion**

In this research report, NN refers to the first informant and SBA refers to the second informant. In the first section, both teachers perceive deep learning as learning that focuses on

the meaningfulness of concepts and students' active engagement. NN defines it as "learning in which students can understand concepts and see how they relate to everyday life" (NN). Meanwhile, SBA emphasizes that this aspect must prioritize the process of student awareness: "if deep learning is more about the process... it emphasizes meaning, awareness, and enjoyment" (SBA).

Second, regarding their perceptions of GBA and its stages, the teachers view it as a systematic framework that guides students from text comprehension to independent production. NN explained GBA practices that integrate grammar into texts: "starting with BKOF to build knowledge, then MOT to understand text examples... tenses are also observed within the text, not taught directly through formulas" (NN). SBA added that GBA has a clear cycle for achieving independence: "there are four stages, starting from building knowledge... until students create texts independently" (SBA).

Third, teachers perceive the relationship between deep learning and GBA as a unified whole in which the GBA stages facilitate the principles

of deep learning. NN argues that the structured nature of GBA greatly benefits students' psychological state: "The GBA stages make it easier for students to understand the text because they are gradual and do not overwhelm them" (NN). SBA also observed that this relationship is most strongly felt during group collaboration, where "during group stages, students appear more focused because they are discussing with their peers" (SBA).

Fourth, regarding practical experience, teachers face significant challenges related to time management and the diversity of student abilities in the classroom. NN noted that the duration of each stage is the main obstacle: "The main challenge is time, because each GBA stage requires sufficient time allocation" (NN). This is complicated by students' varying learning styles, as stated by SBA: "Every class has a different dynamic... some grasp concepts quickly, while others need more time, so lessons can take longer" (SBA).

Fifth, regarding teachers' beliefs, they believe in the effectiveness of GBA but feel that institutional support is currently still suboptimal. NN

expressed her confidence in the GBA framework: "It's very effective because the steps are clear and logical" (NN), but she complained about the quality of training: "In the past, training could last up to a month; now it's only a few days and not very in-depth" (NN). SBA added a complaint regarding teaching resources: "there is currently no official handbook from the government, so teachers cannot rely on a single source" (SBA).

Teachers' perceptions, which emphasize conceptual understanding and real-world application, align with the theory proposed by Biggs and Tang (2011), which states that deep learning occurs when students connect new information with past experiences. The experts' focus on the relevance of the material to daily life reflects the principle of "meaningfulness" in the Merdeka Curriculum guidelines (2025). In line with this, Bransford et al. (2021) argue that authentic communication contexts foster active knowledge construction. However, as noted by Marton and Säljö (1997), teachers' understanding remains largely limited to practical application and has not yet fully addressed "mindful aspects" such as critical reflection or metacognition.

Although teachers create a pleasant atmosphere, Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) remind us that deep learning must result in analytical skills and conscious engagement, not merely emotional comfort.

Teachers' understanding of GBA as a structured process supports the theories of Halliday (1994) and Martin & Rose (2008), who define genre as a goal-oriented social process. The emphasis on explicit instruction through systematic stages is validated by Emilia (2011) as an effective scaffolding strategy for building independence. At the BKOF stage, teachers' use of prompting questions aligns with Suharyadi & Basthomi's (2020) theory regarding schema activation and linguistic preparation. However, the discussion revealed that teachers underutilize "metalanguage," which Belbouah and Chibi (2025) argue is crucial for systematically discussing linguistic features. Furthermore, Hyland (2007) emphasizes that GBA should foster audience awareness, a dimension often overlooked in instructional practices that focus solely on text structure.

The relationship between GBA and deep learning lies in the

scaffolding stage's ability to minimize students' cognitive load, in line with the views of Emilia (2011) and Hyland (2007). Teachers felt that the GBA stages helped students learn gradually, a view supported by Husna et al.'s (2026) theory regarding step-by-step instruction as the key to deep understanding. Students' focus on the MOT and JCOT stages reflects the "mindful learning" principle from Mercer and Dörnyei (2020). However, the teachers' assumption that meaningful learning occurs only at the beginning (BKOF) needs correction based on the theory of Fullan et al. (2020); meaningfulness should emerge throughout the entire cycle, including during independent production. Hammond et al. (2020) add that deep understanding is truly achieved only when students understand the social function of texts in real life.

The time constraints cited by teachers serve as concrete evidence of Emilia's (2011) theory that high-quality scaffolding does indeed require a significant time investment. The issue of delays in the ICOT stages experienced by teachers was validated by Suharyadi & Basthomi (2020) as one of the most common

limitations in the implementation of GBA in schools. Differences in students' learning speeds that hinder the process align with Biggs & Tang's (2011) theory regarding the diversity of ways students actively construct knowledge. However, according to Hyland (2007), this challenge actually demands teachers' proficiency in classroom management and pacing. Without the right strategies, the Merdeka Curriculum (2025) target of achieving depth in subject matter will be difficult to attain if teachers merely focus on completing the administrative stages of GBA.

Teachers' positive belief that GBA is effective in supporting deep learning is supported by Emilia's (2011) theory, which states that the regularity of GBA helps students transition toward independent production. Teachers' expectations for more intensive training align with the findings of Suharyadi and Basthomi (2020) that mastering GBA requires strong pedagogical competencies and genre proficiency. The need for standardized materials and official guidelines is also emphasized by Osawa (2025) as a crucial tool for minimizing misinterpretation. Theoretically, the success of GBA

depends heavily on teachers' capacity to provide explicit guidance (Emilia, 2011). Therefore, teachers' confidence must be accompanied by systemic support, as without clear integration, teachers will struggle to create a sustainably reflective learning environment (Husna et al., 2026).

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study concludes that teachers hold very positive perceptions and beliefs regarding the implementation of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in facilitating deep learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. The GBA is regarded as a systematic and effective framework because its pedagogical stages (BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT) are capable of building students' understanding gradually and supporting the principles of meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning. Although conceptually teachers have successfully integrated content with students' real-world experiences, classroom practice still faces significant challenges regarding time management and the heterogeneity of student abilities, which often hinder the completion of the GBA cycle within a single session.

Overall, the success of integrating GBA and deep learning heavily depends on teachers' ability to adapt to classroom dynamics as well as practical support factors such as adequate time allocation.

This study has limitations in terms of the small number of participants and the limited duration of data collection; consequently, the findings cannot be broadly generalized and do not yet provide a comprehensive picture of the ICOT stages or students' independent learning outcomes. Furthermore, the study's focus solely on the teacher's perspective has not provided a quantitative picture of the actual impact on students' academic achievement. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers include a broader range of research subjects, encompassing the students' perspective, and employ mixed-methods research to assess the effectiveness of GBA more deeply. For educational institutions, there is a need for ongoing training focused on the development of standardized teaching materials and time management strategies so that teachers can optimally implement all stages of GBA and the principles of



deep learning in various classroom contexts.

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