Enhancing High Degree Students' Movie Critical Review Writing Skills through Project-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT

The effort to improve students' review writing skill on fiction work has been a challenge from time to time. Yet, lecturers keep finding ways to sort out the problem. Rather than beginning with a thick novel to critically review, the present researcher acting as the lecturer in this action research then invited the students to work on movies that adapted from canon and contemporary novels. The study was conducted in eight Fiction (subject) classes that each class consisted of 25-40 students. To obtain comprehensive data, the researcher collected through observation, evaluation, and questionnaire. The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) invited students to work in groups that each of them had the autonomy to manage their group as each group should produce a movie critical review. The use of movies adapted from canon – the 1st cycle – and contemporary – (2nd cycle) novel in the students' creation of movie critical review reveals increasing scores. It is assumed as an indication that movies adapted from contemporary novels which expose current life issues which close to their lives are more tangible than working on movies adapted from canon novels.

Keywords: movies, writing skill, group, project, novels, project-based learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning comprises four language skills to acquire and those four skills are interrelated. To be good at delivering ideas verbally or in written, it is necessary for one to be skilled at four language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Though one may be good at one of the language skills, it is impossible to ignore three other language skills. One of the important language skills for high degree students is writing..

The significance of teaching writing and literature to high degree students, particularly fiction work can work in two ways. In the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes, improving students' writing skill needs to be emphasis as the students are demanded to be good at writing. Teaching writing through fiction work, particularly movies, can be motivating to students (Ismaili, 2013), as it provides creativity of the writers in developing stories and imagination concurrently. This logic drives the present researcher who is also a lecturer of Fiction class, is intending to conduct an action research in her class.

However, teaching literature, like fiction work at the aim of improving review writing skill at a high degree level becomes a particular challenge to some EFL lecturers. There are some reasons why it becomes a challenge to teach fiction in an EFL context., such as the language, culture, history, political references. Those elements often arise in a fiction work that necessarily exist to accentuate a fiction work and even to attract the readers to read. Besides looking at attribution within the fiction work, delivering literature work interestingly can help to improve EFL students' language skill, particularly writing. Responding to this matter, teaching review writing on fiction work needs a certain learning model that can facilitate the needs.

In the context of teaching review writing skills on fiction work in such a big class, lecturers consider that Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a more suitable one compared to other learning models. Besides, the characteristics of PBL also correspond to the needs of 21st century learning trends: communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, and creativity. Confirming this argument, Larmer, Mergendoller and Boss (2015, p.1) stated that PBL generated some features acquired by the leaners such as "problem solvers, responsible, work well with others, can work independently, critical thinker, confident, manage time and work effectively, communicate well with

variety of people." Chiang and Lee (2016) seem to agree with such an idea that project-based learning model generates students' skills to work cooperatively, creatively, and thinking critically that leads them to be able to solve problems independently. Though those qualities may exist in conventional teaching method – teacher centred, those qualities are more consistently emerge within PBL practice. In the conventional learning model, which tends to create passive students does not meet the current learning trend. Therefore, the learning goal to create students who can adapt with the needs of the 21st needs is believably achieved with the implementation of PBL.

Several researches on the implementation of PBL show positive result. Nurina's (2019) research showed that the implementation of PBL in teaching writing through fiction – short stories – has succeeded in improving SHS students' writing skill. Such encouraging reality is also found in Lee, Blackwell, Drake and Moran's (2014) research. Through their research they suggest that PBL in higher education is encouraged. In this kind of learning model, high degree students' engagement in a literature class is more positive. Minimum scaffolding from their lecturer increases students' freedom and autonomy (Grant, 2009; English & Kitsantas, 2013; Stefanou, Stolk, Prince, Chen & Lord, 2013). Students' autonomy can lead to self-efficacy that students "play active role in their own learning process" (Shin, 201, p. 95). In this context, autonomy is defined as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holes as cited in Barilarro, 2011). In her research, Grant (2009), also, Harmer and Stokes (2016) asserted that such freedom and autonomy have driven the students who work in groups to complete their project and begin to be responsible for accomplishing their given project. The students learn how to collaborate with and tolerate their group mates, so that their project can be done properly. Project-based learning model is also effective in enhancing students' motivation (Shin, 2018; Oh, Chan, & Kim, 2020; Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016). Their motivation derives from their active participation in their group, because the group project has made them "to construct their own knowledge and reflect upon their learning projects' ' (Shin, 2018, p.1). It means that PBL holds a significant role in the students' knowledge and soft skill development as these two are rooted on motivation (Dornyei, 1998; Chiang and Lee, 2016). The implementation of PBL in higher degree level also reported that students have better attainment in elaboration, metacognition, and critical thinking (Stefanou, Stolk, Prince, Chen & Lord, 2013).

Different from the previous researches, the present study invited the class to work in group that carried out during the covid-19 outbreak and the teaching learning process held online. Thus, the researcher carried out the research in her *Fiction* class and implemented PBL in its online teaching learning process. This present study

aims: to find whether the PBL can improve the students' writing and critical thinking skill or not; to find how the implementation of PBL can improve the students' review writing and critical thinking skill on a fiction work, particularly fiction movies; and to find how the students' responses to the implementation of Project Based Learning can improve students' review writing skills on a fiction work, particularly films adapted from novels.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This action research was conducted around two months. The researcher conducted the study in eight classes of the 7th semester students of Fiction class that each class consists of 25-40 students. Two types of data collection were conducted by doing evaluation, sharing questionnaire, and observation. To collect the data, the researcher provided guidance of doing observation, students' group assignment, questionnaire for the student respondents.

This research data was analysed in accordance with the type of data:

- Quantitative data which are derived from the students score which comprises students' activeness in their class participation, knowledge, and project result. The quantitative data will be analyzed descriptively and taking the percentage of the score increase of the students' work. It uses this formula:

$$\frac{\text{Student' Score}}{\text{Maximum score}} \times 100\% = \text{Result}$$

- Qualitative data which are derived from questionnaire and observation will be analysed through several steps: data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. Since every cycle provides its own qualitative data, the researcher then will compare the findings of both cycles.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3. 1.1. Observation Result

Prior the learning-cycles, the researcher conducted observation. The researcher observes the teaching-learning process covering learning phases, teaching-learning method, students' interaction with their peers in group work, and teaching-learning facilities during the distance learning.

At this observation stage, the researcher found that many students find challenges in creating critical review on movies, lack of students involvement in group works in the previous learning model, low of students' enthusiasm in accomplishing group project. In the first cycle, it was found that some students already understood how this learning method is used properly but not a few

of them who still showed low performance in criticizing a literary work. There are still many of them who only show a summary of the literary work they are analysing without writing a critique in their writing. Most of them are also lacking in building an argument in their reviews. The second cycle found that students seems to enjoy reviewing movies adapted from contemporary novels. More students began to work on track as informed of how a proper movie critical review should be that they learnt from the previous cycle and the preliminary session given by the lecturer.

3.1.2. Evaluation

Table 1. Comparison of Total Assessment Result

	1st Cycle	2nd Cycle	Percentage of Comparison
TOTAL	20038	20670	3%
Average	75,62	78	3%

From the table above, it can be seen that the comparison of the total assessment results between the first and second cycles. The first cycle used films that are adapted from canon novel show a total result of 20038 with an average of 75.62. Meanwhile, the second assessment cycle is the result of the assessment of the contemporary film reviews chosen by the students themselves. The total result shows 20670 with an average of 78. The comparison percentage from the first cycle to the second cycle is 3% which is an increase from the previous cycle to the second cycle.

Table 2. Difference of result in percentage

Comparison percentage	Sum of Students	Percentage of difference
(21%) - (30%)	14	5%
(11%) - (20%)	51	19%
(1%) - (10%)	78	29%
0%	18	7%
(-1%) - (-10%)	93	35%
(-11%) - (-20)%	11	4%
Total	265	100%

Table 3. Percentage of the highest difference of assessment result

Highgest Difference	26%
	-14%

Around 11 students experienced a decrease in changes in grades by (-11%) – (-20%) and 93 other students experienced a decrease in changes in grades by (-1%) – (-10%). However, many students experienced an increase in the change in assessment such as, 78 students experienced a change in grades of approximately (1%) – (10%), 51 students experienced a change in grades of approximately (11%) – (20%), and 14 students experienced a change in grades by (21%) – (30%). The remaining 18 students underwent a permanent assessment. The highest difference in the increase in student grades was (26%) while the lowest difference in the decline in student grades was (-14%).

To conclude, that Project-Based Learning can be well received by students. This study uses two literary works in the form of film to compare the result of the students' performances. For the first film, it is an adaptation of a canon film where there are still many students who are less than optimal in writing criticism of the film. The second uses contemporary movies which can be seen changes in student performance, most of the students increase their ability in their writing of critical reviews of the film.

3.1.3. Questionnaire Result

The following 3 (three) charts derived from distributed google form (questionnaire tool) to students related their perception of the benefits of movie critical review writing.

7. Membuat project "Critical Review on a fiction work: movies" meningkatkan daya berpikir kritis saya.
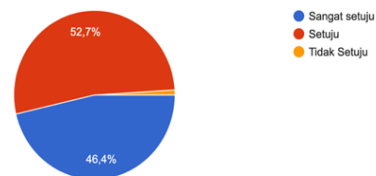207 jawaban

Chart 1. Students' perception on their enhanced critical thinking skill due to movie critical review project

11. Saya lebih menyukai mengkritisi film yg diadaptasi dari:
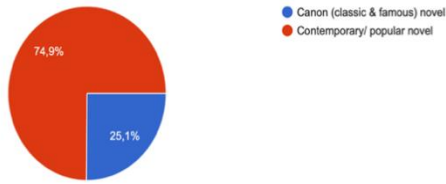207 jawaban

Chart 2. Students' preference on the object of movie critical review

Membuat critical review pada karya fiksi dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis akademis saya.
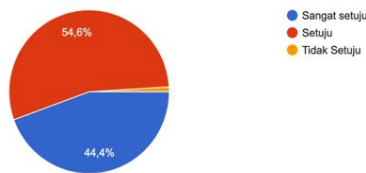207 jawaban

Chart 3. Students' awareness of the benefits of movie critical review to enhance their writing skills.

3.2. Discussion

Developing students' life skills at academic environment is challenging as it involves some parties and time consuming. As reported by many students, PBL integrated with group work has brought them to acknowledge some life skills such as problem solving, communication, creativity, responsibility, and self-direction. This indicates that the PBL course had an impact on the development of life skills.

Working collaboratively in distance learning method when the students completed their project of movie critical review showed positives life skills. One of them is leadership skill as students has to act as a leader of a group as well as self-leadership, as shown chart 4: *PBL fosters sense of leadership*. They have to manage their group or self-time and work distribution with their groupmates.

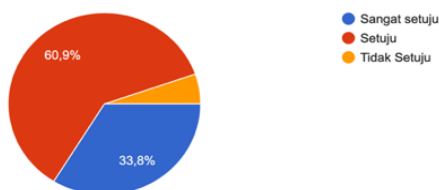5. Belajar dalam grup meningkatkan kemampuan leadership saya.
207 jawaban

Chart 4. Group working & students' leadership skill

Project-based learning seems to succeed in engaging the students to explore their selves in solving problems. First, students have to organize their groupmates. Then they have to manage each member's workload to carry out the project at the aim of producing their best outcome. Such organization requires competence to create plans and timeline, tolerance, time management, and communication skills. In the future time, there is possibility that obstacles come from the members itself as one may have different pace of working than the others. Also, the result of the project may be not as planned and expected. It means that they may be necessary to repeat one of the steps among of these: planning, evaluating, reflecting. Such a route of process during project accomplishment is plausibly lead the students to train their life skills.

Project-based learning has apparently succeeded to enhance the students' movie critical review writing skills. Using some indicators of scoring, such as follows: (1). scope and content, (2).Critical Writing. (3) Development os Story (flow and style). (4). Grammatical Correctness. Sum of 74.9% student respondents prefer to have familiar and current issues in the object of critical review as shown in their choice or contemporary movies. The rest of numbers as much 25.1% prefer to have canon/ classic novel adapted to movies as the object.

5. CONCLUSION

Project-Based Learning is a learning method that uses projects or activities as media. Students are asked to be more active and also more critical in applying these learning methods. This project is applied among the students so that in the future, students can be more thinking critically. This study applies a project to review two films for comparison in group performance. The two films used in this study are films adapted from canon novels that have been determined by the lecturer and also films adapted from contemporary novels selected by the students themselves. The point is to compare which results are more optimal for students in critically reviewing a film. From the data presented above, it shows that there is an increase in the project reviewing two films with different time backgrounds.

In the first cycle, there were still many students who lacked participation in responding to the project. This is because they are still not used to it and also think that the project is a challenge so that many students did not show enthusiasm in reviewing a film adaptation from a canon novel. While in the second cycle, several changes were found, one of them was a change in the enthusiasm of students from reviewing contemporary films adapted from contemporary novels as well as critically. From the results of the data shows an increase about 3%. The first cycle used films from canon novel adaptation which shows a total result of 20038 with an average of 75.62. Meanwhile, the second assessment cycle is the result of

the assessment of the contemporary film reviews chosen by the students themselves. The total result shows 20670 with an average of 78. The comparison percentage from the first cycle to the second cycle is 3% which is an increase from the previous cycle to the second cycle. Around 11 students experienced a decrease in changes in grades by (-11%) – (-20%) and 93 other students experienced a decrease in changes in grades by (-1%) – (-10%). However, many students experienced an increase in the change in assessment such as, 78 students experienced a change in grades of approximately (1%) – (10%), 51 students experienced a change in grades of approximately (11%) – (20%), and 14 students experienced a change in grades by (21%) – (30%). The other 18 students are remained stable. The highest difference in the increase in student grades is (26%) while the lowest difference in the decline in student grades is (-14%). The researcher also found improvisation of student writings in criticizing a film using the PBL method. To sum up, PBL is one of the successful methods applied to 7th semester students to improve students' writing and thinking by using a comparison of two films, namely canon and contemporary films adapted from novels.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This research article is one of the outcomes of a work hard of Yeny Prastiwi as the main researcher with the other two members of research group, Febian Martha and Candra Septiawan.

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