

A TEACHER-LED EVALUATION OF THE INNOVATIONS IN WRITING COURSES CURRICULUM AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STAIN KEDIRI

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Abstract

Kenyataan bahwa masih banyak mahasiswa membuat kesalahan gramatika yang mendasar bahkan di tahap-tahap akhir studi mereka, mendorong pengelola Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STAIN Kediri merancang ulang kurikulum matakuliah writing. Inovasi yang dilakukan meliputi (1) tujuan setiap matakuliah Writing; (2) kelas ukuran kecil; (3) buku diktat yang ditulis dosen sendiri; (4) menulis jurnal mingguan. Dilaksanakan selama semester genap tahun akademik 2013/2014, penelitian ini dimaksudkan untuk mengeksplorasi metode pembelajaran yang diterapkan dan untuk mengevaluasi sejauh mana program ini bisa mencapai tujuan perkuliahan. Evaluasi program pada penelitian ini menggunakan rancangan quasi-eksperimental, dan data diambil melalui pre-tes dan post-tes dan wawancara mendalam dengan para dosen. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa (1) semua dosen yang menerapkan metode eklektik telah mengakomodir semua tipe pembelajar, mengkombinasi dengan ceramah, evaluasi teman sebaya, menulis jurnal dan diskusi kelas; (2) perbandingan antara nilai mahasiswa di pre-tes dan post-tes mengindikasikan bahwa tidak ada bukti perkembangan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan menulis mahasiswa yang dihasilkan dari inovasi tersebut. Akan tetapi, menganalisis pekerjaan mahasiswa secara kualitatif mengarahkan pada temuan bahwa ada perkembangan yang dicapai mahasiswa dalam beberapa hal: (1) kesalahan-kesalahan umum yang ditemukan di hasil pre-tes tidak atau jarang sekali ditemukan di hasil post-tes; (2) penggunaan pola kalimat yang lebih bervariasi di post-tes; sedangkan kalimat mereka pada hasil pre-tes kebanyakan sederhana, hanya sedikit yang berpola kompleks atau majemuk.

Keywords: Evaluasi diarahkan guru, inovasi, kurikulum matakuliah menulis.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Writing is integral to student success. Throughout their academic career, students will be asked to produce term papers and write answers to essay exam questions. They cannot pass most courses unless they can express their ideas in written forms clearly in either those term papers or in the essay types of exam questions. They even will never be able to finish their study if they cannot write well, since, especially in the context of most universities that apply the policy that writing thesis is a compulsory course, they cannot graduate unless they write a thesis as the final assignment. In short, the success of their study is mainly determined by the ability in producing a piece of writing.

On the other hand, writing is a productive language skill which should be learned and

improved more seriously than other language skills and components. It is mainly because writing activities involve adequate ability in not only expressing the ideas but also using appropriate formal aspects, such as correct spelling and punctuation as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary. Such complexity in improving writing skills has basically underlined the design of existing curriculum of English Department STAIN Kediri. Writing courses have been planned to improve students writing skills step-by-step under the name Writing 1, Writing 2, Writing 3, and Scientific Writing, preceded with the introductory course Intensive Course Program in the first semester. However, observation and research on the students' writing ability have shown that students still make many basic mistakes in their writing. Thesis consultation activities are frequently dominated with discussion on these kinds of language problems. Suggestions given by the thesis advisors are not

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rarely interpreted incorrectly by the students such that they come to the next consultation without sufficient language revisions. Consequently, grammatical mistakes can still be found even in the final text of their thesis. The most common mistakes include noun phrase constructions, subject-verb agreement, pluralisation, and passive-active voice.

This condition has encouraged the faculty of English Department to review the existing curriculum of Writing and make some innovations. The following are the points of innovation which have been started to be implemented in the even semester of 2013/2014 academic year.

1. The objectives of each writing course, i.e. Writing 1 is focused for sentence building, Writing 2 for paragraph writing, and Writing 3 for essay writing, while Scientific Writing is designed to improve students' skills in writing scientific reports based on a given set of data.
2. The students are divided into small classes containing 5-10 students. Each of the regular class is split into three smaller classes, each of which is supervised by a teacher.
3. New coursebooks are developed. Some writing teachers were assigned to write a coursebook for each writing course. Topics in Writing 1 are presented in two textbooks, the first half part is about simple sentences and the second one is about complex, compound and compound complex sentences. The coursebooks contains some points of basic concepts followed by various kinds of exercises.
4. Eclectic strategies are recommended to apply: weekly journal writing, peer assessment, scaffolding and portfolio.

In order to achieve the intended objective effectively, such curriculum renewal should be evaluated systematically. Therefore, as an integral part of evaluation on the whole curriculum renewal, the present study on writing program evaluation is worth conducting.

B. Research Problem

Pertaining the above-illustrated background, the main question to be answered through the present study is "To what extent does Writing 1 Course achieve the course objectives?" More specifically, this study is focused to find the answer of the following questions:

1. What are the instructional methods applied in Writing 1 classes?
2. To what extent do such instructional methods improve the students' writing skills?

C. Research Significance

Theoretically, the present study can hopefully contribute to the theory of language program evaluation by providing more evidence especially for Indonesian EFL learners context, that can contribute to possible generalization for language program evaluation across different context. Practically, The research result will hopefully provide a resource for educators and for curriculum developers who seek to effect improvements in written language skills for Indonesian EFL learners. Institutionally, it would also be an important input to consider for further renewal of the curriculum of English Department STAIN Kediri.

D. Research Method

1. Research Design

This language program evaluation study employs quasi experimental method. The type of design in quasi experimental method employed in this study is *One Group Pre-Program/Post-Program* design. This quantitative method is applied especially to find out the effectiveness of instructional methods to gain the planned course objectives. In addition, to gain a holistic data and view on the effectiveness of the program, case study for some students with specific characteristics will be employed.

2. Population

Two groups of subjects are involved in this study, the teachers and the students of Writing

1 at English Department STAIN Kediri in 2013/2014 academic year. The sample involved in the quasi experimental are 45 students out of 150 students taking Writing 1. They come from five classes supervised by three different teachers. The subjects are treated as one group, that is experimental group. The data will be taken from pre-test administered at the beginning of the semester (March 2014) and post-test that will be conducted by the end of the semester (June 2014).

3. Research Instruments

The instruments employed to collect data in this study include test, scoring rubric and field notes. There are two tests, pre-test and post-test. Considering that this study is intended to evaluate the success of this Writing courses program, the tests are not made by the researcher, but made by the team of Writing 1 teachers. This is meant to conduct an overall evaluation, including the tests made to measure the students ability before and after the program, i.e. pre-test and final term evaluation. It is the final term evaluation that is used as the post-test scores in the present study. The employed scoring rubric is adopted from en100spring2014.blogspot.com. It only assesses the sentence format, excluding the content and organization, since the objective of Writing 1 is to train the students to write good sentences. Therefore, the assessment is executed at the sentence level. Using the scoring rubric, the students' works are scored by two raters. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is then applied to find the inter-rater reliability. Check list is employed in the process of analyzing errors in the students works. It contains the list of errors made by each students under investigation in their pretest and their post-test.

In addition, to obtain the data of the instructional methods applied by the teachers of Writing 1, field notes are used. The important points are written directly during the open interviews with the teachers. The questions in the interviews are around the instructional strategies they used in their teaching, how

they applied the strategies, their opinion on the innovations in the writing courses and their suggestions or recommendations for the betterment of this program in the future.

4. Data Analysis

There are two types of data in this study, those are quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are the scores of the students in their pre-test and post-test. Before being analyzed using T-test for correlated samples to know the difference between the two sets of scores (pre-test and post-test), the scores given by two raters are calculated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to find the reliability coefficient. The calculation of these two kinds of data analysis is conducted by employing SPSS program. The t-test computation result shows whether pre-test and post-test are significantly different or not, the result of which will indicate the effectiveness of Writing 1 program in improving students' writing skills.

Qualitative data that is partly obtained through error analysis on the students' works are then analysed inductively to identify the improvement of each student. First of all, mistakes in the pre-test are identified. The post-test is then analysed, firstly by checking whether that kind of mistake occurs again in the post-test. Next, analysing other parts of the post test to identify other kinds of mistakes. The occurrence of the mistakes found either in the pre-test or in the post-test is used as indicators of improvement.

The other qualitative data is the interview results. Interviews with Writing 1 teachers provide information to answer the first research question in this study. While interviewing the teachers, the researcher writes down the important points of the answers of each teacher. The results of the interviews with all teachers are then combined to identify the common points they shares related to their instructional strategies and their opinion on the current writing program and their suggestions for the betterment of this program in the future.

E. Eclectic Method in the Teaching of Writing

The eclectic method of learning was advocated in the beginning of 1990's and became fashionably popular these days. Larsen Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000) both have used the term principle eclecticism to describe a desirable, coherent, pluralistic approach to language learning teaching. Eclecticism involves the use of a variety of language learning activities, each of which may have very different characteristics and objectives. Further, Kumar¹ elaborates that the eclectic method is mostly used method because every other theory has strength and limitations of its own. Learning of this method benefits from teaching. The eclectic method is a combination of different method of teaching and learning approaches. This method effectively works for any kind of learners' irrespective of age and standard. Learning is fun and innovative due to the unique nature of leaning process.

In the teaching of writing, writing teachers have an array of methods and techniques for interacting with students. They can interact with a whole class, encourage students to interact with each other in small groups, tutor students individually. They can lecture, ask questions, generate discussion, facilitate group work, stage a debate, show a movie, organize a field trip. Many writing teachers have a favorite way to configure a class, a favorite method of imparting knowledge, a preferred voice in which to speak. However, there is so much diversity among students in a writing classroom, especially a freshman writing classroom, that a writing teacher needs to take an eclectic approach and use a variety of teaching strategies, if she is to connect with all of her students.²

¹Chinta Praveen Kumar, The Eclectic Method-Theory and Its Application to the Learning of English, in *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2013, hlm. 1.

²Derek Soles, An Eclectic Approach to the Teaching of Writing, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (54th, New York, NY, March 19-22, 2003)

In summary, Writing teachers, similarly are charged with the responsibility of teaching all students regardless of their personality, learning style or dominant intelligences to write competently. To discharge this responsibility, composition teachers need a variety of teaching strategies (see Beck for a complete taxonomy of teaching methods). Teachers need to lecture, facilitate group work, meet with their students alone, organize a debate, show a movie, arrange a field trip. No one method of teaching is likely to reach all students in a classroom as diverse in learning styles and intelligences as most freshman composition classes are. If writing teachers talk to each of their students alone and all of their students together; if they encourage students to write together and to write alone; if they teach students how to respond sensitively to each other's work and how to evaluate their own work independently; if they assign some topics and allow free choice for others; if they provide specific concrete instructions and encourage independent thinking; if they show movies, play music, ask questions, and present problems in need of solutions, they will connect with all their students and help all of them learn to write well.

F. Language Program Evaluation

In the field of education, evaluation is an integral part of daily works of educators. As educators, we reflect constantly on our daily work, often in an instinctive manner. While this is useful, the process can be more effective when it is systematic, explicit and articulated to others. Kiely and Rea-Dickins³ point out that Evaluation has many meanings in language programs. It is part of the novice teacher's checklist to guide the development of initial lesson plans and teaching practice, a process of determining learning achievements or student satisfaction, and a dimension of the analysis of data in a formal evaluation or research study. It refers to judgements about students by teachers

³Richard Kiely & Paulin Rea-Dickins, *Program Evaluation in Language Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), hlm. 5.

and by external assessors; the performance of teachers by their students, program managers and institutions; and programs, departments and institutions by internal assessors, external monitors and inspectors. Further, they explain that evaluation is about the relationships between different program components, the procedures and epistemologies developed by the people involved in programs, and the processes and outcomes which are used to show the value of a program –accountability – and enhance this value – development.

In the field of teaching and learning, evaluation is required to find out how far the objective can be gained. Lynch⁴ states that Research into language assessment and program evaluation is central to any agenda that seeks to address problems of language teaching and learning. He adds that a great deal of research in language testing has developed the technical aspects of measuring language ability for the purposes of informing decisions about individuals as well as evaluating language programs (e.g., Bachman, 2000).

For evaluating program quality in higher education, Kiely and Rea-Dickins⁵ proposed some general principles, those are:

- a. Stakeholder evaluation is undertaken primarily for two purposes: accountability and development. The university is committed to use evaluation to inform decision-making and to aid the development of an effective teaching/ learning environment.
- b. Evaluation methods used must demonstrate a balance of quantitative and qualitative approaches and seek both internal and external evaluative data.
- c. Evaluation methods must use appropriate criteria and systematically collect information so that the quality and effectiveness of modules and programmes can be assessed.

⁴Brian K.Lynch. *Language Program Evaluation, Theory and Practice* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2003), hlm. 603.

⁵Richard Kiely & Paulin Rea-Dickins, *Program Evaluation in Language Education*, hlm. 153.

- d. Stakeholders should feel that they own evaluation through active participation in the process and by seeing that their evaluations are being used to make positive changes.
- e. Evaluation methods must be user friendly and the resulting information should be easy to collate and should be communicated effectively.
- f. In order that the evaluation process is implemented effectively staff need training. Conversely, involvement in evaluation leads to staff development.
- g. Stakeholder evaluation should not be confused with staff appraisal, for which entirely different systems must be set up.

G. Teacher-led Evaluation

In language education, program evaluation can be conducted in either a large-scale evaluation or a small scale, by classroom teachers or by program management. An evaluation carried out by teachers in their teaching context is named teacher-led evaluation⁶. Kealy and Rea-Dickins further point out that the teacher-led evaluation projects. They build on notions of professional practice *as* enquiry, professional development *through* enquiry, and the centrality of contextual understanding in solving curricular problems and enhancing opportunities for learning. Teacher-led evaluations therefore are opportunities to evaluate curricular resources, that is, learning materials and classroom tasks, resources such as information technology and libraries, and aspects of interaction in the teaching learning process. The findings of such evaluations contribute to the management task in language programs, whether within the school or institution, or related to the operation of mandates from external stakeholders. Teacher-led evaluations relate to innovation in two ways:

- a. They are likely to work best where there is a culture of innovation: where teachers are encouraged to experiment with materials,

⁶Richard Kiely & Paulin Rea-Dickins, *Program Evaluation in Language Education*, hlm. 246.

tasks and activities as part of their role in facilitating language learning.

- b. The innovative aspects of the curriculum (including, perhaps, the practice of evaluation) requires a management of change dimension to the evaluation. This may mean enquiry into a given resource, a new course book or a computer in the classroom, as a *change of practice* as well as a *set of curricular practices* in its own right.

II. RESEARCH FINDING

A. Writing 1 Course

As one of the sequence of writing courses, Writing 1 is given in semester 2. It is required that those who take Writing 1 pass Intensive Course Program. As the first course in the sequence of courses which are intended to improve students' writing ability, Writing 1 course aims at "developing students theoretical knowledge on sentence patterns and developing their practical skills in producing grammatically correct sentences."

Writing 1 course is divided into 15 small classes, each of which consists of 7-10 students. Special for a class containing Thailand students, the class only contains 5 students. Writing 1 classes are supervised by 8 teachers. Most teachers supervise 1 class only, some others 2 classes and one teacher supervises 3 classes. The teaching and learning activities of Writing 1 is conducted in 100 minutes each meeting. In one semester there should be 12-14 meetings excluding the tests. Most classes of Writing 1 have 12 meetings, some of them 13 meetings. The final scores are taken by considering the results of pre-test, midterm test, and final test, besides the students' works on classroom exercises and journal writing. Most teachers put priority on the result of final test, followed by midterm term test and exercises and journal writing. Only a few teachers who account for the result of pre-test in the final score.

B. The Instructional Methods

Some new methods of teaching writing are applied in Writing 1 class in academic year

2013/2014. Based on the class observation and interviews with the teachers, the instructional methods employed in classes of Writing 1 are as the following.

1. Lecturing

Lecturing is still the main strategy applied in Writing 1 classes. All teachers apply this strategy to present the new material, which mostly include the sentence patterns. The lecture is part of drilling all types of the sentence patterns. Although teachers of Writing 1 implement this strategy quite differently, they commonly use lecturing for presenting new materials. Some of them explain that they usually explain the new topic at the beginning of the class, then followed by asking the students to do the exercises. Some others said that they firstly ask the students to read the new materials themselves, try to understand the ideas and confirm their understanding with their friends. They can ask the teacher if they have problems. While the students are discussing the materials, the teacher is going around the class, making sure that each student is actively involved in the discussion. They frequently find some problems faced by some students. It is the teachers' turn then to identify the problems and give solution to them. Sometimes they have to refer to some other materials in order that the students understand the new material more thoroughly. It means that lecturing is not only used when new material should be discussed.

2. Individual assignment

Individual assignment is assignments have to be done by the students individually. In general, the objective of individual assignment is to provide them with the opportunity to practice the concepts they have learned. There are two main sorts of individual assignment in Writing 1, those are in-class exercises and writing journal.

a. Doing exercises

Both text-books, Writing 1 Book 1 and Writing 1 Book 2, that are developed by Writing 1 teachers to be employed for in-class activities contain many types of exercises.

Book 1 discusses all types of simple sentences. It consists of 9 chapters and is initiated with an introduction. Each chapter deals with 1 type of simple sentence. These all types of sentence patterns are reviewed at the beginning of Book 2. Book 2 specifically contains discussion on complex sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. To expose the frequently used words in academic world to the students Both Book 1 and Book 2 of Writing 1 are completed with Sub-lists of Academic World List. The instructions in each chapter of both of the text-books can be summarized into some following points:

- 1) Completing sentences by supplying certain words
- 2) Writing sentences using certain given words
- 3) Identifying parts of sentences
- 4) Identifying sentence patterns
- 5) Writing a paragraph
- 6) Combining sentences
- 7) Rewriting sentences using given words
- 8) Completing a paragraph using certain appropriate words
- 9) Rewriting a paragraph
- 10) Identifying types of sentences

The exercises above are commonly done after the teachers explain the learning material, but sometimes when the teachers think that the students can learn the material autonomously, or want to be not monotonous, they directly the students to do the exercises. The works of the students are usually discussed at the end of the class. The teacher expose the mistakes made by the students and do a class discussion to provide the correction. In this occasion teachers often record the students' works to be considered for their final scores.

b. *Writing journal*

For outside-class activities, students of Writing 1 are asked to write a journal at home. Mostly teachers assign them to write a journal twice a week. It is so because they use every other week to discuss the students' works. In every journal writing assignment, each

student is to write a set of sentences, at least 10 sentences. The sentences can be in isolation, meaning that they are inter-connected, or the sentences make a paragraph telling about something. Most teachers ask each student to provide one notebook specifically devoted for journal writing assignment. Just one teacher who ask his students submit their journal by sending an e-mail to the teacher. The teacher then gives comments on the students' works. He admits that his method run very well. Almost all students submit the works on time.

3. Peer assessment

One way to identify the mistakes made by the students is by asking other students to read the works, identify the mistakes and provide the correction. Almost all teachers implement this method.

4. Class Discussion

Commonly, class discussions are employed to discuss these two things:

a. *Identifying mistakes and making the correction*

Teachers usually presents the important points they found in the students' works, one of them is mistake. The discussion is prioritized on grammatical mistakes, especially the application of sentence patterns the students have already learned. However, dominant mistakes on language use and mechanics are also discussed. Teachers then ask the class to show why the sentences are wrong, and what are the correct ones.

b. *Learning new materials*

Sometimes certain teachers introduce new materials by asking the students to read the book themselves and ask them to present what they have learned in front of the class. Before the class discussion, the students have already discussed the materials in smaller groups using a jig-saw strategy. This cooperative learning strategy is applied for the sake of variety of instructional method, expecting that students are not bored with Writing 1 class which, they think, is burdensome. The teacher claims that, using this strategy, students feel that this class is more enjoyable.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRETEST	8.6087	23	1.42985	.29814
	POSTTEST	8.4565	23	1.92421	.40122

5. Improvement of Students' Writing Skills

Part of the innovations in writing courses is the new instructional methods as illustrated above. Such innovations are expected to be able to increase the students writing ability more effectively. In this program evaluation study, the improvement of the students writing skills is viewed from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The following two sub-sections present the findings on the improvement of students' writing skills from quantitative and qualitative view point successively.

6. The Effectiveness of New Instructional Methods in Improving the Students' Writing Skill

The results of the pretest and the posttest are scored by two raters independently using scoring rubric. In this study, Pearson Product Moment Correlation between first and second raters is employed. The result reports that the reliability coefficient in each aspect of pretest and posttest score indicates a high level of consistency between first and second raters in all aspects. These results provide further confirmation of our data analysis that the data we obtained from two raters have a high level of reliability. To review briefly, then, the data of pretest and posttest score are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the mean score of pretest is higher than its mean score of posttest. The mean score of pretest is 8.6087 and the mean

score of posttest is 8.4565. It indicates that the students' pretest scored 0.15 points higher compared to their posttest. The standard deviation for mean score of pretest is 1.42985 and standard deviation for mean score of posttest is 1.92421. Regarding the standard deviation, the one for pretest is considerably lower, which indicates that the scores are more tightly grouped around the mean than those of posttest score. Hence, the pretest score is considerably more homogeneous.

In light of the comparison between students' score in pretest and posttest, it indicates that there is no improvement of students' writing skill made by this new method. The results of T-test paired samples confirm this finding.

Table 3 reveals that there is no significant difference between pretest and posttest as evidenced by $p .736 > \alpha .05$. This means that there is no improvement in students' writing skill.

7. Some Improvement Made by the Students

Although the statistical computation on the improvement in students' writing skills shows that there is not significant improvement, it does not mean that the students do not make any progress in their writing ability. The summary of the mistakes commonly made by the students as in the following are some of the evidences that they basically have made some improvement in some aspects. The points of mistakes below refer to grammatical mistakes

Table 3. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRETEST - POSTTEST	.15217	2.13964	.44615	-.77308	1.07742	.341	22	.736

found in the students' writing pieces they produced in the pre-test and post-test.

- a. Missing main verbs
- b. Subject-Verb Agreement
- c. Pronoun
- d. Pluralization
- e. Articles
- f. Monotonous sentences

Sentences produced by almost all students under investigation in the pre-test are mainly simple sentences. Meanwhile, in the post test, students make some improvements. They use more various sentence patterns, combining simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences; meanwhile, in the pre-test they tend to use simple and monotonous sentence patterns. Besides, they also become aware of the basic construction of English sentence: Subject-Verb. Previously, main verb are frequently missing in the students-made sentences. This especially happens in sentences using linking verb as the main verb, or sentences with the pattern Subject + linking verb + adverbial.

C. Eclectic Method in The Teaching of Writing 1

Eclectic method refers to combination of some methods in a class. There is so much diversity among students in a writing classroom, especially a freshman writing classroom, that a writing teacher needs to take an eclectic approach and use a variety of teaching strategies, if she is to connect with all of her students.⁷

This is because we know from the work of learning style experts that different students have different learning styles. Writing teachers need to adopt an eclectic approach to teaching writing to accommodate the variety of learning styles students bring with them into the classroom. Some students see knowledge as concrete and tangible;

⁷Derek Soles, *An Eclectic Approach to the Teaching of Writing*, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (54th, New York, NY, March 19-22, 2003)

others perceive knowledge as less tangible, more abstract. Some students feel compelled to organize knowledge sequentially if they are to learn effectively; others can learn while still preferring and appreciating the non-linear, random, unclassifiable nature of knowledge. In Gregorc's taxonomy, there are four different learning styles: Concrete Sequential, Concrete Random, Abstract Sequential, and Abstract Random⁸.

Lecturing that is applied dominantly in the classes of Writing 1 is mostly enjoyed by Concrete Sequential students. They like lecture a lot and learn best when an authority, in this case is the teacher, presents clear and specific information to them in a structured manner. They appreciate a one-on-one session with their teacher because it gives them the opportunity to clarify the nature of the assignment and to make sure they are efficiently meeting the needs and expectations of the person who will be evaluating their work. In addition, lecturing is especially suitable for Concrete Sequential students since they like to read and analyze exemplary models of the kind of writing their teacher wants them to produce. They will analyze and synthesize the structure and style of the model, its syntax, the word order of its sentences, so they can imitate it effectively. Students with strong verbal/ linguistic intelligence can listen to and learn from a lecture. A lecture can also engage students with strong visual/spatial intelligence but only if the lecturer includes visual aids charts, maps, pictures, film and video clips in her presentation. Moreover, a lecture can engage Concrete Randoms and Abstract Sequentials to an extent, the former because they appreciate tangible knowledge, the latter because they appreciate order and structure.

Group work, a teaching method that is employed by some teachers of Writing 1, is mostly enjoyed by Abstract Random learners. Concrete Random students also take benefit

⁸Antony Gregorc. *An Adult's Guide to Style*. Maynard, MA: Gabriel Systems, 1982.

from this method, but not Abstract Sequential ones. Concrete Randoms generally enjoy and benefit from group work because they need readers to suggest to them accepted ways of structuring their written work more effectively. As participants, they are great at suggesting to classmates alternate but still effective ways of structuring a writing assignment. Concrete Sequential learners do not like group work. Devoted time managers, they find peer conferencing inefficient and prefer to have their work reviewed by their teachers not their classmates. On the other hand, Abstract Sequential learners generally do not benefit from group work because they tend to be naturally good writers, adept at transforming the abstract into the sequential, usually the very purpose of an academic writing assignment.

But other group members benefit from the participation of Abstract Sequentials who are good at assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' writing. Abstract Random learners enjoy group work the most, probably because they benefit the most from it. Their attention span lengthens when they are interacting with peers so they can heed the advice they are given more effectively than they can when listening to a lecture. They are also the best participants not only because they are so creative and perceptive, but also because they are sensitive and can convey suggestions and advice in a non-judgmental, non-threatening manner.

Peer assessment or review is also mostly enjoyed by students of both Abstract Random learners and Concrete Random learners. Abstract Sequentials who are good at assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' writing, also can do well in peer assessment or review. Ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' writing is required to identify the incorrect part in the writing and provide the correction.

Students with the four different learning styles can take benefit from writing journal, the most instructional method in Writing

1. Concrete Sequential students who do not like work group can enjoy their working individually, expressing their ideas freely without someone else's interference. They can apply the teachers' instruction into their writing journal autonomously. Concrete Random can make their tangible knowledge concrete in their journal. They enjoy the journal as the realization of their ideas and the concepts they have learned as well. Abstract Sequential learners who appreciate order and structure certainly enjoy writing journal. The sentences in their writing may even tend to be more well structured. Sentence building, as the mainstream in Writing 1, seems to be able to internalize well by this type of students. Although organization is not emphasized in this course, their writing can also be more well organized. The last, Abstract Random, who need the stimulation of other in a more informal context, must be able to benefit from writing journal. Writing journal is done in the classroom, instead it is written at home, a very informal situation. They can freely consult their works to their peers, ask them to proofread the works, open dictionaries, read some resources, or any other informal activities that are helpful for the improvement of their writing.

To sum up, the eclectic methods have been employed by teachers of Writing 1 can accommodate all groups of students of different learning styles. The implementation of this method should be able to improve the students' writing quality. The fact that the implementation of this eclectic instructional strategy does not automatically provides statistically significant improvement in the quality of students' writing is therefore elaborated in the next discussion.

D. The Effectiveness of the Program

1. Interpretation on the Quantitative Calculation

The result of statistic calculation using T-test for paired-sample revealed that there is no significant difference between pretest and posttest as evidenced by $p .736 > \alpha .05$.

This means that there is no improvement in students' writing skill. Theoretically, there are some possibilities related to the result that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, those are⁹:

- a. The research design may not be right
- b. The instrument may not be valid
- c. The sample size may be too small
- d. The statistical analysis may not be appropriate
- e. There is no difference between the two means

In the case of the present study, the researcher draws a conclusion that the most possible facts are the instrument may not be valid and the sample size is too small. Therefore, the points relevant to discuss related to the quantitative findings of this study is the instrument employed to collect the data.

The instruments used to collect quantitative data are pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test, students are asked to write a paragraph of approximately 100 words. Below the instruction is provided a picture of a view of a city situation. The instruction in the pre-test is clear and easy to understand. Besides, the picture is also interesting, representing a view in students' daily lives so that the students are quite familiar with the situation. As there are not relatively new things in the picture, students do not need to think hard to produce sentences related to items in the picture. It means that the vocabulary they need is within their level. Although almost all sentences in the students' works are of simple patterns, most of the sentences are grammatically correct. Only some simple grammatical mistakes are found. Grammar theories they have learned previously at schools can sufficiently help them make the sentences. Therefore, it is not surprising that they get good scores in the pre-test, even the mean of the pre-test is better than that of post-test.

⁹This part is summarized from a lecture on Quantitative Research Methodology by Prof. Ali Saukah, Ph.D. the lecture was delivered for the students of doctorate program in English Language Education, Malang State University, in 2010.

Meanwhile, such clear instruction and sufficiency illustration are not found in the post-test. There are two parts in the post-test. First is asking the students to use coordinators and subordinators (conjunction) to join the given 10 sentence pairs. The second part is asking the students to "write two or three normal length paragraphs telling your problems in English subject (particularly 'writing')". The next instruction is "Your writing is supposed to include simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex (if possible) sentences." This study accounts for the second section only. It is because this second section, compared to section 1 of the test, is more parallel with the pre-test.

Some points we can take from the above instruction are:

- a. The instruction is not clear in terms of the length of the writing. "Two or three normal length paragraphs" does not tell the length of the paragraph clearly. Students do not have sense yet about how long a normal paragraph should be. Some of them write two paragraphs, each consisting of 10 lines or 5-10 sentences, but most of them just write five lines or three sentences in each paragraph. Even, few of them write three to five sentences only.
- b. The instruction does not provide information on the proportion of scoring for each section. This information psychologically affected the students' attention. If they know that this section is given higher proportion than section 1 as it should be, they should have done this section more seriously. The less efforts made by the students in doing this second section can be seen from the length of writing and the quality of their hand writing.
- c. The topic is too wide, but they should also focus on writing. For beginners, writing this kind of topic is not easy. They have not yet learned about writing a paragraph, meaning that they do not know how to organize ideas in a paragraph. This

especially and clearly happened to those who write a very short paragraph.

2. Qualitative Consideration

The fact that the statistical calculation in the present study has indicated that there is no significant improvement in students' writing quality can be viewed from two relevant angles. (1) syntactic complexity and writing quality; and (2) the role of grammar in writing.

a. *Syntactic Complexity and writing quality*

As being elaborated earlier in the previous chapter, Writing 1 is intended to introduce the students to the various sorts of sentence patterns. In other words, this course is still dealing with the grammar aspect of writing, besides some aspects of mechanics and word choice. The mechanics introduced in this course are still closely related to sentence pattern. For example, the use of semicolon (;) in compound complex sentences. Although not becoming the main focus, word choice or vocabulary is sometimes discussed when it is necessary, especially when the word choice affects the sentence patterns. For instance, the choice of transitive and intransitive verbs, or the use of prepositions preceding or following certain verbs. Other aspects of writing such as content or ideas, organizations and unity are not introduced yet and therefore are not accounted for in the assessment.

Sentence patterns as being taught in Writing 1 are related to the issue of syntactic complexity. Syntactic complexity in the students' written texts (students' corpora) is indicated through the categories of the whole sentences performed in the texts. The categories cover the varieties and sophistication of sentence structures. They are mostly described through the length of unit production of clause, sentence, the intensive use of subordination, coordination and range of surface syntactic structure, and degree of sophistication of particular syntactic structures.¹⁰

¹⁰Ortega 2003, in X. Lu. Automatic Analysis of Syntactic Complexity in Second Language Learners. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*. 2010, 15 (4): 474-496.

It has been discussed that the statistical calculation on the quantitative data in the present study has shown that there is no improvement in the students' writing quality. There is no significant difference between the mean of pre-test and post-test. Even the sentences produced by the students in their post-test are commonly longer and much more various compared to those in their pre-test, the quality of their writing is not improved significantly.

This result then can be not too surprising it is connected with the previous studies on the correlation between syntactic complexity and writing quality. The most current study on syntactic complexity and writing quality was conducted by Dewi¹¹. Dewi found that there was no correlation between lexical density, lexical sophistication and lexical variation to the quality of undergraduate students' articles, except for lexical variation related to the number of different words employed that are significantly correlated. The no correlation also went to the whole indicators of syntactic complexity and quality of articles.

In this study, the syntactic complexity of the students' writing has improved, indicated by the fact that they use longer and more various patterns of sentences in their post-test while they use simple sentences only in their pre-test. In the post test, they already combined simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences, even compound complex sentences. On the other hand, as the sentence length and variation are not included as the category in the assessment rubric, the quality of their writing which is determined by the grammatical aspects are not improved significantly.

b. *Grammatical knowledge and writing quality*

Writing 1 which is aimed at developing student ability in building sentences of various sorts of patterns does not, basically, "touch" the writing itself except in one aspect, i.e.

¹¹Ratna Dewi. Lexical and Syntactic Complexities in Undergraduate Students' Articles and Their Correlation to the Quality of Articles. Unpublished Dissertation in Malang State University, 2014.

grammar. EFL students' grammatical ability has been often discussed in apposition with writing ability. Various grammar instructions have been developed in order to promote students' writing ability. The role of grammar in writing has been extensively argued and yet not reached a consensus conclusion. The major reason for this unresolved debate is mainly due to how grammatical and writing abilities are defined as well as the variables of the design and assessment of the tests for both abilities. A study by Huang (2011)¹² has shown that the grammar subtest and the writing subtest comprised 40% and 60% of the whole test respectively. The results indicated that most students' grammar subtests outperformed their writing subtests. The finding implied that there was no strong relationship between the knowledge of grammar and usage among lower-intermediate learners.

The subject of this study is the students of semester 2. They can be categorized as lower-intermediate learners, just like the subject of the above-mentioned study. It seems that they can understand well the sentence patterns that they have learned during the whole semester, but they may still have difficulties in applying their understanding into their writing. Therefore, it is still found many grammatical mistakes even in their writing.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The present study has uncovered the instructional strategies employed by the teachers of Writing 1 as well as the effectiveness of the application of those strategies as part of the innovations in writing courses curriculum to improve students writing ability. The innovations include the re-designing of course objectives, the development of writing text books, the use of eclectic methods (peer assessment, journal writing, error analysis, etc.). The improvement of students' writing ability has been investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively.

¹²Yun Hsuan Huang, Does EFL Students' Grammatical Ability Account For Writing Ability? A Case Study. CHIA-NAN ANNUAL BULLETIN Vol. 37, 2011, hlm. 500-515

Quantitatively, it is found that there is no significant difference between the mean of pre-test and that of post-test. The comparison between students' score in pretest and posttest indicates that there is no improvement of students' writing skill resulted by the innovations. The most possible causes of the fact that there is no difference between the two means is the instrument is not valid.

However, analysing the students' works qualitatively leads to the findings that there are improvements made by the students in some points: (1) some common mistakes found in the pre-test results are not anymore or scarcely found in the post test results; (2) the use of more various kinds of sentence patterns in the post-test results; meanwhile, the sentences in the pre-test results are mostly simple, just very few of them are of complex or compound types.

These findings are in line with the most current previous study by Ratnasari (2014) which found that there is no correlation between syntactic complexity and writing quality. Although the sentence structures in the students' works are getting more complex, their writing quality are automatically better. This can mean that they need more time to internalize their new knowledge on sentence structures, to apply their knowledge while they are writing, and to be guided in the process of their writing.

Related to the research findings as illustrated above, the research proposes some recommendations as the following.

- 1) Innovations in the writing courses curriculum is basically worth conducting. To get better results, instructions in the post-test as well as the scoring proportion of each section should be more clearly stated. Besides, the post-test questions should be parallel with the pre-test.
- 2) There should be other studies investigating the effectiveness of the innovations in other writing courses, i.e. Writing 2, Writing 3, and Scientific Writing. This study on Writing 1 can be used as the starting point to further study about the

success of writing courses curriculum in achieving the course objectives. Research on those are writing courses can provide information on this more thoroughly.

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