THE EFFICACY OF THINK-PAIR-SHARE WITH PEER ASSESSMENT IN IMPROVING WRITING SKILL AND DEVELOPING CHARACTER OF THE TEACHER CANDIDATES

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ABSTRACT

Teaching learning process does not only focus about improving the students' hard skill but also developing their soft skill. The phenomena showed that a lot of students had low mastery in writing. In addition, most of them still had bad behavior in their surrounding especially during classroom interaction. This research aimed at answering the following questions: how effective is think-pair-share with peer assessment in improving the writing skill of the subjects under study? and how effective is think-pair-share with peer assessment in developing the characters of the subjects under study?. In the present study, 36 students of the second semester of the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University were selected as the subjects of the study. The present study made use of Classroom Action Research design. The progressing results of tests, pre-test and post-tests showed that the mean score of the subjects significantly increased. It clearly clarified that the implementation of think-pair-share with peer assessment was effective to improve the subjects' writing skill. In addition, the five-observed characters which were developed in the present study also positively changed. The five-observed characters, moreover, began to consistently appear during their interaction in the teaching learning process.

Keywords: think-pair-share, peer assessment, writing skill, and character.

ABSTRAK

Proses pembelajaran tidak hanya fokus dalam meningkatkan *hard skill* tetapi juga *soft skill*. Fenomena yang berkembang menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menulis masih rendah. Di samping itu, mereka juga menunjukkan tingkah laku yang sangat buruk terutama pada saat berinteraksi di dalam kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab dua permasalahan yaitu: bagaimana effektivitas *think-pair-share with peer assessment* dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis? dan bagaimana efektivitas *think-pair-share with peer assessment* dalam mengembangkan karakter? Dalam penelitian ini terdapat 36 orang mahasiswa/I semester II Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar yang dijadikan sebagai subjek penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terjadi peningkatan nilai rata-rata yang sangat signifikan dari hasil di observasi awal sampai dengan siklus III. Di samping itu lima karakter yang diamati juga menunjukkan konsistensinya terutama dalam interaksi mereka di kelas. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa *think-pair-share with peer assessment* sangat efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis dan mengembangkan karakter para calon guru.

Kata kunci: *think- pair-share, peer assessment*, keterampilan menulis, dan karakter.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill, one of the four major language skills, is the goal of learning languages including English. It is of necessary for students, who learn English, to be aware the importance of writing as they learn it to communicate both in spoken or written form. Brown (2004) states that writing skill, which is categorized as productive skill, should be taught and assessed in different ways with receptive skills. The students might dislike writing because of the way the lecturers teach and the subjectivity in assessing their writing. Furthermore, writing skill as one of the skills which focuses on the process has two beneficial products for the students; they are the ability to express their ideas and the opportunity to develop their character during the process of writing. Therefore, ideally if the lecturers teach or practice this skill, they will provide the students with these two beneficial products.

Nowadays, education in Indonesia in general and campus in particular tries hard to improve and develop both the students' knowledge or hard skill in English including writing and their character or soft skill. Thus, in teaching learning process of writing, we should also provide them with the ability to manage themselves and other people so that they will be ready and survived to face their real, competitive world out there. If we open our eyes to the phenomena, we might find a lot of unusual phenomena which are out of our mind such as: speaking impolitely, doing anarchism (engaging in a group of students fight), doing crimes (stealing, robbing, picking pocket, raping, etc.) and many others. If we now turn on our television, we will only see news about corruption in almost every sector including education which supposes to build the character. These show that character building is urgently needed by this country as we have seen decadent or demoralizing lifestyles have slowly and surely destroyed this nation.

Whether we realize or not these demoralizing lifestyles are getting worse and need further handling so that massive character demoralization can be avoided. The action to stop this should be started from the education itself. Consequently, the lecturers should play their role as facilitator to develop the students' soft skills particularly the character. In line with the National Education System Act No. 20 year 2003, national education is intended to develop skills, character and also a civilized country which has self-esteem in order to educate people. This function in education especially higher education is not well carried out because university tends to enrich their students' knowledge so that character building is sometimes forgotten. It should be every lecturer's concern so the students' character can be developed.

Developing the students' character in higher education or university level is, of course, not a piece of cake to do because it needs efforts from many aspects such as: parents,

lecturers, friends, environment and so forth. On the other hand, a lot of universities still do not have special lecture that teaches how to develop the character; character building is only put as hidden curriculum which does not become the main priority. This also happens in one of the departments of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Mahasaraswati Denpasar University (i.e. English Department). English Department should play its role to provide teachers candidates with both hard skills and soft skills. Henceforth, they will be able to share them with their students later in their own classroom. However, based on the preliminary observation in some of the classes in the English Department, it was found that the students' writing ability was really low and their character needed further treatment.

Improving writing skill and developing the students' character at the same time are challenging objectives for the lecturers to reach. They should be able to choose and implement a teaching technique that is appropriate for this kind of purpose. The lecturers should also be able to modify the technique which is chosen in order to fit with the students who are heterogeneous in terms of writing skill and character. In addition, the most difficult part is what they should do in order to get both the improvement of writing skill and the development of students' character by implementing a teaching technique. In the present study, Think-Pair-Share with

Peer Assessment is used as a model of teaching which is expected to solve the problem faced by the students.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:198-199) and Arends (2007:354-355) describe the procedures of Think-Pair-Share in the classroom in quite similar process in which it focuses on the three steps as its name suggests. The procedural steps of Think-Pair-Share are thinking, pairing and sharing. In thinking, the lecturer poses a question or an issue associated with the lesson and asks students to spend a minute thinking alone about the answer or the issue. In pairing, the lecturer asks students to pair off and discuss what they have been thinking about. Interaction during this period can be sharing answers if a question has been posed or sharing ideas if a specific issue was identified. Usually, the lecturer allows no more than four to five minutes for pairing. Finally in sharing, the lecturer asks the pairs to share what they have been talking about with the whole class. It is effective to simply go around the classroom from pair to pair and continue until about a fourth or a half of the pairs have had a chance to report.

Richards and Schmidt (2002:389) state that "peer assessment is an activity in which learners assess each other's performance". In relation to writing skill, Oshima and Hogue (2007:194) introduce peer assessment in different terminology, that is, peer editing. They said that peer editing is an interactive process of reading and commenting on a

classmate's writing. The classmates exchange their works, read each other's work, and make suggestions or assessment for improvement. In addition, Brown (2004:276-277) explains the guidelines of peer-assessment are as follows: telling the students the purpose of the assessment, defining the tasks clearly, encouraging impartial evaluation of ability and ensuring beneficial wash back through follow-up tasks.

Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in the present study is operationally defined as a teaching model in which firstly, the lecturer gives a topic of a paragraph and the students try to think and draft their ideas in a piece of paper. Secondly, the lecturer pairs them. In this pairing phase, they try to discuss the draft of their ideas; however, they should keep the originality of their ideas. They are allowed to assess each other paragraph. Finally, they share the paragraph with the whole class in which the lecturer invites some students to come forward and write down their paragraph on the board. During the pairing and sharing phases, they try to give peer assessment on their friends' paragraph. In peer assessment, the students who have already been paired checks and scores their pair's paragraph using an analytic paragraph scoring rubric, a rubric for classroom use. In addition, they check the development of their pair characters using character checklist.

In accordance with the background, the present research is limited on improving the students' writing skill and developing their characters through the implementation of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment. In addition, the present study is focused on figuring out the answers of the research questions which are constructed to give a scientific direction and find scientific answers; the research questions are as follows: how effective is Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in improving the paragraph writing skill of the subjects under study? and how effective is Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in developing the characters of the subjects under study?

A scientific study is carried out in order to figure out the scientific solution of the research problem so that a scientific explanation can be proposed for the sake of establishing worth findings. Generally, the purpose of the present study is to know the efficacy or effectiveness of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in improving writing skill and developing the character of the candidates of teachers or the second semester students of the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. Besides the general purpose, specific purposes of the present study are to figure out: the efficacy of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in improving paragraph writing skill and developing the characters of the subjects under study.

RESEARCH METHOD

The design of the present research was Classroom Action Research. It was divided into some cycles of cyclical process. The present classroom action research was preceded through carrying out initial reflection in order to figure out the real problem face by the subjects of the study. Furthermore, in every cycle there were four interconnected activities such as: planning, action, observation and reflection. The result of the reflection in the previous cycle was used to reflect the weaknesses and they were then used to revise the next planning. The cyclical processes were carried out until it achieved the purpose of conducting the present classroom action research.

The subjects of the study were chosen based on preliminary observation which was carried out by observing all the classes and questioning some of the lecturers. Besides, the second semester students of the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University, exactly were the B class (II B) consisting of 36 students: 10 males and 26 females were chosen as the subjects of the present study. The data which were needed to answer the research questions were collected through the constructed research instruments. They were test (pre-test and post-test) and character checklist. They were validly and reliably constructed to gather the data so that they would yield worth findings.

The tests both pre-test and post-tests were constructed in the form of paragraph construction test. The subject of the study was asked to write a short paragraph in six to twelve sentences and, of course, on the basis of the criteria of a good paragraph. The result of the subjects' paragraph was scored using analytical scoring rubric that considers the criteria such as: format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. Furthermore, to observe the development of their character, the instrument was constructed in the form of character checklist consisting of five elements; they are being discipline, honest, cooperative, creative, and deferential.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Finding
Preliminary Observation

The present classroom action research was initiated by preliminary observation. In the preliminary observation, the English lecturers who taught the subjects of the study were interviewed in order to get initial data about the subjects' writing ability. They were categorized as inactive subjects; their writing achievement furthermore was low. Their character did not show a good character of a teacher who would be a model for their own students. To get a clear picture, pre-test and character checklist were then administered.

The pre-test in the present study was intended to figure out the subjects' pre-existing ability in paragraph writing. The subjects were instructed to write a short paragraph from a given theme, *Technology*. The mean score of the pre-test which was followed by 36 subjects figured a mean figure of 45.33. This score was categorized as insufficient; moreover, this result showed that the subjects writing skill was very low. This result also clarified that their weaknesses in constructing a good paragraph was mostly in organization, content, grammar and sentence structure. To sum up, the result indicated that their writing urgently needed improving.

The character checklist clearly showed that the character percentages were as follows: the character of discipline which was 18.06% began to develop and 5.56% consistently appeared; honesty which was 34.72% began to develop and 12.50% consistently appeared; cooperative which was 25.00% began to develop and 6.94% consistently appeared; creativity which was 25.00% began to develop and 9.72% consistently appeared; and deference which was 45.83% began to develop and 1.39% consistently appeared (only top two percentages were presented. These results clearly indicated that the five characters observed should be prioritized to get an immediate treatment so that they would be a good model for their own subjects.

Cycle I

Cycle I consisted of four cyclical steps; they were planning, action, observation and reflection. This cycle was expected as a starting point that might improve writing skill and develop characters of the subjects by implementing Think-Pair-Share with peer assessment. The planning was carefully prepared and it was carried out in the action. At the end on the teaching learning process through the implementation of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment, post-test and character checklist were administered.

The post-test for cycle I was administered for 36 subjects all together. In addition, they were asked to write a short single paragraph entitled *Mobile Phone*. The subjects' writing were then scored by using an analytical scoring rubric and the mean score yielded a figure of 69.46 which was categorized as sufficient. This result, even though it was still low, showed that there was an improvement from the pre-test. This result also confirmed that the technique had already played its part, that is, to improve the subjects' writing skill especially in writing a paragraph.

In order to get the data concerning the development of their characters, the character checklist was administered. Based on the calculation of the character checklist, it was figured out that there were surprisingly significant improvements on the percentages of the characters observed. For example, before the teaching

learning process using Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment there was 5.56% character of discipline which was categorized as consistently appear; however, after the teaching learning process using the technique, it surprisingly increased to 69.44%. Their honesty also improved from 12.50% to 44.44% consistently appear; cooperative, 6.94% to 70.83%; creativity, 9.72% to 20.83% and deference, 25.00% to 69.44%. These improvements clarified that the teaching learning process using Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment ran as it was expected even though it did not yield a satisfying result.

Cycle II

Cycle II also consisted of four cyclical steps similar to cycle I; they were planning, action, observation and reflection. This cycle was projected to gain a better result than cycle I since this cycle was planned on the basis of the weaknesses found out in cycle I. Therefore, based on the weaknesses in cycle I, it was expected that cycle II could be successfully carried out. In other words, cycle II was started with revised planning. Furthermore, action was carefully carried out and it was ended through administering post-test and character checklist.

After having been taught using Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment, post-test II was administered to 36 subjects all together. Based on the calculation of the subjects' individual scores through mean score formula, the calculated mean score yielded a figure of 74.42. This figure furthermore was categorized as good. The mean score of cycle II clearly showed that the technique was effective enough in improving the subjects' writing skill. In other words, Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment had already directed the classroom and the intended learning objectives, that is, to improve the subjects' writing skill. The quality of their paragraph improved in terms of the characteristics of a good paragraph and writing a unified and coherent paragraph.

As what has been already aforementioned that since the character checklist was used to find out the development of the subjects' characters, the same character checklist as in the preliminary observation and cycle I was used. Based on the calculation of the character checklist, it was figured out that there were some significant improvements, a decreased percentage on the character of discipline and a constant percentage on the character of deference. The developed characters in cycle II could be evidently seen from the increasing percentages of each character if we compared with the previous cycle. For example, in cycle I there was 44.44% character of honesty was categorized as consistently appear; however, after the teaching learning process in cycle II using the technique, it increased to 55.56%. The character of being cooperative also increased from 70.83% to 72.22% consistently appear;

in addition, the character of being creative was increasingly progressed from 20.83% to 22.22%. However, the character of being disciplined decreased from 69.44% to 54.17% whereas the character of being deferential did not move from the figure of 69.44%.

Cycle III

Cycle III consisted of four cyclical steps similar to two previous cycles. This cycle was expected to gain a better result than cycle II and it was expected also to gain the minimum passing grade of *Writing I*. This challenge was given to cycle III since this cycle was planned on the basis of the weaknesses found out in cycle II. Therefore, based on the weaknesses in cycle II, it was expected that cycle III could be smoothly and successfully carried out. After the planning and the action, the research instruments, post-test and character checklist, were administered.

After the teaching learning process with the implementation of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in cycle III was conducted, post-test III was administered. Based on the computation of the subjects' individual scores through mean score formula, the calculated mean score produced a figure of 80.17. Furthermore, this figure was categorized as good level of writing achievement. Linguistically, the improvements of their paragraph in terms of its quality were not really different from cycle II. Generally, their

paragraph writing could be categorized as a good paragraph since their paragraph consisted of three major structural parts of a good paragraph, a topic sentence, some supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. In addition, their paragraph writing was constructed on the basis of unity and coherence.

As what has already been aforementioned, the character checklist was used to find out the development of the subjects' characters. Based on the percentages of computation of the character checklist, the developed characters in cycle III could be obviously recognized from the increasing percentages of each character if it was compared with the previous cycle. For example, in cycle II there was 54.17% character of being discipline that was categorized as consistently appear; however, after the teaching learning process in cycle III, it surprisingly increased to 83.33% as it was expected. The second character, being honest, showed an increasing percentage as well from 55.56% to 56.94% which was categorized as consistently appear. The character of being cooperative also increased from 72.22% to 80.56% which consistently appear; in addition, the character of being creative was increasingly progressed from 22.22% to 25.00%. The last-observed character, being deferential, was greater than before; it was from 69.44% to 75.00%. In summary, the five-observed characters in cycle III had developed as

it was shown by the increasing percentages.

Discussion

The Efficacy of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in Improving Writing Skill

To know the efficacy of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in the present study, the researcher administered a pre-test and some post-tests, which were in the form of paragraph construction. In the tests, the subjects were instructed to write a short single paragraph of different topics with six to twelve sentences. Based on the results, it could be obviously seen that the subjects writing achievement could be improved.

The preliminary observation the mean score of the subjects' pre-test was 45.33 which was categorized as insufficient. It happened because the subjects mostly did not have any ideas of how they should express their ideas in the form of paragraph. In cycle I, after they had been taught by using Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment, the mean scores of the subjects post-test I improved significantly with a figure of 69.46 and this mean score was categorized as sufficient. The improvement of the mean score was mainly caused by the teaching technique applied in the classroom. It was also supported by the subjects' responses toward the implementation of questionnaire which quantified that they

responded quite positively on the teaching technique.

The result of cycle I was considered unsatisfactory; the next cycle (i.e. cycle II) was therefore carried out by considering the weaknesses found out in cycle I. In this cycle, the material on how the subjects should organize their ideas, comparison/contrast paragraph organization, was discussed. It was expected that it would be one of the factors that supported the improvement of their paragraph. After the re-implementation of the teaching technique, a progressing figure of mean score yielded an increasing mean figure of 74.42. This mean figure was classified as a good level of writing achievement. This result was quite satisfactory; however, it did not yet achieve the minimum standard of the passing grade of *Writing I*, that was, 75.

Therefore, a much more comprehensive planning in cycle III was prearranged and it was carried out carefully so that a better writing achievement could be achieved. In this cycle also, another paragraph organization, logical division of ideas, was taught to give the subjects more choices to express their ideas. The computation of the subjects' scores using the mean formula resulted a mean figure of 80.17. This expected improvement of mean figure was categorized as good level of writing achievement. This mean figure also justified that the present study might be stopped because it had already achieved the minimum standard

of the passing grade in which more than 90% of the subjects or 32 subjects gained 75.

The Efficacy of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in Developing Characters

The data about efficacy of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in developing the five-observed characters were taken through administering character checklist. The character checklist was given to the subjects before the research was carried out and the end of every cycle. It meant that the character checklist was administered for four times, in the preliminary observation, cycle I, cycle II, and cycle III.

The abovementioned findings clearly revealed that the five-observed characters of developed significantly. This further showed the development of the subjects' characters from pre-cycle, cycle I, cycle II and cycle III. The development of the five-observed characters could be obviously seen. In the preliminary observation or pre-cycle, the computation of the percentages of the first-observed character, being disciplined, resulted a percentage figure of 5.56%. It meant that there were 2 subjects who were disciplined in attending the class and finishing assignment. This result showed that it needed an urgent treatment. Hence, the teaching technique, Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment was implemented. At the end of cycle I, another character

checklist was administered and it figured a percentage of 69.44% or 25 subjects were categorized as discipline. However, in cycle II, the number of the subjects who are categorized as discipline decreased into 20 subjects or 54.17%. It happened because they were trapped in the middle of heavy rain. Based on this result, in the next meeting, the researcher emphasized about the importance of being disciplined and at the end of cycle III, it increased into 30 subjects or 83.33%. This validated that the characters of being disciplined has been already affected their everyday activity in the classroom.

The second-observed character that was being honest also showed quite significant development. In pre-cycle, there were 5 subjects or 12.50% who declared themselves as honest people in terms of doing the assignment and test based on their genuine faculty. However, through a series of teaching learning process by implementing Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment, the character of being honest developed convincingly and significantly; they were 16 subjects or 44.44%, 20 subjects or 55.56% and 21 subjects or 56.94% respectively from cycle I, cycle II and cycle III.

Concerning the other character, being cooperative, there were 3 (6.94%) subjects who were willing to be cooperative in the classroom in pre-cycle. This result was shocking because they were in one class and they were supposed to be familiar with each other

and cooperate in order to achieve a better learning achievement. According to some subjects, this might happen because they were rarely exposed to work in group or cooperatively. Therefore, the teaching technique applied in the present study focused on building the subjects' willingness to work cooperatively in a pair. As it was expected, the percentage figures resulted figure of 70.83% (26 subjects) in cycle I and quite similar figure of 72.22% (26 subjects) in cycle II. However, in cycle III, it increased into 29 subjects or 80.56%. These figures obviously clarified that the character was formed in their daily classroom activity.

The fourth-observed character, being creative, which was observed based on the two indicators: asking and/or answering questions and giving comment or suggestion on their friends' works produced similar development. In pre-cycle, there were 4 subjects or 9.72% who could be categorized as being creative. After the treatment by using the teaching technique, it developed into: 8 subjects or 20.83% in cycle I; quite similar percentage of 22.22% or 8 subjects in cycle II; and a few developments occurred in cycle III, there were only 9 subjects or 25.00%. This result might happen because not so many the subjects were 'dare'. A lot of them have already tried to raise their hand and ask and/or answer questions; however, only a few of them who were brave enough to give comment and suggestion. The researcher found it

difficult to switch the paradigm of 'afraid of making mistakes' into 'dare to make mistakes'. A lot of them were afraid of making mistakes because they would laugh at them. This character needed further treatment so the subjects would build their bravery in giving comment and suggestion.

The last character was being deferential. It was observed from their behavior of respecting others and conducting good and polite manner and expressing gratitude. Based on the calculation in pre-cycle, there were 9 (25.00%) subjects who were categorized as being deferential to others. After the treatment in cycle I and II, a similar percentage figure was yielded; it was 69.44% or 25 subjects. Finally at the end of cycle III, it increased into 27 subjects or 75.00%. The increasing percentage figures undoubtedly showed that the character has already become a part of their behavior.

CONCLUSION

The present classroom action research was finally stopped because it had already achieved the success indicators which have already been set up. Based on the discussion, conclusions could finally be drawn in line with the purpose of the study.

The progressing results of tests, pre-test and post-tests showed that the mean score of the subjects significantly increased. It clearly clarified that the implementation of Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment brought a more

interesting teaching learning atmosphere it was shown by the result of the questionnaire. As a result, it affected the improvement of the subjects' level achievement of *Writing I* from being 'insufficient' to 'good'. This result explicitly justified that Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment was effective in improving the subjects' paragraph writing skill.

In addition, Think-Pair-Share with Peer Assessment in the present study was implemented in the teaching learning process for the purpose of developing the subjects' characters. Based on the preliminary observation, there were five characters which needed an immediate attention; they were the character of being disciplined, honest, cooperative, creative and deferential. After some cycles of teaching learning processes and after collecting the data using character checklist, it could be concluded that the five-observed characters developed significantly. A lot of changes in behaviors happened after the implementation of the teaching technique.

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