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Speaking with Content Program (Genre for English Speaking Improvement)

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IMPROVING STUDENTS’ ABILITY TO WRITE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY BY PROVIDING ARGUMENTATIVE ARTICLES AS TEXT MODEL AT STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH, FACULTY OF CULTURAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA MALANG

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Abstract
Considered as the most challenging subject for the students, compared to other skill courses, writing needs to be taught in a way which can trigger students to start writing. Most of our students think that writing class is a monster because they think that writing has been a burden for them since they had writing course in the second semester. They find it difficult to develop their ideas and to choose the appropriate vocabulary. Moreover, they are not confident with their grammar. This phenomenon also happens in the writer’s argumentative essay class. Based on the students’ difficulties above, the writers conducted classroom action research to improve students’ ability to write argumentative essay. Argumentative articles were provided as text model to help students activate their background knowledge so that they would be able to develop their ideas. By applying this technique, it is found out that the students writing is getting better. It can be proven by the improvement of their writing score after they were given argumentative articles as text model.

Key words: classroom action research (CAR), writing skill.

INTRODUCTION
In Indonesia, the teaching of English as Foreign Language (EFL) requires the students to master all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among the four English language skills, writing is considered to be the most complex. According to Cahyono (2010), this is not only because writing is a productive skill, but it also demands the ability to develop a piece of writing into an effective finished product.

Writing course is given to the students of Study Program of English, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya Malang from the second to the fourth semester; they are Paragraph Writing, Expository Essay, and Argumentative Essay with three credits for each. The latest is considered as the last phase
for the students to learn writing skill. If the students pass this course, it is expected that they will have acquired the skill. Thus, it is urgently needed to overcome the students' problems in Argumentative Essay course since it becomes the last opportunity for the students to enhance their basic writing skill before they write their thesis.

When we conducted argumentative essay class, we found that our students faced difficulties in developing their own topic. It happens every time they were asked to write a new argumentative essay. Most students admitted that they did not know to start writing argumentative essay. This condition was due to their limited knowledge on the given topic. Besides, limited vocabulary also became another issue on how they were not able to develop their writing. Students also found it hard when they had to write statements to support their ideas and refute their opponent ideas, since the core of argumentative essay is supporting ideas and refuting opponent ideas. Considering these issues, as lecturers we found a way on how to activate students background knowledge and vocabulary by providing argumentative article as text model. We hope that by providing argumentative articles, the students will be able to develop their writing skill better.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Writing

As stated on the background of this study, writing is one of the skills that college students have to master in learning a language, instead of listening, speaking, and reading. Cahyono (2009) state that writing is defined as jotting down ideas into written form. However, it is not only a matter of putting ideas into written form but also deals with how a writer uses language to communicate with their readers and how the readers interpret the messages. Hence, in writing process, the writer is not only required to have ideas and to be able to write, but they are also required to know how to express those ideas using good grammar, appropriate diction, and also rhetoric.

Argumentative essay is a foundation to write thesis because when writing thesis, students need to be able to express their arguments. One way to enhance students' ability to write argumentative essay is by providing argumentative articles as text model since it is believed that it can help students to get ideas in writing argumentative essay. The following is the explanation on the connection between reading and writing.

2. The Connection between Reading and Writing

For many years, research in EFL reading and writing has been conducted
Improving Students’ Ability to Write Argumentative Essay by Providing Argumentative Articles as Text Model at Study Program of English, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya Malang

separately. The authorities and the learners do not realize and even recognize that reading gives significant input to the process and product of writing. This situation can be due to the unawareness of the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, or the limited perspectives on reading-writing connection that they are actually connected in some simple ways (Tierney and Ley's 1986).

However, recent studies from various disciplines such as reading theory (schema theory), linguistics, pragmatics, communication theory have been investigated to find out and prove whether there is connection between reading and writing. Moreover, it is frequently hypothesized that the most effective way to master writing skill is by involving reading activities in writing classroom. Many research findings state that reading material is beneficial for the mastery of writing. These interest and research are also supported by the argument that those two skills are shared knowledge and process of making meaning involving similar pattern of thinking and similar linguistic habits (Reid 1993:43). Shared knowledge shows that reading shares information and knowledge to readers and so does writing; the writers share and express their knowledge into printed-texts. Whereas, the latter, skills invite readers’ thinking while receiving information from texts and writers’ thinking while expressing ideas about content and language form into printed-texts. One more statement supporting the idea was also stated by Tierney (1992), “Reading and writing are sufficiently overlapping activities that they support a symbiosis in which the impact of the two together becomes greater than the sum of their separate impacts.”

3. Advantages of Involving Reading in Writing Classroom

When students are exposed to reading various kinds of topics, they can obtain many advantages such as the use of sentences for different syntactic styles, the use of appropriate dictions, as well as the use of cohesion and coherence devices to make the unified paragraphs. Some extensive reviews of correlational studies of reading and writing performance reveal that there are correlation between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Stotsky (1983) and Belanger (1987) found that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. Some researchers also conducted the research on involving reading in writing class. The finding shows that this can determine students’ maturity of using grammatical pattern in producing texts.

Still related to the linguistics’ point of view, there are some other advantageous activities of involving reading in writing classroom. Reading a text can stimulate and
activate students' schemata (background knowledge and experience) about the language, content, form of the topic and eventually will lead to the exploration to their schemata in discovering meaning (Reid 1993); reading can help students develop their thinking to express their ideas into print by employing knowledge about content and text structures, and language organization they gain from reading; reading a text might inspire students in discovering topic and ideas that they can write about; reading can make students aware of the fact that conversational types of discourse and rhetoric are considerably different from those in written discourse and rhetoric they are reading. That is to say that they will realize that speech pattern they usually include in their writing do not reflect the characteristics of their writing.

METHOD

The method of this study is classroom action research (CAR) as it is compatible with the aim of CAR for English teaching and learning namely developing a particular method to solve problems in English classrooms. This statement is supported by Latief (2008); classroom action research is research designed to improve the quality of teaching learning process based on problems faced by teachers and/or students which occurred in a class.

Therefore, it is very appropriate to be applied in this study since as stated previously, there is a problem on students' ability to write argumentative essay that they found difficulties in developing their own essay because they lack of background knowledge of the topic they were going to write, so this study is aimed to improve students' ability to write argumentative essay by providing argumentative articles as a text model. The subjects of the study were twenty eight students of Argumentative Essay class. In carrying out the study, the writers followed some steps as the procedures in Classroom Action Research (CAR) as outlined by Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (1988). The steps include a preliminary study to analyze and identify the problems as the preparation, followed by planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting the action. The model of the procedures is shown in Figure 1 and the explanation of each step is presented below.
1. Preliminary Study

Preliminary study was done by the writers on the eighth meeting in argumentative essay class. It was conducted to collect the data dealing with the problems faced by the students to develop their argumentative essay. The writers gained the data through observation of the teaching and learning process and questionnaire delivery for the students about their writing problems. It is
clear that the students found difficulties in developing their argumentative essay since they did not have enough background knowledge related to the topic they were going to write and they also lacked vocabulary. The results of this preliminary study were used to set up a plan of action as the first step of the cycle. It can be seen in appendix 5.

2. Planning
Planning stage covered determining the method, designing lesson plans, outlining procedures of the method, designing research instruments, preparing material and media, and setting the criteria of success.

The writers determined to provide reading materials, in this case, argumentative articles as text model to teach argumentative essay. As the writers explained before that writing has mutual connection with reading since reading a text can stimulate and activate students’ background knowledge and experience about the language, content, form of the topic. Furthermore, reading can help students develop their thinking to express their ideas into print by employing knowledge about content and text structures, and language organization they gain from reading.

Designing lesson plan was done as the guidance of what the writers were going to do in the implementation of the method. It was in accordance with the existing RPKPS of the faculty. The next step in planning was designing research instruments. The writers used some instruments for data collection. The instruments in this study were test, questionnaire, observation checklists, and field notes. The last step in planning was setting the criteria of success. The criteria of success are defined as the targets that are used to decide whether the action implemented works or not. If the result of the action does not meet the criteria of success, the action needs to be revised before going to the next cycle. In this study, the criteria of success are dealing with the students’ achievement in developing argumentative essay. Here, the students were expected to get at least B+ in argumentative class. The criteria of success, the writing criteria, and the writing grading can be seen in details in appendix 1, appendix 2, and appendix 3.

3. Implementing
Dealing with the implementation stage, the writers implemented the procedure of the strategy that had been planned in the planning stage. The action was teaching argumentative essay by providing argumentative articles as the text model. One writer was responsible to implement the teaching technique while the other writer was responsible to observe and record every aspect and event that might have occurred during the implementation of the technique. Two cycles in this study were conducted under the consideration that significant result cannot be retained only
through one cycle. Thus, cycle two was conducted by implementing the revision and improvements of cycle one.

4. Observing
Observation is an activity to see how far the strategy solves the problems during the action by collecting the data using the instruments of the study. Through the observation, the weaknesses can be found, and then they can be revised to be implemented later in the next cycle. It is conducted simultaneously with the implementation. In this observation stage, the observer did the process of recording and collecting data covering any aspects and events that were happening during the implementation of the method by utilizing the research instruments. The result of observation can be seen in appendix 6.

5. Reflecting
To determine the success or the failure of the applied technique, a reflection was performed by the writers. The reflection was focused on the analysis of the students’ learning result and the teaching and learning process. The analysis was based on the data obtained from the instruments used in the research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
The implementation of the method was conducted in three meeting for each cycle, the ninth to the eleventh meeting of the semester as cycle 1 and the twelveth to the fourteenth meeting of the semester as cycle 2. In the first meeting of cycle 1, the writer conducted pre-writing activity in the class by providing two argumentative articles as the model of essay, Dieting Makes People Fat and Staying Healthy with Diet as the references to be read before the students developed their own argumentative essay on Diet. In other words, the writers provided a particular topic that to be developed by the students. After reading the articles provided, the students had a little discussion with the teacher to get the same understanding about the articles. Next, they had to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with what the articles were talking about, as they would develop an argumentative essay by exposing their position on a certain topic. Then, they were asked to make an outline under the topic on Diet. The students were given a chance to consult their outline with the lecturer. After the outline was approved, they then were asked to develop their own essay. In the second meeting of this cycle, the students consulted their essay to the lecturer dealing with writing criteria namely content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. They were also possibly permitted to finish their writing revision outside the classroom before submitting their final work. In the last meeting of the cycle, the students submitted their final work to be scored by the lecturer then the lecturer gave feedback on their writing. These
activities were done repeatedly in the three meetings of Cycle 2. However, in the first meeting of this cycle, the students were given two argumentative articles, they were 'Cheating Makes Students Creative' and 'Cheating Makes Students Lazy' as the text models. Then, they were asked to make an outline and developed their writing as what they did in Cycle 1. In the second and the third meeting, they did the same things as they were asked to do in Cycle 1. There is significant difference between the students' writing score in cycle 1 and cycle 2. In cycle 1, the average score of students' writing was 73.6. It indicates that the average grade of their score was B. This result did not pass the criteria of success set by the writers. In the criteria of success, it is stated that the average grade of students' writing should be at least B+. The failure of the reachment in cycle 1 is possibly due to the fact that the students had not been familiar yet with the writing activities conducted by the lecturer. Moreover, based on the result of the questionnaire given to the students, 70% of the students confessed that they were not interested in the topic provided by the lecturer. This made the students who did not like the topic found difficulties their ideas. As a result, the score they gained was below the criteria of success. Thus, cycle 2 was necessary to conduct since cycle 1 failed. In cycle 2, the average score of students' writing was 79.9 which indicates the grade of their writing score was B+. This result met the criteria of success made by the writers and it can be said the technique was successfully done. This achievement was gained since the students had been familiar with the activities conducted in cycle 2. Furthermore, they got used to read argumentative articles and recognize argumentative essay's pattern. From the result of the students' achievement on Argumentative essay class, it can be inferred that providing argumentative articles as model text to improve students' ability to write Argumentative essay has evidently worked.

CONCLUSION
After finding out that the students were not able to develop their ideas, the writers then tried to solve the problems by providing them argumentative articles as text model in two cycles. This effort is intended to activate the students' background knowledge and enrich their vocabulary so that they were able to write better. It can be proven by the improvement of their writing score. In cycle 1, the average of their writing score is B while in cycle 2 the average score is B+. In other words, providing argumentative articles can help students to develop their writing skill and this method can be applied in any other writing classes.
## APPENDIX 4

### STUDENTS' SCORES ON ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Cycle 1</th>
<th>Cycle 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Zeya Firdaus Widyka</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Anisa Zuhria Sugeha</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Jino Prayudi kartono</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sri Wahyuni Titawael</td>
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**Average Score**

<p>| | |</p>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 2</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5

Questionnaire

I. BIODATA

1. Name:
2. Place/date of birth:
3. Class:
4. Address:

II. Questions on the effect of argumentative articles to the development of writing!

1. Do you have any problems when you are asked to write argumentative article?

2. What are they? Why?

3. According to you, what is the best solution for solving the problems?

APPENDIX 6

Observation Report on Students' Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay
In Cycle 1

Meeting: 1 (Students were given argumentative articles as text model)
Credits: 3
Time Allotment: 180 minutes

1. Activities

- The students read two argumentative articles on Diet given by the lecturer.
- The students discussed their understanding about the articles they read with the
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lecturer.

- The students made an outline underlying the topic Diet.

2. Observer's comments
   2.1 Good points
      2.1.1 From the teacher's side
          - The lecturer explained the material clearly.
      2.1.2 From the students' side
          - The students looked eager to read the articles provided by the lecturer.
          - Most of the students followed the teacher's instructions to do the activities.
          - The students got involved actively in the discussion especially when deciding their position after reading the articles.

    2.2 Points to be improved
       2.2.1 From the teacher's side
           - The lecturer should be able to manage between the time allotment and the activities conducted so it could be more effective.
           - The lecturer should be responsive and sensitive to the students who did not give full attention on the lesson.
       2.2.2 From the students' side
           - The students especially those who did not follow all of the activities should be disciplined by giving them sanction so that next, they would not did the same action.
           - Few students looked not enthusiastic to make an outline.

Observation Report on Students’ Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay
In Cycle 1

Meeting : 2 (Students developed their writing on argumentative essay)
Credits : 3
Time Allotment : 180 minutes

1. Activities
   - The students developed their writing on argumentative essay.
   - The students had consultation for their draft while developing their writing.

2. Observer's comments
   A. Good points
   From the teacher's side
   - The lecturer facilitated the students while they had consultation with the lecturer.

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From the students' side

- The students focused on their writing development.
- Most students took their time for consulting their writing.

B. Points to be improved

From the teacher's side

- The lecturer should be able to manage between the time allotment and the activities conducted so it could be more effective.
- The lecturer should be responsive and sensitive to the students who did not give full attention on the lesson.

From the students' side

- Few students looked not enthusiastic to have consultation with the lecturer since they had to revise their draft.

Observation Report on Students' Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay
In Cycle 1

Meeting : 3 (Students submitted their writing)
Credits : 3
Time Allotment : 180 minutes

1. Activities

- The students submit the final draft of their writing.

2. Observer's comments

A. Good points

From the teacher's side

- The lecturer facilitated the students while they had consultation with the lecturer.

From the students' side

- Most of the students submitted their writing.

B. Points to be improved

From the teacher's side

- The lecturer should be able to manage between the time allotment and the activities conducted so it could be more effective.

From the students' side

- Some students were not ready to submit their final writing.

Observation Report on Students' Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay
In Cycle 2

Meeting : 1 (Students were provided two argumentative articles as text model)
Credits : 3
Time Allotment : 180 minutes
1. Activities
   - The students read two argumentative articles *Cheating* given by the lecturer.
   - The students discussed their understanding about the articles they read with the lecturer.
   - The students made an outline underlying the topic *Cheating*.

2. Observer’s comments
   2.3 Good points
      2.3.1 From the teacher’s side
         - The lecturer explained the material clearly.
         - The lecturer had given full attention on the students who did not do the activities.
      2.3.2 From the students’ side
         - The students had got used to do the activities.
         - The students got involved actively in the discussion especially when deciding their position after reading the articles.
         - The students then made an outline.

3. Points to be improved
   3.1.1 From the teacher’s side
      - The lecturer should give sanction for those who did not do the activities.
   3.1.2 From the students’ side
      - The students especially those who did not follow all of the activities should be disciplined by giving them sanction so that next, they would not did the same action.
      - Few students looked not enthusiastic to make an outline.

Observation Report on Students’ Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay
In Cycle 2

Meeting : 2 (Students developed their writing on argumentative essay)
Credits : 3
Time Allotment : 180 minutes

2. Activities
   - The students developed their writing on argumentative essay.
   - The students had consultation for their draft while developing their writing.

3. Observer’s comments
   A. Good points
      From the teacher’s side
      - The lecturer facilitated the students while they had consultation with the lecturer.
      From the students’ side
The students focused on their writing development. Most students took their time for consulting their writing.

B. Points to be improved

From the teacher’s side
- The lecturer should be able to manage between the time allotment and the activities conducted so it could be more effective.

From the students’ side
- Few students still looked not enthusiastic to have consultation with the lecturer since they had to revise their draft.

Observation Report on Students’ Activity in Writing Argumentative Essay In Cycle 2

Meeting : 3 (Students submitted their writing)
Credits : 3
Time Allotment : 180 minutes

1. Activities
- The students submitted the final draft of their writing to the lecturer

2. Observer’s comments
   A. Good points
   From the teacher’s side
   - The lecturer facilitated the students needed brief consultation.
   From the students’ side
   - All of the students submitted their writing.

B. Points to be improved
   From the teacher’s side
   - The lecturer should be able to manage between the time allotment and the activities conducted so it could be more effective.
   From the students’ side
   - The students should not have consultation with their lecturer anymore since it was the due date to submit their writing.