

Improving the Students' Writing Skills Through Peer-Editing Technique

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This research was conducted in order to identify: 1) whether peer-editing technique can improve the students' writing skill and 2) the classroom situation when peer-editing technique is used in the classroom. The method used in this research was classroom action research which consisted of two cycles. Each cycle comprised of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The subjects of the research were grade XI class of Bahasa dan Budaya Department of an SMA in Kudus in the academic year of 2019/2020 consisted of 35 students made up of 23 girls and 12 boys. The qualitative data in this research were gathered using observation, interview, and questionnaire, while the quantitative data were collected by conducting pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The qualitative data were analyzed by using interactive model of analysis (Miles, et al 2014), while the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the mean score of pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The result of the research showed that there were improvements in the students' writing skills when they were taught using peer-editing technique. The result of the research also showed that the students became more active when peer-editing technique was implemented in the writing classroom. Based on the findings, it is suggested that the teacher implement peer-editing technique by using interesting activities. In addition, it is recommended that other researchers carry other studies about peer-editing techniques involving other variables.

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Keywords: Writing, peer-editing, classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the basic language skills. However, even though it is one of the basic language skills, writing is more complicated than listening, speaking, and reading (Javed et al, 2013). It is generally considered as one of the most difficult skills for students of English as a foreign language. Even native English speakers may get difficulty in writing in a tricky situation. However, writing also helps the students improve their grammar and vocabulary as well as assists the other language skills (Kellogg, 2008 in Javed et al, 2013). Thus, writing is a necessary skill for the students. Even in Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia, writing is one of the basic competences which is stated as '*Menyusun teks lisan dan tulis*' [Arranging oral and written text]. Unfortunately, many students in Indonesia do not realized the importance of writing and, as a result, they are unable to write English sentences or texts correctly. Ideally, in the writing classroom, the students should be able to brainstorm, create an outline of the text, write the first draft, revise it, and write a complete text (Seouw in Abaz & Aziz, 2018). They should be able to make a text with a good organization, rich content, correct grammar, correct spelling and punctuation, and a variety of vocabulary. However, as stated before, many students are not able to write English sentences or texts correctly. As a result, during the process of revising the text, the students may not realize their own mistakes. There are several factors that caused the students to be unable to write English sentences or texts correctly (Farooq 2012). In Grade XI of *Bahasa dan Budaya*, for example, when the students are interviewed, some of them claimed that they rarely write anything in English outside the class. They do not have confidence in their own writing skill and they are afraid of what people might say about their writing. Additionally, the dictation method used by the teacher does not improve the students' motivation to write and forces them to write only what the teacher says. As such, it is important for the teacher to use a technique that can improve the students' writing skill and motivate them to write. There are many techniques that the teacher can use and one of them is peer-editing technique.

Peer-editing is a technique of collaborative learning in which the students review and provide feedback to each other's work (Hill, 2011). The goal of peer-editing is to promote collaboration among the students and to improve their skills in writing at the same time (Insai & Poonlarp, 2017). According to Galvis (2010), peer-editing can also create new opportunities for the students to work together and develop their collaborative skills. Moreover, in the latest research from Muthmainah (2019), peer-editing is defined as an activity in which the students exchange their writing with their friends in order to be edited which will result in the improvement of students' ability to recognize the errors and correct them. There are several advantages

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of using peer-editing technique in the writing classroom. According to Mulligan and Garofalo (2011), peer-editing is an effective technique to improve the students' awareness of important organizational and syntactical elements in their writing that they might not recognize on their own. It allows the students to learn from both the revisions they receive and the process of revising other's work (Galvis, 2010). More importantly, the practice of peer-editing allows students to receive more individual comments from their peers as well as giving the reviewers the opportunity to practice and develop their other language skills (Lundstrom and Baker, 2009). Additionally, in the latest research conducted by Harutyunyan and Poveda (2018), the peer-editing technique is regarded as a useful strategy to improve their collaborative skill and critical thinking skill. The students also become more motivated when using peer-editing technique because they noticed that the contribution that they give were useful for their friends. As such, by implementing peer-editing in the classroom, the students' writing skill, collaborative skill, and critical thinking skill might improve.

This article was written in order to report the result of the research about using peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in the grade XI *Bahasa dan Budaya* of an SMA in Kudus. There were two aims in this research which include: 1) to identify whether peer-editing technique can improve the students' writing skill and to what extent and 2) to describe the classroom situation when peer-editing technique is used in the classroom.

Research Method

The method used in this research was an action research. According to Bailey (in Murcia, 2001), an action research is an approach of collecting and interpreting data that involves a repeated cycle of procedures. Burn (2010) also mentioned that the main aims of action research are to identify a 'problematic' situation that the participants, including teachers and students, consider worth looking into more deeply. Problematic here means an area that could be done better, subject to questioning, and then to developing new ideas and alternatives. Thus, it can be said that action research is an approach of collecting and interpreting data by the participants in order to find an area that could be improved by implementing new ideas.

Participants

This action research was carried out in one Senior High School, specifically SMA 1 Kudus in the Kudus Regency, Indonesia. The subject of this research was grade XI class of *Bahasa dan Budaya* Department students of the school in the academic year of 2019/2020. It was a class consisting of 35 students made up of 23 girls and 12 boys.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data in this research were collected using several techniques which include: 1) observation, 2) interview, 3) questionnaire, and 4) test. Those data were analyzed using qualitative method and quantitative method. In analyzing qualitative data, the steps from Miles et al (2014) were used. According to Miles et al (2014), there are four stages that must be taken in order to analyze qualitative data, which include: data collection, data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusion.

1. Data collection

The first stage was collecting the data. The data in this research was collected from the students and teacher. Several methods were used in order to collect the data which include: observation of the students during classroom activities, interview with teacher and students, and questionnaire to the students. Tests were also conducted for the students in order to know their writing ability.

2. Data condensation

The next stage was the data condensation. In this stage, the data the researcher obtained from observation, interview, questionnaire, and tests were selected, focused, simplified, abstracted, and/or transformed. The questionnaire contained 20 items and there were three tests that were conducted which include pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The data condensing process continued until the final report was completed.

3. Data display

The third stage was the data display in which the data is organized to allow conclusion drawing.

4. Drawing and verifying conclusion

The next stage was drawing and verifying conclusion. The conclusion of this research was drawn from the previous stages. It started from a light conclusion which maintain openness and became more explicit and grounded later on. Conclusion was verified as the research proceeded. The conclusion of this research focused on the students' writing ability and the classroom situation.

Meanwhile, in quantitative techniques, the researcher compared the mean scores of pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The improvement can be seen if the mean score of post-test 1 is higher than the mean score of pre-test and the mean score of post-test 2 is higher than the mean score of post-test 1. The mean score can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n} \qquad \bar{y} = \frac{\sum y}{n}$$

- \bar{x} = The mean score of students' pre-test.
- \bar{y} = The mean score of students' post-test.
- $\sum x$ = The sum of students' scores in pre-test.
- $\sum y$ = The sum of students' scores in post-test.
- n = Number of students.

Research Findings

From the interview that was conducted before the research, it was found that the students did not have confidence in their writing skill and they were afraid of what other people might say about their writing. Some of them also claimed that they rarely write anything in English outside class. Moreover, the dictation method that was used by the teacher forced the students to write only what the teacher said. Then, from the result of the questionnaire, it was found that most of the students like the English class itself but admitted that their scores are not satisfactory and below the school passing grade.

Besides interview and questionnaire, a writing pre-test was also conducted in order to gain data about the students' writing skill. Then, from the pre-test that was conducted, it was found that the average score of the students in grade XI *Bahasa dan Budaya* was 73.14. It was lower than the passing grade, which was 77.00 with a total of 20 out of 35 students receiving a score lower than the average. The students' mean score of the pre-test and each of its indicators were shown in table 1.

Table 1 The students' mean score of pre-test

No.	Indicator	Mean Score
1.	Organization	16.23
2.	Content	20.17
3.	Grammar	17.17
4.	Mechanic	3.51
5.	Vocabulary	16.06
	Total Mean Score	73.14

Based on those interview, questionnaire, and pre-test, it was found that the students' writing skill needed to be improved. In this research, peer-editing technique was chosen as a means to improve the students' writing skill. Peer-editing is a form of collaborative learning in which the students work in pairs or groups to review, criticize, and provide editorial feedback to each other's work. By using peer-editing technique in the classroom, the students can learn to work together and become more critical and aware of the language errors in their own work.

Once the data were obtained, the lesson plans for all of the meetings in cycle 1 were made. There were three meetings in cycle 1 which was conducted once a week. The materials used were taken from the school textbook and the teacher also prepared several tasks and papers for the students to write their text during the lesson. The students were also observed during cycle 1 in order to know the improvement of their writing skill. Then, after cycle 1 was finished, a post-test was conducted with the same aim.

From the result of the observation during cycle 1, it was found that the students' writing skill improved. During the pre-test and the first meeting, for example, the students still made a lot of mistakes in the spelling and grammar aspects. They also had a tendency to use the same vocabulary again and again. But,

in the second meeting, their vocabulary began to vary and there were only a few spelling mistakes in their works. Then, during the first test after cycle one was conducted, the students' mean score was better than the mean score in the pre-test before cycle one was conducted. In the pre-test, the students' mean score was 73.14. But, in test 1, the students' mean score was 82.51. The students' mean scores of the pre-test and post-test 1 and each of its indicators was presented in table 2.

Table 2 The students' mean score of pre-test and post-test 1

No.	Indicator	Mean Score of pre-test	Mean Score of post-test 1
1.	Organization	16.23	17.80
2.	Content	20.17	24.37
3.	Grammar	17.17	18.20
4.	Mechanic	3.51	4.11
5.	Vocabulary	16.06	18.03
	Total Mean Score	73.14	82.51

However, from the observation and the tests that were conducted, several problems which needed to be solved were also found. Those problems include: 1) the students' mistakes in using grammar and 2) there were some students who were still afraid to write their own sentence on the whiteboard.

Considering these unsolved problems, the research was continued to cycle 2. In cycle 2, to address the problem of the students' grammar, the teacher encourages the students to read more English text and ask questions if there is anything that they do not understand. Then, to address the problem of the students' low confidence in writing their own sentences on the whiteboard, the teacher increased the frequency of asking the students to write their own sentences on the whiteboard.

Once cycle 2 was finished, it was found that there were some improvements in the students' writing skill. In cycle 1, the students still made a few mistakes in spelling some words. But, in cycle 2, the students who made spelling mistakes became even fewer and their vocabulary varies a lot. The students also paid more attention to the lesson and more active in answering and asking questions and their grammar improved a bit too. The mean score of the post-test 2 that was conducted after the second cycle was better than the pre-test and the post-test 1. In the pre-test, the students' overall mean score was 73.14 and, in post-test 1, their mean score was 82.51. But, in the post-test, their mean score was 83.40. The students' mean score of the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test along with each of its indicators was presented in table 3.

Table 3 The students' mean score of pre-test, test 1, and post-test

No.	Indicator	Mean Score of pre-test	Mean Score of post-test 1	Mean Score of post-test 2
1.	Organization	16.23	17.80	18.29
2.	Content	20.17	24.37	24.17
3.	Grammar	17.17	18.20	20.03
4.	Mechanic	3.51	4.11	4.11
5.	Vocabulary	16.06	18.03	16.80
	Total Mean Score	73.14	82.51	83.40

However, during the second cycle, it was found that the students still do not have the confidence to write their own example on the whiteboard. To counter this problem, the teacher told the students to keep on writing using English language and not to be afraid of what other people think of their writing.

Discussion

Based on the findings from the previous sections, there are several theories that can be generated which include: 1) The use of peer-editing technique in the classroom can improve the students' writing skill to a certain extent and 2) The classroom situation became more active when peer-editing technique is

implemented in the writing classroom. These theories are supported by other relevant theories and references which are explained in detail in this section.

1. The Implementation of Peer-editing Technique Can Improve the Students' Writing Skill

Most of the students of grade XI class of *Bahasa dan Budaya* Department at a Senior High School (SMA) in Kudus stated that they like the English lesson. However, most of them also admitted that they rarely receive a satisfying score and their score in writing tests is often below average. Implementing peer-editing technique had improved the students' writing skill. The improvement of the students' writing skill involves five different aspects of writing. Each improvement is discussed as follows:

a. Peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in writing an organized text

The research findings show that the text that the students made became more organized. By using peer-editing technique, the students could compare their own work with their peers' work and figure out which of the text has a better organization and what conjunction words should they use in a text. This finding is supported by Puegphrom and Chiramanee (2011) who said that peer-editing technique has the ability to improve the students' language ability and create a better idea organization. The research that was conducted by Galvis (2010) also stated that peer-editing allows the students to learn both from giving and receiving reviews of others' work.

b. Peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in writing a more related content in their text

The research findings show that the content of the text that the students made became more complete. Before peer-editing technique is implemented, the text that the students made is not in line with the title. For example, one student wrote a text with the title "The Snow Queen", but the content of the text is "Snow White". However, when peer-editing technique is implemented, the more knowledgeable students reminded their friends of whether the title and the content of their text are related or not. This finding is in line with Puegphrom and Chiramanee (2011) who said that peer-editing can improve the language ability of the students to create more complete content. It is also in line with the research that was conducted by Merina et. al (2019) which stated that peer-editing can help the students to develop their writing better with an appropriate topic.

c. Peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in writing a text with correct grammar (Grammar)

The research findings show that the students' grammar improved a little. Before peer-editing technique is implemented in the classroom, the students use of grammar was inaccurate. Some of them still used the present tense in a narrative text when it was supposed to use past tense such as using 'is' when it should have been 'was'. However, during the implementation of the research, the students whose grammar was inaccurate could compare their own work with the work of the students whose grammar was accurate. They also asked those students about which grammar to use in their writing. Thus, they learned about their own mistakes and will be able to use the correct grammar in their next writing. This improvement in grammar is in line with Al-nafiseh (2013) who stated that peer-editing helped the students to know their mistakes in terms of grammar and other writing aspects. Additionally, the research that was conducted by Nirmala & Ramala (2017) also concluded that peer-editing technique can develop the students' awareness of grammatical rules when writing. Thus, they are less likely to use incorrect grammar in their text.

d. Peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in writing a text with correct spelling and punctuation (Mechanic)

The research findings show that the students made fewer mistake in spelling and punctuation in their text. From the pre-test that was conducted before the research was implemented, it was found that the students still made some spelling and punctuation mistakes. There were some students who use 'i' instead of 'I' whenever there was a first-person pronoun and there were also several students who did not use a capital letter when writing the name of a person. Some of them also wrote 'he husband' on their text when it should have been 'her husband'. However, during the implementation of the research, the students corrected their friends' mistakes in spelling and punctuation. The students who correctly used 'I' as a first-person pronoun instead of 'i' increased and they made fewer spelling mistakes in their writing. This finding is in line with Insai

and Poonlarp (2017) who stated that peer-editing helps the students to notice their error and became more critical and aware of it when revising and editing their own work. Because the students are giving and receiving correction, their understanding of the spelling and punctuation increased. Thus, the mistake in spelling and punctuation in their writing decreased. The research from Sanchez and Lozada in Soto (2020) also states that there was an improvement in the organization, capitalization, and punctuation in the students' text when peer-editing technique is implemented.

e. Peer-editing technique to improve the students' writing skill in writing a text with a varied vocabulary

The research findings show that the students' vocabulary increased and has more variety. Before the research was implemented, the students often use the same vocabulary over and over again like using the word 'but' often as conjunction and using the word 'fair' to describe something beautiful. However, when the research was implemented, the students pointed out when their peers used the same vocabulary over and over again. They also taught their friends about the synonym of a few vocabularies such as 'beautiful skin' for 'fair skin'. Thus, the students who received the reviews learned about more varied vocabulary. This finding is supported by Galvis (2010) who stated that peer-editing allows the students to learn both from giving and receiving reviews of others' work. By reviewing their peers' work, the students' vocabulary increased and has more variety. In addition, in the research that was conducted by Insai and Poonlarp (2017), it was also found that the students who edit others' works subsequently implement their editing skills in their own writing which caused them to become more critical of their own text. It also provides them with the opportunities to negotiate and interact with each other which resulted in them learning new vocabulary.

2. The Classroom Situation When Peer-editing Technique is Used in the Writing Class

During the implementation of the research, the classroom situation is observed. From the result of the observation, it was found that the student became more active in the classroom. When the teacher was asking questions, there were more students who answered enthusiastically. The students were also more active in asking questions when they were performing the task given to them. This finding is supported by Al-Nafiseh (2013) who states that peer-editing gives the students the motivation to communicate orally. It was also supported by the research that was conducted by Puegphrom and Chiramanee (2011) which conclude that peer-editing caused the students to have more confidence in their language ability.

However, from the observation, the problem with the students' confidence in their writing skill was also found. For example, when the teacher asked one of the students to come forward and write their own sentence on the whiteboard, none of them was willing to volunteer themselves. It is most likely that the students were still afraid of making mistakes and what other people might say regarding their writing. To solve this problem, the teacher increased the frequency of asking students to write their own sentences on the whiteboard. The teacher also encouraged the students to keep on practicing their writing and to not be of what other people might say to them regarding their writing. Aside from that, the teacher also encouraged the students to read English text more so that they did not make a lot of mistakes that can cause negative criticism on their writing.

Discussion

Based on the findings from the previous sections, there are several theories that can be generated which include: 1) The use of peer-editing technique in the classroom can improve the students' writing skill to a certain extent and 2) The classroom situation became more active when peer-editing technique is implemented in the writing classroom. Most of the students of grade XI Bahasa dan Budaya at an SMA in Kudus stated that they like the English lesson. However, most of them also admitted that they rarely receive a satisfying score and their score in writing test is often below average. Implementing peer-editing technique had improved the students' writing skill. The improvement of the students' writing skill involves five different aspects of writing which include organization, content, grammar, mechanic (spelling and punctuation), and vocabulary.

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Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the students' writing skill can be improved through peer-editing technique. Before peer-editing technique was implemented in the writing classroom, the students text was already organized enough and the content of their text was well developed. However, they still made a lot of mistake in the spelling and grammar aspect. They also used the same vocabulary over and over again in the text that they write. But, after peer-editing technique is implemented, their writing skill improved. The text that the students write became more organized and more developed. The number of mistakes in the spelling aspect also decreased a lot and the students used more vocabulary in their text. The students' accuracy in grammar increased a bit as well.

The classroom situation also improved in that there were more students who were asking and answering questions from the teacher. Peer-editing technique allowed the students to learn from their friends' mistakes when they were editing their friends' work and applied what they have learned in their own writing. Thus, their understanding of their own language skill also increased. However, as could be seen from the research findings, there was still an issue when peer-editing technique was implemented in the classroom. The issue that was found in this research was the students' low confidence in their own writing. As such, there is still room for improvement in this research. The teacher can create interesting activities to increase the students' confidence and the other researchers can use it as a reference for further research which is related to other aspects such as the students' attitude or motivation. This study focused merely on the writing skill. As such, there are still many other things that has not been researched further related to the peer-editing technique.

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