ENHANCING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN WRITING NARRATIVE THROUGH PEER-FEEDBACKING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

This study aims to find out whether peer-feedbacking activities effective in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative or not and students' perceptions on the use of peer-feedbacking in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative. This study applied a mixed method design which employed true-experimental with the type of pre-test post-test control group design for the quantitative data and close-ended questionnaire for the qualitative data. The population of this study were all students of tenth grade in one of vocational high school in Padaherang and the sample were 30 students as the experimental group and 30 students as the control group. The data of this study were obtained from pre-test, post-test and questionnaire. The result obtained from the pre-test and post-test concluded that Peer Feedback Activities is effective in teaching writing. The findings showed that the students' score improved from pretest to posttest. In conclusion, there was a significant difference in students' critical thinking before and after being taught by means applying Peer Feedback Activities. Based on the questionnaire, the study concluded that the students expressed positive perceptions about peer feedback activities and it was effective in enhancing critical thinking in writing narrative. The future researchers are suggested to conduct experiment or action research to improve writing or other dependent variables ability through peer -feedbacking.

Keywords: *Critical Thinking, Writing, Narrative, Peer Feedback.*

INTRODUCTION

In teaching English as a foreign language, speaking and listening are considered as receptive skills; meanwhile, writing and reading are language skills that is included into productive skills. Writing, as one of productive skills, is thought difficult for most students to learn (Allan & Vallette, 1981, p. 5). Although it is as the productive skill as speaking, it cannot be similar as the way speaking is. Speaking can be done by oral expression whereas writing has a bit complex process to learn it (Brown, 2001, p. 334). It means that it is not a vital skill like speaking. When people want to be able to write, they should learn it as well.

Writing can give chances for the learners to state their ideas and messages through letters, words, and sentences in English. Besides, writing has an important role as a communication tool. Hence, writing is applied not only in the education field, but also in many fields of job and technology also requires writing skill.

Writing is one of the productive skills that the students must learn. They learn writing as an important part not only for their academic practice but also later in their future life. It connects people to deliver information and message. Pulverness, Spratt, & Williams (2005) state that writing is one of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing means also one of the productive skills involving communicating a message by means of letter and symbols. Communicating is delivering such information to others. So, a message must have a purpose. In other words, writing skills generate a written text which has certain information.

Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 205) claim that writing process is categorized into four stages. They are prewriting: choosing topic and collecting information. The second is organizing ideas into outline. The third is making a rough draft. In this stage, writers follow the outline and ignore about the grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The fourth stage is polishing or revising or editing.

Teaching writing is guiding and facilitating the students to start writing. It is reinforced by Brown (2000, p. 7) who offers that "teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learners to learn and adjust the learning condition". Teachers' understanding of how students learn will adjust the teacher's view of education, teaching style, approaches, methods, and the classroom techniques. The approach, the

methods, and the techniques used in the classroom depend on the teacher's understanding of learning. In other words, the teaching concept of writing narrative text, is defined in line with the learning concept.

Rebecca (2003) says that a narrative text is a text which is relevant with a series of logically, and chronologically related events that caused or experienced by factors. Moreover, Anderson and Andersen (2003) explained that a narrative is a text that describes a story along with entertaining the audience. From the two arguments, it can be concluded that narrative is a chronological story that is used to entertain the readers.

Concerning the generic structure of narrative text, Anderson and Andersen (1997, p. 17) says that narrative texts consist of five main parts. They are orientation, complication, and sequence of events, resolution, and coda. Orientation explains who is in the story, when it is happening, where it is happening and what is going on. Complication tells about something that will start a series of events. Resolution is the art at which the complication is sorted out or the problem is overcome. Coda relates to a moral or message learned from the story which might be optional, so that the writer is free to add this part or not.

Feedback is important to encourage students to keep their goals in mind (Nation, 2009, p. 115). It means that it is significant to provide them with feedback dealing with the effectiveness of their writing so that the students can manifest the idea of their writing. Feedback widely seems as crucial to for encourage learning and it is also regarded as an essential factor in the writing context. Therefore, it is a way to respond to students' writing to reinforce them to improve their writing skills.

Feedback has several goals when given in the language classes (Lewis, 2002, p. 3-4). The first is Feedback provides information for teachers and students that makes teachers gain the information about individuals and collective class progress and, indirectly, is a form of evaluation on their own teaching. While for learners, feedback is enduring form of assessment which focused more on the process rather than marks or grades. By emphasizing on strengths and weakness, the comments provide information about individual progress, unlike marks or grades, which tend to compare one student with another. The comments can also contain direction about language, by declaring a rule or giving an example.

Another objective is that Feedback provides students with learning recommendation. Teachers can give students more than merely description of their language use. Comments might also be constructed on the students' learning process. A common way for this to happen is through learning journals.

Beside feedback, critical thinking is also another thing that must be a part of teaching writing. Critical thinking, according to Paul and Scriven (2000), is the process to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or examine information from observation, experience, feedback, reasoning, or communication, as a way to believe and act. Critical thinking is the ability to analyze and evaluate information, and includes attitude, value and character, or the whole being. Critical thinking is an art of life-to live one's life with head and heart. It is a skill all can develop to improve oneself and others. Paul and Elder (2000) recommend that teachers plan activities and tasks to facilitate students to think their way through questioning tasks. To strengthen student critical thinking skills, teacher instruction should incite students to presume, suspect, generalize, make, and assess. It includes providing students with chances to recognize and solve problems, especially those that are relevant and of interest and concern to them (Ferris, Chaney, Komura, Roberts, & McKee, 2006).

Paul and Elder (2000) say that students' critical thinking can be generated after achieving two important parts of thinking: the ability to identify the parts of their thinking and evaluate the use of these parts. Such parts (reasoning ability) relate to purpose, problem solving, assumption, point of view, information and evidence, concept and idea, interpretation, and implication. It is urgent for students to do the characteristics of expected responses so that they will intentionally think and reflect in a serious way in online response. Instructional models have been employed as guiding tools to stimulate students' responses according to particular questions.

Ferris et al. (2000) investigated the effect of facilitator pattern by encrypting the posts and responses of students' online discussion and the assessment rubric to measure significant communication of asynchronous online interchange. Their study indicated that assessment criteria, both periodical and precise reflection, had an influential impact on students' quality of communication. To support this study, Ferris et al. (2000) state that the increase of frequencies and quality of students' contributions are realized after assessment characteristic were indicated. Ertmer et al.,

(2007) adopts peer feedback to improve students' ability to have more effective communication. Their study discovered that when students ought to provide comments on their peers' posting, the meaningful quality of feedback was promising. The practical inquiry model is a discourse guide to facilitate students' critical thinking in an online discussion. Meanwhile, Bai (2009) used the functional interrogatory pattern as a guide to assist students to do critical thinking through four phases: stimulating issue, investigating, coordinating, and resolving. The aforementioned strategy provided concrete guidelines to students of what a good contribution might be. Therefore, the quality of responses could be identified.

Wade (2008) states that the primary goal of education is to help students learn to think deeply to overcome problems, challenges, tasks, and dilemma. Facione & Facione (1994) state that today learning how to learn and how to think appears definitely necessary. Facione & Facione (1994) expressively argue that 'fact-loading memorizers who cannot analyze information, take back the implications, assess the cogency of arguments, and explain how they came to their results, they will not survive in the competitive economic and political aspects of this or the next century.' The applied integration of critical thinking goals in educational contexts in general and in teaching and learning foreign/second languages specifically appears to be a new path of research. In learning process, to make students critical namely through computer conferencing (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010). Appropriate goal-orientated assessment in critical thinking can manipulate cognitive skills (Ferris et al., 2000).

There are several previous studies on the topic of the peer feedback in writing which were conducted by Fatimah and Suharto (2017), Richardson and Eltmer (2015), and Pribady (2018). None of them focuses on triggering critical thinking and feedback in writing narrative text. Therefore, the present study is aimed to find out whether peer-feedbacking Activities effective in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative or not; and students' perceptions on the use of peer-feedbacking in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed method study as suggested by Creswell 92014). It

consists of quantitative data with true-experimental pre-test post-test control group design and qualitative with close-ended questionnaire for the data. The data for this study were collected from pre-test post-test and students" document tests which went through several steps. On the first meeting of the four-meeting sequence, students were required to write narrative text based on a given prompt.

At the very beginning, the researcher implementation the pre-test in the form of writing test to the students without treatment. Second was giving treatment of the explanation narrative text through Peer Feedback activities to the experimental group. Third, the students of experimental group wrote a text of narrative text, and then other students gave Peer Feedback. Fourth, the researcher gave post-test to students after treatment. The last, after the post-test was given, the questionnaire was given to get their perceptions concerning Peer Feedback Activities in writing narrative text. The result of quantitative data had been compared with the qualitative data to look at the result confirm or disconfirm each other.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study attempts to find out whether peer-feedbacking Activities is effective in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative or not; and students' perceptions on the use of peer-feedbacking in improving students' critical thinking skills in writing narrative. The followings were the steps that the researcher underwent to get the data.

The first is regarding the quantitative data using pre-test post-test. The calculation showed that in the pre-test, the researchers evaluated the students" writing of narrative text by relating to the writing components including of content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar), and mechanics. The calculation of the students' score in writing narrative text of the pre-test showed that 74 was the highest score before being given the treatment, meanwhile, 57 was the lowest score. That calculation also showed that 83 was the high score of students' writing narrative text after being given the treatment, meanwhile, 63 was the low score.

The computation result showed that the N-gain t-test got a significance of 0.012 which is less than 0.05. So, H0 is rejected. This means that there is a difference in the

increase of the ability of students who use Peer Feedback activities with those who do not use Peer Feedback activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that the delivery of Peer feedback in this study was effective in improving critical thinking in writing narrative text. It means that the first research question of the present study had been answered.

The next steps was analyzing data derived from the results of pre-test and post-test and closed-ended questionnaire. First, the researcher presented some of the students' questionnaire. The result of the mean score of enhancing students critical thinking in writing narrative through Peer Feedback activities was at a positive level. Over the 10 items, no. 7 was the highest mean score "I would like my friend to identify my errors, explain why they are wrong and then give me the corrected forms" (M = 4.83, SD = 0.37); followed by no. 9, "Feedback from my friend make me to write better." (M = 4.63, SD = 0.60); no. 8, "I would like my friend to identify my errors through written feedback" (M = 4.53, SD = 0.67); no. 1, "I really need my friend to check my writing Peer Feedback motivates me to learn English (M = 4.46, SD = 0.76); no. 3, "I would like my friend to indicate all of my errors" (M = 4.43, SD = 0.67); no. 10, "Peer Feedback make me confidence to write" (M = 4.36, SD = 0.76); no. 2, "I really need my friend to check my writing" (M = 4.26, SD = 0.78); no. 6, "I would my friend to focus on my grammatical mistakes only" (M = 4.23, SD = 0.89). The lowest mean score was no. 4, "I would like my friend to indicate some serious errors (not all)" (M = 4.16, SD = 0.74); and no. 5 "I would like my friend identify an errors on my writing and explain why my writing wrong" (M = 4.16, SD = 0.74). All mean scores were at a positive level.

These findings are in accordance with Fatimah and Suharto (2017). The results showed that there is a significant difference on the students' writing skills before and after being taught by using peer feedback technique. The complete obtained scores of the mean and the standard deviation of the sample group highlighted the significant difference of the students' writing ability.

Besides, Richardson & Eltmer (2015) also has the similar result in that participants perceived the peer feedback strategy effective on their learning at the stage of higher cognitive level. Qualitative data explores that the peer feedback process effected students' learning, both as receivers and providers of peer feedback.

The study implicates to teaching and designing online courses that adopt asynchronous discussions.

Additionally, Pribady (2018) carried out a research discussed about the appraisal analysis on how teacher's talk make the students enhance their critical thinking skills in Narrative learning in Design Thinking methodology and the appraisal analysis on how students are able to construe their critical thinking in classroom interaction through a process of Narrative learning in Design Thinking.

The previous study and the present study have the same result which revealed that after getting feedback on their writing, they recognized that their writing performance has significantly improved. Finally, the present study showed that the score of students' writing narrative text increased because Peer Feedback is effective.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings concluded that Peer Feedback can improve students' critical thinking. It can be seen from the students' score in writing before and after being given the treatment. The implementation of peer feedback in the teaching-learning process of writing improves students' score significantly. Thus, in another word, the use of peer feedback in teaching writing could overcome the students' writing problem and improved the students' critical thinking.

The researcher asserts that the students generally interested and have a good excitement in enhancing critical thinking in writing. They assumed that applying Peer Feedback activities could make them easy to understand the material such as narrative text, correct text through peer feedback and improve their writing skill, grammar mastery and vocabulary.

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