

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF *ESTAFET WRITING GAME* AND *PICTURE BASED-CREATIVE WRITING* TO NURTURE LOVE OF WRITING

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Abstract: To create a quality education, mainly on EFL instruction, the EFL teachers need to be empowered by improving their teaching quality. The students, in addition, should also be engaged during the instructional activities. Due to the fact that love of “writing” as one of the language skills is not yet established among the EFL university students, the effort of finding out an innovative way of helping them to establish love of creative writing is a must. One of the ways is collaborative writing through *Estafet Writing Game* and *Picture-Based-Creative Writing* strategies. Thus, this article aims at describing the students' voices on the use of those strategies to establish love of creative writing. The study conducted through a reflective survey to 165 EFL university students reveals that most of the respondents prefer *Estafet Writing Game* to *Picture-Based Creative Writing* in terms of its effectiveness to build their creativity and spontaneity of writing skills. To sum up, these strategies are pedagogically meaningful to improve the EFL students' creative writing, because they can collaborate with their peers and promote their cooperative communication. Therefore, it is useful to establish love of writing and to stimulate their ideas for writing.

Keywords: *Estafet Writing Game, Picture-Based Creative Writing, Writing Skills, Writing Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

There are many studies concerning the writing for EFL students. Yet, it is hardly found a study on building love of writing. Kiriakos & Tienari, (2018) prove that advocating the perspective of love can encourage discussion on academic writing so that it reflects the multifaceted experiences of writers and unleash its potential in confusing and disrupting. Moreover, love offers a language to talk about vulnerability and courage and viewing writing in the light of love can help students to learn more about themselves and their activities as writers. Besides, McDonough et.al (2018) who conducted a study on the quality of collaborative writing, collaborative prewriting, and individual texts in Thailand- in which English is considered as a foreign language as that in Indonesia- found “the collaborative texts were more accurate than the collaborative prewriting and no collaboration texts, while the collaborative prewriting and no collaboration texts contained more subordination.” Therefore they suggest the future researchers to investigate the role of collaboration at various stages in the L2 writing process.

It is often claimed that writing is not an easy subject to learn. The fact revealed from observation to students taking Writing Course at tertiary level indicates that the students who are learning to write get problems in starting what to write and how to write. A study of Phuket & Othman (2015) also proves that writing is the most difficult language skill for EFL students; therefore, they investigate the sources of error they usually made. Various problems concerning EFL writing such as lack of linguistic knowledge, word-for-word translation, cohesion errors, and lack of academic style have also raised (Hammad, 2016), writing awareness (Thuy, 2016), lexical and content aspects of writing (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014), punctuation and capitalization, grammatical structure, and language use (Nazim, 2018). Some other problems concerning students' English essay writing problems included lack of linguistic knowledge, word-for-word translation, cohesion errors, and lack of academic style. To reach the ability to write, there is a need to build their love towards writing. The term love of writing in this study is defined as releasing the students from having difficulties to start writing. It is believed that if they do not get any difficulties anymore, they will feel free, relax, and finally they can build love of writing.

METHOD

Since this study was intended to dig up the social phenomenon on the EFL students' views on the implementation of *Estafet Writing Game (EWG)* and *Picture-Based-Creative Writing (PBCW)* strategies to shape love of creative writing, the descriptive study was employed. The subjects of this study were the EFL students attending Creative Writing Class in State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung. Both fun strategies of teaching creative writing were implemented in a certain procedures. *The Estafet Writing Game* done to help students build an in prompt creating writing was implemented in four steps, namely preparation, action, reading performance, and peer feedback.

a. Preparation step

1. First of all, the class consisting of 40 students was divided into two big groups.
2. The members of each group sat in their own circle.
3. Each member put a number tag on their chests.
4. They prepared paper(s) and each member should bring a pen.
5. Then, the class decided the theme of the story they planned to develop in a certain type of creative writing they all agreed with (short-short story).
6. The lecturer determined the length of time and each group should finish their creative writing within 25 minutes.

b. Action step

After all the preparations were ready, each member focused on how to develop the theme into a story

1. The lecturer announced that the game started.
2. Student with the number tag 1 should start writing a sentence.
3. The next Students with the following number tags should continue writing so that each group could produce a piece of a story.

c. Reading performance

1. The writing product of each group was then read in front of the class by the representative of another group.
2. The lecturer announced the winner of the group. The criterion of the winner was any group who could completely finish the story in the determined time.
3. The story should consist of exposition, raising action, climax, anti-climax, falling action, and resolution.

d. Peer Feedback

1. The group exchanged the writing.
2. They kept sitting in a circle.
3. They divided themselves into three feedback groups, i.e. "grammar group", "content group", and "organization group".
4. Each member of the group gave feedback in turns.
5. They returned the work and revised their writing product in accordance to the given feedback.

This game was done 4 times within four meetings in which the number of group member was getting smaller in the following meetings. In each meeting, the students produced different types of creative writing, namely poem, diary, and fairy tale. To know the students' progress in their creative writing, they were assigned to write their own piece of creative writing. The formation of group member was assigned by the students themselves in order to set group dynamics so that the writing process and outcome became more successful (Hassaskhah & Mozaffari, 2015).

Like EWG, Picture Based Writing Game was conducted through 4 steps as well. However, in this fun strategy, the students were assisted with pictures hung on the wall.

a. Preparation step

1. First of all, 4 pictures were stuck on each corner of the wall
2. The class consisting of 40 students was divided into 4 big groups (10 members for each group).
3. The representative of the group took the lottery to decide which picture they wrote within 30 minutes.
4. They had at glance discussion on what and how to write.
5. They started writing based on the result of the group discussion
6. They prepared paper(s) and each member should bring a pen.
7. Then, the class decided the theme of the story they planned to develop in a certain type of creative writing they all agreed with (short-short story).
8. The lecturer determined the length of time each group should finish their creative writing 25 minutes.

b. Action step

After all the preparations were ready, each member focused on how to develop the theme into one type of creative writing.

1. When the lecturer counted to start writing, all members of each group ran toward their own selected pictures to take a look and find ideas to write.
2. Then they, in return, developed their ideas into a story in their group.

c. Reading performance

1. The writing product of one group was then read in front of the class by the representative of another group.
2. The lecturer announced the winner of the group. The criterion of the winner was any group who could completely finish the story in the determined time with the more complete plot.
3. The story should consist of exposition, raising action, climax, anti-climax, falling action, and resolution.

d. Peer Feedback

1. The group exchanged the writing
2. They kept sitting in a circle
3. They divided themselves into three feedback groups, i.e. “grammar group”, “content group”, and “organization group”.
4. Each member of the group gave feedback in turns.
5. They returned the work and revised their writing product in accordance to the given feedback.

To get the data about the students' perception on the implementation of those two strategies of teaching writing, written responsive interview was administered to the subjects of the study at the end of the course. The collected data in the form of qualitative ones were subsequently analyzed qualitatively by considering the related theories on collaborative writing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After implementing these two methods in one semester, the writer found out that Estafet Writing Game and Picture-Based Creative Writing are fun and exciting. Both bring about positive perception in terms of creativity and spontaneity for shaping the students' creative writing. This study also indicates that the EFL students joining Creative Writing Class are interested in implementing either Estafet Writing Game strategy or Picture-Based Creative Writing for some reasons.

1. Estafet Writing Game

First, concerning with the writing creativity, this strategy *triggers students to get riled, fun, and happy*, so that they can create ideas. In this context, students are told to write everything they think about the approved topic in an exciting situation in which the students working in group are positioned in a competitive atmosphere.

“I am very interested and happy with these games. Of course, because indirectly, the lecturers train the creativity of the students through these games. If this game is applied with more leverage, then these games will greatly assist students in fostering greater creativity of them” (Risya)

Han & Hyland (2015) who explore learner engagement with written corrective feedback in a Chinese tertiary EFL classroom found the complexity of learners' engagement within and across the cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimension. This indicates that working in groups with peers is influential for the EFL students' writing. Working in groups with their peer creates the students' engagement in a relaxing and joyful atmosphere. Moreover, the use of cooperative learning can improve the students writing skill (Astuti, 2016).

Another significant point to be noticed is that EWG strategy is proved to have some exciting activities which encourage the students to work fast to create a story by continuing their group peers' writing in a limited time. They become as the competitor of the other group and are encouraged to win the game by producing a story in their own word “estafetly” with group members. Each member has to write one sentence connecting the previous sentences made by their previous group mates. They are forced to construct sentences which further build a story. This learning atmosphere is believed to successfully build the students' writing creativity. This fact is clearly seen in the following student's statement:

I am interested with estafet-writing game and pictured-based-creative writing, because this is very exiting activity and a creative writing game skill, that I can ever

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had. I think this game run so fast, to appropriate our writing topic from our friends. Even though the time is very limited, we must decided to get a story based from our friends written. (Nuri)

Third, in relation with spontaneity, this study proved that the implementation of EWG which focuses on encouraging the students to write and write without giving much concern on grammatical matters mainly in the drafting phase is meaningful to build students' creative writing. They are demanded and challenged to write as many sentences as possible. This is done to attract them to arouse ideas and develop those ideas into writing as explicitly stated in the following quoted statement:

Yes, it is effective to build spontaneity in writing. Actually this game learn the students how to make a story with ignored grammatical rules, and others...This game also trains the students speed writing, write many sentences as much as they can and actually it can make spontaneity on their creatively writing. (Anggi)

2. Picture Based Creative Writing

In Picture-Based-Creative-Writing, students are asked to arrange a piece of creative writing spontaneously based on the images hung on the wall. The study proves that the strategy satisfies the students to train their creativity in writing. Each student working either in groups, in pairs, or individually is demanded to create a piece of writing. Commonly, the students get confused to start writing because they do not have any ideas and to develop the plot. Hence, pictures are considered as helpful media to attract the students' creativity in digging up their own ideas of writing and developing the ideas into one type of creative writings, such as a short story, narrative essay, poem, legend, fairy tale, and so on as explicitly stated in the student's comment below:

"I prefer choose Pictured-Based-Creative Writing...make the student more creative, because when they look the picture before start the writing, it makes the student has more creative ideas to make creative writing. It is very effective to build my creative writing skills, why, because by using this method, I can imagine many things after looking for the picture...(Fandi)

In addition, the selection of this learning model—integrating working in groups and the use of picture as one of the media—is important to elicit the students' enthusiasm while following the instruction. As revealed by Ningsih & Razak, (2017), the application of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition model is helpful for students to pour the ideas that the text is not only read in their own circles but it can also be published.

Besides, PBCW is believed to be useful to build the *students' creativity* in their Creative Writing Course" because they do not have any idea except after taking a look at the picture. They are then challenged to write in accordance with the in-depth observation of the picture. As claimed by one of the respondents, the creativity of the students will increase by using this game because the students didn't see the picture before, and they have to write down it based on the picture directly.

I am interested in....pictured-based-creative writing, because this is very exiting activity and a creative writing game skill, that I can ever have. The creativity of the students will increase by using this game, because the students didn't saw yet the picture before and they have to write down it based on the picture directly. (Anggi)

Moreover, the rules of implementing PBCW are helpful for students to get inspiration, as reflected in one of the student's comments: "Yes, I think those games could help me to build my spontaneity in writing. When the time is running, it automatically forced me to think hard and get the inspiration. With the supported theme and pictures, I can imagine something properly. The PBCW has made them to be more inspirable to find what they should write through the picture than think based on a given topic. The pictures or images are valuable to attract their imagination about the pictures and correlate the information and ideas from the picture with the real lives to build new ideas for their writing. This is in line with a study by Gutiérrez et.al (2015) advocating that the intervention of Picture series technique can improve the overall growth of writing skills, specific to the areas of Transition or logical sequence and Ideas exposure.

Yet, one thing that needs to be significantly noticed is that the lecturer should play his significant role to give a brief instruction and give a model to creatively write to their students. As explicitly stated in one of the respondent' statement: "...In addition, lecturers also play an important role in this game by giving direction briefing to their students. So, I am very interested and happy with these games." (Nurillah)." The positive voices of the students towards their loves of writing have been proved through

this study. This is because the lecturers have trained the students' creative writings in an interesting learning atmosphere so that their love of writing can be gradually set. As stated in the respondent's quotation that she wants this strategy to be more influential: "...If this game is applied with more leverage, then these games will greatly assist students in fostering greater creativity of them." (Ais). She further claims that this strategy is also helpful to nurture *spontaneity* of writing creatively, because the picture provided for her can stimulate her brain and mind to recall words and create ideas useful for starting to write. "*Pictured-Based-Creative Writing is very effective to build my spontaneity of creative writing. This method stimulates my brain and my mind spontaneously to remember many words and many ideas to start my writing.*" (Ais). A study by Nazim (2018) indicates that the students' writing skill improves not only because of the professional teacher who taught them but also the students' engagement in writing activities which put them in the joy of practicing.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of this study shows that helping the EFL students to set love of writing can be done by inviting them to get involved and engaged in their own creative writing. Writing, mainly creative writing, should be taught and nurtured through an innovative way with which students feel joy to do their own creative writing. Collaborative strategies: Estafet Writing Game (EWG) and Picture Based Creative Writing (PBCW) are proved to be meaningful to create joyful competitive activities among students to trigger their creativity and spontaneity in writing. Therefore, they feel relax and will not be trapped in their own writing problem as they collaborate with their peers in a group to create and produce a piece of writing. Peer feedback as part of writing process is also helpful to measure mainly their writing accuracy in grammar. This atmosphere also, helps students not only solving their confusion and constraint to start and develop writing but also to build love of writing. Therefore, the result of this study is expected to be implemented to Creative Writing for the sake of scaffolding the EFL students arousing their creativity and love of writing. For future researchers, conducting an experimenting study is needed for further results.

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