Experiential Learning (El): An Effective Teaching Method To Construct Students’ Writing Skill Viewed From Self-Efficacy

Ani Meitikasari
Sebelas Maret University, Jl. Ir. Sutami No. 36A, Surakarta, Indonesia
Corresponding e-mail: animei16@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: This study investigates the effects of Experiential Learning in teaching writing from the perspective of students’ self-efficacy by means of a comparative experiment concerning on the experimental group taught by Experiential Learning and the control group by using Direct Instruction. The sixty students of a senior high school in Central Java, Indonesia were chosen randomly and participated in this research. These participants are asked to compose a text in order to examine their writing skill after having eight-meeting treatments and fulfil the self-efficacy questionnaire. The results show that Experiential Learning guides the students to achieve significantly a greater writing skill than those using Direct Instruction and the high self-efficacious students perform better writing skill than those having low self-efficacy. Additionally, it was found that there is an interaction between those methods and students self-efficacy in writing skill. Therefore, Experiential Learning is suggested as an alternative teaching method in constructing students’ writing skill and self-efficacy.

Keywords: Experimental Study, Senior High School, Teaching Methods

1. INTRODUCTION

In today’s era, the demand of mastering language especially English as an international language becomes one of key factors to empower the world. Language plays important roles as a means of communication with others in both oral and written form by sharing information to broaden knowledge about the world or expressing or delivering ideas about certain phenomenon of the world. Moreover, dealing with English in educational settings, the communicative competence becomes the goal of language teaching that must be achieved by students in certain education level. It indicates that learning activities emphasize not only on how the students understand the content (cognitive ability) of language but also on how the students are able to apply language by considering their social context and psychological learning factors such as motivation and self-efficacy. On other words, it is a demand to provide the students to experience their language ability through an activity in real context rather than just focus on the process of transmitting knowledge (Kolb and Kolb, 2009). It means that students are involved directly in a meaningful learning process in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values in the suitable environment for language learning (Association for Experiential Education, 2011. para. 2). However, in fact, a teacher-instructed learning is commonly used in the classroom in which teaching largely transmits the knowledge and the students may remain unmotivated and disengaged (Kolb and Kolb, 2009).

Furthermore, one of the language skills emphasized by the teacher is writing skill that is defined as a complex meta-cognitive activity that draws on an individual’s knowledge, basic skills, strategies, and ability to coordinate multiple processes, it requires writers to have a great deal of lexical and syntactic knowledge as well as principles of organization in L2 to produce a good writing (Graham, 1997). However, in reality, most of the students are not able to generate and organize the ideas in order to communicate on paper by interrelating their cognitive and psychological skills such as they are unmotivated and have low self-efficacy. Moreover, the students also
admitted that their difficulties on writing of English text are caused by language aspects such as the problem in vocabulary and grammar so that they are not able to produce a good writing text.

Therefore, by considering the explanation above, this research was conducted to investigate whether or not a) Experiential Learning (EL) is more effective than Direct Instruction to teach writing, b) the higher self-efficacious students have better writing skill than those who have low self-efficacy, and c) the is an interaction between methods and self-efficacy in teaching writing.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1. Experiential Learning

The concepts of Experiential Learning (EL), was initially developed by John Dewey (1859-1952), Carl Rogers (1902-1987), and David Kolb (1939) that refers to “learning through experience”, or “learning by doing”, are based on a Constructivism Perspective. It indicates that EL is one of the teaching methods that guides the students to construct their own understanding about language by not only purposefully engaging with students in direct experience and focusing on the reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values but also provides the suitable environment for language learning (Association for Experiential Education, 2011. para. 2). A key element of experiential learning, therefore, is the student, and that learning takes place (the knowledge gained) as a result of being personally involved in this pedagogical approach including five steps: a) doing something, b) recalling what happened, c) reflecting on that, d) drawing conclusion from reflections, and e) using those conclusions to inform and prepare for future practical experience (Baker, Jensen, and Kolb, 2002). It means that the students are involved in teaching learning process actively (a student-centered approach) in which they have a personal interest, need, or want by analyzing and activating their critical thinking, reflecting, evaluating and reconstructing it in order to draw meaning from it in the light of prior experience. Moreover, by giving the students’ opportunities to experience directly, the self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-regulated of the students are trained indirectly because they may construct their own understanding about the concept of certain writing text freely in real-context of language use and struggle under difficulties in the process of writing. Therefore, it may influence to their ability in producing a text and their well-social personality in which the language is used. Moreover, the learning activities that can be applied are making products or models, role-playing, giving a presentation, problem-solving, and playing a game.

Dealing with the learning environment, Smith (2001: 1) described EL is the—sort of learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant settings. It means that the students will be provided a real life situation of language use and then they are enhanced their autonomy in learning by having opportunities and experiences about language use.

In 2000, Boud, Cohen and Walker (p. 8-14) developed five “propositions” about experiential learning, as follows: (a) Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for all learning. (b) Learners actively construct their own experience. (c) Learning is a holistic process. (d) Learning is socially and culturally constructed. (e) Learning is influenced by socio-emotional context in which it occurs.

2.2. Direct Instruction

In addition, many teachers usually conduct a conventional method that is Direct Instruction. The Direct instruction was developed by Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) in the 1960s at the University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana. This method had been interpreted from the Behaviorism Approach proposed by Skinner (1953). Direct instruction commonly is characterized as a teacher-directed approach (Stein, Carnine, & Dixon, 1998). Moreover, according to Duran and Carnine (2003: 3), they stated that Direct Instruction is a method by which the students are taught face to face in small or large groups utilizing systemic and explicit instruction. It means that the teacher is the main key in teaching learning process in which the students do not give more spaces to explore and
develop their ability. In addition, in the direct instruction, the main goal of learning focuses on the basic content or the cognitive aspects based on the guidelines of curriculum, on other words, the psychological aspects that may influence the students’ ability in writing are neglected specifically.

Additionally, according to Slavin (2006: 209-210), Direct Instruction is used to describe lessons in which the teacher transmits information directly to students structuring class time to reach a clearly defined set of objectives as efficient as possible. It means that direct instruction deals with the teacher centrality in which the teacher has a dominated position in the classroom by deciding what is to be learnt and how, and is visibly in charge in direction and control. Moreover, Direct instruction much prefers to the content of the leaning or cognitive aspects. It also supported by Magliaro, Lockee, and Burton (2005: 41) that direct instruction is an instructional technique that is focused on systematic curriculum design and skillful implementation of prescribed behavioral script. Additionally, the main characteristics of direct instruction include: (a) The classroom activities focus to learn basic academic knowledge and skill. Therefore, the affective and social aspects of learning are either de-emphasized or ignored. (b) The decision-maker of instructional activities is handled by the teacher; it means that a teacher-directed approach is applied. (c) Students are guided to learn new academic knowledge by being on-task as much as possible. (d) A positive reinforcement is emphasized to maintain the classroom climate.

Additionally, dealing with the components of Direct Instruction, actually, Joyce and Weil (2004) proposed five general phases reflects the techniques or implementation in the classroom settings, as follows: (a) Orientation (In this phase, the explanation about an overview of the lesson). (b) Presentation (This phase initially includes explaining, illustrating, and demonstrating the new material). (c) Structured Practice (It refers to the teacher assistance by guiding the class to respond the each step of instruction correctly. The reinforcement is a demand to ensure the students acquire the components of the lesson). (d) Guided Practice (Students work at their task which explained and demonstrated by the teacher, and teacher starts to check their work and correct the errors.). (e) Independent Practice (In this phase, students should practice on their own in the class or home and teacher continues to assess the accuracy their work and give feedback.)

Therefore, direct instruction is a directed learning focused on academic content and characterized as teacher-centered learning.

2.3. Self-Efficacy

Furthermore, Self-efficacy is one of psychological factors that influences the learning achievement and determines the success or failure in second language learning. It is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their life (Bandura, 1997, 2001). It is closely related to the students’ belief and awareness about their capabilities, needs, certain goals and their efforts to achieve the learning goals directly by influencing the frequency of using learning strategies, and the persistence in learning. Dealing with the content focus of self-efficacy, it focuses on the performance capabilities rather than on personal qualities (Zimmerman, 2000). It indicates that students judge their capabilities to fulfill certain task, not who they are only feel or think that they can fulfill those tasks. On other words, the outcome people depend on their judgments of how well they will able to perform in given situations (Bandura, 2006).

Referring to the writing, the students who have high self-efficacy tend to have great efforts and a will in writing so that they feel to enjoy learning process by performing their ability confidently and participating actively in the writing class activity. Besides, if they get the difficulties in writing such as using incorrect grammar or misspelling in their vocabulary and so on, they will tend to find out the solution to overcome those problems because they have a will to achieve certain goals (learning achievement).

On other words, they who have low self-efficacy tend to, unfortunately, earn the failing grade in writing because they will not develop their ability to write, compose the carelessly
created sentence, or completing writing task in patch up way without struggling with their efforts to do the best in writing and discover the solution of their writing problems. In conclusion, in the choosing and applying the appropriate technique, the teacher should consider the students’ self-efficacy by evaluating in order to achieve the goal of teaching learning process.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a quasi-experimental research by using the 2x2 factorial design that was conducted at the second grades of a senior high school located in Central Java, Indonesia. The researcher recruits two writing groups of the second grade students by using cluster-random sampling as an experiment group that was taught by using Experiential Learning of 30 students and a control group that was taught by using Direct Instruction of 30 students. Moreover, the researcher had been conducted treatments for 4 weeks with 8 meetings of each group by focusing on the details of composing a text especially on analytical exposition texts. After conducting treatments, a composition writing test was used to assess the students’ writing skill. One of the writing scoring profiles is created by Jacobs et al. (1981, cited in Weigle, 2002, pp. 115-116). In the Jacobs et al. scale, scripts are rated on five indicators of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Table 1. Scoring Rubric of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of writing</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, self-efficacy is evaluated by the further details of aspects of self-efficacy i.e. choice of activities, learning efforts, persistence in learning and emotional states that were used as the basic consideration to investigate and categorize the level of self-efficacy in the educational setting in form of 50 items of questionnaire referring to Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk and Pajares, 2005; and Bandura, 2006.

Additionally, a descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data in this research. The descriptive test was used to recognize the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, histogram, and polygon of students’ writing skill. Besides, inferential statistics plays important role to test the research hypothesis and investigates whether the hypothesis of the research will be accepted or rejected. Then, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was also used by researcher in order to investigate the variances which appeared due to the different treatments as a basis for conclusion whether there will be different mean of the population or not. Moreover, Tukey test is a test designed to perform comparison of mean between cells to see where the significant difference is.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the prerequisite test then, based on the calculation of the Multifactor Analysis of Variance 2x2, it was found that:

Table 2. The Summary of the Gained Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Methods</th>
<th>Teaching Methods</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Experiential Learning (A₁)</td>
<td>Direct Instruction (A₂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (B₁)</td>
<td>79.87</td>
<td>72.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (B₂)</td>
<td>70.60</td>
<td>71.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>75.23</td>
<td>72.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. ANOVA Test
1) $F_0 (4.106)$ between columns is higher than $F_t$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05 (4.00)$ and the means score $\hat{X}_{c1} (75.23) > \hat{X}_{c2} (72.17)$. It indicates that Experiential Learning is more effective to teach writing especially on the analytical exposition text than using Direct Instruction.

2) $F_0 (11.20854)$ between rows is higher than $F_t$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05 (4.00)$ and the mean score of the first row is 76.23, whereas, the mean of second row is 71.17 or $\hat{X}_{r1} (76.23) > \hat{X}_{r2} (71.17)$, therefore, it can be concluded that students who have high self-efficacy have better writing skill than those who have low self-efficacy.

3) $F_0 (7.701989)$ interaction is higher than $F_t$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05 (4.00)$, therefore, $H_0$ is rejected and there is an interaction between two variables: teaching methods and students’ self-efficacy in teaching writing an analytical exposition text.

Moreover, based on the calculation of the Tukey test, it can be concluded that:

**Table 4. Tukey Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F_0$</th>
<th>$F_t$ (0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>between columns</td>
<td>141.06</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>141.0</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between rows</td>
<td>385.06</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55.09</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>columns by rows</td>
<td>264.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>264.6</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between group</td>
<td>790.73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263.5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within group</td>
<td>1923.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>384.7</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>2714.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>301.6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, based on the calculation of the Tukey test, it can be concluded that:

**Table 4. Tukey Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F_0$</th>
<th>$F_t$ (0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>between columns</td>
<td>141.06</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>141.0</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between rows</td>
<td>385.06</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55.09</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>columns by rows</td>
<td>264.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>264.6</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between group</td>
<td>790.73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>263.5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within group</td>
<td>1923.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>384.7</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>2714.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>301.6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A1 – A2: 4.053, 2.83 Significant
B1 – B2: 6.696, 2.83 Significant
A1B1 – A2B1: 6.791, 2.89 Significant
A1B2 – A2B2: 1.059, 2.89 Not significant

1) $q_0$ between columns A1 and A2 (4.053) is higher than $q_0$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05$ (2.83), therefore, it can be concluded that Experiential Learning is more effective to teach writing especially on the analytical exposition text than using Direct Instruction.

2) $q_0$ B1 and B2 (6.696) is higher than $q_0$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05$ (2.83), therefore, whereas, the mean of B2 is 71.17. Therefore, it can be concluded that students who have high self-efficacy have better writing skill than those who have low self-efficacy.

3) $q_0$ between cells A1B1 and A2B1 (6.791) is higher than $F_0$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05$ (2.89), therefore, Experiential Learning is more effective than Direct Instruction to teach writing for the students having high self-efficacy.

4) $q_0$ between cells A1B2 and A2B2 (1.059) is lower than $F_0$ at the level significance $\alpha = 0.05$ (2.89), therefore, Experiential Learning does not differ significantly from Direct Instruction to teach writing for students who have low self-efficacy. Therefore, based on the findings, it proved that Experiential Learning is one of the effective teaching methods to teach writing especially for the senior high school. It deals with the construction process of knowledge, clarify values, and engage the students’ participation by providing the students with the meaningful experience. The term ‘experiential’ is used to describe a theoretical perspective on the individual learning process that applied in all situations and arenas of life, a holistic process of learning that can aid in overcoming the difficulties of learning from direct experience by helping the process how experience is transformed into learning and reliable knowledge and affecting by emotional states (Kolb, 2014). Furthermore, the core of experience is as a language input to formulate their critical thinking, understand of the concept of writing and implements them in the real communication in written form. In other words, by obtaining the meaningful experience by exploring their ability in using language, it will help the students to keep up wider ideas to write. Moreover, because of Experiential Learning focuses on the learning is based on the social context, working in group will promote their ability to share their ideas with other and, consequently, it will reflect to their ability in generating and developing their ideas also in their writing process. Additionally, the negotiation process of meaning during the discussion will affect to their understanding about certain term used in the text such as the diction of the words or the use of certain grammar. Finally, the process of analyzing and practicing in learning activities will generate their habit in writing and it affects their understanding of using a certain systematical structure (punctuation and spelling) in the text writing.

Meanwhile, Direct Instruction is designed as a teaching method that helps the students to achieve the content-based goals in teaching learning process. It implies that this method is guided the students to attain the certain goal purposively by maximizing the academic time and fully instructions (Santrock, 2008: 414). Even though Direct Instruction focuses on the optimizing the academic time, it will take much time to give further explanation, monitor or help the students to overcome their problem during writing process each student. Additionally, dealing with teaching writing, because of the structured instruction, students will be helped to construct their understanding systematically (Joyce and Weil, 1996). It indicates that the teacher will give the
instruction based on the rigid steps in order to formulate the students understanding about the teaching materials. Furthermore, dealing with the language input for the writing, the teachers provide the model texts that should be imitated by the students. The students are able to write because of the teacher’s instruction without having the much opportunity to explore the ideas in using language. On other words, because of their prior knowledge coming from the teacher’ instruction, they tend to have limited ideas for their writing and, as consequently, if they are not participate actively by following their teacher’ guidance in the class they are not able to acquire the knowledge comprehensively. Additionally, language use depends on the situational context of language occurs in. It implies that the students are expected to be able to analyze the social-emotional context of language use before they are sharing their messages. However, this method is designed as the structured activities based on the systematical steps that should be conducted to reach the goals. Model text given by the teacher can not able to collaborate all situation of language use; as a result, if the students are confronted with different situation or problem, they can not able to generate their knowledge to overcome those problems. Finally, the result of the writing product is not adequately optimal. Therefore, in conclusion, Experiential Learning guides the students to have better achievement in writing skill than Direct Instruction.

Furthermore, the students’ writing ability is also influenced by the psychological factors such as self-efficacy especially in executing their task or overcoming the learning problems. It also supported by Bouffard-Bouchard, 1989 cited in Goodman, S. B., & Cirka, C C. (2009) that self-efficacy is one of the factors that influence the students’ willing or ability to execute writing tasks that are clearly within their repertoire by applying a variety of strategies to solve problems such as re-reading, rewriting, and re-thinking (Walker, 2003). Self-efficacious students tend to find out the best way to conquer their problems during writing process, meanwhile, students low in self-efficacy tend to exhibit self-doubts by giving up easily when confronted with difficulties on writing tasks, even if they have the skills or knowledge to perform the task (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Moreover, in the classroom context, the students have different level of self-efficacy. The high one tends to have greater efforts to achieve the learning goals directly by influencing the frequency of using learning strategies, and the endurance in struggling with difficult task such as writing revision task (Zimmerman and Kistsantas, 1999), so that they feel to enjoy learning process by performing their ability confidently and participating actively in the writing class activity.

On other words, they who have low self-efficacy tend to, unfortunately, earn the failing grade in writing because they will not develop their ability to write, compose the carelessly created sentence, or completing writing task in patch up way without struggling with their efforts to perform the best in writing and discover the solution of their writing problems. Therefore, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded those students who have higher self-efficacy tend to perform better than those who have lower self-efficacy in writing skill.

Moreover, students high self-efficacy is characterized as the “the struggling hunter” in which they are attracted to involve the newest experience, keep fight on the hard situation, think critically and creatively in struggling under difficulties, feel more confident in performing their ability. The experiencing activities provide the occasions to develop their ideas in writing by giving them more direct experiences of language use. They are directed to obtain the newest experience of how language is produced and how the manner in delivering language is. Therefore, Experiential Learning may become an effective way to teach writing for those who have high self-efficacy.

Furthermore, they are categorized as “the instructed follower” that focuses on the instruction provided by the teacher so that they have limited desire to produce or act the new thing, participate moderately in learning activities, and have greater self-doubt and anxiety about their ability. They tend to follow
the systematic rules in producing a writing text because they can not develop their ideas greater than those having high self-efficacy. Additionally, according to Magliaro, Lockee, and Burton (2005: 41), Direct Instruction closely relates to a systematic teaching method in which all of instructional learning activities are controlled by the teachers. It indicates that Direct Instruction guides the students with low self-efficacy who have the lack of interest in writing to practice continuously based on the teachers’ instruction. In addition, another principle of Direct Instruction proposed by Magliaro, Lockee, and Burton (2005: 41) is referred that students are guided to learn new academic knowledge by being on-task as much as possible. On other words, the task is one of the main elements applied in Direct Instruction. The task facilitates the students to practice more and build their learning habit especially in writing activity. The task given by the teacher is very beneficial for helping them in constructing writing text and the phased practices lead them to have better self-confidence and awareness about their ability. Moreover, because of many practices in learning task, they are familiar with the certain term used in the text consisting diction, grammar, or the mechanics of writing; therefore, it consequently will influence their writing skill. In conclusion, both Experiential Learning and Direct Instruction can be implemented to teach writing for those having low self-efficacy.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Experiential Learning may becomes the alternative teaching method to teach writing effectively rather than the conventional method conducted by the teacher especially viewed from the perspective of self-efficacy. Moreover, in teaching writing, both teaching methods and the psychological factors of learner such as self-efficacy play important roles to achieve the learning goals. Ensuring the teaching learning process run effectively and well-prepared is one of the teachers’ responsibilities so that they should broaden their knowledge about language teaching and develop their teaching skill in order to overcome the students’ learning problems and achieve the language learning goal.

6. REFERENCES

Association for Experiential Education
http://www.aee.org/


