

Dialogue Journal Writing in Building Students' Awareness on Local Wisdom and English Writing Skill

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Abstract--Developing English communicative competence while integrating ideal characters as good Indonesians can be applied to English language teaching. The students can use English in foreign ways to communicate leading them without disregarding their local norms, values, and cultures. One of way is applying communicative teaching strategies. One of teaching strategy that can be applied in language teaching is Dialogue Journal Writing. This paper discusses the use of dialogue journal writing in teaching writing skill for *Imam Bonjol State Islamic University* students in the academic year 2017/2018. The result of the research showed that Dialogue Journal Writing could help the students to be better in mastering writing components and developing ideas. In addition, inserting local wisdom concept through narrative text especially the legends contributed the building of their awareness on their culture and helped the students to be better writers which in turn the lecturers were able to lead them to develop ideas in their writing. It implies that Dialogue Journal Writing was one of interesting teaching writing strategies for a brighter future of English teaching and learning in Indonesia's multilingual society.

Key words--*Dialogue journal writing, awareness, local wisdom, writing skill*

I. INTRODUCTION

The national system of education stipulates the importance to develop students' competence and to build their characters aiming to develop a better civil society in the future. In particular, the objective of education is to expand students' potency in conforming the Oneness of God, exercising noble characters, being healthy, well-informed, skillful, innovative, and self-reliant, which in turn will create democratic and responsible citizens for the development of Indonesia [1]. It is similar to the objective of English language teaching which is not only develop students' proficiency, but also build their characters in accordance to local norms and values in line with the culture and national philosophy: *Pancasila*. English teaching will contain learning contextual communication [2]. English Proficiency (i.e., integrating writing skill) is supposed to reflect the appropriate character values [3]. In other words, the students are expected to have English competence demonstrating their global knowledge depicting culturally accepted characters as Indonesians.

English writing skill is as one of skill to be quiet mastered by any major of students at colleges in order to explore their English competence including State Islamic University students of *Imam Bonjol Padang*. Every student should be given the chance to view writing as a way to represent life experiences. To give students this experience, lecturers must show their students that they see the value in and potential joy of writing. The students can use English in foreign ways to communicate leading them without disregarding their local norms, values, and cultures. Therefore, lecturers should be able to create meaningful atmosphere, joyfully, creative, dynamic and dialogic of education [1]. It implies that teaching process should be shifted from talking about language to doing something with language. Thus, the atmosphere of the writing classroom should be warm and supportive, and non-threatening. It helps the students can work together, assist each other, and review each other's texts.

One of way to build students' skill in English writing and to be better in character in line with local norms and values is implementation of Dialogue Journal Writing in teaching process. Dialogue Journal Writing is a written conversation between two people in which the student and the teacher communicate regularly whether is daily, weekly depending on the educational setting and solve problems about learner's writing ability [4]. Activities on dialogue journal is to communicate through writing not on form [5], [6]. Thus, students can write freely, without focusing on form. Teacher-student or student-student can be engaging in writing activity. Teachers do not correct mistakes but respond as a partner in a conversation [7]. In this case, the students may write as much as they choose and the lecturer writes feedback regularly, respond to the students' questions, asking questions and comment, introduce new topic. The lecturer is as a participant in ongoing, written conversation with the students rather than as evaluator who corrects or comments on students' writing skill.

The main objective of using dialogue journals in the English language classroom is to give students more time and opportunities for writing so they can experience the pleasure of communication through the written word and at the same time become better writers in English. Through a dialogue journal,

teacher and every student can do communication freely. One more community builder is that the teacher can offer praise, encouragement or simply understanding without the student feeling uncomfortable with peers. In addition, students at first may feel afraid to write, but after some encouragement and experience writing in the non-threatening context about subject matter they enjoy, they develop confidence and a more open attitude toward writing [7].

In line with the concept of offered in Dialogue Journal Writing, lecturers can insert more on the topics written by students by including the cultural, social topics that surround them. This is confirmed by the experts that language learning may contain some basic principles of life transferred through socio-cultural values and norms [8], [9]. Such values and norms could be used as daily life guidelines. Diaz-Rico states that culture involves belief and values, rhymes, rules, and roles [8].

Inserting the Indonesian culture into English writing is in line with the motion that stated the students' daily lives, cultures, environment, hopes and fears, and needs must be involved in what is happening around them in the class during the teaching and learning process [10]. The topic given to the students can raise the students' awareness to their local culture. Awareness theoretically equals to consciousness-raising. According to Schmidt, awareness is a deliberate attempt on the part of a teacher to increase learners' awareness of the perceived information to the state of being conscious of the information, notice the relationship between the information and the contexts, turn the relationship into learning, and be able to apply the learning to various contexts autonomously [11].

Culture has explicit and implicit patterns for living, dynamic system of commonly agreed-on symbols and meaning, knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, behaviors, traditions, and/or habits shared that make up the total way of life in constructing a personal identity. Similarly, the socio-cultural value is called local wisdom. Wisdom is the skill to be able to put oneself in any situation gracefully without causing any harm so ever [12], [13]. Therefore, pertaining to the purpose of education, character building should consider local wisdoms. The lessons from local wisdoms, in particular, may be taken from the meaning of local legends, folklores, and special places in the village, certain traditional/monumental objects, building, rivers, mount/hill, forest, and the like. The lessons from local wisdom may contain particular meaning of norms and values to understand [9].

The previous researches have proved that Dialogue Journal Writing is better to improve students' skills in such speaking, reading comprehension, writing skill on e-mail. Dialogue Journal can also improve students' learning strategy, anxiety and motivation [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]. It can also improve deaf students to write [22]. Using Dialogue journal writing can enhance intellectual growth and development is achievable by most learners, especially as they gain more experience with the writing or recording procedures; can increase self-confidence not only in the classroom but in many other settings; can helps in the solution of problems; and can improve various aspects of personal health [23]. In addition, the research about awareness on local wisdom had been

conducted by Sa-ngiamwibool [24] He stated that awareness tasks could lead the learners to realize these objects of awareness: nature of experiential learning, subject content, and skill content. Yunita also found that the process of incorporating the local wisdom in folklores into the English short stories will stimulate the students' creativity in writing [25].

Concerning on the strength of Dialogue Journal Writing as an innovative way to build and solve the students' skill on English writing as well as increase their awareness on their local cultures. This research paper is aimed at finding out how the use of Dialogue Journal Writing affects each component of writing skill and to know how significance the students' writing improvement was. This study also examines how dialogue Journal writing builds students' awareness on local wisdom at State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang. In doing writing projects, the students write essay type. Essay writing is a process and needs to be done in various stages, namely; understanding the task, plan and prepare, write first draft, review first draft, Write, and final draft [26]. Writing an essay is an opportunity to learn the material and to show what it is known. It is an opportunity to read more widely around a subject area. This guide will take the writer through these steps and help them on their way to producing a good essay. Some researchers have searched English essay writing in different areas [27], [28], [29]. In this case, they are asked to write the various topics related to folklores and legends where they are coming from. The finding implies that the English lecturers have to use dialogue journal writing to enhance the quality of teaching and the students' English writing skill at State Islamic University of *Imam Bonjol* and it can be one of interesting teaching writing strategy for brighter future of English teaching and learning in Indonesia multilingual society.

II.METHOD

This was an experimental research type. Thirty active students at first semester in academic year 2017/2018 of two Arabic classes were chosen through cluster random sampling technique, participated on this research [30]. The study was carried out in 7 meetings. On the first meeting, the students were asked to take a pretest in a 50-minute class period before the dialogue journal writing project.

The instrument of this research was an essay writing test that proposed by Gronlund [31]. The items were designed to examine the students' fondness for dialogue journal writing activity. The indicators in writing skill were used content (27-30), organization(18-20),vocabulary (18-20),language use (20-25), and (5) mechanics [32], [33]. Choosing one of the best of 4 topics to be written was as a form of writing test (*Malin Kundang, Batu menangis, Timun Mas, desa sungai jernih*). There were three generic structures that should be quiet mastered by the students in writing text namely, orientation, complication, and resolution.

The procedures that had been conducted were: (1) giving a brief introduction on the general purpose of the study and on the guidelines needed to be achieved for the following 7 weeks; (2) the students joined in the dialogue journal writing project; (3) they were required to submit the reading text on various legends

in Indonesia, write on their day class so that they would have more time on weekends to develop their ideas; (4) the lecturer responded to the journals collected based on what they wrote by showing empathy, asking questions, providing suggestions, motivating further thinking, or sharing their life experiences. After conducting dialogue journal writing project, the students were asked to take a post-test for 50 minutes and the activity was continued by interviewing the students about their idea about values that they got from reading and writing activities.

Finally, the researcher gathered, computed, and analyzed the scores. There were two types of data analysis, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative analysis was used to describe the students' responses on dialogue journal writing on students' writing. Quantitative analysis was used to describe the effect Dialogue Journal Writing and analyze the gain score groups by using t-test. Samples of the students' journal entries were also selected and discussed. All the data were input into the computer, and then analyzed to get descriptive and inferential statistics.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Effect of Dialogue Journal Writing towards Students' Writing Skill

The implementation of dialogue journal writing gave significant influence on English writing skill of Arabic Students at State Islamic University of *Imam Bonjol* Padang. It can be seen from the students' scores on the following tables below:

TABLE 1. DATA DESCRIPTION OF PRETEST AND POST TEST OF STUDENTS' WRITING

Description	Pretest	Post test	t-test	p-value
Resp	30	30	3.397	0.05
Mean	52.65	81.44		
St. Deviation	4.78	5.02		

The mean scores are 52.65 for the pre-test and 81.44 for the post-test. A comparison of the scores between the two tests indicates a gain of 29. The paired *t*-test is 3.397, and the *p*-value is .05 ($p < .05$), which shows a significant difference. It can be concluded that the dialogue journal writing project promotes the students' writing skill. Their mastery on writing skill components can be seen on the following table.

TABLE 2. STUDENTS' MASTERY ON WRITING SKILL COMPONENTS

No	Writing Skill Components	Students	Mean Score	
			Before	After
1	Content	30	14.35	23.25
2	Organization		12.45	17.35
3	Vocabulary		10.35	18.34
4	Language use		12.61	19.35
5	Mechanics		2.30	3.15
Mean score			52.65	81.44

Based on the table above, it can be seen that students' mastery on all writing components in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics can be

improved significantly by using dialogue journal writing for seven meetings. The mean score of each item on the participants' posttest is higher than that on their pretest ($M = 23.25 > 14.35$ for content; $M = 17.35 > 12.45$ for organization; $M = 18.35 > 10.35$ for vocabulary; $M = 19.35 > 12.61$ for language use; and $M = 3.15 > 2.30$ for mechanics. The mean score before doing writing was 52.65 and 81.44 after treatment for seven weeks. It means that the students write and lecturer gives responses intensively towards students' writing can enhance students to master writing skill well. In addition, the students could elaborate their ideas on generic structure of narrative text namely orientation, complication and resolution. Each of part of generic structure was better improved. The students' performance on dialogue journal activities fluctuated in each task. In the first journal writing assignment, almost the students just wrote a few sentences with incorrect grammar, spelling, and organization of text. However, on the second and third assignment, average students were able to write better. In a few weeks later, almost the students did write with various topics well in all aspects of writing components. It is concluded that the students' skill in English writing is better than before by using Dialogue journal writing.

B. The Students' Awareness on Local Wisdom through English Writing

The students' awareness on local wisdom can be seen on their weekly essay writing. The students are able to elaborate their ideas through the lecturer's responses on their writing. Related to the students' writing process, the lecturer leads them by giving some questions to the students, for instances, the characters, the place, and the moral values. Even though they are not so fluent in writing ideas, they can develop ideas on their story well. Among the lessons they have learned is that they know the folk stories or legends that exist around them and other places. Besides, writing legends around them can lead to a love of culture, faith, integrity, and other positive attitudes. Most of them state that they love their culture. The role of lecturer in students' writing is that the lecturer can help the students to observe other values and compare them to their own religious value and attitude. This activity will enhance students' apprehension on how language and culture are related in shaping the world view and that there are varieties of moral standard in different places and time.

For their writing test, most of the students have chosen *Malin Kundang* legend topic for their writing. *Malin Kundang* is full of values According to them, *Malin Kundang* legend has been legendary and many lessons can be taken from the story. Among the lessons that can be taken is to respect parents with however they are. The moral message from the story of *Malin Kundang* is not to be ungodly with parents especially a mother because she who conceives and gives birth to us and the word parent is prayer. The most efficacious prayer is parental prayer especially a mother's prayer and don't forget our mother's services when we are successful. In other word, they learn that perfidiousness to mother will bring misery. So, respect mother if we want to be successful in life.

To achieve the local wisdom-based character education, it requires understanding, awareness, cooperation, and participation of all learning elements. Local cultural wisdom should become the basic model and the implementation of character education in Indonesia. Thus, this concept will not only develop the students' character education but also their knowledge and skill. It is expected that lecturers can develop teaching material by providing local literary works that will help students to gain understanding related to character value.

Language and culture are inseparable since language itself is a product of culture and culture cannot be expressed or communicated, therefore cannot be transfer to the next generation, without language. By all means, teaching a language means also teaching much more things, including the culture where the language is originally from. One of way is inserting cultures in English language teaching technique.

Dialogue journal writing is as an innovative way to build the college students to be better writer. The result of the research showed that dialogue journal writing gave significant effect to improve students to write English. The students' English writing components such as content, organization of text, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics in writing were better improved.

Students positive responses to the dialogue journal writing were as a tool for self-understanding. Furthermore, they felt that writing was a meaningful process because they were not dictated to write, which supports the argument that humans develop in knowledge and skills through acting on their natural interests [34]. Teachers' entries can provide input slightly above learners' proficiency level to help them improve their language skills [35]. In addition, the permission to write freely about whatever they want prevents writer's block and reduces fear of writing. Students gain confidence as writers, become autonomous learners, and are more motivated to express themselves in writing [36], [17], [37], [38].

Inserting the values of local wisdom in the teaching process at colleges is an absolute thing to continue to do. This is due to the rapid development of technology that can lead students slowly towards what is no longer in line with educational goals [25]. The students can use English in foreign ways to communicate leading them without disregarding their local norms, values, and cultures. In addition, inserting local cultural topics into the learning process, especially in English language writing is a strategy that provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the achievement of understanding or meaning created through various cultural manifestations based on certain cultural values and local wisdom. The students are expected to be able to create meaning that is valid for them based on the interaction between knowledge that has been owned, known, and trusted; with new symptoms, ideas, or information obtained in the educational process that he took. *Malin Kundang* legend, for instance, can help the students to have positive attitudes like love of the culture, faith, integrity, and other Therefore, the cultural values and local wisdom in question must be presented in the learning or lecture class.

The results of interviews with students about the awareness they gained through their writing showed that they got some advantages. They had learned was that they knew the folk stories or legends that existed around them and other places. Besides, writing legends around them can lead to a love of culture, faith, integrity, and other positive attitudes. Most of them stated that they love their culture.

IV. CONCLUSION

English language teaching has become an important component to develop the quality of human resources which will, in turn, become a strategic asset to develop science and technology leading Indonesia to become a competitive nation. Lecturers play a strategic role in guiding their students to develop communicative competence of English writing. This indicates that such communicative competence reflects character values that speakers may refer to as their cultures. These values are important to develop students' spoken and/or written communication skills. In short, cultural awareness/understanding is an important issue in English communicative competence.

Using dialogue journal writing on English teaching classroom at State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang has given some valuable input for students' writing skill. The students have been better writer in developing and constructing ideas into their writing. Inserting local wisdom concept through narrative text especially the legends can build their awareness on their culture and help the students to be better writer since that lecturer can lead them to develop idea in their writing. It implies that Dialogue Journal Writing can be one of interesting teaching writing strategy for brighter future of English teaching and learning in Indonesia multilingual society.

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