THE APPLICATION OF SCAFFOLDED WRITING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD EXPOSITION WRITING AND WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

Dian Kusumaningrum
State Senior High School 1 South Inderalaya
E-mail: dian_ksn@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

Language is a means of social communication which facilitates humans to interact with others. One of the social functions of a language is to express and pass on one's cultural ideas and attitudes. In English language learning, the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) support each other. Writing as one the English skills is taught at the level of secondary school in Indonesia. The teaching of writing should focus more on application or process that serves the students' need of writing skill on their educational and working world. Students could not explore and focus their mind and ideas in their writing assignments due to several reasons, such as lack of vocabularies and difficulties in structuring sentences. This led to their reluctance to do the writing assignments given by their English teacher which can form their negative attitude toward writing. Attitude plays an important part in foreign language learning. This paper presents the role of scaffolded writing technique to improve students' attitude toward exposition writing and writing achievement.

Keywords: Scaffolded writing, attitude, writing, hortatory exposition

BACKGROUND

Language is a means of social communication which facilitates humans to interact with others. One of the social functions of a language is to express and pass on one's cultural ideas and attitudes (Basiga, 2000). First language (L1) acquisition is exposed through the process of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Similarly, second language (L2) learning also involves the four language skills. In English language learning, the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) support each other (Tarigan, 1986).

According to Jahin and Idrees (2012) the teaching of writing should focus more on application or process that serves the students' need of writing skill on their educational and working world. As Cho and Schunn (2005, p.1) state "Professional and academic success in all disciplines depends, at least in part, upon writing skills". It means, writing skill is an important skill that every student need to master.

According to 2007 Survey on Teaching Writing (National Writing Project, 2007), in this technological world, having good writing skills are more important than ever. The survey also indicates that the public recognize the importance of good writing skills and reject the view that reading skills need to come first. Furthermore, according to the survey, "learning to write well is perceived as a key ingredient for students to acquire other skills such as effective communication (66% 'essential'), grammar (63%), and critical thinking (52%)" (p. 3).

Tarigan (1986, pp. 3-4) defines writing as "language skill used to indirectly communicate to others". Jahin and Idrees (2012, p. 11) describe writing as "a process of stating ideas, thoughts, feeling in written forms and delivers it to other people as communication tool". Writing requires people to

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think what they have on mind. As Krishnamurti (2009) states, "Writing relates to critical thinking and good writing skills help students improve their academic purposes" (p. 2).

Most students could not explore and focus their mind and ideas in their writing assignments due to several reasons, such as lack of vocabularies and difficulties in structuring sentences (grammar). This led to their reluctance to do the writing assignments given by their English teacher which can form their negative attitude toward writing.

Attitude plays an important part in foreign language learning. It goes as a guideline for teachers in understanding their students' eagerness in learning. Their attitude can influence the future decision they will take. In other words, a decision that students make shows their tendency or inclination which might be positive or negative.

It is worth saying that having positive attitude toward writing is very important for students. English teachers need to help students build their positive attitude toward writing, for example by giving them interesting writing activity. One of the ways to do this is through Scaffolded Writing. Schwieter (2010) defines scaffolded writing technique as process in which the experts help novice learners to develop higher level of writing skills. It helps students to learn how to write in meaningful stages. Scaffolding is an effective way for teaching writing skills as it builds their writing skills incrementally and helps them communicate effectively (Krishnamurthi, 2009).

This scaffolding technique is considered effective as students need guidance in writing. It influences students' eagerness of not focusing more on the writing classes. They prefer to do something easier; hence, they are reluctant to write. Once their write, they mostly do not know what to write and if they have one, they do not know how to start. Scaffolding helps to bridge the gap upon this problem. Rose, Chivizhe, McKnight, and Smith (2003) explain that the teacher models and explain each activity in a task, the learner watches and listens, and then practice the activity as the teacher guides them to do it accurately. In each step the learner takes over more control of the task until they are independent. Furthermore, the students are hoped to be really encouraged as the teachers will guide them to create more writings.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Concept of Scaffolded Writing

Scaffolding allows the teacher to help students transition from assisted tasks to independent performances (Bodrova& Leong, 1998). Scaffolding is not one of the Vygotsky's initial terms; the concept is a useful one because it makes more explicit some of the instructional implications of the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Bodrova& Leong, 2001).

The nowadays term of 'Scaffolding' is currently used to describe how an expert can facilitate the learner's transition from assisted to independent performance (Bodrova& Leong, 1998, p. 4). Scaffolded writing is a step-by-step process that provides the learner with sufficient guidance until the process is learned, and then gradually removes the supports in order to transfer the responsibility for completing the task to the student. For scaffolding to be successful, a foundation or organized procedure must first be developed. The teacher must provide students with the optimal amount of support necessary to complete the task, and then progressively decrease the level of assistance until the student becomes capable of completing the activity independently (Bodrova& Leong, 1998).

Scaffolded Writing Teaching Procedure

Scaffolding instructional plans generally involve the following steps (Krishnamurti, 2009):

1. Modeling the task and the desired behavior so that students see how the instructor completes the task.
2. Offering explanations that can range from detailed explanations at the initial stages on how the instructor accomplished the task to simple clarifications at the later stages.
3. Inviting students to participate in the task through activities that can range from inviting a student to explain on the board what he or she had learned to inviting groups of students to do the same task.
4. Verifying students' work and clarifying their understanding as this feedback is critical to reinforce what students have learned as well as resolve any difficulties they may have.
5. Inviting students to contribute ideas about the topic, which can guide instructor's discussion based on their ideas and lead students to a deeper understanding of the topic.

The Concept of Attitude

Attitude, to some experts defined as a *tendency or inclination to behave* in a certain way (Ruggiero, 1998, p. 9). Without any denial, there are many teachers have experienced moments regarding our students' attitude in the classroom toward the daily teaching and learning activities. Lefrancois (1983) cited in Ruggiero (1998, p. 9) gives his opinion that "attitude may be described as positive or negative; they therefore have strong motivational consequences, a fact that distinguishes them from opinions". Ruggiero (1998, p. 9) states that teachers have little or even no training at all dealing with these kind of problems. Furthermore, he explains that the principal reason for the neglect of the attitudes is mired in vagueness and confusion.

Truly, the success of students' learning process depends on attitude and motivation. When they are exposed to serial boring and monotonous classroom activities, they are more exposed on laziness, distracted, and unmotivated. Neither the affective, cognitive nor their psychomotor domain will be better. The further important thing is to think critically about attitudes, and how attitudes of students could be changed by their own. Moreover, teachers need to facilitate them to the right ways and also with the right ways.

The practical way is to provide students with already conceptualized and expressed ideas and guiding them to test the ideas against their own experience and knowledge (Ruggiero, 1998, p. 14). Further, he states that if teachers want students to give every idea a fair hearing, and base their evaluation on an idea's strengths and weaknesses rather than on its familiarity or compatibility with their personal viewpoint, teachers must model these behaviors through good example, since preaching alone will not be enough.

Concept of Writing

Lannon (1989, p. 9) states that writing is "the process of transforming the material discovered by research inspiration, accidental, trial or error, or whatever into a message with a definite meaning – writing is a process of deliberate decision". Writing is a system of thinking processes and interpersonal communication put on paper using visible signs or graphic symbols on a flat surface such as paper, cloth or even stone slabs (Al-Jawi, 2011, p. 2). Most students argue that writing is somewhat difficult for them because writing deals with the ability to convey meaning, understand the lexical and syntactical knowledge and the organization of sentences. Students' lack of these abilities forces them not to learn writing.

Harmer (2004, p. 4) suggests four main elements in writing, which are given as follows:
a. Planning. Writers need to plan what they are going to write.

b. Drafting. It refers to the *first version* of the writing. This first 'go' at a text is often done on the assumption that will be amended later.

c. Editing (reflecting and revising). Reflecting and revision are often helped by other readers (or editors) who comment and make suggestions.

d. Final Version. Once the writers have edited their draft, making the changes they consider to be necessary, they produce their final version.

In writing, students need to be well-informed on what kind of text they will write. It is related to the idea of 'planning'. Once they know what kind of text they will write, it is easier for them to dig the ideas in their prior knowledge and explore it further. A different kind of writing constructions is called **genres**. Genre is known as schematic text to achieve certain goals of a text. Furthermore, Harmer (2004, p.17) explains "knowledge of genres (understanding how different purposes are commonly expressed within a discourse community) is only one of the many 'knowledge' or 'competences' that a reader brings to the task of reading, and which a writer assumes the reader will know".

These different genres have different generic structures which vary and confuse students. McCarthy and Carter (1994, p. 24) state, "the very existence of the term *report* as well as other terms such as *narrative* or *argument* or **exposition** indicate a shared intuitive awareness of the existence of such texts and that they differ from one another in recognizable ways". Clear and detail explanation are necessarily needed. The explanation involves the definition of each genre, the generic structure and language features. There are stages in writing genre texts. McCarthy and Carter (1994, p. 33) argue "there are different stages in different genres". The stages understood here are the generic structures that differs one genre to another. McCarthy and Carter (1994) further state "chronological and non-chronological forms are structured according to the nature of the information they convey".

Hortatory Exposition

Hortatory exposition is a text which represents the attempt of the writer to have the addressee do something or act in a certain way.Generic Structure of Hortatory Exposition:

- Thesis
- Arguments
- Recommendation

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