

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PEER REVIEW TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING SKILL

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Abstract

The paper is aimed at describing the students' argumentative writing improvement in the EFL classroom after the implementation of Peer Review technique in writing class of the fourth semester students in FBS-UWKS. This research is classroom action research (CAR) and the fourth semester students of UWKS were the participants. There were 20 students in this class which consists of 7 boys and 13 girls. The data used in this research were students' difficulty and response to the learning process and students' writing score. From this information, the researchers could find that the treatment was successful or not. To collect the data, the researchers used some instruments, 1) observation sheet, 2) problem sheets. There were two cycles implemented in this research. The first cycle showed that the learning process was not successful due to the students' lack of knowledge about essay organization, weak argumentation and low responses to the classroom activities which lead to their low score in their writing. In the second cycle the students' writing score improve significantly from 50% to 85%. In conclusion, Peer Review is a teaching technique which can help the students improve their writing skills

Keywords: Peer Review, Argumentative, Essay, classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

One of the important English skills which is taught in university is writing besides reading, speaking, and listening. It is so important that the students are to join writing class in several semesters, starting from paragraph writing until critical writing. In the English Education Department in Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University, the fifth semester students will learn how to write an argumentative and persuasive essay which are classified as critical writing.

Writing argumentative is not simple, it looks difficult for most students in our class as they have to build their competence in grammar,

explore major and supporting ideas and put them together in paragraphs (Kareem: 2014, Younes and Albalawi: 2015). In addition, argumentative essay is different from other mode of essays because an argumentative essay contains a combination of facts, writer's personal ideas, and statistics. Therefore, writing argumentative essay for most students is not merely making lists of words and arranging them in a particular order and linking them together in certain ways to form coherenceness, but the students have to construct a thesis statement which is different from that in other essays and elaborating the topic sentence in each body paragraphs which have evidential

supports whether they are factual, logical, statistical or anecdotal. Based on the observation done in the English Education Department of Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University, most of students have three difficulties in composing argumentative essay. Those difficulties are they are lack of grammar competence which cause them produce ungrammatical sentences, they have no sufficient knowledge about component of a good essay which relate to unity, coherence and cohesion, they are lack of knowledge about argumentative essay organization. These difficulties, furthermore, lead them to reluctant in practicing writing and they are unable to pass this subject. Only 25% students got passing grade.

The role of a lecturer in writing class is to give feedback to the students' writing however sometimes this can not be done effectively due to a large number of students in the class, too many mistakes the students make, short time provided for writing class. In a large class, a lecturer has to have sufficient time to check the students' work so that he can give feedback to all of them in details. Most teachers only play a role as examiners as they only have time to give feedback to the final product and give grades (Polisda, 2017: 46). It becomes a problem since writing is a process that is the stages of a writer goes through in order to produce something in its final written form (Palmer, 2004: 4). Final writing product can not be done without feedback and correction because writing should almost always be a communication between writer and reader. Thus, feedback is important to gain good and satisfying writing product. Due to the above problems, peer review is considered to be one way to help students improve their

writing skill. In the previous research, it is found that the effect of peer review combined with didactic instruction in writing, formal feedback and in class practice was effective at improving writing skills for psychology students (Fallahi, Wood, Austad, and Fallahi: 2006). Yalch, M.M, Vitale, E.M and Kevin Ford, J (2019) also find that the more critical students were on their peers' writing during an in-class peer review work-shop, the higher their paper grades they have and this finding is similar to the earlier research which mentioned that peer review is useful for improving students' writing skill (Fallahi et al. 2006). One possible mechanism by which student peer review might improve writing skill is that students tend to provide more critical feedback on their peers' paper than course teaching assistance (Kottke, 1998; Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Li et al., 2010; Lundstorm & Baker, 2009).

What is peer review? Peer review, peer respond, peer suggestion, peer revision, peer evaluation or peer comment as Ong and Zhang (2010) say, is a constructive or collaborative activity in which students negotiate the intended ideas and meaning and mutually scaffold each other (Levi Altstaedter; 2016 and Yang; 2011). Peer review provides learners with opportunities to exchange multiple corrective feedback and articulate their knowledge of L2 (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Some researchers had paid attention to the application of peer review in writing courses and showed that peer review is as a means to negotiate meanings or ideas in writing and peer review engages learners in exchanging feedback that functions as evaluation, suggestions, clarification and questions (Saeed, Ghazali, Aljaberi; 2018)

The paper is aimed at finding out whether peer review is able to improve the students' argumentative writing.

RESEARCH METHODS

This is Classroom Action Research. The participants of the research were the Fourth semester English Education Department students of FBS UWKS. In that semester, those students were having critical writing subject containing argumentative writing . There were 20 students used as the research participants. Based on the test as the research instrument, given to the students, this CAR was done in two cycles because of unsuccessful achievement in the first cycle, referring to the success indicators determined that less than 70% of total students got 70. To fix the problems in the first cycle, there are some differences in the classroom activities in the process of doing the first and the second cycles.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The first data gained before the treatment done, showed that 75% students could not pass the grades because those students only received below 60. From those data, the information can be drawn that most of the students had difficulties about the concept of argumentative writing and they had difficulties in communicating with the lecturers. They have limited time to discuss their difficulties with the lecturers. Therefore, peer review technique solved this problem. There were two cycles done in this research.

Due to the failure of reaching the success indicator in the first cycle, the second cycle had to be done to fix the problems found in the first cycle . Some students could not pass

the grades in the first cycle, as stated in success indicator.

In the first cycle, the students' writing score improved compared to their score in pre cycle stage, however 50% students still got under 70. Thus, it still cannot pass the success indicator. Based on the observation stated in the reflection stage, some causes of those failure were that 1) some students did not know well about some components in argumentative writing so that they got confused what feedback they gave to their friends works, 2) students did not seem to have sufficient vocabulary competence so that they had no idea of how to construct good sentences and paragraphs, 3) time was limited so that the student reviewers did not have enough time to give feed back to their friends' works, 4) some student reviewers only worked on grammatical mistakes,) the knowledge about how to evaluate essay organization such as coherence, unity, adequacy supporting details was still low, 5) student reviewers did not know how to give clear and specific feedback to their friends' works so that they could not revise the work well, consequently, the students who received feedback from their friends did not know how to incorporate those feedback when they revised their works.

Due to those results, the second cycle was needed. The information about students' problems made the lecturer find some other ways to revise classroom activities. Therefore, in this cycle, the lecturer modified the classroom activities to minimize the problems which emerged during the learning process. The first thing that the lecturer did was briefing the class with the procedures of peer correcting; this process includes giving

information about some points that the student reviewers had to focus which were the content, language and organization and gave more specific guidance of how to give notes to the works. Secondly, after all the students understand, they were seated in groups of four based on the students' level of competence in which the high level students were mixed in one group with low level students as recommended in cooperative learning principle. Thirdly, the students in each group exchanged their works and they started revising based on the guidance they received from their lecturer. There were 30 minutes given to each student reviewers to fill in the review table before being discussed together with their groups. The discussion session could be interesting because each student was given an opportunity to read their findings from their friends' works to the class. This triggered the class to give their opinions and inputs to the result of the review which was more critical than the ones from their lecturer (Kottke, 1998; Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Li et al., 2010; Lundstorm & Baker, 2009)

This revised classroom activities gave two positive results to writing class; firstly, the students' motivation to write was improving which could be seen from their enthusiasm in discussion session. As it is stated that Peer review can affect the class atmosphere in which this technique gives positive contribution to the students achievement in writing because they do not feel threatened by the lecturer's correction (Fallahi, Wood, Austad, and Fallahi: 2006). Furthermore, They were enthusiast to ask questions and give some inputs to the review result presented by the student reviewers. Secondly, students' score in argumentative writing was

improving. The total improvement was 85% since 17 from 20 students got more than 69 in their works. It means that those students have passed the success indicator stated by the English Education Department in our institution.

CONCLUSION

Peer Review technique can be used as a way to improve students' argumentative writing. It can be seen from the result of the students' score after has been implemented. The students' scores improve in the first cycle compared to the pre cycle but it can not pass the success indicator. However, it is successful in the second cycle because 85% of the students can pass the success indicator stated. In conclusion, this technique can be used to solve students' problem in writing argumentative essay.

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