PEER CORRECTION BY USING GOOGLE DOCS IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING

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Ringkasan

The research aims to know the learning process in applying peer-correction activities through Google Docs on students' writing descriptive text. This research was a qualitative research. Data gathering was done by doing observation while teaching. The data was analyzed by analyzing the result from the observation. The results of the research show that the students are extremely interested to peer-correction activities through Google Docs, and they felt that utilizing Google Docs was a powerful method to encourage their learning process. Their learning circumstance was viewed as progressively favorable, when they discussing, giving comment, and revising their texts. They did those exercises without talking one another, so it did not create any loud. They also considered that this kind of learning process merits continuing.

Keywords

Writing Skills—Learning Process—Peer-Correction—Google Docs

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Introduction

Harmer (2004) stated that writing is important, because it is one of the basic skills in learning the languages, especially learning English. Hellen and Hafiz (2014:40) also said that among of the four skills, writing is one of the important skills that should be mastered by students because it is a communicative act as well as a way of sharing information, thoughts or ideas to the readers. Writing is one of skills developed in high school. A type of written text usually learnt and discussed at school especially by high school students is the descriptive text. Thus, descriptive text is one kind of texts should be mastered by all students. In writing descriptive text students should write identification part which introduces the object and description part where the students should describe the object. However, some students often find it difficult in constructing the text. They firstly assumed that producing descriptive text was very difficult especially in organizing the ideas. It is possibly because they do not clearly understand what descriptive text is. Therefore, teachers need to provide a specific technique to grab students' interest in writing descriptive text.

Responding to the situation, teachers may apply peer correction technique to facilitate student writing process. Peer-correction is one of the techniques which support

a student-centered approach. Many experts in teaching writing skills (e.g. Brookes & Grundy, 1998; Leki, 2007; Robinson, 1988) support the idea of implementing peer-correction or peer-review into learning process. In doing peer correction, students are engaged some activities which activate their critical thinking such as checking their peer written text, discussing the topic, and evaluating their writing mistakes. Then continue to idea that current learning process urges more students' active participation, thus integrating online learning activities benefits to encourage students to be active learners.

The available of internet connection can be very helpful in doing peer-correction. By using technology and internet as media, students will be interested and enjoy in the learning process. Some research studies (e.g. West & West, 2009; Wheeler, 2010) support the idea that writing skills might be enhanced by using collaborative online tools. One of media that is able to apply online peer-correction is Google Docs or Google Documents. In Google docs, students can share the results of their writing via e-mail and ask their friends to check and correct each other's writing.

According to Horne and Pine (1990), learning is an experience which occurs inside the learner, and it is activated by the learners. This means that learning will not take place unless the learners themselves allow it to hap-

pen in their mind. In constructing descriptive texts, Knap and Watkins (2005, p.97) stated that describing is used extensively in many text types, such as information reports, literary descriptions, descriptive, recount, and due to the need to classify and or describe a process before explaining it in the opening paragraphs of most explanations. Students may think that writing is difficult. Even, Javed et. al. (2013: 130) argued that writing skill is more complicated than the other English skill. However, there is a technique that can be applied, that is peer-correction. Ferris (2003: 70) mentions several advantages of doing peer-correction. The first is students are able to gain confidence, and critical thinking from being able to read texts by peer's writing. Second, students get feedback from a more diverse audience bringing multiple perspectives. Third, students get more feedback than they could get from the teacher. Fourth, students receive feedback from non-expert readers on ways in which their texts are unclear as to ideas and language. The last one is peer review activities build a sense of classroom community. The clear description on the advantages of doing peer correction clarifies that the technique is appropriate to be applied in learning process. Students are involved in the real activity, they can learn from their experience when they are correcting each other. Kolb (1984) stated that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concept that can be applied flexibly in a range situation. He also added that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

Research Methodology

This research used qualitative research. Observations were done while teaching to 10th grade students of Ilmu Budaya (IBU) SMA Negeri 1 Sumberjo. The observations were done to describe the learning process in the class while they were using peer correction through Google Docs. This research used total sampling. According to Sugiyono (2010) total sampling is a sampling technique that number of the samples is the same as the population, the reason for taking total is because the number of population is less than 100, the entire population is made up of the research. As there were only 30 students in the class so all students were included as the participants of the research.

In this research, the point of doing the observation is about to know the ongoing learning process of peer correction through Google Docs. After all of the data were gathered, it was then analyzed. In analyzing data, the researchers adopted qualitative data analysis proposed by Lawrence (2006). In conducting this research, researchers only made the observations for 3 times. On the first day, it was presented the introduction to descriptive text and the explanation about what is peer correction and how it is done. In the second and third meetings, students carried out the writing and correction process. Documentation was needed as evidence and materials which can be seen later

so there would be no missing part of the process that has been done. There were three ways of coding used to analyze the data. The first was the open coding in which we examined the data to condense them into the preliminary analytic categories or codes. During the open coding, we focused on the actual data and assigned the code labels by themes. There was no concern in connecting the data. The second one was the axial coding in which we organized the codes, linked them, and discovered the key analytic categories. The third one was selective coding in which we examined the previous codes results for identifying and selecting the data which supported the conceptual coding categories which had been developed. The last step in analyzing was that interpreting and elaborating the data into sentences. The data which had been sorted and coded were interpreted and elaborated in forms of analytical sentences.

Result and Discussion

Result

Macro skills in writing emphasize on how students develop the writing topic, convey links and connections between events, and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification. During the writing activities, developing macro skills tend to provide activities on working on descriptive text and correcting other's writing products. Based on the activities done during working on the descriptive texts with Google Docs, the learning process was able to be described.

The writing activities done for this research implemented the four stage learning cycles proposed by Kolb (1984) which consists of four stages learning cycle. The first is the concrete experience which emphasizes on making students experience a real event directly without being represented by others. The second is the reflective observation which looks at others' work or develops observations about someone's experience. The next is the abstract conceptualization which engages to create theories in order to explain the result from the observations. Then the last one is the active experimentation which uses the theory to solve the problems and make the decisions. Those stages of the learning cycle are formulated in this following figure. Regarding those learning stages, the learning process for this research will be then explained step by step by describing and explaining the students' learning experience in each of those stages. Their learning process is explained in these following sections.

Concrete Experience   The first stage is the concrete experience. According to Kolb (1984), concrete experience happens when learners are being involved in a new experience. At this stage, the students were expected to experience an activity directly without any intermediaries. In this stage, the students did their first draft writing.

Gambar 1. Four-stages cycle by Kolb (1984)
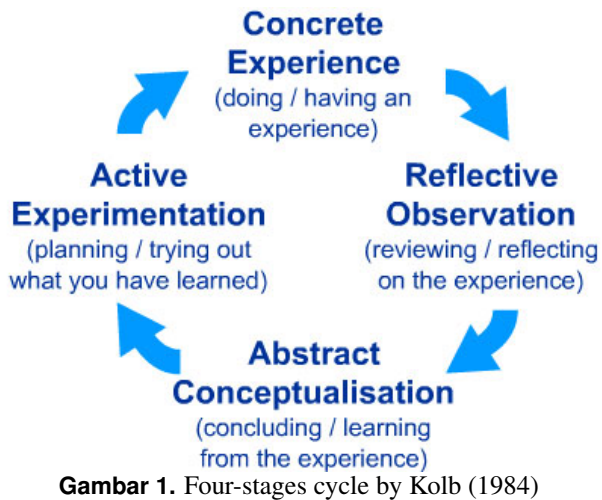
They wrote a descriptive text about anything they were interested in. They were asked to write 3 paragraphs with 5 sentences minimum in each paragraph. The steps done by the teacher was first explaining about the text. After being explained about descriptive text, the students were asked to write descriptive text through Google Docs and found their peers' work. The students did the activities, (1) discussing with their partners about what topics they could develop (recorded observation 1, minute 25-60) and (2) discussing whether the topics they wrote appropriate, namely Descriptive Text (recorded observation 1, 25-60) as mentioned previously when they wanted to start writing. After getting the topic, they wrote the descriptive text. They were given chance to write by their own words. They wrote on worksheets on Google Docs. They chose the type of letter they wanted. In addition they could also input images or tables in their writing.

When they faced some confusion or difficulties while writing, they asked their peers to solve the problems. They could invite their friends to discuss the texts through Google Docs. They could spread it through an email account or link. Friends who were invited via email would get a notification and they could directly connect to Google Docs, and then they could have a discussion there. They discussed their writing through the comments column available on Google Docs. In addition, someone who had the writing could give their peers access to edit their writing by selecting the "Viewing" option to "Editing". They discussed and tried to solve the problems faced.

Reflective Observation   Reflective observation is reviewing or reflecting on their experience (Kolb, 1984). At this stage the students were expected to be able to reflect on their mistakes in writing by correcting each other's writing. They reviewed what they got from the discussion process and input provided by their respective peers.

(3) They discussed each other whether the words or sentences they wrote were interrelated and made sense (recorded observation 1, minute 60-75). This reflects the

second stage of the cycle, the reflective observation. After they finished their writing, they asked their peers to check their writings each other. They wanted to make sure whether the sentences or words were logic and related one to other. (5) They gave comments on their peer's writing, and they exchanged writings and gave input (recorded observation 3, minute 17-40) through comment column.

Based on the observation, the aspects which are commonly given in commenting the texts were the vocabulary, the organization of sentence, and topic development. From the activities they have done, they could learn from the mistakes of each other's writings. From this activity students are able to find the errors or mistakes from their friend's writing. They noticed not only the mistakes and errors but also the improvement from their friends' corrections. Here is the sample of giving comment activities.
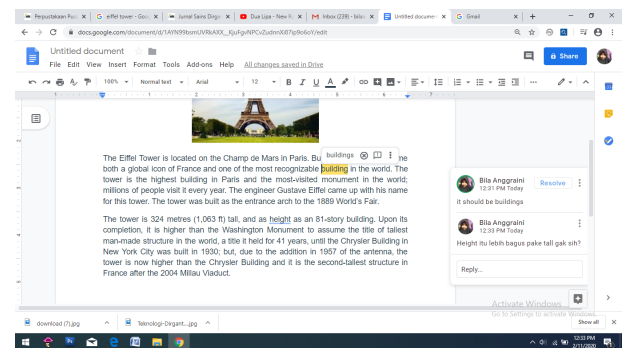
Gambar 2. Peer's Comment

Abstract Conceptualization   The third stage is abstract conceptualization. According to Kolb (1984), Abstract Conceptualization reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience). After correcting each other and giving input to each other's writing, the students were asked to understand what was meant by the correction given by their peer.

Posts that have been given comments, and then given back to the owner, and the owner tries to understand the comments that have been given. If they found some confusion from the comments, (4) they asked each other questions if there was a vocabulary they did not know when writing the texts (recorded observation, minute 45-55). They asked their peer about the comments which could not be understood. For example, there was one students asked his friend about the meaning of 'inhabitants' and 'shearing', and also there was a student who asked her friend why the word 'building' in her sentence as the sentence "There are so many building" was wrong, and the word 'building' should be revise by 'buildings' as it shows plural noun.

After understanding the input which had been given by their peer, then they adjusted them to their writing and

drew conclusions on which comment they could match to the revision for their writing. From this activity they learnt to become critical in making choices. They become more rational in determining whether the results of their friends' corrections were really wrong, and they must choose whether the comments given are in accordance with their writing.

Active Experimentation After doing those 3 stages above, they went to the next stage, the active experimentation. Active Experimentation happens when students apply their ideas to the world around them (Kolb, 1984). Based on the observation, after they concluded the comments and understood their mistakes they applied their understanding and idea to revise their writing. They tried out what they have learned to produce better descriptive texts. All the stages above were done through Google Docs. They discussed and gave comment about their writing. By using Google Docs, the learning situation became more conducive and was not noisy because they focused on doing the discussion by chatting through Google Docs, and their peers could also revise or give comments directly through Google Docs. By doing these kinds of activity they would be able to choose and then integrate their writing with the opinions or comments provided by their friends.

Discussion

Inviting the students in peer correction activities aims at engaging them to write and also to engage their critical thinking. There were some specific activities done during the learning process. In the way they experienced the learning process, they were hoped to experience the four-step-stage learning by Kolb to activate their critical response to the writings.

In peer-correction activity through Google Docs students got firsthand experience. Learning process that was explained through four-stages learning cycle shows that the students experienced various activities when they wrote. In the first stage, the concrete experience, they got firsthand experience to write online with new media, namely Google Docs.

In the second stage, the reflective observation, students got to exchange their writing with their peer and ascertain whether the topics they wrote are what they were asked for, namely descriptive Text. They discussed not only about the topic but also about whether the words or sentences they had constructed in the texts were interrelated and made sense, and they gave mutual input to their peer's writing. At this stage, they could simultaneously learn from their peer writing errors to improve their writing.

In the third stage, they are forced to think critically, ascertain whether the input provided by the peer was in accordance with their writing. It is at this stage that they chose which comments or suggestions would be taken for the improvement and which ones were not suitable for the improvement of their writing. By doing this, they

might practice on sorting and identifying the most suitable suggestion for improving their descriptive texts.

In the last stage, after gaining some experiences and lessons from the activities they had done, giving input to other people's writing, and examining other people's input on his writing, they rewrote their text based on what they had obtained from the previous stages. Based on the observation results it was found that they enjoyed the learning process during learning and practicing on writing descriptive texts. This kind of activity was a new learning activity for the students and they considered this activity needs to be continued. Furthermore, the use of Google Docs as a medium in conducting peer-correction activity is very helpful for assisting their writing activities. They feel facilitated when doing the process of writing. In addition, the features available in Google Docs make it easy for them to do peer-correction activities.

The results of the observation showed that the students were happy with the learning process that occurred because according to them the learning process that had been carried out made the classroom more conducive without meaningful commotion. They focused on writing on their respective laptops or mobile phones. Although they stated that the learning process was quite good and feasible to be continued, there was an obstacle hindered their learning process which is the internet connection, because essentially this activity could be done if we were connected to the internet. This research also found out that peer correction using Google Docs was helpful to facilitate the students in writing process because the activities which occurred during peer-correction helped them in producing sentences, sharing knowledge, giving each other opportunity to give arguments, and developing their critical thinking as well. In doing peer-correction through Google Docs there were some features that were appropriate to be used in the discussion with other friends.

Peer-correction through Google Docs helped to talk with their friends about discussing topics, looking for meaning of vocabulary, and organizing sentence. Google Docs provides many features that can be used during peer-correction process, such as editing and commenting features that are used for discussion and providing input to each other's writing.

From what has been explained above, it can be concluded that the learning process that occurred when doing peer-correction through Google Docs ran well and deserved to be continued. Although there were obstacles in the form of internet connection, but the learning process been carried out has a positive impact on students' learning. In essence, students enjoyed with the learning process they have done.

Conclusion

Peer-correction through Google Docs is one effective approach to encourage the students more to the process of

writing activities especially in improving writing genres of text. Peer-correction can help students to write descriptive text easily. They are able to discuss with their peer to solve the problem faced in writing descriptive text. It is easier when it is combined with online media, Google Docs. The students can do peer-correction everywhere and anytime.

Based on the entire result, it can be concluded that Google Docs is suitable to be applied in the learning process of writing especially in peer-correction activity. The students were very interested in this activity, and they felt that using Google Docs was an effective way to facilitate their learning process. Their learning situation was considered to be more conducive when they did the discussion, gave comment, revised the texts. They did those activities without talking each other, so it did not cause any noisy. In addition, they considered that the learning process like this is worth continuing. This learning process developed macro skills where students can develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

In this research, the researchers also offer some suggestions to the English teachers, students, and the other researchers who will deal with the same topic of research. In this era, technology is a part of our life because technology can help us to be better especially in education. Peer correction through Google Docs is one of the ways that can be applied in writing class.

Peer-correction through Google Docs is recommended for students because the activities help them write texts. Besides, this activity can also be done for doing their assignments. They can exchange the ideas, find new vocabulary, and discuss with their friends to improve their writing ability. If some students do not have laptop, they can also use their mobile phones. For teachers, doing peer correction using Google Docs can help the students to develop their ideas because they can collaborate with their friends to write. Then, they can see their friends' writing. It can help them to learn how their friends develop their ideas. The students can relearn topic sentences and supporting sentences with their friends. In addition, this activity makes it easy for teachers to teach and correct the students' writings. However, the teacher cannot let the students do all activities by their own without monitoring it. Thus, teacher monitoring is also needed especially for the students who need to get more input from the teacher.

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