

Dialogue Journal Writing in Emergency Remote Teaching: Effect on Writing Competency and Students' Perception towards Implementation

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ABSTRACT

The current study intended to explore the effect of dialogue journal writing (DJW) on students' writing and identifying their perception towards the implementation of DJW in emergency remote teaching (ERT) setting. The method of the current study is a mix method. The design of the quantitative study is experiment with pretest-posttest design, and for qualitative study is using case study. The data were collected through writing competency test and interview guide. This study used descriptive and inferential analysis for the quantitative data and follow O'Connor & Gibson (2003) guidance in analysing qualitative data. The result quantitative analysis showed that the mean score of students' writing competency in posttest (7.4) is higher than pretest (6.6). A significant mean difference is indicated from the result of t test (Sig. =.000). The qualitative analysis identified three themes from the interview (1) encouragement & confidence, (2) motivation, and (3) improvement on writing. Thus, DJW is encouraged to be implemented in ERT setting.

Keywords: Dialogue Journal Writing, EFL, Emergency Remote Teaching

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the face of education in Indonesia. Government policies to learn from home cause face-to-face learning to be replaced by online learning. This policy is certainly made to reduce the spread of the corona virus and the learning process can still be carried out. This learning model is generally known as online learning. But in practice, it is more appropriately called emergency remote teaching (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). Emergency remote teaching (ERT) is also slightly different from online distance learning (ODL). ODL requires careful planning so that it can be done sustainability (Ozkurt, & Sharma, 2020). While ERT is conducted because of an urgent situation such as a pandemic or natural disaster (Abel, 2020; Zayabalaradjane, 2020).

In ERT, communication is done via email, personal chat, or telephone while the teaching and learning process is conducted through learning management system (LMS) such as Schoology, Edmodo and Google Classroom (Latifa, R. Nur, & Amaluddin, 2019; Ferdianto, 2019; Tanduklangi, A., Amrand, & Amri, 2018). Teachers' mastery over technology as a form of readiness is very necessary to support the teaching and learning process (Priyadarshini, & Bhaumik, 2020; Talidong, 2020). In addition, the ability of teachers to adapt learning strategies to learning conditions is also a determining factor for the

success of teaching and learning online (Yengin, Karahoca, Karahoca, & Yücel, 2010; Kebritchi, 2014; Mitchell, 2014). The strategy used should be able to support the process of self-independent learning also encourage the students (Burkle, & Cleveland-Innes, 2013; Sharoff, 2019; Khan, Egbue, Palkie, & Madden, 2017).

In its application, ERT has several characteristics of ERT. ERT can utilize synchronous or asynchronous learning. In synchronous learning, teacher and student interactions occur simultaneously with the help of video conferencing (Shahabadi, & Uplane, 2014). While in asynchronous learning, communication between teachers and students does not occur directly like learning in the classroom and students can work by their own time and pace (Perveen, 2016; Suranata, Rangka, & Permana, 2020). The learning material in asynchronous learning is delivered online for on demand access and the students can engaged with the learning material by their own time and schedule (Daniel, 2020).

As one of the skills that need to be mastered in English, the process of teaching and learning writing is very interesting. Writing teaching and learning strategies are usually done with a face-to-face mentoring model, currently cannot be done (Renandya, & Widodo, 2016). In addition, conventional strategies in language teaching are no longer feasible at this time (Mokhtar, 2016). Therefore, alternative strategies are needed to

support the process of teaching and learning of writing. One strategy that can be used is dialogue journal writing (DJW). Larrotta (2008) states that the dialogue journal can be an alternative for teachers to talk and comment students' work while the classroom time is very limited.

Journal writing, also known as journalism, diary writing, and reflective journal, is a means of recording daily activities, learning, and feeling through writing (Yadav, 2017). Denne-Bolton (2013) defines journal writing as a written conversation between a teacher and students on a particular topic, including reactions and reflections on what they have been reading and hearing. The idea of using journal is based on the view that writing can be developed through activities engaging in reflection, expression, and discovery (Thomas, 2017). While the term dialogue journal is defined as an ongoing written interaction between two people or more conducted daily, weekly or more to exchange experiences, ideas, or reflections in order to seek for improvement (Foroutan, & Noordin, 2012; Peyton, & Staton, 2000).

There are some objectives of using DJW in English teaching. Denne-Bolton (2013) explains that the main objective of using dialogue journals in the English language teaching and learning is to give students more time and opportunities for writing so they can experience the pleasure of communication through the written expression. Rana (2018) adds that the use of dialogue journals in ESL or EFL classrooms is to enable learners to write for communication; rather than to improve grammar and learn vocabulary. During the implementation of DJW, the students write about thoughts, experiences, reactions to texts, or issues of importance to them, and teachers respond to the content of students' entries by sharing experiences, ideas, and reactions as well as modelling correct usage (Peyton, & Staton, 2000). The application of DJW is very suitable with the context of ERT learning. In the process of teaching writing both synchronously and asynchronously, the teacher can interact with students in giving feedback for students' writing through WhatsApp (personal or group chat). Therefore, this study aims to identify the effect of DJW on students' writing competency and exploring students' perceptions of the implementation of DJW.

Method

The current study is a mix method study. This study uses quantitative method (pre-test posttest design) and qualitative method (case study). The quantitative method is used to determine the effect of DJW on students' writing competency and the qualitative method is used to investigate students' perception on the implementation of DJW in remote teaching setting.

Participant of Study

The participant of the study was 40 EFL high school students in one selected school in Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia. The participant consists of 21 males and 19 female students (ages 17 to 19).

Research Instruments

There are three instruments used in this study. The first is writing competency, the second is rubric for assessing writing competency and interview guide. The rubric for assessing writing competency is adopted from Brown (2004) which focuses on five aspects namely content (C), organization (O), grammar (G), vocabulary (V) and mechanic (M). The interview technique used was semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview employs a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015).

Data Analysis

The data from the writing competency test were analysed using descriptive and inferential analysis. While the data from the interview is analyzed with a guidance by O'Connor & Gibson, (2003). The data analysis consists of six steps namely (1) Organizing the data, (2) Finding and organizing ideas and concepts, (3) Building overarching themes in the data, (4) Ensuring reliability and validity in the data analysis and in the findings, (5) Finding possible and plausible explanations for findings, and (6) An overview of the final steps.

Result and Discussion

After collecting the data, the process of analysis was carried out. The result of quantitative (descriptive and inferential) analysis can be seen in Table 1.

In table 1, it can be seen that the mean score of students' writing competency in posttest (7.4) is higher than pretest (6.6). From all aspects of the writing ability component, it can be seen that the posttest results (C = 3.0, O = 3.1, G = 3.0, V = 2.7, M = 3.1) are higher than the pretest (C = 2.7, O = 2.7, G = 2.6, V = 2.3, M = 3.0).

The results of inferential analysis show sig. 000 which means there is a significant mean between the pretest and posttest. It can be said that DJW has a significant influence on students' writing competency. The students' writing shows an improvement after the implementation of DJW.

The next step conducted was analysing the data from the interview. The interview was conducted with five students. The result of analysis shows there are three themes emerged namely (1) encouragement, (2) confident, (3) improvement on writing skill.

1) Encouragement & Confidence

Students said that the communication between teacher and students encourage them in doing the writing task especially when it is conducted through personal chat. Students expressed they are more comfortable and confident to ask questions or discuss through personal chat. Personal chat is used to ask the teacher about the difficulties encountered during the writing process.

2) Motivation

Students said that the teacher's suggestions and input greatly motivated students to improve the quality of writing. Some say that usually the teacher never gives written feedback. Usually, the teacher immediately gives an assessment score. Students who got low score become disappointed because. They also feel lack of opportunities to develop writing skill.

3) Improvement on Writing

Students claimed that their writing skill is improved. They feel that the aspects of organizing ideas, grammar and vocabulary are the most improved aspects.

Table 1. The Result of Quantitative Analysis

Test	Comp. Rubric				M	M(SD)	(Sig.)
	C	O	G	V			
Pre-test	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.3	3.0	6.6(.515)	.000
Post-test	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.7	3.1	7.4(.719)	.000

Note: content (C), organization (O), grammar (G), vocabulary (V) and mechanic (M)

Discussions

By looking at the result of descriptive analysis, it can be seen that students' writing competencies after learning with DJW were better than before learning with DJW. This can be seen from the average results of writing skills and deeper can be seen in every aspect of the assessment. The results of previous studies also prove the same thing where DJW is very influential in improving students' writing competency (Liao, & Wong, 2010; Dabbagh, 2017; Rokni, & Seifi, 2014; Rintaningrum, 2018). They found that DJW is engaging and empowering the students into the

writing process so students' writing competency is improved. DJW also helps to raise students' awareness on language features in writing such as grammar and vocabulary (Rokni, & Seifi, 2014). From the result of interview, students said that they are feeling encouraged and motivated when the teacher asks personally about their problems during writing and gives suggestions to the problems.

The teacher often asks the problems I face in developing writing. I became more confident because the teacher was always there for me and my friends. (Student 2, F)

Teachers often encourage us. If there is a problem, I can directly chat the teacher. (Student 3, M)

The feedback from teacher is also claimed to motivate the students. As the students said:

I discussed with the teacher how to develop my writing skills. I feel motivated after having a personal discussion with the teacher. (Student 4, M)

Suggestions and input from my teacher motivate me to improve the quality of my writing. (Student 5, F)

I feel quite satisfied with the learning process with a personal discussion with the teacher. I saw my writing score increase. (Student 1, F)

In addition to influencing aspects of language, the use of DJW also influence intrinsic aspect such as motivation and anxiety (Foroutan, & Noordin, 2012; Thevasigamoney, & Yunus, 2014). Students who have high motivation and are able to relieve anxiety during the learning process are believed to show their best potential especially in the writing process (Jeon, 2018; Tsao, Tseng, & Wang, 2017). The improvement of students' writing skills is also an indicator of the success of feedback on DJW. Students are motivated to improve their writing when the teachers give feedback in the form of critics, comment and suggestions (Rahman, 2017; Wahyuni, 2017). The absence of feedback given by the teacher of course will make students unmotivated and feeling disengaged during the process of writing.

The DJW implementation is very compatible with ERT. Although all forms of online learning emphasize independent learning, teachers must still be there in facilitating the learning process by communicating with students. In addition to knowing the students' development process, it can also maintain relationships between students and teachers during the learn from home period (Spies, Morgan, & Matsuura, 2014; Omowumi, 2019).

Conclusion

This study shown that the students' writing competencies after learning with DJW were better than before learning with DJW. The average

results of writing skills and deeper can be seen in every aspect of the assessment.

This research implies that DJW can be used as a teaching strategy in writing during the pandemic situation. In addition to improving the quality of student writing, DJW in remote teaching maintains relationships between students and teachers so students remain motivated.

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