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## Improving Students' Ability In Writing Using Peer Correction

Faricha Rizqi<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia  
email: \* faricharizqi2@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

Students' writing anxiety leads students to have low writing skill whereas writing is undeniably crucial. This research is aimed to improve the students' writing skill and investigate the extent to which peer correction method improves the students' skill in writing explanation text. Peer correction is a teaching language method in which students receive feedback from their peer dealing with their writings. This method is considered as an effective teaching strategy which enables students to have enthusiasm and confidence in writing. Thirty of tenth grade students in Surakarta participated in this research. The data of this classroom action research were obtained by conducting test, observation and interview. Based on the data analyzed, it is found that the students' writing skill on each aspect of writing is continuously improved in each cycle. This is affected by effective steps of peer correction method implemented.

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### INTRODUCTION

English is an international language spoken by people around the world to communicate. Therefore, it is the only one of foreign languages taught for ages in the school of Indonesia as a compulsory subject. Students need to be aware of the nature and the importance of English in improving their competence in globalization era. The aim of teaching English is to enable students to communicate using English. It is stated in both curriculums of 2006 and 2013.

Raimes (1983) also acknowledges that learning a second language means learning to communicate with other people: to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them. Therefore, the students are supposed to master four language skills namely listening, writing, reading, and speaking. However, writing is

considered as the most difficult skill of all the language abilities to acquire since writing is an intricate and complex task (Adas and Bakir, 2013). In writing activity, a writer needs to pay attention to the process of writing. There are some processes involved in writing activity, they are planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Richard and Renandya, 2002).

On the other hand, writing has an important role besides in students' communicative competence. According to Monirosadat et al. (2013), writing skill plays an important role in educational success. It is because course materials in academic careers are mostly examined in one main area which is in the form of essay test. Therefore, students are supposed to be able to convey their ideas and understanding by writing. Ur (1996) also claims that much higher standards of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech.

However, according to the result of pre-test conducted in class X Science 4 of SMA N 5 Surakarta, the students have low ability in writing explanation text. They still have some problems dealing with grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanic. Besides, based on the observation conducted by the researcher, the students have low participation in learning activities. There are some students who do not focus on the lesson and are busy with their own activities. There are only some certain students who actively join the activity. However, the teacher tries to have the students focus on the lesson by asking them some questions and asking them to answer some exercises. It can be said that the learning activities are dominated with reading activities by doing the exercises from book.

Another particular problem found in writing class is that the teacher did not give adequate feedback related to the students' writing. It brings the students finding difficulties in writing, whereas by providing feedback it can help them evaluate their success and progress. Feedback can be a number of forms: giving praise and encouragement; correcting; setting regular tests; having discussion about how the group as a whole is doing; giving individual tutorials (Gower, et al., 1995). However, as stated by Ur (1996) that correcting written work is very time-consuming. He also points out that one possible solution is to let students correct and edit each other's writing without releasing teacher from the duty of checking and evaluating student writing.

Regarding the writing problems faced by the students, the researcher finds a method of peer correction effective in improving the students' writing skill. Peer feedback provides a student-centered environment that is a beneficial pedagogy to encourage the learners to improve academic-style writing practice (Coit, 2004). Peer correction requires the students to give feedback to their peer in the form of correction and suggestion. There are some strengths of peer correction as mentioned by McDowell (in Ahangari, 2014), they are (1) there is a development of evaluative and critical abilities; (2) there are opportunities for skill development; (3) knowledge is more integrated; and (4) students collaborate, are motivated and are satisfied. Based on those benefits, the implementation of peer correction is expected to be able to solve the problem with students' ability in writing explanation text in tenth grade of SMA Negeri 5 Surakarta.

## **METHODS**

The method of this research is classroom action research with the aim of improving the students' writing skill. Burns (2010:2) states that one of the main aim of

action research is to systematically identify a “problematic” situation found in the teaching process and to make improvements. Therefore, classroom action research is a problem-solving act of research aimed to enhance the quality of teaching result in improvement of students’ achievement. Model of action research itself is adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart proposing four phases in a cycle of research namely planning, action, observation, and reflection.

This classroom action research was undertaken in SMA N 5 Surakarta. It involved tenth grade students of Science 4 consisting of 30 students. They participated in this study for eight weeks. In the beginning, the students were asked to have pre-test of writing an explanation text. The students were then provided with a comprehensive introduction on the steps of peer correction and on the guidelines about conducting peer correction at revising stage of writing process. After explaining the material of explanation text, the students were asked to write an explanation text in group and then exchange their papers in order to be corrected by other groups with chart of peer correction guidance. After that, they had their papers back and reflected on their writing errors. In this stage, teacher monitored students’ activity and provided feedback toward students’ writing. Lastly, the students were asked to rewrite their papers at the editing stage.

After the implementation of peer correction, the student took a posttest to discover whether the implementation of peer correction was effective in improving students’ writing skill or not. After doing action and observation, the researcher reflected on the influence of the action, analyzed and described the strengths and the weaknesses of the treatment. The result of reflection was taken into consideration to plan further action applied in the next cycle. The next cycle was conducted to reduce the weaknesses found in the first cycle. In the first cycle, it was found some weaknesses dealing with time allotment. The researcher had to manage the time effectively since she had a limit of time to teach in the class. This research was conducted by using two cycles in which each cycle was delivered in three meetings. At the end of the second cycle, the students had the second posttest to know the significant difference of the students’ writing score.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The students’ writing score of the pre-test, first posttest, and second posttest were compared to know if there is significant improvement in the students’ writing skill after having peer correction implemented. The result of the research shows that peer correction is successfully solving the students’ writing problem. The description is presented as follows:

### **1. The students’ writing score is improved**

The improvement can be seen from the increases of the students’ mean score. The mean score in pre-test is improved from 64,51 to 75,2 in posttest I. It shows that the students’ average score is improved 16,5%. Then, the students’ average score in posttest II is raising as well, the average score in posttest II is 82,76. Therefore, the improvement from posttest I to post test II is 9,95%. The improvements of the students’ writing score are displayed on the figure below.

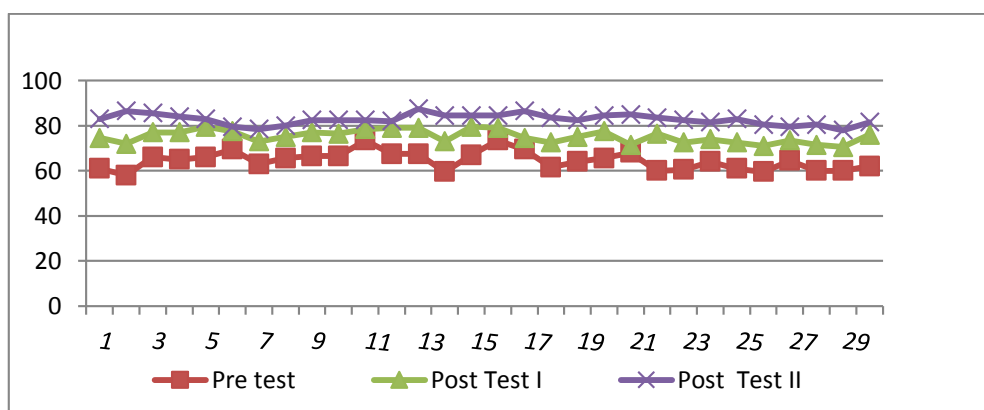


Figure 1. The students' writing mean score

## 2. The students' scores for each writing indicators are improved

The improvement of the students' average is followed with the improvement score on each aspect of writing. In pre-test, the students' mean score in is 64,5. There are only eight students who achieve higher than the passing grade which was 67. Then, it is improved to 75,2 in post test I, and increases to 82,76 in post test II. Generally, five aspects of writing namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanic are improved. They can be seen from the content of writing, the score is improved from 21,5 to 23,78 in post test I, and to 25 in post test II. Dealing with organization aspect, it is increased from 11,9 in pre-test to 14,33 in post test I and becomes 16,9 in post test II. Meanwhile, the students' vocabulary mastery is also improved from 12,6 in pre-test to 14,56 in post test I and 16,06 in post test II. The students also have improvement in grammar. It is 15,1 in pre-test and becomes 18,55 in post test I and 20,8 in post test II. Lastly, feedback given from peers during correction process also influences mechanic aspect of writing. In pre research, the score of mechanic is 3,45, then it is improved to 3,96 in post test I and 4 in post test II.

According to the scoring rubric by Jabob, et al. (1981), five aspects of writing have different maximum score and level which has different criteria. They are four criteria namely poor, fair, good, and excellent. Regarding the explanation of the students' score on writing aspect, content aspect is included in good level as the score is 25. Then, aspect of organization which is improved to 16,9 and is categorized into good level. The level of vocabulary aspect changes from poor into good. The aspect of grammar and mechanic are also categorized into good level.

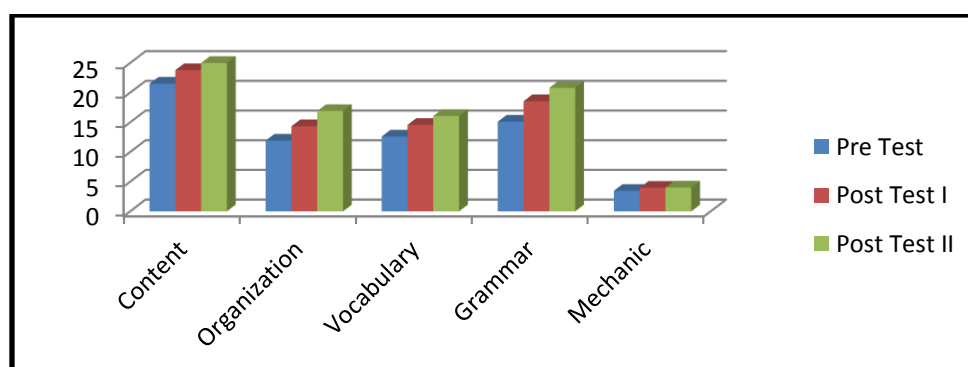


Figure 2. The students' mean score for writing indicators

Table 1. The students' mean score per writing indicator

Activity	Content (13-30)	Organization (7-20)	Vocabulary (7-20)	Grammar (5-25)	Mechanic (1-5)
Pre-Test	21,5	11,9	12,6	15,1	3,45
Post Test I	23,78	14,33	14,56	18,55	3,96
Post Test II	25	16,9	16,06	20,8	4

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that peer correction succeeds in improving the students' ability in writing explanation text. The data obtained from written test indicate that the students' writing ability is improved. The improvement from pre-test to post test I is 16,5% while the improvement from post test I to post test II is 9,95%. It is affected by the improvement in score on each aspect of writing. The students can continuously solve their writing problems related to content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic. Peer correction can be suitably implemented in writing class, but the teacher is supposed to guide the students in order to have peer correction method work smoothly and manage the time well. Besides, practice is important to improve students' writing achievement. They can discuss and ask their peer and teacher to give feedback to their writing. They can get better comprehension by learning from their mistakes and revising their writing. Peer correction is less threatening than teacher correction since students are more comfortable with their classmates and therefore, getting corrected by own friends evoke less anxiety

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