

USING PEER FEEDBACK TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY AMONG SECONDARY STUDENTS

Siti Fatimah; G. Suharto

Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University ; Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University
araichaa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to describe the students' writing skills before and after using peer feedback technique and to reveal the difference between the students' writing skills before and after using peer feedback technique. This study applied a quasi-experimental study design panel. 29 eleventh grade students of SMA N I Pundong class XI Science 2 (XI IPA 2) were involved in this study, serving as the sample group. A pre-test was given before the treatment, and three posttests were done after the treatment (peer feedback technique) was implemented. The findings showed that the students' mean score improved from pretest to all posttests. The main score of pretest was 12.00, the first post-test was 15.57, the second post-test was 17.26, and in the third post-test the mean was 18.32. Therefore, the study revealed that applying peer feedback technique in teaching writing can significantly improve students' writing skills.

Key words: *peer feedback, writing, narrative text*

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language that is taught at every level of education beginning from the primary to higher level of education. In teaching English as a foreign language, four skills to be taught are speaking and listening as receptive skills, writing and reading as productive skills.

As one of the productive skills, writing is considered as difficult skill to study for many students (Allan and Vallette, 1981: 5). Although it shares the same kind of skills with speaking as the productive skill, it cannot be acquired like the way speaking is. Speaking can be acquired by getting exposed orally whereas writing has a bit complicated process to learn it (Brown, 2001: 334). It means that writing is not an innate skill like speaking. When people want to be able to write, they should learn it as well.

Writing can provide opportunities for the learners to express their ideas and messages through letters, words, and sentences in English. In addition, writing has an important role as media of communication. Hence, not only on the field of education, on many fields of job and technology also require the ability to write.

Writing is also a skill taught in secondary schools in Indonesia. Particularly the schools that implement School-Based Curriculum 2006 (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*), English subject syllabus of the eleventh grade students of senior high school requires students to be able to write some genres in writing. They are narrative, hortatory exposition, and spoof.

This study focused on narrative text. The reason underlying such option is based on the writers' observation. The evidence revealed that when the teacher asked the students to write a narrative text, they are expected to have an ability to develop their ideas. However, many students do not know how to express their ideas properly. Even when some students do have some ideas, they fail to develop the ideas into such a good text because of their poor vocabulary mastery.

Allan and Vallete (1981: 5) state it is difficult for students to write in English. They often feel bored because their teacher just asks them to open dictionary when they want to

write. Hence, output text with grammar mistakes and wrong organization of text become the most common mistakes on their writing.

To solve the above problems, teachers should make variation in teaching to make the class more enjoyable so that the judgment about the writing is difficult can be replaced. Peer feedback technique is one of the techniques used by the teacher in teaching writing. It is defined as feedback that is given by peer. In writing activity, peer feedback means having other writers to read and give feedback on what other writer has written. Students as writer will get the input to organize ideas from other peer's feedback. In this technique, other students will read and give comments, corrections, criticisms, and also suggestions on what other students have written.

The feedback is hoped to help the students both revising their writing and developing the text so that their ideas are accommodated. This study describes the students' writing skills before and after being taught using peer feedback technique and provides the possible difference between them.

Theoretical Review

Writing

Writing is one of the English four basic skills. Writing is a productive skill since it requires the learner or language user to produce written texts. Byrne (1984: 1) defines writing as "the act of forming the graphic symbols such as letters and numbers which are arranged in certain rules into meaningful words, sentences, paragraphs, and so on."

However, writing is not only about creating letters or symbols. It is also about using the letters and symbols to hold communicative purpose. This argument is supported by Troyka in Handayani et al. (2013: 1). He states that writing is a way to communicate to the reader in purposes. It means that writing is the ideas, feeling, or thought from the writer which are created and expressed into written forms. The purposes are to deliver messages, to give information to the readers, and to create literary works in written forms.

In the process of writing, as suggested by Harmer (2004: 4), writing has four stages to be followed. The first stage is planning, in which the writer plans and generates ideas. The second stage is drafting in which the writer puts their ideas into words and sentences. The third stage is editing in which the writer looks back his or her draft then edit it by adding information, altering ambiguous information, correcting something not clear or confusing and then choosing different form of words. The last stage is final form in which it is readily-served text after being edited, reflected, and revised.

From the theories above, the teacher should allow the students to plan and generate what they want to write. After that, the teacher gives a guidance to put the students' plan into words. In writing this draft, the teacher better gives a belief that the students are free to develop their ideas. Next stage is editing the draft. The students should take a look back on their works then add information, alter ambiguities, and revise it to get the best final writing. Feedback then definitely plays an important help for the students especially in the editing stage. As proposed in this study, peer feedback is worth implementing.

Narrative text

According to Rebecca (2003: 1), a narrative text is a text, which relates a series of logically, and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by factors. In addition, Anderson and Anderson (2003) explain that a narrative is a text that tells a story and, in doing so, entertains the audience. By the two arguments, it can be concluded that narrative is a chronological story that is used to entertain the readers.

1. Generic structure of narrative text

Anderson and Anderson (1997: 17) say that narrative texts have five main parts. They are orientation, complication, and sequence of events, resolution, and coda.

a. Orientation

In this paragraph, the teacher tells the students who is in the story, when it is happening, where it is happening and what is going on.

b. Complication

This is the part of the story where the narrator tells about something that will begin a chain of events. These events will affect one or more of the characters. The complication is the trigger. It will rise into a climax of the problem.

c. Resolution

In this part of the narrative, the complication is sorted out or the problem is solved.

d. Coda

The narrator includes a coda if there is to be a moral or message to be learned from the story. It is considered as optional so that the writer is free to add this part or not.

Peer feedback

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002: 390), peer feedback can be defined as an activity of the students receiving feedback from other students. The students receive their friends' work and then review it and give comment or suggestion on it.

Meanwhile, Lundstrom and Baker (2009: 31) say that peer feedback is an activity which is not only requiring the students to give feedback to each other but also to use the language itself in meaningful interaction. He argues that the students who are doing peer feedback are getting exposed to new ideas from others. Not only getting new ideas, peer feedback can also be defined as the way to get perspectives from other people in the same age and the same level.

Through peer feedback the students are encouraged to work collaboratively and get around the problem of students' reacting passively to the teachers' responses. As Harmer (2004: 115) states that peer feedback is a valuable element in the writing process. It is supported by Caulk (1994) in Rollinson (2005). He states that peer can give something which is not yet given by the teacher. The feedback of the peer is more specific than that of the teacher which is more general. Hence, peer feedback can complement the teacher's feedback.

Method

Research Design

This research belongs to a quasi-experimental study. This study applies the sixth type of quasi-experimental study called panel design. This design only requires a sample group that is given a test several times and treatment several times to see the development of the learning process. To conclude the relationship between cause and effect is done through interview. The design can be represented by the following pattern (Suharto, 2015: 45).

Sample Group: O₁ X O₂ X O₃...etc.

Notes:

O₁ : Pretest

O₂ : Posttest 1

X : Treatment

O₃ : Posttest 2

Research Subject

The sample group of this research was the eleventh grade students of SMAN I Pundong. From the eleventh grade classes, one was randomly taken. The sample class was XI Science (IPA) 2. It consists of 9 males and 20 female students.

Research procedure

At the very beginning, determining the sample group was done through random sampling. Because all participants had the same chance to be the object of the research, only one group was taken randomly. After having the sample group, then the students were given pretests. The teacher asked the students to write a narrative text in the form of legend. Second, the sample group was given the first treatment using peer feedback technique. Then, after given the treatment, the teacher gave the first post-test and the students were asked to give their feedback to their friends' work before being continued with the second treatment. After second treatment, the students were given the second post-test and the students were asked to give their feedback to their friends' work before being continued with the third treatment. After the third treatment, the students were given the third post-test.

Research Instruments

In constructing research instruments, the researcher used the standard competence and the basic competency of English lesson in writing skill for the eleventh grade in semester two of senior high school. There were a pre-test that was given before the treatment and post-tests that were given after the treatments.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

1. Validity

a. Content validity

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009: 355), "content validity is the process of how the test establishes the representativeness of the items in a certain domain of the skills, tasks, knowledge, and other aspects that are being measured." It means that the test was developed in reference to the Standard of Competence and Basic Competency for Senior High School students of Grade XI in second semester.

b. Construct validity

Wiersma and Jurs (2009: 358) state that "construct validity refers to theoretical construct or trait being measured, but not to the technical construction of the test." To fulfill the construct validity, the researcher constructed the instrument consisting on some specific indicators. To score students' writing test, the researcher used Weigles' (2002: 190) scoring rubric, as presented below.

	Score	CRITERIA
CON	4	Relevant to topic
	3	Mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
	2	Inadequate development of topic
	1	Does not show knowledge of subject
ORGANI	4	Ideas clearly stated/supported, well-organized
	3	Loosely organized but main ideas stand out, logical but incomplete sequencing
	2	Ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development
	1	No organization
	4	Effective word/idiom choice and usage

	3	Occasional errors of word/idiom choice/usage <i>but meaning not obscured.</i>
	2	Frequent errors of world/idiom form, choice, usage and <i>meaningconfused or obscured</i>
	1	Little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms word form
LANGUAGE	4	Few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	3	Several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	2	Frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions
	1	Dominated by errors
MECHAN	4	Few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	3	Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization
	2	Frequent errors of spelling, punctuation capitalization, paragraphing · poor handwriting
	1	Dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing · handwriting illegible

2. Reliability

The formula used to measure the reliability was Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Formula (Tuckman, 1998: 275). It was employed by Bivariate Correlation of SPSS 16.00. The coefficient of pre-test was 0.921, while that of post-test 1 was 0.881. From the post-test 2 it was 0.856, and that of post-test 3 was 0.821. Based on the result of inter-rater tests, it could be inferred that the tests were reliable. All tests were in the level of very *high*.

Data Analysis Technique

1. Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis employed the result of the mean and the standard deviation score. Hatch and Farhady (1982: 39) indicate that the descriptive analysis is statistics used to summarize data. The data analysis was aimed at describing the result of the mean and standard deviation score.

a. Mean and standard deviation

Hatch and Farhady (1982: 55) state that the mean is the commonly used measure because the mean takes all scores into account. The mean is the same as the average of score. The higher the mean value, the higher the level of group attainment is. On the other hand, the lower the mean value, the lower level of groups' attainment is (Suharto, 2006: 51).

In addition, Hatch and Farhady (1982: 57) state that standard deviation is used to measure variability. The larger the standard deviation, the more variability from the central points in the distribution (heterogeneous) and the smaller the standard deviation, the closer the distribution is to the central point (homogeneous).

2. Inferential Analysis

The inferential statistics was focused to answer the question on problems formulation, whether there was a significant difference in students' achievement before and after taught by using peer feedback technique. The statistics used in this computation were the test of normality, the test of homogeneity, and the hypothesis test.

a. Test of normality

This test was aimed at finding whether the distribution of the responses in the population met the normal distribution requirement or not. It was gained from the scores of pre-test and post-test. To determine the level of significance, the researcher used One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov in the significance level of 0.05 from SPSS version 16.0 of Windows computer program.

b. Test of homogeneity

This test was used to analyze whether the sample variance is homogeneous or not. In this study, the test of homogeneity was done by using SPSS version 16.0 of Windows computer program. The test was considered homogeneous if the level of significance is more than 0.05.

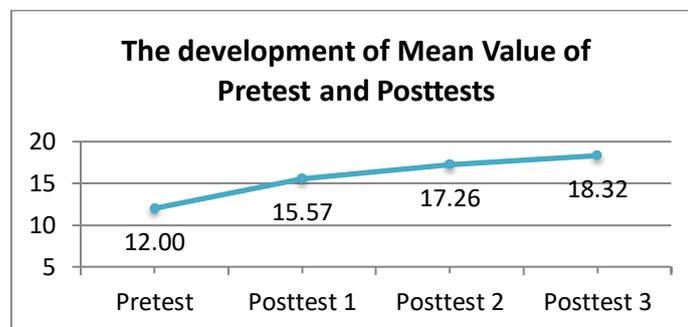
c. Test of hypothesis

The independent sample One-Way ANOVA was employed based on the test of normality and the test of homogeneity.

Findings and Discussion

The results indicate that there is a significant difference on the students' writing skills before and after being taught by using peer feedback technique. The absolute gained scores of the mean and the standard deviation of the sample group emphasized the significant difference of the students' writing ability. Based on the computation of the all post-tests result, the mean value of the first posttest was 15.57, the mean value of the second post-test was 17.26, and the mean value of the third post-test was 18.32. The chart is presented below.

Figure 2: The Improvement of Mean Value of Pretest and Posttests



From the chart above, it could be interpreted that there is an improvement on the students' writing skills after being taught using peer feedback technique. From the gained test score, the absolute gain score of the mean of pre-test and posttest 1 was 3.57, gain score of post-test 1 and post-test 2 was 1.69, and gain score of post-test 2 and post-test 3 was 1.06. It can be interpreted that the highest improvement could be seen from the pre-test and the first pre-test and the lowest one could be seen from the second post-test to the third post-test. In other words, the most effective treatments were in the first two treatments. Hence, it could be indicated that if the posttest was continued to the fourth post-test and so on, the improvement of mean value might be getting lower and lower.

From the improvement of score gained by the sample group after being taught by using peer feedback technique, therefore, it could be concluded that peer feedback was helpful. The frequency distribution of the first posttest showed that, there were twenty eight students (96.55%) in the positive area and there were seven students (24.14) belonged to *excellent* category. Meanwhile, the result of the pretest showed that there were only fourteen

students (41.38%) in the positive area and there was no student classified into *excellent* category. Compared with the result from the pre-test above, it can be interpreted that there is a significant improvement from the pre-test to the first post-test. In the pretest, there were no students classified into *excellent* category whereas in the first post-test there were seven students (24.14%) classified into *excellent* category. In other words, the students' writing skills were improved after being given the treatment using peer feedback technique.

In the second post-test, the frequency distribution showed that twenty nine students (100%) are in the positive area and fourteen students (48.28%) were classified into *excellent* category. Compared with the result of the first posttest in which there were only seven students (24.14%) classified into *excellent* category, it can be interpreted that there is a significant improvement from the first post-test to the second post-test. In other words, the students' writing skills were improved after were given two treatments using peer feedback technique.

In the third post-test, the frequency distribution showed that twenty nine students (100%) are in the positive area and twenty three students (79.31%) classified into *excellent* category. Compared with the result of the second post-test in which there were only fourteen students (48.28%) classified into *excellent* category, it can be interpreted that there is a significant improvement from the second post-test to the third post-test. In other words, the amount of students who were classified into excellent category was getting higher and higher on each post-test.

Overall, it could be concluded that the findings showed that the students' writing scores after they were taught by using peer feedback was higher than those before being taught without using it. From the pre-test, the students that are in the positive area are only fourteen students (41.38%); the first post-test was twenty eight students (96.55%); the second post-test was twenty nine students (100%); and the third post-test was also twenty nine students although it was different in the amount of students that belonged to *excellent* category. It could be concluded that, the number of students that belonged to positive area was getting higher and higher on each test.

In addition, based on the statistic calculation of One-Way ANOVA using SPSS 16.00 for Windows computer program, the result showed that the significance value of the group was 0.000. It was less than the significance level of 0.05 so that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. Statistically, there was a significant difference when the significance level of One-Way ANOVA test was higher than the significance level of 0.05.

It could be concluded that the findings of this study contributed to previous studies. The result showed that peer feedback technique was beneficial to help students in the teaching-learning process especially for the writing skills. It could be seen from the improvement of students' writing scores after being taught using peer feedback technique.

Kamimura (2006) has investigated the effect of peer feedback on the students' writing performance. His finding showed that peer feedback had positive effect on the students' writing performance and it had significant improvements on the revisions produced by the students. In addition, peer feedback had an important role for the students compared with the teachers' comment. Murni and Siregar (2014) find that students who did peer-feedback had higher motivation and enthusiasm than the students who did not. Then, they also got benefits of peer feedback process as their peers told the mistakes that they were not aware of and gave them opinions and suggestions. They also felt free and confident in discussing their point of view in peer feedback.

Those arguments above were supported by the result of interview between the researcher and a student representative. The student said that the teaching and learning process became more interesting because they were not only listening to the teachers'

explanation. When they were given a chance to involve on the whole teaching and learning process, they felt confident and enthusiastic. They felt free to write any ideas on their mind without feeling worried because the feedback provider would be their friend. During the feedback giving, the students became more active to share their ideas to get the best result on writing a narrative text.

Besides, the students were observed to seriously gave feedback on their friends' work after being given the treatment. In this stage, they practiced the theory of giving peer feedback and followed some guides from the teacher to give comments and suggestions. The students looked confident with their selves because they were given a chance to be a feedback provider. By giving feedback for the other works, the students would learn to give feedback on their own works. After knowing their mistakes, they could revise the draft to get the better written text.

From the explanation above, it could be concluded that peer feedback was the appropriate technique to be applied in teaching-learning writing for all levels of senior high school. The improvement of the students' score was due to the different treatment as well. The treatment was to use peer feedback in teaching writing of narrative text in the sample group.

Conclusion

The post-tests result notes that the mean value of the sample group was higher than that before being taught using peer feedback technique. This means that in teaching writing, the students' score after being taught using peer feedback was higher than those after being taught without using it. Furthermore, the significance value of the hypothesis testing is 0.000 and it is lower than 0.05.

In conclusion, the use of peer feedback in the teaching-learning process of writing made a significant improvement in the students' score. Therefore, it could be stated that the use of peer feedback in teaching writing could be used to solve the students' writing problem and increased the students' writing ability. Finally, the hypothesis proposed in this research which said "there is a significant difference between students' writing skills before and after being taught using peer feedback technique" is accepted.

References

- Anderson, M. and Anderson, K. (1997). *Text types in English 2*. South Yara: Macmillan Education Australia.
- Brown, D. (2004). *Language Assesment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Handayani, A A, K., Dantes, Ny., & Ratminingsih, Ni Made. (2013). *The Effect of Guided Writing Strategy and Students' Achievement Motivation on Students' Writing Competency*. Indonesia: e-Journal Program Pascasarjana Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. New York: Pearson Education Limited. Longman.
- Hyland, K & Hyland, F. (2006). *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J C. & Schmidt, R. 2002. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. London: Pearson Education Limited
- Rollinson, P. (2005). Using Feedback in the ESL Writing Class. *SELT Journal Volume 59*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

- Suharto, G. (2006). *Pengukuran dan Penilaian Hasil Belajar Bahasa Inggris*. Yogyakarta: Pusat Pelayanan dan Pengembangan Bahasa.
- Suharto, G. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Ilmiah dalam Pendidikan Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa.
- Wiersma, W. and Jurs, S. (2009). *Research Methods in Education*. United States: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Weigle, C. S. (2002). *Assessing Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.