Improving the Students’ Ability In Writing Explanation Text Using Peer Correction at the Tenth Grade Students of SMA N 5 Surakarta

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Abstract

This action research attempts to improve the students’ writing skill and to find out in what extent method of peer correction can improve the students’ achievement in writing explanation text. The subject of the research is the students of class X Science 4 of SMAN 5 Surakarta in the academic year of 2015/2016. The class consists of 30 students. The research is carried out in two cycles. Each cycle encompasses planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research data is obtained in the form of quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data is collected from the result of pre test and post test. Meanwhile, the qualitative data is collected by conducting observation and interview. Based on the data analyzed, it is found that the students’ writing ability is continuously improved in each cycle. This is affected by the implementation of peer correction method. The students’ mean score increases from 64,5 in the pre test, while in post test I is 75,2, and becomes 82,7 in post test II. Those increases are followed with the improvement of the students’ score on each aspect of writing namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic. Moreover, according to the observation in the students’ participation, the implementation of peer correction also influences the improvement of the effectiveness of teaching learning process. It can be summarized that peer correction can improve the students’ writing ability and the teaching learning process.

Keywords: writing, explanation text, peer correction, classroom action research

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 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: 3) 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 skills namely listening, writing, reading, and speaking. However, writing is considered as the most difficult skill to master for second foreign language learners. It is in line with the statement of Adas and Bakir (2013, 254) that writing is the most difficult of all the language abilities to acquire since writing is an intricate and complex task. In writing, a writer needs to pay attention to the process of writing. There are some process involved in writing activity, they are planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Richard and Renandya:2002, p. 316).

On the other hand, writing has important role in students’ competence in communication. According to Monirosadat et al. (2013: 4), 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 (1996:163) 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. Only some certain students who actively join the activity. However, the teacher tries to make 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.

Regarding the writing problems faced by the students, the researcher finds method of peer correction effective in improving the students’ writing skill. Coit (2004) also mentions that peer feedback provides student-centered environment that is a beneficial pedagogy to encourage the learners to improve academic-style writing practice. 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: 82), 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 in students’ ability in writing explanation text in tenth grade of SMA Negeri 5 Surakarta.

**THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

1. **Writing**

   Writing is a necessary skill for learners to master. In writing, learners need to pay attention to the purpose of writing. As stated by Ur (1996: 163), the purpose of writing is principally the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. Furthermore, Heaton (1988, p. 135) opines that “The writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgemental element”.

   Brown delivers his idea (2000: 335) that writing pedagogy focuses on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product. Meanwhile, Sokolik (2003) in Linse (2005: 98) states that writing is a combination of process and product in which the process involves the act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers.

   Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that writing is a productive skill producing an output in written form with particular features of language and involving complex thinking process to invent, arrange, and express ideas by paying attention to the content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar), and mechanism of writing.

2. **Explanation Text**

   According to Anderson and Anderson (1997: 80), explanation text is type of text telling how or something occurs. Blake (2001) shares same idea that the purpose of writing explanation text is to explain how and why something in the world happens. The structure of explanation text is firstly begun with with general statement introducing or identifying the scientific or technical phenomenon and
followed with sequenced statements containing well-organized explanation about why or how something happens. There are some language features of explanation such as using simple present tense, using of passive voice, using of action verbs, abstract nouns, connectives to link time sequences, etc.

3. Peer Correction

Nowadays, method of peer correction has been applied effectively in teaching writing by practitioners. Peer correction is done at revising stage after students have finished arranging their writing. Edge (1997, 42) describes that peer correction is when students are working (during pair and group work) on a sentence-by-sentence exercise, then they can take turns to comment on each other’s sentences. Sultana (2009) states that through peer correction, more students get the chance to use language in the class by helping each other and sharing some extent. He also defines that peer correction is a means that is more modern and democratic pedagogy focusing on the self-determining and student-centered concepts whereby students are expected to be more independent.

METHODOLOGY

The method used by this research is classroom action research. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2002: 13), action research is “as a process of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection and learning”. Meanwhile, Burns (2010: 2) states that one of the main aim of action research is to systematically identify a “problematic” situation found in teaching process and to make improvements. Therefore, it can be summarized that classroom action research is a problem-solving act of research aimed to enhance quality of teaching result in students’ achievement improvement. Model of action research itself is adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart which propose four phases in a cycle of research namely planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Based on the explanation delivered above, this research is conducted in which the researcher invites the English teacher and the students of the tenth grade science four of SMA Negeri 5 Surakarta to work collaboratively. The technique used to collect the data are observation, interview, and written test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After implementing method of peer correction in two cycles, 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 post test I. It shows that the students’ average score is improved 16.5%. Then, the students average score in post test II is raising as well, the average score in post test II is 82.76. Therefore, the improvement from post test I to post test II is 9.95%. The improvements of the students’ writing score are displayed on the figure below.

![Figure showing the students’ writing mean score](image)

2. The students’ scores for each writing indicators are improved

The improvement of the students’ average is followed with the improvement score 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 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 used by the research, 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, organization which is improved to 16.9 and is categorized into good level. The level of vocabulary aspect changes from poor into good. Aspect of grammar and mechanic are also categorized into good level.

Table 4.12 The students’ mean score for writing indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Test</th>
<th>Post Test I</th>
<th>Post Test II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Teaching learning process

After the implementation of peer correction, it can be said that the students’ participation is increased. Based on the observation on the classroom condition, the students have interest in implementing method of peer correction because that is something new for them. Even though the students find some difficulties at the beginning of doing peer correction, it can be overcome by giving them clear guidance. They are excited since they have new experience from doing discussing and correcting their peer’ draft. It creates active
atmosphere for the students to learn writing. They can share and communicate their thoughts well with their friends and the researcher. The condition of writing class in pre research is quite different from the condition when peer correction being implemented. The students focus on the lesson and join the activity enthusiastically.

Furthermore, based on the interview with the students, they state that they are encouraged to participate the writing class activity during the implementation of peer correction. They admit that the classroom situation becomes more alive and fun. Therefore, it motivates the students do writing activity well and get score passing the standard minimum competence. Besides, the feedback from their peers and teacher also influence the students’ writing ability. They can learn from their mistake and revise their writing using their peer’s correction as the background knowledge.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result and discussion of this research, it can be concluded that peer correction succeeded in improving the students’ ability in writing explanation text. The improvements dealing with the students’ writing score and the teaching learning process. It is explained in detail as follows:

1. The data obtained from written test indicated 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.

2. The process of teaching learning becomes more alive and fun for the students. They enjoy learning by correcting their peer’s draft. They learn to give feedback and to receive feedback from peer. They use the feedback to revise their writing. Most of the students join actively the learning activities. They are not bored since they experience new role as a corrector.

Regarding the conclusion explained above, the researcher would like to provide several suggestion as well. The suggestions are noted as follows:

1. English teacher needs to pay attention to the method applied in the classroom. It would be better if the method is suitable for the students’ need and able to motivate them in learning. Peer
correction can be applied as an effective method to improve the students’ writing achievement. In this method, the teacher needs to master the steps of peer correction and guide the students in order to have peer correction method work smoothly.

2. In writing, the students need to pay attention more to the content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic. Besides, practice is important to improve their writing achievement. They can discuss and ask their peer and teacher to give feedback to their writing. They can get better understanding by learning from their mistakes and revising their writing.

3. This research is expected to able to be beneficial contributions to other researchers as additional references not only to the material of explanation text, but it can be implied to other materials. Besides, the method of peer correction can be developed improve another skill such as speaking, listening, and reading.

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