

Using Ekphrasis of Emotional Writing for Improving Emotional Regulation Skills

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Abstract—The goal of this study was to examine the effect of ekphrasis of emotional writing (ETE) on emotional regulation skills. The research method is quasi experiment with a non-parametric counterbalanced design. Participants were 27 students of PGMI Islamic State University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya (with 8 students put in A group, 11 students put in B group, and 8 students put in C group) who completed emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ). Each group received neutral ETE treatment (ETE0), positive ETE (ETE1) and negative ETE (ETE2) in different order. The results of this research indicate that ETE Neutral, ETE Positive, ETE Negative treatment had an effect on the regulation of emotions in groups B and C, while in group A it did not significantly influence. This research confirms that can be applied ekphrasis of emotional writing to improve emotional regulation skill of PGMI Islamic State University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya students.

Keywords— *ekphrasis of emotional writing, emotional regulation*

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional regulation is high ability to manage emotions will increase the ability of individuals to deal with tensions in their lives [1]. Emotion regulation is a set of regulatory processes that can be used to redirect emotions in order to modify the magnitude, latency, and duration of affective responses [2,3]. It includes the management of both positive and negative emotions that arise under a wide range of stressful and non-stressful situations [4].

Students of education teacher are required to develop and create a positive emotional climate. There is a tendency for students who are unable to condition emotional signals that are burden, respond the situations and create a normal culture that is truly needed. Perceiving the practical reality that is needed by students in emotional regulation, the integration of emotional expression and language is an alternative learning for students as prospective teachers to think and form attitudes, values and habits also to control themselves properly.

By observing the emotional regulation students are expected to be able to learn to express and balance emotions appropriately as a foothold of subsequent social life reflections and can improve the ability of thought and Memory [5,6,7,8]. Even by balancing emotions it is

expected to increase the immune system, condition the mood and stress and can trigger positive emotions and self-motivation [9,10].

Therefore, increasing in emotional regulatory skills is a noncognitive skills [11]. The research of Tampubolon, Amelia, Suwartono, goddess, & Estrely has proven the importance of emotional regulation on teachers to cope with stress and self-care [12]. One alternative to being able to do emotional regulation is through precise and balanced emotion disclosure. The researcher developed a counseling model that integrates emotional regulation strategies through writing activities. Writing is an alternative to create a climate of positive emotions. Writing is an expression of Emotional Writing that can put more emphasis on understanding and attitude towards feelings, thoughts and desires [13,14]. The counseling model through writing activities was chosen based on the consideration that basically writing competence can be formed from one's ability to regulate emotions and written language [15]. The implications of emotional writing can give the impression of experience in the form of emotional expression in positive, negative, or neutral emotions.

The ability to express texts that refer to authentic desires is different from encouragement, that is Ekphrasis. Ekphrasis is a form of catharsis communication that is able to represent writing, language and images [16]. This becomes important is the power of emotional writing (ETE) in enhancing images that were initially objective in nature to become objects of reality that are able to reconcile perceptions and interpretations [17]. Psychologically, the results of authentic expressions produce emotional experiences that are pleasant, sensual and have intellectual power with values and aesthetics [18].

Based on the problem in improving students' emotional regulation, it is substantial to apply the counseling model through ekphrasis of emotional writing (ETE) which can be adapted into one of the counseling techniques that can precisely be used to help counsees who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally, so that the counselee can express thoughts, feelings, desires or hopes through writing.

II. METHODS

This research used is quasi experiment with a non-parametric counterbalanced design.

Table 1. Counterbalanced Design

Stage	1		2		3	
Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest	Treatment	Posttest	
Group A	ERQ	X0	ERQ	X1	ERQ	
Group B	ERQ	X2	ERQ	X0	ERQ	
Group C	ERQ	X1	ERQ	X2	ERQ	

Stage	4	
Group	Treatment	Posttest
Group A	X2	ERQ
Group B	X1	ERQ
Group C	X0	ERQ

Note: X0 = Control ETE; X1 = Positive ETE; X2 = Negative ETE

This research involved 27 students of PGMI Islamic State University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya (with 8 students put in A group, 11 students put in B group, and 8 students put in C group). Each group received neutral ETE treatment (ETE0), positive ETE (ETE1) and negative ETE (ETE2) in different order.

The instrument used was Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) adapted by Gross & John [19]. This is a 10-item questionnaire measuring individual differences in respondents' habitual use of two strategies for regulating their emotions, cognitive reappraisal (six items), and expressive suppression (four items). Each question is rated on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 ¼ "strongly disagree" to 7 ¼ "strongly agree") and a higher score indicates greater use of a particular strategy. The range of scores for reappraisal is 6 to 42, and for suppression is 4 to 28. Internal reliability for the ERQ in a student population is acceptable with Cronbach's alpha reported as 0.82 for cognitive reappraisal and 0.76 for expressive suppression.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The collected data (pretest-posttest) were tabulated and prepared before then analyzed. The results of the comparison between Neutral, Positive and Negative ETE treatments in each group with the results of the ERQ post test can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Post-test ERQ Test Results of Wilcoxon Test in Group A, B, and C

Treatment ETE	Comparison ERQ	N	Average	Average Rangking
Group A				
Neutral (ETE0)	Pre	8	39,75	5,56
	Post	8	49,00	11,44
Positive (ETE1)	Pre	8	39,75	7,56
	Post	8	43,63	9,44
Negative (ETE2)	Pre	8	49,00	10,38
	Post	8	43,63	6,63
Treatment ETE	Comparison ERQ	N	Average	Average Rangking
Group B				
Neutral (ETE0)	Pre	11	40,91	8,91
	Post	11	49,09	14,09
Positive (ETE1)	Pre	11	40,91	10,05
	Post	11	45,82	12,95
Negative (ETE2)	Pre	11	49,09	13,23
	Post	11	45,82	9,77
Treatment ETE	Comparison ERQ	N	Average	Average Rangking
Group C				
Neutral (ETE0)	Pre	8	38,13	5,06
	Post	8	55,38	11,94
Positive (ETE1)	Pre	8	38,13	6,50
	Post	8	48,25	10,50
Negative (ETE2)	Pre	8	55,38	9,81
	Post	8	48,25	7,19

Treatment ETE	Total Ranking	Z	p-value
Group A			
Neutral (ETE0)	44,50	2,481	0,833
Positive (ETE1)	91,50		
Negative (ETE2)	60,50	0,789	0,400
	75,50		
Treatment ETE	Total Ranking	Z	p-value
Group B			
Neutral (ETE0)	98,00	1,876	0,003
Positive (ETE1)	155,00		
Negative (ETE2)	110,50	1,052	0,013
	142,50		
Treatment ETE	Total Ranking	Z	p-value
Group C			
Neutral (ETE0)	145,50	1,252	0,003
Positive (ETE1)	107,50		
Negative (ETE2)	40,50	2,894	0,012
	95,50		
Treatment ETE	Total Ranking	Z	p-value
Neutral (ETE0)	52,00	1,680	0,012
Positive (ETE1)	84,00		
Negative (ETE2)	78,50	1,105	0,012
	57,50		

Analysis of the results Neutral ETE, positive ETE, and negative ETE treatment for group A based on Wilcoxon test results obtained a score of 0.833 ($p > 0.05$) so that H_0 is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no change in the average pretest & posttest score in the neutral ETE, positive ETE, and negative ETE treatment in group A. It can be seen that there is no effect of giving ETE Neutral to the emotional regulation of students.

Analysis of the results Neutral ETE, positive ETE, and negative ETE treatment for group B and group C based on Wilcoxon test results obtained a score of 0,003 and 0,012 ($p > 0.05$) so that H_0 is refused and it can be concluded that there is a change in the average pretest & posttest score in neutral ETE, positive ETE, and negative ETE treatment in group B and Group C. It can be seen that, there is an effect of giving neutral ETE, positive ETE, and negative ETE treatment to the emotional regulation of students.

After conducting the treatment text, several words or phrases can be found with two categories, namely; negative and positive words or phrases. Overall all groups in the subject of this study have a tendency to express emotional writing automatically. Expressions of emotions automatically with the following detailed words; 75 positive emotional words with 33 word variations. Negative words are 85 words with 31 word variations. Insight words number 74 words with 53 word variations.

Causal words total 33 words with three word variations. Words or phrases of negative and positive emotions, when correlated with the flow of emotional tendencies, it can be seen at the level of positive emotional tendencies on the axis of hope while the level of negative emotional tendencies has a tendency on the axis of fear. This finding implies that positive emotions can trigger a person to have strong motivation and expectations with his emotional regulation abilities.

Words or phrases of emotion both negative and positive, when correlated with the flow of emotional tendencies, it can be identified the level of positive emotional tendencies on the axis of hope while the level of negative emotional tendencies has a tendency on the axis of fear. In the Emotion Diagram shown above, positive words tend to lead to the axis of hope, while negative words tend to lead to the axis of fear.

Discussion

Basically everyone has different emotional characteristics, even everyone can reflect on words positive emotions (such as happy, comfortable, anthusias and excited), and words of negative emotions (such as anxiety, anger, sadness, shame, and guilty) according to changes in perspective and personal experience. With this kind of emotional expression, everyone has the ability to precisely regulate the emotions of the situation, whether in the selection of situations, behavioral modification, level of attention, or level of change in cognition and self-response [20].

The process of expressing emotions properly is the step of emotion regulation. Emotions arise starting from an event, then the culture translates these events and processes in the capacity of the self (inner state). A moment later the culture reacts and its role is in the form of self-expression. Various forms of self-expression become a measure of a

person's ability to associate emotions with their cognitive. The connection between emotion and cognition becomes a characteristic of emotion regulation especially in reappraisal strategy.

Emotion regulation is the center of the correlation between behavior and emotions among adolescents, adolescents who have low emotional regulation can experience various forms of adolescent psychopathology both from internal and external disorders [21]. In connection with the opinion above, it is obtained data that there are twenty-seven students who have not been able to regulate their emotions and then given the treatment of Neutral ETE, Positive ETE and Negative ETE groups.

In fact, everyone can always get to know themselves through direct expression of emotions. Everyone can do the disclosure of certain emotions, because they want to get a more comfortable feeling, and avoid uncomfortable feelings [22]. The tendency of emotional disclosure that leads to more comfortable feeling is not fully able to be a proper way of responding to certain situations. Sometimes what a person does just an expression of an emotional moment by saying, talking or screaming [23,24]. Unlike the expression of emotion in writing, which further gives emphasis to the understanding and the bribery of feelings, thoughts as a whole [25,26]. Essentially expressions of emotions that feel, will lead to the behavior of aggression. This is due to the weakness of its emotional and self-regulation [27]. The socioemotional experience of prospective teacher students can have significant implications for future included when becoming a teacher [28].

The relationship between ETE and emotion regulation is the use of three dimensions (objects, interpretations and expression patterns) in the process of building emotions. The object of feelings signals that appear expressively automatically in the form of unstructured written expressions. Feeling signals are directed towards interpretations that are aesthetically reflective in the form of structured written expressions. Furthermore, the expression patterns are formed from self abilities with a reappraisal strategy. The ability of emotion regulation through ETE becomes a form of trust and self commitment as an implied meaning to be an adaptive emotional flow.

By writing it is an expression of emotion in writing that can further emphasize the understanding and the bribery of feelings, thoughts and and desires as a whole [29]. The linguistic emotional approach is one of the alternatives that can be used in the express emotion through writing activities. Mechanisms of change occurring in the writing therapy, can be effectively detected in the changes in cognition and memory [30]. The mechanism of change as it happens in the writing process is the target and strategy of skill development of emotional regulation. There are three models of conveyance written expression; Poetry, rhyme, or acrostics. These three types of expressions demonstrate the power of meaningful magical words, or the effects of rhythm that deliver deep communication messages [31].

ETE in this study is a model of therapy involving understanding, emotion, and activities of individual behaviours integratively. A single point of intersection strengthening this conception is the cognitive behavioral (CBT) approach. CBT translates cognition aspects as a self-understanding of attributes, beliefs, memory, hope and self-image. ETE can be used as an alternative model that can be

developed as an emotional action catharsis process, felt more comfortable psychological conditions, reduced depression and post-traumatic, and also improved memory work and performance [32,33]. Even the least important is the ETE can enhance self-expression, self-actualisation and the invention of identity and interaction.

ETE existence for prospective teachers is also needed in the process of learning and habituation of self in conducting emotional regulation. The teacher's emotional regulation in class management can be done through attempts to modify the intensity and duration of a teacher's emotions in the learning process. The process of emotional interaction can give reciprocity to the positive emotions of learners and reduce their negative emotions. It can also be a process of proving discipline and interaction with learners [34]. The power of ETE is to be able to lift a picture of its original objective, to be a reality object that is capable of pairing between perception and interpretation. Psychologically, that the results of expressions that are authentic, produce a pleasant emotional experience, sensual and have intellectual power that contains certain aesthetic values [35].

The integration of emotional and language expression is an alternative learning for students as teacher candidates to think and shape attitudes, values, habits and control themselves appropriately. Indeed, in reality there are still no specific references that can bridge the internalization process of positive emotional self-expression. Further research is expected to have positive implications on PGMI students as prospective teachers who are prepared with the right emotional regulation capabilities, so that they are more mature and have complete personalities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Pursuant to the results of this research, it can be concluded that Ekphrasis of Emotional Writing was effective in improving PGMI Islamic State University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya students' emotional regulation skill in Surabaya, Indonesia. These effects can be seen from the results of the pre-test and post-test that have been done showing that there were differences between before and after treatment. Although modeling were effective, modeling was more effective in groups B and C, while in group A it did not significantly influence. The findings of this study can provide new understanding for guidance and counseling development in Indonesia.

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