THE EDITING AND REVISING COMPETENCE OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS BY USING COLLABORATIVE METHOD OF SWELL (Social interactive Writing for English Language Learners)

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Abstract

This study focuses on the competence of English Department students, especially those who took a class of Genre-based Writing, to work collaboratively in pairs in writing their Analytical Exposition texts. There are two research questions addressed in the study: 1) Can students apply the collaborative method in their Writing class?; 2) How effective is the collaborative method used in students’ Writing class to improve their competence in editing and revising their texts?

The object of the study is the Analytical Exposition essays of Genre-based Writing class, English Educational study program, semester 4 in academic year 2010-2011. There were 26 essays to be analyzed. The procedure of collecting the data was carried out by conducting the instrument of the study, which is based on SWELL (Social-interactive Writing for English Language Learners) procedure, in the form of classroom assignment. The data were analyzed by using the Azar theory (1989) for the students’ competence in editing and revising the use of tense and word order, and the Boardman-Frydenberg theory (2002) for the students’ competence in editing and revising the use of coherence-cohesion and unity-completeness.

Based on the data analysis, it was found out that basically students had already been able to apply collaborative learning method in their classes, especially in their Writing classes. This can be seen from the Helpers’ editing on their peers’ grammatical mistakes and discourse mistakes. The Helpers could either edit and revise the Writers’ mistakes or at least give symbols in editing the Writers’ mistakes so that they could revise them more easily. The Helpers edited 24 grammatical errors and 14 discourse errors.

Finally, the pedagogical implication of the study is lecturers and students are supposed to fully motivated to use collaborative teaching-learning method in their classes, especially in their Writing classes. This method, hopefully, can improve students’ awareness of their grammatical and discourse mistakes so that they can improve their competence, both the grammatical and the discourse competence, in writing essays.

Keywords: collaborative method, grammatical competence, discourse competence, tense, word order, coherence, cohesion, unity, completeness
INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four language skills to master, i.e. reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Those skills are divided into receptive skills and productive skills. Reading and listening belong to receptive skills, whereas speaking and writing are included in productive skills. As one of productive skills, speaking can be considered as a two-way communication because in a speaking interaction there must be at least one speaker and one listener. On the other hand, writing is not the same as speaking in such a way that the writer cannot directly get responses of his/her writing directly from the readers, so it can be said that writing is a one-way communication. Consequently, a writer must be able to use language elements, e.g. language structure, language style, vocabulary, punctuation, correctly so that there won’t be any misunderstanding from the readers who read his/her writing. This makes writing be the most difficult skill to learn.

In Semarang State University (Unnes), writing classes are some classes that must be taken by English Department students beside other language skill classes, i.e. speaking classes, reading classes, and listening classes. There are four writing classes to take starting from semester 2, namely Sentence-based Writing, Paragraph-based Writing, Genre-based Writing, and Academic Writing. In Sentence-based Writing classes, students learn to make English sentences based on correct grammatical and semantic structures. For classes of Paragraph-based Writing, students are supposed to make texts coherently and cohesively in forms of paragraph. Genre-based Writing is a writing class taken by semester four students so that they will be able to write essays of various text types. The last level of writing classes is Academic writing in which students are taught to make academic texts (e.g. their final project) well and correctly, both in grammatical and semantic structures. In this study, I was interested to take a class of Genre-based writing because in this class students are supposed to elaborate their ideas in forms of essay, so their texts will be easier to analyze.

In writing classes, students often underestimate some important factors in developing their ideas into texts, so their readers often find difficulties in understanding their writing texts. Because students frequently take for granted such factors like language structure, language style, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and writing organization when they write texts, their readers occasionally get confused in reading them. This is in line with Harmer’s opinion (1998:84) who states that a lecturer, as an editor of students’ writings, often feel frustrated because s/he can cot understand what is meant by his/her students in their writing texts. Moreover, the lecturer will feel more frustrated if the students do not pay attention to his/her editing notes since they keep doing the same mistakes when they are asked to write different texts. Therefore, a lecturer must make sure that his/her students have really understood about their mistakes and been able to revise their texts well and completely.

Considering those two factors, a writing lecturer needs to develop some effective teaching methods to be applied in his/her writing class. Hopefully, by doing this, s/he can improve the writing competence of his/her students so that s/he will be able to read and edit their writing texts more easily. One of the methods that can be used is collaborative learning method. Based on Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), a collaborative learning method can improve
the social interaction among the students because they are supposed to work together, either in groups or in pairs. Further, Harmer (2004) explains about some advantages of collaborative learning method in writing class as follows: “Successful collaborative writing allows students to learn from each other. It gives each member of the collaboration access to others’ minds and knowledge, and it imbues the task with a sense of shared goals which can be very motivating.”

Referring to those opinions, I was interested in using a collaborative learning method in my writing class. Hopefully, with this method the students will be motivated not only in writing texts, but also in discussing and revising their writing mistakes with their classmates, either in groups or in pairs. The collaborative learning method which will be used in this study is SWELL (Social-interactive Writing for English Language Learners) proposed by Adeline Teo (2007). In this method, there are six steps to follow. The first step is Ideas, in which the Writer tries to brainstorm his/her ideas with the Helper’s help. In the second step, Draft, the Writer tries to write his/her writing draft. In the third step, Read, the Writer reads his/her writing draft to the Helper who will try to edit it whenever s/he finds any mistake. The fourth step is Edit, in which both the Writer and the Helper are given some questions to guide them in editing and revising the Writer’s draft. In the next step, Best Copy, the Writer tries to rewrite his/her draft based on the Helper’s editing and submits it to the lecturer. Finally, in the sixth step, Teacher Evaluate, the lecturer gives some feedback to be read and discussed by both the Writer and Helper.

In order to limit the discussion, there are two problems of the study as follows:
1) Can students apply the collaborative method in their Writing class?;
2) How effective is the collaborative method used in students’ Writing class to improve their competence in editing and revising their texts?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
1) Collaborative Method
There are many definitions of this method, but basically it gives priority to students’ interaction, either in pairs or in groups, so that there will be social interaction among them. Coleman (1973) states that a collaborative learning method is an effective tool for adult students to do academic culture. Another definition is stated by Slavin (1990:3) as follows:

All cooperative learning methods share the idea that students work together to learn and are responsible for their teammates’ learning as well as their own. In addition to the idea of cooperative work, Student Team Learning Method (the overall name used for those methods developed by Slavin and his colleagues) emphasize the use of team goals and team success, which can be achieved only if all members of the team learn the objectives being taught. That is, in Student Team Learning the students’ tasks are not to do something as a team, but to learn something as a team.

This leaning method has a lot of advantages, one of which is to give students opportunities to interact to one another, to tell and to be told, so that the goal of learning can
be reached. This method can also improve students’ self confidence because they can exchange their ideas freely. The success of this method lies not only on the individual success but also on the team success. This method can be applied for all levels of students, starting from pre-school students to graduate school students.

Some other advantages of collaborative learning method are explained in (http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/coopcollab/index_sub3.html) as follows:

a) Celebration of diversity
   Students will learn to work together with their classmates who have different educational and cultural background. In discussing a problem, they must discuss and solve the problem by using different points of view. As a result, students can learn to understand and give respect to the differences of background and point of view.

b) Acknowledgment of individual differences.
   In collaborative groups, students will get more complete and comprehensive solution when they have to discuss a problem because they have different perspectives.

c) Interpersonal development.
   Collaborative learning can improve students’ interpersonal and social competence because they have to work together with their classmates, either in groups or in pairs.

d) Actively involving students in learning.
   Every student must be active and think critically when they have to work collaboratively, either in groups or in pairs.

e) More opportunities for personal feedback.
   With collaborative learning methods, either in groups or in pairs, students have more opportunities to get feedback from their peers or their team members. This will be difficult to do in a very big group because there are only a few students who are active while other students only listen to them.

2) Social-interactive Writing for English Language Learners (SWELL)
   Collaborative learning method can be applied in any level of students, starting from pre-school students to graduate school students. Besides, this method can be applied in any skill of language classes, e.g. Reading, Listening, Speaking, or Writing classes. One of collaborative methods in writing class is SWELL. This method was proposed by Adeline Teo (1997). She is a professor assistant and teaches Writing and Research Methodology at Chung Shan Medical University, Taiwan. As a matter of fact, SWELL is a modification method of Paired Writing Method by Topping (2001). Teo felt that she needed to make some modification in Topping’s method because his method is not appropriate to be applied in non-English speaking countries. Topping used six procedures in his method, i.e. (1) Idea generation, (2) Drafting, (3) Reading, (4) Editing, (5) Best Copy, (6) Evaluate. Teo only modified the last step; she changed the last procedure to be Teacher Evaluate. She thought that if she let students to evaluate their writing by themselves, it would only make their writing competence worse.
Basically, Teo (2007:24-25) states the procedures of collaborative learning method in writing classes in the following diagram:

H=Helper     W=Writer

**Step 1: IDEAS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H asks W questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who did what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who did what to whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did it happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When did it happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the important people (main characters) in the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did he/she/they do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did he/she/they solve the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happened next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did anyone learn anything at the end? What was it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ask any questions you can think of)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W answers and takes notes. W can add things that are not in H’s questions.

Then both H&W read the notes. Are ideas in proper place? Make changes if needed.

**Step 2: DRAFT**

Teacher will give and explain to you ONE of the following jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1</th>
<th>STAGE 2</th>
<th>STAGE 3</th>
<th>STAGE 4</th>
<th>STAGE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H writes it all</td>
<td>H writes hard words for W</td>
<td>H writes hard words in rough. W copies in</td>
<td>H says how to spell hard words</td>
<td>W writes it all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use your notes. Begin writing. DON’T WORRY about spelling.

**Step 3: READ**

W reads drafts out loud and makes it sound good! H corrects words read wrong if he/she can.
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**Step 4: EDIT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W asks himself/herself:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does H understand what I want to say in my writing? (meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does my writing have a clear beginning, middle, and end? (order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do I use all the words and write all the sentences correctly? (style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do I spell all the words correctly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do I put all the punctuation in the right places?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H asks himself/herself:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do I understand what W wants to say in his/her writing? (meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the writing have a clear beginning, middle, and end? (order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does W use all the words and write all the sentences correctly? (style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does W spell all the words correctly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does W put all the punctuation in the right places?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W makes changes ⇔ H suggests changes.

*Use dictionary when necessary.*

**Step 5: BEST COPY**

W copies “best” writing from step 4. H may help if necessary. Write both H and W’s names on paper. Turn in the completed copy to teacher.

**Step 6: TEACHER EVALUATE**

Teacher comments on meaning, order, style, spelling, and punctuation. H and W read teacher’s comments together, then discuss and make corrections.

In this method, there are six steps to follow. The first step is **Ideas**, in which the Writer tries to brainstorm his/her ideas with the Helper’s help. In the second step, **Draft**, the Writer tries to write his/her writing draft. In the third step, **Read**, the Writer reads his/her writing draft to the Helper who will try to edit it whenever s/he finds any mistake. The fourth step is **Edit**, in which both the Writer and the helper are given some questions to guide them in editing and revising the Writer’s draft. In the next step, **Best Copy**, the Writer tries to rewrite his/her draft based on the Helper’s editing and submits it to the lecturer. Finally, in the sixth step, **Teacher Evaluate**, the lecturer gives some feedback to be read and discussed by both the Writer and the Helper.
METHOD OF ANALYSIS

I used students’ analytical exposition texts as the objects of my study. There were 26 texts written by 26 students. These texts were made collaboratively by students of a Genre-based Writing class. In the writing process, one student (as the Writer) was helped by one other student (as the Helper). In the collaborative process, the Helper gave guidance to the Writer starting from the first step, Ideas, until the fourth step, Edit. In the fifth step, Best Copy, the Writer had to write his/her best copy based on his/her Helper’s editing. In the last step, Teacher Evaluate, I gave some feedback to the students writing and did the analysis process of this study.

I analyzed the data qualitatively. There were some steps in analyzing the data. First of all, I observed the collaborative process in the class and made some necessary notes related to the students’ behavior in doing the collaborative process. After that, I focused on the students’ texts to analyze their editing and revising competence. To analyze students’ editing competence, I analyzed the Writers’ drafts that had been read and edited by the Helpers. The data were analyzed by using the Azar theory (1989) for the Helpers’ competence in editing the use of tense and word order, and the Boardman-Frydenberg theory (2002) for the Helpers’ competence in editing the use of coherence-cohesion and unity-completeness. Finally, I compared the Writer’s drafts and best copies in order to analyze students’ revising competence. I also used the Azar theory (1989) to analyze the Writers’ competence in revising the use of tense and word order, and the Boardman-Frydenberg theory (2002) to analyze the Writers’ competence in revising the use of coherence-cohesion and unity-completeness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To answer the research questions, the data collection was done in two weeks before the students had their mid semester test. I conducted this study in a Genre based Writing class in academic year 2010-2011. There were 26 students in that class and they were asked to make analytical exposition texts by using the collaborative learning process SWELL. The students were paired to be Writers and Helpers. The Writers were guided by the Helpers starting from the first step, Ideas, until the fourth step, Edit. Next, in the fifth step, Best Copy, the Writers were supposed to revise their drafts and made them into their best copies based on the Helpers’ editing. In the last step, the Writers submitted their best copies to the lecturer.

From all of the analytical exposition texts which I analyzed, I tried to compare the students’ drafts and best copies. Based on the comparison, I found that students (as Helpers) have appropriate competence in editing the Writers’ drafts, especially in editing their grammatical mistakes. I also found that there were 38 mistakes of the Writers that could be edited by the Helpers. Those mistakes consisted of 24 grammatical mistakes and 14 discourse mistakes.
In detail, for grammatical mistakes, it can be said that there were 22 mistakes (57.9 %) of English tenses and 2 mistakes (5.3 %) of English word order that were edited by the Helpers. In addition, for discourse mistakes, there were 1 mistake (2.6 %) of coherence, 10 mistakes (26.3 %) of cohesion, 2 mistakes (5.3 %) of unity, and 1 mistake (2.6 %) of completeness that could be edited by the Helpers. The example(s) of each analysis will be presented below.

**Discussion**

In this section, I will try to elaborate the Helpers competence in editing the Writers’ analytical exposition texts. This learning technique was done collaboratively with a purpose that the Writers could make their best copies well before they submitted them to the lecturer. The Helpers’ competence in editing the Writers’ drafts was compared to the Writers’ competence in revising their drafts. Some of the examples are shown as follows:

1) Competence in Editing and Revising Grammatical Mistakes

In general, the sentences used by the Writers in their analytical exposition texts were simple sentences; therefore, it would be easier for the Helpers to edit them. Most of the Writers had already used correct tenses, i.e. simple present tense or present perfect tense, in writing their analytical exposition texts. Only one of them who wrote by using wrong tense, i.e. past tenses.

As I have explained before, there were 24 grammatical mistakes that could be edited by the Helpers. Those mistakes consisted of 22 mistakes (57.9 %) of English tenses and 2 mistakes (5.3 %) of word order. For the mistakes of English tenses, the Writers often used incorrect verbs, inappropriate auxiliaries, inappropriate nouns, or incorrect active/passive sentences. One example of each mistake will be discussed below.

(a) **Draft**: As we know English *is exist* in the tourism world. (text 1)

**Best copy**: As we know English *exists* in the tourism world.

In the example above, the Helper edited that the Writer used incorrect verb. The incorrect verb ‘is exist’ then was revised by the Writer to be ‘exists’. The use of inappropriate auxiliaries can be seen in the following example:

(b) **Draft**: … they *not to be master of language* in the world. (text 1)

**Best copy**: … they *do not have to master every* language in the world.

From the example (b), the Helper edited the Writer’s mistake in using auxiliary. The wrong use of ‘not to be master of language’ then was revised by the Writer to be ‘do not have to master every language’. The next example is to show the incorrect use of determiner:

(c) **Draft**: There *are many pollution* surrounding us that can threat human health and environment system. (text 2)

**Best copy**: There *is much pollution* surrounding us that can threat human health and environment system.

We can see from the example above that the Helper edited the Writer’s mistake in using verb and determiner for an uncountable noun ‘pollution’. Therefore, in his/her best
copy, the Writer revised his/her mistake to be ‘there is much pollution.’ In the next example, I tried to show the Helper competence in editing a passive sentence.

(d) Draft : The technology has to be develop from now on, especially the internet. (text 6)

Best copy : The technology has to be developed from now on, especially the internet.

From the example above, the Writer made a mistake in making a passive sentence. After being edited by the Helper, the Writer could revise his/her sentence in correct form of passive voice. The Writer’s mistakes in applying word order can be seen in the following examples:

(e) Draft : One of the requirements in getting the job is fluently in speaking English. (text 1)

Best copy : One of the requirements in getting a job is speaking English fluently.

(f) Draft : … because they not to be master of language in the world. (text 1)

Best copy : In addition, they do not have to master every language in the world.

2) Competence in Editing and Revising Discourse Mistakes

Beside grammatical mistakes, the Helpers had appropriate competence in editing contextual mistakes. I found 14 data (26.3%0 which consisted of the incorrect use of coherence, cohesion, unity, and completeness. The example of each mistake will be shown in the following examples:

(g) An example of incorrect cohesion

Draft : Of these 2.4 million children in the UK are overweight and obesity is currently the most serious childcare health issue—it’s a huge, huge problem. (text 5)

Best copy : From those, 2.4 million children in the UK are overweight and obesity is currently the most serious childcare health issue—it’s a huge, huge problem.

(h) An example of incorrect coherence and cohesion

Draft : The damage of ozone also causes the temperature higher and b higher. Moreover, it is difficult for us to get fresh air, especially in town. (text 2)

Best copy : Moreover, it is difficult for us to get fresh air, especially in town because the temperature becomes higher and higher.
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(i) An example of incorrect unity
Draft: For example, they are to search some study, get some important information for the knowledge. (text 6)
Best copy: For example, they search some study to get some important information.

(j) An example of incorrect completeness
Draft: The first dangerous pollution is air pollution. (text 2)
Best copy: The first dangerous pollution is air pollution. It comes from the smog of transportation devices, industry, illegal logging, and many more.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions
Based on the result of the analysis, it can be concluded that basically the 4th semester students of English Department of Unnes could apply the collaborative learning method well in their Genre-based Writing class. This can be seen that the Helpers could edit the Writers’ drafts and then the Writers could revise their mistakes based on the Helpers’ editing. The mistakes made by the Writers consisted of grammatical mistakes and discourse mistakes.

There were 38 mistakes that could be used as the data of this analysis. Those mistakes consisted of 24 grammatical mistakes and 14 discourse mistakes. The Helpers could edit 22 mistakes (57.9 %) of English tenses, 2 mistakes (5.3 %) of word order, 1 mistake (2.6 %) of cohesion, 10 mistakes (26.3 %) of coherence, 2 mistakes (5.3 %) of unity, and 1 mistake (2.6 %) of completeness.

Suggestion
For students, it is suggested that they can often use collaborative learning method. By using this method, actually they learn to be independent persons because they are supposed to think critically about a problem and discuss it in groups or in pairs. In collaborative learning, they can share their opinions and knowledge so that they can get win-win solution. By using collaborative method SWELL in writing classes, hopefully students can become more aware of their mistakes and will not do the same mistakes when they have to write different texts.

For lecturers, especially those who teach writing classes, it is suggested that they can use innovative teaching methods, e.g. collaborative teaching method, so they can motivate their students to write texts, in forms of paragraph or essay, without doing the same mistakes repeatedly. Besides that, by using this collaborative teaching method of SWELL, they are helped by the Helpers in editing their students’ writing texts.
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