

Peer Editing on Learner's Writing Skill in a Second-Grade Classroom

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Abstract

This research attempted at knowing the implementation of peer-editing technique in learners' English writing skill and their perceptions to peer-editing for teaching and learning writing. The method used in this research is qualitative study. The subjects of this research were 22 learners of the second semester of English Department of University of Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum (Unipdu) Jombang of 2015/2016 academic year. The instrument for collecting data was students' descriptive texts and questionnaire. The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis. The results of the research showed that, in general, peer-editing technique made the learners' progress on their writing achievement and good perceptions for teaching and learning writing skill of English. This implied that the implementation of peer-editing is significantly improving learners' writing skill.

Keywords: Peer-editing technique, learning writing

Introduction

Peer editing allows for a natural extension of what is already happening in the classroom. Peer learning could become an important tool to provide assistance and a new form of assessment during the EFL writing process in a collaborative classroom environment. Peer editing is included as a tool that helps students assess their own writing assignment (Diaz, 2010:86).

“High-stakes standardized testing can significantly influence the teaching of reading and writing” (Higgins, Miller & Wegmann, 2006). In teaching learning process, much of the instructional focus is on tested skills and concepts. Skills not a part of high-stakes testing, such as writing, are often overlooked. Despite, second grade learners struggle to meet the levels of competency in writing process to become more and more evident. The learners' grammar skills and mechanical writing are consistently in low which is evidenced on grammar skills tests, weekly sentence writing, and journal writing. Students have shown knowledge of concepts in “stand alone” grammar and writing, however, these concepts did not transfer to their independent writing. This observation

led me to explore effective strategies for improving student writing that fit naturally within current classroom practices.

According to Garlid (2014), knowledge of students' attitudes toward writing and awareness of students' interests helps lecturers make connections with their learners, often leading to increased student engagement. Through continuous gathering of information about the student, lecturers focus their instruction in a way that is meaningful and provides opportunities for growth.

Students should be active participants in the correcting and revising of their writing and the writing of their peers. In a study by Annable (2012), introducing metacognition into grammar instruction had a positive impact on student writing. Rather than correcting the students' work for them, she identified grammatical errors and asked the students to correct them. Students were asked to identify common errors made in their writing and then share strategies of how to fix them. This exercise led to more meaningful discussions and the sharing of strategies with their peers. By the end of the study, students could better monitor and communicate the progress made in the development of their writing.

This work by Annable (2012) has shown that when given the necessary tools, students can identify strategies for editing and communicate their mistakes. A successful writer has the ability to identify grammatical errors in writing, express his/her understanding of the errors, and takes a lead role in developing a plan to correct his/her writing. Asking students to move into the role of the teacher to mark suspected errors within their writing encourages reflection and acknowledgment of their current level of skills. A student's ability to self-assess including skills such as monitoring, evaluating, and identifying strategies to improve understanding increases student motivation and achievement (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). The use of a checklist or rubric to assist in self-editing and peer-editing can also hold the students accountable--leading to an increase in ownership and pride in their work.

A vast array of strategies and techniques can be used to improve student writing. Analyzing student writing to develop error-based instruction has been shown to be an effective way to teach grammar and writing instruction. Awareness of a student's writing, by both the teacher and the student, can lead to some of the most effective approaches to developing confident, successful writers. There is no guarantee that a particular strategy will work in every classroom (Graham et al., 2013). It is important to implement chosen strategies with integrity and adjust based on the students' responses in the development of their writing.

There is a significant increase in the number of errors in learners' writing, specifically capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure. Learners are completing writing assignments, however, little time appears to be spent reviewing their writing for grammar and mechanics. There has also been a decrease in the amount of time dedicated to grammar and writing instruction. The grammar and writing activities in some text follow a particular sequence which allows the concepts to build on one another. The focus on specific power standards leads the learners to jump through the themes finding

stories with a particular focus. This makes it difficult to follow a sequence and keep instruction consistent.

Peer editing is increasingly conducted in writing classes since the prevalence of communicative approach in recent years, and it has been proved as an effective approach to improve the writing skill (Corbin, 2012), to increase motivation to writing, and to learn how to treat writing as a collaborative social activity (Farrah, 2012). Therefore, this study was conducted to contribute to EFL students, in general. Peer editing can be a way to open up new possibilities for both writer and editor.

The focus of this study was to answer the following question: How effective will peer-editing have on learner's writing in a second-grade classroom? The 22 participants in this study were from a regular education second-grade classroom. All participants completed the four week study. It is a valuable form of communication that provides individuals with an opportunity to express themselves. Although high-stakes testing often drives scheduling and instruction, it is necessary to make time for writing and identify strategies that will provide learners with opportunities to further develop their writing skills.

Literature Review

Improving learner's writing should be a continuous process (Feng & Powers, 2005; Lacina & Block, 2012; Graham, Gillespie & McKeown, 2013). Lecturers should be analyzing and reanalyzing their learners' writing to identify opportunities for reviewing previously taught concepts and identifying a need for new instruction (Feng & Powers, 2005). Blaauw-Hara (2006) suggests teaching writing as a process with several stages, and when appropriate, sharing one's work with the students. He notes increased engagement in discussion and a willingness of students to ask questions about the process as a result of having shared his work with his students. Several students contributed that they found this process of sharing helpful, not only as a model to help them develop their individual writing process but also encouraging to see that even successful writers have struggles and challenges.

Peer may be seen as less intimidating than working directly with the adult lecturer. Low achieving students in particular tend to seek out higher achieving students a way to improve their writing assignment and better understand the material. Peer editing allows for a natural extension of what is already happening in the classroom. Peer learning could become an important tool to provide assistance and a new form of assessment during the EFL writing process in a collaborative classroom environment. Peer editing is included as a tool that helps students assess their own writing assignment (Diaz, 2010:86).

Corrections written on compositions returned to the student after the process has finished seem to do little to improve their writing skill. According to Rollinson (2004), ideas on the constructive effect of peer review has seemed to be busy work or a waste of time while others consider it as an important learning experience. Peer editing or feedback has recently drawn the researchers' attention around the world and many of them have started to research on it. In fact, over the past twenty years, changes in writing pedagogy and research have transformed editing practices, with teacher comments often

supplemented with peer feedback, writing workshops, conferences, and computer-delivered feedback (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). Sengupt (2000) found that through using peer feedback, the responsibility moved gradually from the teacher to peer, and finally, to the students themselves.

Peer editing is a technique often used in composition and other writing-intensive courses. Students engaged in peer editing trade drafts of material they have written and provide each other with suggestions for improvement. This technique can be used at any point in the writing process-- idea formation, outlining, draft revision, or copy editing a final draft (Phillipson, 2007).

According to Balushy (2000) the steps of doing peer editing are mentioned as followed:

- a. Learners choose the peers.
- b. Learners exchange papers.
- c. Learners are given rubric sheets they provided.
- d. Learners put their own names on the papers they are to edit.
- e. Learners read the essay.
- f. Editors underline the mistakes.
- g. After finishing, learners get their papers back.
- h. Based on the feedback they receive, learners have to correct their mistakes.
- i. While correcting their mistakes, they should consult the editor for clarification.
- j. Remind them to negotiate their mistakes with the editor and it is not guaranteed though that all the peer's suggestions are correct.
- k. Learners are allowed to use dictionaries and class notes while correcting their mistakes.

Research Methodology

This research was qualitative study. This research was conducted with 22 second grade learners of English education department in 2016/2017 academic year.

Then, the editors had to correct and evaluate the essays, and respond to them in a week. After doing the peer editing, the researcher had learners meet their peers for peer negotiation and conference that they had already been taught in the peer editing instruction session. Then, the editors presented their opinions towards the problems and mistakes they had encountered and made an argument with peers to get the problem solved.

The data in this study were collected through participant observation. The data were also obtained from the students' argumentative texts from the first drafts until the final drafts. The learners' writing is used to get the data about the students' improvement after peer-editing technique was applied. It was collected 4 times in each meeting in each cycle that existed in the learners' drafts.

At the end of the term, a survey, survey assessed the students' opinions about specific aspects of the peer editing technique through a multiple-test questionnaire.

Each meeting of the study followed a similar pattern of pre-writing, whole-group instruction, small group mini-lessons, practice exercises, and a final edited copy. Students began by writing the first draft of their sentences. Whole group mini-lessons on peer-editing technique were shared, and small group mini-lessons were developed and implemented based on the students' work. A final copy of the week's sentences was written using what had been learned throughout the week.

Each meeting of the study began with the students writing five stand-alone sentences. Students chose five words from a list of ten vocabulary words included in the weekly writing lesson. The students were asked to write a sentence for each word, using it correctly and showing an understanding of its meaning. Sentences were also scored for correct grammar and writing mechanics. A writing rubric was provided to help each student better understand the expectations of the assignment.

The rubric focused on correct use of capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure. The students were able to see how their sentences would be scored before they began the writing process. The students were given the 30 minute language arts block to complete the task. The entire 30 minute block was provided to accommodate the different needs and learning styles of the students. Writing samples were collected from each student and scored for correct use of capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure following the writing rubric. An error tally sheet was used to mark errors in each of the identified areas prior to peer-editing, and further instruction.

There were three steps of peer editing; compliments, suggestions, and corrections. A peer editing tutorial created by Read-Write-Think influenced the learner's act. After participating in activities and discussion to build upon previous writing and editing concepts, students worked with one another to edit one another's sentences. The students edited the work of two different peers. The students followed the editing checklist, adding verbal and written comments and suggestions. While students worked with one another, the researcher observed their interactions and level of engagement in the editing process. The researcher listened to the discussions students were having and the feedback they were giving and receiving. These observations helped identify areas in peer editing process that needed additional attention.

Data Analysis

Peer-editing on capitalization error.

Data source from an error tally-sheet recorded, recorded the number of errors in capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure. In the writing self-reflection, most students identified capitalization as a strength. During instruction and the editing process, students focused on 3 areas of capitalization. The areas included: capitalizing the first letter of each sentence, proper nouns, and using capital letters only when necessary. The capitalization errors were 79% of the capitalization errors of letters in the middle of sentences. Examples include capitalizing the *t* in *the* and the *n* in *and*. Errors in proper nouns made up 15% of the errors, and less than 1 percent of the errors were made when capitalizing the beginning of each sentence. The 4 students decreased their number of errors from their pre-writing to their final copies by an average of 81%.

Based on the data, students' use of capitalization improved after whole group instruction, and the editing process. A breakdown of each week's decrease in the number of capitalization errors is included in Figure 1.

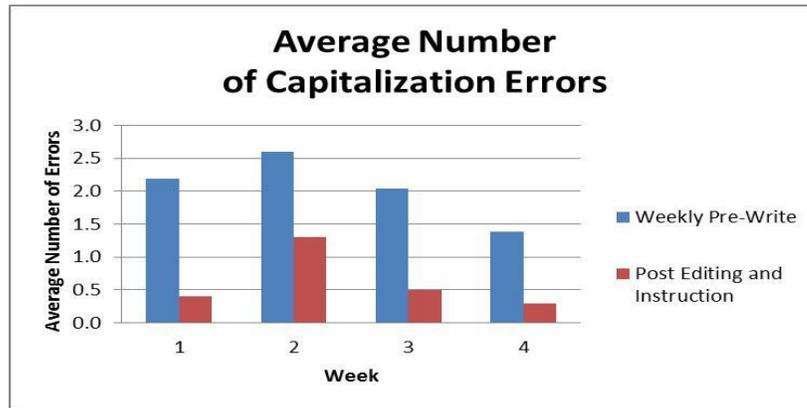


Figure 1. Average number of capitalization errors by week.

Peer-editing on Punctuation error.

The average number of punctuation errors fluctuated from week to week and from pre-writing to final copies. The main focus for punctuation, as noted on the writing rubric, was appropriate use of end punctuation. Student writing samples showed an overall increase in the number of punctuation errors after peer-editing. Of the total errors on the pre-writing samples and final copies, 29% of the errors were due to incorrect use of end punctuation or lack of end punctuation. The data showed that of the 61 errors in end punctuation, 51 of them were for lack of end punctuation. After further analysis, the data indicated that incorrect use or omission of commas made up 61% of the punctuation errors. The average number of punctuation errors from week to week is depicted in Figure 2.

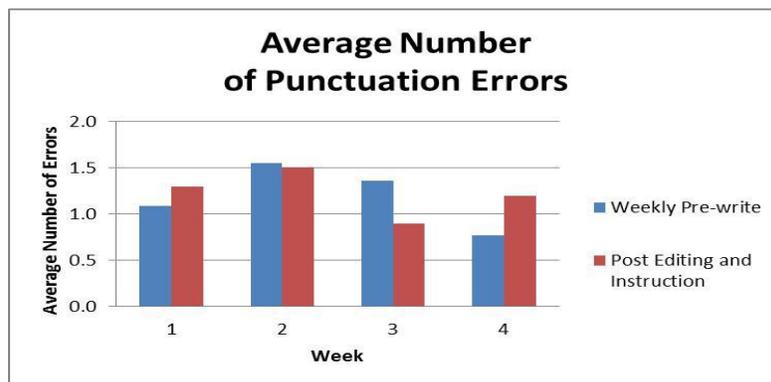


Figure 2. The Average Number of Punctuation Errors by Week.

Peer editing on sentence structure

Sentence structure, identified as the skill that needed the most practice on the student self-reflection, was shown to be the strongest skill for the group as a whole. Based on the data, each student averaged 1 error in sentence structure in each the pre-writing and the post draft throughout the 3 week study. After further analysis of the data collected, students were writing longer, more detailed sentences in their post draft. This may have been a contributing factor for the increased number of errors from their initial weekly writing sample. Results of the students' weekly work are included in Figure 3.

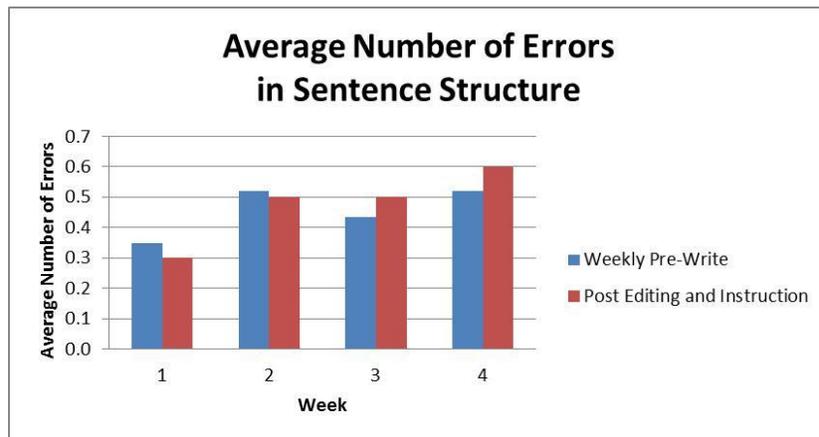


Figure 3. The Average Number of Errors in Sentence Structure by Week.

The average weekly rubric scores, including all three skills (capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure), are shown in figure 3. Based on the data, the learners showed overall improvement on their pre-draft until post-draft.

Aside from week two, the data shows improved scores on the learners' post-assessments as well. After reviewing notes made during observations from week 2, data suggests that students appeared to rush through their final copies, not taking time to review the edits and suggestions made by themselves and their peers. It was also noted that students lacked focus during this work time. Many reminders were also given to follow the editing checklist. The first step on the editing checklist was to read the sentences out loud to listen for pauses and to hear when the sentences stop. As I observed the students, many of them had this step checked off while the room remained silent. The students and I discussed that whisper reading would be acceptable as long as they took the time to hear themselves read the sentences. On the peer-editing side of the checklist, there was a column for comments and suggestions. Students were reminded to provide written feedback for their classmates following the model of suggest, compliment, and correct that was shared during whole group instruction. Before each self- or peer-editing session, the students and I had a short discussion about the importance of following each step of the editing checklist. I shared with them that the purpose of the checklist was to guide them and help them through the editing process. By the end of the study, the students' use of the checklist had improved. Steps such as

reading the sentences out loud needed to be revisited, however, students' effort improved in other steps of the checklist as evidenced by the increased number of comments and suggestions shared with their peers.

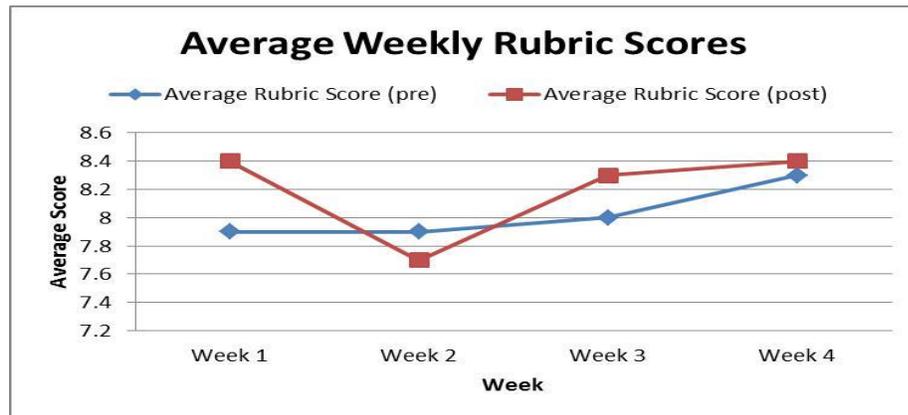


Figure 4. The Average Weekly Rubric Scores.

The results of the content analysis of students' argumentative texts from the first drafts until the final drafts are shown in table 1.

Table 1. The Results of the Content analysis of Learners' Argumentative Drafts

Learners	Rating		Progress
	Pre-draft	Post-draft	
L1	3 (G)	4 (VG)	+1
L2	1 (P)	3 (G)	+2
L3	3 (G)	4 (VG)	+1
L4	4 (VG)	5 (E)	+1
L5	3 (G)	4 (VG)	+1
L6	4 (VG)	4 (VG)	0
L7	1 (P)	3 (G)	+2
L8	2 (F)	3 (G)	+1
L9	3(G)	4 (VG)	+1
L10	2 (F)	4 (VG)	+2
L11	4 (VG)	5 (E)	+1
L12	4 (VG)	5 (E)	+1
L13	4 (VG)	4 (VG)	0
L14	1 (P)	3 (G)	+2
L15	3 (G)	4 (VG)	+1

L16	2 (F)	3 (G)	+1
L17	4 (VG)	4 (VG)	0
L18	5 (E)	5 (E)	0
L19	4 (VG)	5 (E)	+1
L20	1 (P)	3 (G)	+2
L21	4 (VG)	5 (E)	+1
L22	5 (E)	5 (E)	0

Note: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good, 5 = Excellent; + = Progress, 0 = Steady, - = Fluctuate

From table 1 it can be seen that there are some improvements on the learners' writing ability from pre-draft and post-draft after implementing peer-editing technique. Most of them were able to develop their writing ability through 4 times of implementing peer-editing technique. Therefore, by involving the learners to practice their writing from pre-draft until post-draft, the researcher tried to make the students aware of their weaknesses in writing skill. The use of peer-editing technique showed the development of the learner's writing skill during the process of writing until they got the best progress.

To know the learners' reflection on implementing peer-editing, the researcher did the survey by asking them to fill some questions to gather information about the students' feelings toward peer-editing technique. Learners were asked to choose from the following list to describe the perception of peer-editing implementation: boring, difficult, enjoyable, interesting and easy. Learners were given the opportunity to check more than one response. The data showed that 55% of the learners identified peer-editing as enjoyable. But 22 % of them indicated that peer-editing was difficult. Though, 9% of learners argued that peer-editing was easy technique. In the self-reflection, 13% of the learners shared that peer-editing was boring. The learners' responses to their views on peer-editing are included in Figure 5.

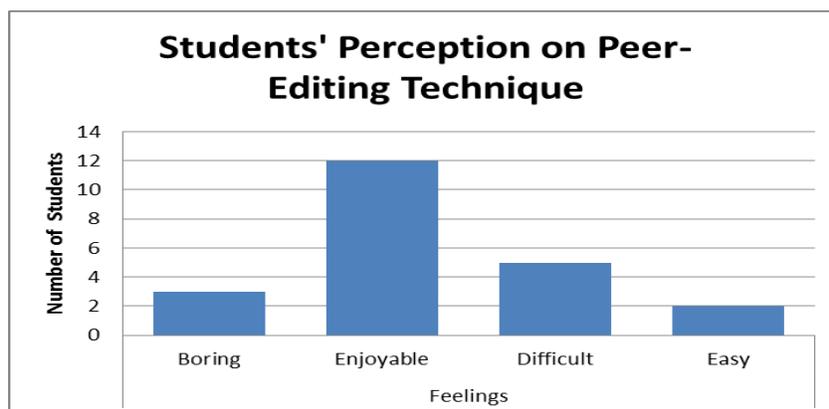


Figure 5: Learners' perception on peer-editing technique

Discussion

The discussion section deals with the results of the analysis of the implementation peer-editing technique. The study got the analyzing from the learners' argumentative texts indicated that they did better the learning process in writing skill. Though, they made some errors in capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure in pre-draft but they got improvement in writing ability seen by their final draft progress.

The learners' progress in their writing ability can be read from the data on table 1 that most of the learners get the progressive point from their pre-draft to the post-draft. 2% of the learners are steady in their point, and 18% of the learners get the progress. Overall, the results of the study showed that peer editing technique had a positive impact on learners' writing.

According to the learners' perception tell that peer-editing is enjoyable technique for them in writing. This is 54% argue that peer-editing is enjoyable technique in learning writing process. Moreover, this means that students learn a lot from their experiences even though they have low entry behavior. By peer-editing, the learners are assumed to be able to improve their writing ability because peer-editing facilitates them to learn more systematically and more easily. Then, Wu and Garza (2014) argue that by error analysis, the learners have their own learning resources so that they can improve their learning process. The learners' effort of trying should be praised, and the lecturer should encourage the learners to engage their writing ability for different purposes in order to language in the different context.

Conclusion

From the result of the study it can be concluded that there was development in learners' writing ability from their pre-draft till post-draft. It indicate that peer-editing technique as a constructive way to make the learners enjoy and easy in learning writing. Though, few of them fell boring and difficult in following peer-editing technique while learning writing.

By this conclusion, it is advisedly recommended that peer-editing technique actually can also be used for the other relevant subjects such as the structure, the vocabulary, the pronunciation, etc. To provide a good and significant achievement in teaching and learning, it should be implemented gradually and systematically. In addition, the lecturers also should allocate enough time during the process of teaching and learning because peer-editing technique provides relatively long and complex steps and procedure to implement.

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