Model of Communicative Writing Instruction through Genre Process Approach and Peer-Review Technique in Undergraduate English Program

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Abstract

The current study looks at possible implementation of Genre Process Approach under Peer-Review technique to improve students' competence in writing discussion or argumentative essays. As the study focuses on the development of students' language awareness, teacher's method and techniques were explored to investigate: (a) The extend to which students' understanding of language and rethorics get improved; (b) Ways in which students appreciate English and its culture; and (c) Students' ability to use English in terms of structure and vocabulary as reflected in their academic writing. Data were collected through interview with some students soon after the process of Peer-Review, while the assessment of students' writing products were done by two independent raters using Jacob's (1981) criteria. It was found that students' improvement in understanding of language and rethorics include pluralization, capitalization, present verb 'have', future tense, and use of past form of modal (should and must). Students appreciated English since it promises good job in the future. Students perceived English as an interesting language that the users seem to be honest. Peers and discussion with the lecturer gave significant impact to their oral skill, however, such activities presented a little impact to the betterment of their writing products. The findings suggest that language awareness in the teaching and learning process of Essay Writing does not only include linguistic aspects, but also rethorical styles, attitudinal education, and metacognitive opportunties as well. To achieve the ultimate goals of ELT, therefore, peer-review activities needs to be collaboarated with other related disciplines.

Key words: communicative writing model, peer-review technique.

A. Introduction

Current topic on the English Language and Teaching has been the center of interest, perhaps, along with the rise of linguists' attention and awareness to maximize interaction in this particular language. What is new to our 21st era is that Englsh as a world language – a main tool for global communication - still be the key to the paradigm shift of Indonesian education. Indeed, the ability to communicate (orally or in writing) as required by ESL/EFL curricula should be the main concern and therefore, practitioners in the field are challenged to always investigate and implement their sounds methodology. My concern on TEFL as stated in the title above, deals with the development of communicative writing instruction, by taking advantages of some relevant approaches such as Process Approach, Commuicative Aproach, and Genre Based Approach, while promoting affective skills through Peer-Review technique. This project aims at establishing a valid and practical model of communicative writing instruction which is suitable for Undergraduate English Program. Since the validity and practicality of the model depend on many variables in teaching and learning process of language, the study focused on the development of students' language awareness.

As 'teaching seems to have become more and more concerned with the provision of opportunities and conditions for more productive learning to take place' (Mariani, 1992), the implementation of Genre Based Approach under Peer-Review technique is expected to explore:

(1) The extend to which students' understanding of language and rethorics get improved; (2) Ways in which students appreciate English and its culture; and (3) Students' ability to use English in terms of structure and vocabulary in their essay writing.

The design of this communicative writing instruction is based on some pedagogical approaches as well as method and techniques. First of all, Communicative approach has been primarily credited to bring the TEFL alive since it makes communicative competence the goal of language teaching by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication (Freeman, 2000:121). The strengths of CLT provide insights to current methodology, as Nunan (1991) maintains:

> (1) An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language; (2) the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situiation; (3) the provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself; (4) an enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and (5) an attempt to link clasroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

The development of communicative writing also relies on Process approach that focuses on meaning rather than form, and process rather than product. Proponents of this approach contend that it is more important to guide the learners and let content, ideas, and the needs to communicate determine form, rather than beginning with the form of a text (Silva, 1990:11). Another supporting theories for commnicative writing is derived from Genre-Based Approach. It does not explain how we share information, but also knowledge, as well as how we interact in social context (Callaghan, Knapp and Knobble, 1993:193).

The implementation of the above approaches into classroom techniques is carried out in the form of 'Peer-Review' technique. Liu and Hansen (2002: 1) use the term 'peer response' to refer to 'peer- feedback', peer- review,' or 'peer- editing' in teaching L2 writing as they contend:

> 'Peer response is the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing'.

Liu and Hansen (2002: 3) maintain that peer response supports process writing with a focus on drafting and revision and enables students to get multiple feedback (e.g., from teacher, peer, and self) across various drafts. Most importantly, it builds audience awareness; helps make reading-writing connections; and build content, linguistic, and rhetorical schemata through multiple exposures to a text. Many authors of various disciplines such as Ferris (2003: 70) also acknowledges some practical benefits of peer response that: (1) Students gain confidence, perspective, and critical thinking skills from being able to read texts by peers writing on similar tasks; (2) Students get more feedback on their writing than they could from the teacher alone; (3) Students get feedback from a more diverse guidance bringing multiple perspectives; (4) Students receive feedback from non-expert readers on ways in which their texts are unclear as to ideas and language; (5) Peer review activities build a sense of classroom community.

The development of students' language awareness in the so-called communicative writing is done with the two classes of the fourth semester students (36 and 37 students) of Undergraduate English through multiple foci, stages, and activities which are shaped into the following procedures:

(1) Building Knowledge

The focus of this stage is to develop students' oral skills in that their specific writing knowledge and skill were explored in dealing with purpose, audience, as well as the impacts or results of such activity. They were told about the project in which they should come up with several activities to produce qualified essay on discussion (persuasive and argumentative) types. To achieve this purpose, therefore, the structure of essay was presented in short, simple, and effective way.

(2) Modeling of Text

In this stage, students were exposed to a passage (eg., Is Having School Uniforms a Good Idea?). As an input for students' learning, their understanding were developed through discussion; questions and answers leading to topic or issue, thesis statement, purpose of the text, specific target readers, generic structures of text, and language feature. Note that the material was accompanied by Grammar focus.

(3) Joint Construction

Students' sufficient understanding of the purpose (eg., For and Against, Opinion, and Solution to Problems) should lead them to create similar text. Therefore, in this stage of joint construction, they were exposed to a new case through brainstorming activity (eg., Anticipation of Tsunami in Padang; Thesis writing for college students; Electricity in Padang, etc.). Here, students were supposed to write for specific audience (Foreigners or Western People, University professors, etc.). In groups of four or five students, they discussed together to plan the essay. Students' planning (in the form of outline) should be submitted to the instructor so that he could manage or monitor their activity inside or outside the classroom.

(4) Independent Construction

Everyone in the group was supposed to write or develop the outline into essay form that had already been shared before. This activity is done at home or outside the classroom.

(5) Peer-Review

The product of students' writing (First Draft) was shared to the other members of the group to be reviewed. Students could do this in or outside the classroom. In order to be more focused, students were provided with guideline or peer-review format. The instructor first modeled the reviewing through sharing and discussion with a student writer. The purpose of this discussion may be to clarify or negotiate the reviewer's comment, critiques, or suggestion. Finally, a student writer should revise his/her first draft based on what have been suggested. They should type it in special format preferred by the instructor for later activity.

(6) Small Conference

Students' revisions are now ready to be graded. But before that, the instructor calls them one by one to have a small conference. It is through this activity that the instructor clarifies, suggests, or raises students' awareness of language and rhetoric.

B. Discussion

Teaching and Learning process of Writing 2 (Essay Writing) under Peer-Review technique has been directed to students' centered aiming at developing their language acquisition. The analysis of the above practice is relevant to basic concepts proposed by Bilash and Tulasiewicz (1995) that:

> Language awareness blends a) content about language, b) language skill, c)
> attitudinal education and d) metacognitive opportunities, which allow the

student to reflect on the process of language acquisition, learning and language use (p.49).

In general, students' language awareness is developed along a series of learning stage as summarized below.

Tabel 1: Development of Students' Language Awareness

Stage	Inputs	Activity	Out-Puts (Language Awareness)
1. Building knowledge of field	Teacher' learning experience, communicative skills, and pedagogy.	• Listening and responding to current phenomenon • Hypothesizing specific language use	Attitudes
2. Modeling	Text materials: procedural knowledge, vocabulary and grammar.	Reading/ understanding the model text: purpose, organization, and language features.	Language content
3. Joint Construction	Teacher's selected topics on actual and motivating issues.	• Determining the purpose and target readers • Creating Thesis statement and supporting points	Language skill and attitude
4. Independent Construction	All available sources: people, books, newspaper, magazine, and internet.	Writing the first draft	• Language content • Language skill • Language monitoring • Metacognitive opportunity
5. Peer-review	Classmates	• Reading • Highlighting • Correcting • Providing comments • Speaking: Discussing/ clarifying • Grading	• Language content (Structure, vocabulary, mechanics) and skills • Attitude
6. Small-Conference	Teacher and Porto-folio	• Speaking • Discussion on the techniques and strategies used for task accomplishment	➢ Attitudes: Appreciation to English and Native Speakers ➢ Metacognitive opportunity: Commitment to the writing improvement

The following description discusses how each of the four principles above get developed through the stages.

1. *Language Content*

As evidenced in the recent study, students' awareness of language is mostly developed during the peer-review activities (Stage 5). This language content includes (a) Structure or

grammar such as: pluralization, conjunctions, adverb, auxiliary verb, adverb, and word order; (b) Choices of word such as: ….; and (c) Mechanics such spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. If this is the case, then, what is the contribution of exposing text early in the stage of Modeling (Stage 2)? I assume that students take for granted the language structure used in the text while they are reading it. However, as students' mistakes found in the example above are in the intermediate level, it suggests that frequency of writing (essay) must be intensified.

Besides, the Communicative Writing Instruction develops students' language awareness in the Small Conference (Stage 6), in which every individual student are called for questions and answers with the Instructor. Common questions include:

(1) How many reviewers do you have?
(2) Do you learn something from your reviewers, or what have you learnt from your reviewers?
(3) Can you give example(s) of correction(s) suggested by reviewers dealing with grammar?
(4) How do you respond to the correction or suggestion given by the reviewers?
(5) Why do you learn English? Etc.

The aim of the interview was not only to refresh or to get information about the peer-review activity, but also to develop and monitor students' language (especially grammar). The same questions were sometimes repeated to make them understand and the answers were also clarified.
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2. Language skill

In almost every stage of this instruction, students' language skill (eg., speaking, reading, and writing) are consciously and continuously developed. Described below is an example of how Susi (False name) got through the Peer –Review in her introductory paragraph. I have highlighted some words and sentences for later class discussion with all participants.

Table 2: Sample of Student's Writing

First Draft	Revised Version
A thesis is not the only right choice or even the best choice for every major or career path. In some /disciplines, other experiences - if they allow you to demonstrate independence, proficiency, and maturity in your field – can be just as valuable or even more so. But even if you field emphasizes other experiences such as internships, do not be too quick to dismiss the possibility and values of an honors thesis. Some departments limit the number of such credits you may count toward your major, but there's nothing wrong with having more than culminating experience – a thesis and an internship, for instance- if you can fit them in. doing one does not necessarily preclude the other. You can think "both/and" rather than "either/or".	Thesis is not the only right choice or even the best choice for every major or career. In some disciplines, [other experiences if they allow you to demonstrate independence, proficiency, and maturity in your field] can be just as valuable or even more so. Some undergraduate contra if they have to write a thesis at the end of their course. Because they are think that writing a thesis [was only going to spend] a lot of time to graduation, especially when they have to make improvements repairs, searching for the right time in order to consult with their supervisor, and research for the completion of the thesis. {So, that it all makes them long for graduation.}

3. Attitudinal education

The aspect of attitudinal education which is very popular in Indonesian term as 'Character building' has been the primary concern in this study. First of all, within its permanent character, writing product has great impacts to the readers or society. It is through writing that human

civilization can be maintained and developed. Secondly, writing activity requires that ideas must be arranged and supported accordingly by using appropriate grammar as well as suitable words (vocabulary). Good and strong characters are implemented during the peer review and they include: objectivity, truth, patience, cooperation, self confidence, open-minded, hard work, fairness, appreciation or respect, etc. As have been put in Table 00 that Stage 3 and 5 were mainly projected to develop students' positive character.

Thirdly, since there is a strong connection between language and culture (Brown, 1994), students' thinking and imagination were also directed to understand and appreciate English and other foreign cultures. Described below are some introductions to these specific tasks.

Table 3: Tasks on Essay Writing

Teacher's Talk/ Stimulus	Types of Essay being required	Percentage of Students' Readiness
1. This morning I saw many ambulances parking around the Red Cross Station of Simpang Haru. Padang city government is now busy with the conference and simulation. I think you know what I mean. What do you hope from the foreigners in case Tsunami really happens in this area. So, then, write an essay by discussing some possible treatments either before or after the tsunami disaster.	Discussion Essay	90
2. The lack of electrical power supply in Padang city has brought serious impacts to the people. What do you want the State Electrical Company to do?	Persuasive Essay	95
3. In some colleges and universities, students are required to write thesis for their S1 degree. But you know, in this institution, students have been required to do it. What is your opinion about it?	Argumentative Essay	50

The topics above do not only encourage students to consider the target readers (eg, Western people; Manager of State Electrical Company; and University Professors), but also the types of essay that must be put forward in their thesis statement, as well as valid sources from which they will provide supports or evidences. The fact that students' readiness dropped to almost 50 percents deserves to be investigated. It might be a matter of time, but surely it was not about motivation.

4. Metacognitive opportunities

Students' reflection on their particular language learning and acquisition revealed that they have done their best and were willing to access all available sources (brothers or sisters, seniors, books, and internet) and work together with other specialists in other related disciplines (scientists, teachers, or lecturers), including Native speakers of English. Some respondents even say:

Table 4: Reflection

#1   *I think that English people are good. I have ever spoken to them once, but her grammar was not good. Sometime she didn't care about grammar, she just said….*
#2   *I searched in Google what the thesis means and then I asked my seniors why they wrote the thesis. I discussed with Bang Arif…..*
#3   *I got difficulty to translate the Indonesian words into English…..*

It's difficult to arrange the sentences into English like (kalimatnya terlalu berbelit-belit..)

I used to speak in English with my reviewers, but if they don't understand I used Indonesian…

I think English is very difficult, I can't write the essay, but I try and try…

My second essay was longer than the first one because I added…

Actually it was difficult for me to listen to the native speaker…

Mr Nofel said if you meet with the tourist, don't ask their name first…

When I meet with them in Andalas Plaza, they answered my questions and I took a picture…

I listen to the song…. I read some of your essays… and I try to write like your essay….

My ambition is going to Australia or America… but my parents….

Finally, some students have implemented what is good for them and it is in accordance with the following wise word: 'Every chance or opportunity (however small it is!) must be taken and made use for our own benefits'. The task is now on the teacher's hand, probably to plan, monitor, and evaluate students' learning strategies.

C. Conclusion

Students' communicative writing skills have been developed through many stages and strategies involving target language content and skill together with character building and metacognitive opportunities. In language education perspective, these four aspects may serve as the main points or target from which sophisticated teaching and learning techniques are relied on. The key success to optimalizing students' language acquisition, therefore, depends on various nuances the teacher creates within his or her program.

In fact, the practice of Peer-Review inside and outside the classroom has provided a lot of insights as to improve students' language awareness either in oral or writing. The six stages presented above promotes highly intensive learning and yet challenging.

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