Improving students' essay writing skills by implementing peer feedback

Nur Fatimah *, Suwarsih Madya

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Jalan Colombo No.1 Karangmalang, Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia.
* Corresponding Author. E-mail: nur_2you@yahoo.com

Abstract: The aim of this research is improving the students' writing skill by implementing peer feedback. This study was a three-cycle classroom action research at the English Education Department of Ahmad Dahlan University (UAD), Yogyakarta. It focused on the four aspects: designing and teaching the writing class implementing peer feedback, providing writing materials, varying tasks and enhancing students' participation and interaction with peers in the learning process. The subjects consisted of 22 semester 4 students of Essay Writing-Class E. The quantitative data were collected through students' essay scores, whereas the qualitative data were through fieldnotes, interview and portfolio. The research results in these findings. First, the students' participation in the learning process is enhanced through their pair work, group work and whole class activity. By working collaboratively, the students take advantages of giving feedback improving their essay on these aspects: organization, content, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics, style and quality of expression. Second, the students' essay writing improves after peer feedback. Their essay mean scores increase from 63.09; 67.23 to 70.09.

Keywords: peer-feedback, writing, essay

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important language skills. Through writing, a person can express his or her ideas to literate social members. To facilitate a student to be skillful in writing, an education institution needs to consider the purposes of teaching writing. In relation to this, Hyland (2003, p.23) recommends principal orientations of L2 writing teaching, i.e. structure, function, expressivist, process, content and genre.

Despite the importance of writing, in relation to the process of teaching and learning, based on the researcher's observation before the action research, the writing activities in the class have been monotonous. The teacher explained the materials in the writing class, and asked the students to do the writing exercises. If the students did not finish the work in the classroom, they continued by working on it as a home assignment. The students do not have enough time to do the real writing because the teacher plays a very dominant role in explaining the materials to the students.

From such routines, the students felt bored. Their motivation in attending the writing class was not high. This resulted in unsatisfying result of learning writing. Ideas to express in writing did not flow smoothly, lack of coherence was found in the students' work. Many did not meet minimum requirements of grammar in composing English work. The teacher's written feedback in the form of comments such as "keep trying", "reorganize your ideas", "mind your grammar" with some notes on the work did not give much effect on the students' revision.

A preliminary study on academic writing shows several common problems of students at English Education Department of Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta. The study (Fatimah, 2013: pp. 23-25) found out that the main problems in academic writing are as the following: developing ideas (46.67%), grammar (16.67), motivation (10%) and use of vocabulary and language expression (10%). Further, it is also revealed that in relation to learning activities, the students of English Education Department classified getting feedback from the lecturer, feedback from classmates and in-class writing as the first

three needed activities in academic writing compared to teacher's lectures, group work and students' presentation (Fatimah, 2013: pp.23-25).

From lecturers supervising students during the process of writing the *skripsi*, it is reported that students have difficulties in expressing ideas through academic paper in terms of developing ideas and mechanics of writing. There is also lack of coherence and unity in their paragraphs. Some lecturers in the classes of *Seminar on Language Teaching* also admitted similar problems.

The absence of specific module for students in the class of writing put the students in a situation with an obstacle for the students to perform better in writing since they did not have enough writing examples before they produced their own work. From the researcher's colleague teachers, it was reported that the students still made similar mistakes after they gave feedback to the work.

The problems above need to be solved. It is for the improvement of the teaching and learning process and for the achievement of students' writing competence and in the future for the better graduate qualification. Written document or work is one of the authentic evidences of learning achievement. In this case, students succeeding in the writing classes are hopefully able to produce good pieces of work in writing. At the same time, that can be a medium of communication in the academic forums in the future. The Indonesian government policy to upload academic work of the students demands the department and the students to obtain competency in writing skills.

Considering the facts related to writing, in order to help the students improve their skills in writing, the researcher viewed the importance of assisting the students through feedback. The feedback must be clear but the students should not be too dependent to their teacher. Often, students are more open to get feedbacks from their peers. Thus, to enable them to work more independently and autonomously, the feedback to students' writing performance from the teacher needs to be supported with the one from classmates or peers. Such a feedback empowers the students to be more aware of both own work and other students' work.

As Hyland states, there are advantages of peer review. The benefits are: that students participate actively in authentic communicative contexts with alternative and authentic audience, the academic environment is nonjudgmental and writers gain understanding of reader needs and they can develop critical reading skills(Hyland, 2003: p.199). Peer feedback reduced apprehension about writing and doing peer feedback can reduce teacher's workload. Moreover, by doing peer review, students are encouraged to work collaboratively and reduce their self-reliance in the writing process (Harmer, 2004, p.115).

A number of studies support the idea of peer feedback or peer review. A research of *Students' Response toward Peer Review Panel in Writing Class* by Sahertian (2011: p.298) reveals that 56.52% of her respondents agree that peer-review writing is a such a beneficial way to improve their writing skills; 60.87% of them agree that peer review's comments help them motivating and improving their writing skills; and 47.83% agree that peer review writing is effective to excel their writing skills. The findings of the research are in line with the research results conducted by Lundstrom & Baker (2009: p. 38). They found that *L2 writing students can improve their own writing by transferring abilities they learn when reviewing peer texts*.

The result of this mentioned research is in line with the study conducted by Rofiudin (2011: p.572) on *Improving Students' Ability to Write Descriptive Texts through Peer Assessment*. It is found out that there is improvement of students' writing ability; that students' interest and awareness in writing descriptive texts were enhanced significantly.

Ryo & Wing (2012: p.95) researched the cooperative relationships between Korean EFL college students of different skill levels in peer review process, how the college students' skill levels affect their peer review experiences. The research shows that there is a high degree of cooperation between peer partners during review process. Other findings are creativity in non-directed correction confirmation of the students' peer paper, a widespread perceived benefit of the peer process by students themselves and some interesting, though unsurprising, skill level differences in student performances of their peer review duties. Another study by Sucipto (2014: p.429) resulted in the positive response of the students joining the writing class and the increasing scores of the students' writing.

However, different levels of students' ability may hinder them to do the peer review. The situation above demands the teacher to create a better learning atmosphere. The teaching and learning process, then, should be designed in such away so that the process of conducting peer feedback results in

improvement in students' writing skills. This article presents ideas on the efforts to improve the writing skills of the students of English Education Department at Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta.

METHOD

The research was a classroom action research. It was a collaborative study. The researcher worked together with one of the lecturers of the essay writing class, and with students taking essay writing. The action research was conducted in three cycles and the area of research focus was to improve students' writing skills by using peer feedback. Each meeting lasted in 100 minutes. The steps in each cycle consist of planning, doing action and observing and reflecting (Kemmis and McTaggart (in Burns, 2010, p.9), Madya, 2007: p.67). This action research was conducted at Essay Writing class E, English Education Department of Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta. It started from February 25, 2014 to June 10, 2014.The subjects were 22 students of English Education Department in the 2013/2014 academic year. They were learning essay writing at class E.

In Cycle I, preparation was done before the action. The activities for the planning step are as the following. The researcher designed the lesson plan that facilitated the students to improve their essay writing skills through peer feedback. After that, she prepared the materials: *Topic, Topic Sentences, and Introductory Paragraphs*, student workseet, observation checklist and interview guide. Next, she discussed the plan, the checklist and the interview guide with the collaborator. Further, she prepared and shared the teaching materials with the collaborator. She, together with the collaborator, also prepared the activity of reflecting to solve the problem(s) in the next cycle.

At the beginning of the learning session, the main activities were greeting and engaging the students to the materials taught.At the whilst-writing stage, writing tasks were to be designed for the process of studying the lesson, i.e. essay writing. The students were to learn the material guiding them to the achievement of the learning objective. They made their writing draft. They were exposed to the points to observe during peer feedback.Working in pairs, they exchanged the writing draft, observed their partner's work using the rubric to give feedback.After that, they shared the feedback in a discussion with their partner. Students gave the feedback rubric and the work back to their partner.

Each of the students revised the writing draft inside the class and then continued outside the classroom. The students's efforts to write were appreciated. Students' work was observed and analyzed by the teacher to help give feedbacks for improvement. The idea of doing peer feedback in writing and why it is important was also introduced. Before ending the learning session, students were invited to draw a conclusion on the lesson at that meeting. Also, it is important to know what difficulties the students got when learning in the classroom. While the action was taking place, the collaborator observed the process. He made necessary notes as well.

After doing the first cycle of the action research, a discussion with the collaborator was done. What has been discussed included the result of students' involvement in the learning process, response to the rubric and students' work. The interview with the students was also conducted. Moreover, the collaborator reports his finding about the strengths and weaknesses he observed during the action to help the researcher get meaningful feedback for the next cycle.

The reflection after the first cycle was the basis to make improvement for the next process of action research. The steps in the second cycle were mainly similar to those of the first cycle.

There was a collaborator. The students attended the class, and did the peer feedback in improving their skills in essay writing. There were some points to observe and to check by the students to improve their skills. The points of the essay to concern are organization, content, grammar, punctuation-spelling-and mechanics, and style-and-quality of expression as Brown (2001) suggested.

Through the learning process in the essay writing class, where the teacher did the action research, the students were facilitated to solve their problem in writing. They were exposed to giving feedback to their partner's essay work, they revised their own writing draft based on the feedback, they revised and rewrote their essay.

Data Collecting Procedures and Research Instruments

There are several techniques to collect the research data. They were observation, interview, photo, field note taking. A questionnaire is distributed to help to get data on the students' responses evenly. There are several statements to be responded by the students after doing peer feedback in writing.

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Since writing is an excursive process, the students' collection of work is the basis of the assessment. The students produced several pieces of work. And from their portfolio, the assessment is based on for each cycle. After each cycle, work to measure the students writing skills is submitted to find out their learning progress or achievement.

To help measure the writing improvement, there were two indicators covering the ones for learning process and for learning results. For the learning process the points to observe were focused on: designing writing class implementing peer feedback, varying tasks, enhancing students' participation and providing suitable writing materials.

For the learning results, a writing rubric is used. The rubric is adapted from the criteria cited from Brown (2001: p.357) that emphasizes on: organization, content, grammar, punctuation-spelling-and-mechanics, and style-and-quality of expression. The descriptors for each point in the rubric are graded into five levels.

Table1. Category of Scores

Score	Category
80 -100	Excellent
65 -<80	Good
55 -<65	Adequate
40 -<55	Unacceptable
<40	Not college level

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data is done qualitatively and quantitatively. After each cycle, the mean score of the writing work is analyzed. Then, supported by the results of the observation, interview, and reflection with the collaborator, the information relation to the process happening in the teaching and learning in the classroom is described clearly. The processes toward descriptive qualitative analysis range from data reduction, data display and conclusion or verification.

Referring to the research validity defined by Burns this research implements democratic, outcome, process, catalytic and dialogic validities. According to Burns (1999: p. 161), the democratic validity relates to the extent to which the research is truly collaborative and allows for the inclusion of multiple voices. From the beginning every participant has opportunities to voice his or her ideas and opinion. The participants are involved to share their thoughts through interviews, discussions and involvement in the action research. If this democratic validity is achieved, the problem solutions benefit for related parties in the research.

Other validity, i.e. outcome validity relates to the notion of actions leading to outcomes that are 'successful' within the research context (Burns, 1999: p.162). This outcome validity is taken by facilitating the students to do the peer feedback with clear explanation from the teacher and a rubric for the peer feedback. The next validity is process validity. It is related to the process how adequate the teaching and learning conducted in the action research. The next is catalytic validity. It is related to the extent to which the research allows participants to deepen their understanding and of the social realities of the context and how they can make changes within it (Burns, 1999: p.162). The last validity is dialogic validity. These are obtained by asking the lecturer collaborator and students to give suggestions, feedbacks that make the process of teaching and writing improve the students' writing skills.

To deal with the reliability, the data are supported with the field notes and results of interviews. Another effort is also working intensively with the lecturer collaborator. This activity is conducted to get the most accurate and valid data of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cycle I

Planning

In cycle I, the planning on the four points to focus in the action research, were discussed with the collaborator. There are four actions done through out the action research. They are: designing and teaching the writing class implementing peer feedback; providing writing materials (finding topics and narrowing ideas, thesis statement, introductory paragraphs of the essay and introduction to peer

feedback); varying tasks: whole class activity, work in pairs, work in groups; and enhancing students' participation in the learning process and students' interaction with peers.

Doing Action and Observing

In the first cycle, the writing materials were taught. During the learning process, the students listened to the explanation from the teacher, were guided with pictures by the teacher in finding the topics and narrowing ideas, defining thesis statements but they have not finished producing an introductory paragraph. Only three to four students out of twenty two students did give response to my efforts to invite the students to participate actively in the class. Students responded to the teacher only when they were asked to do that.
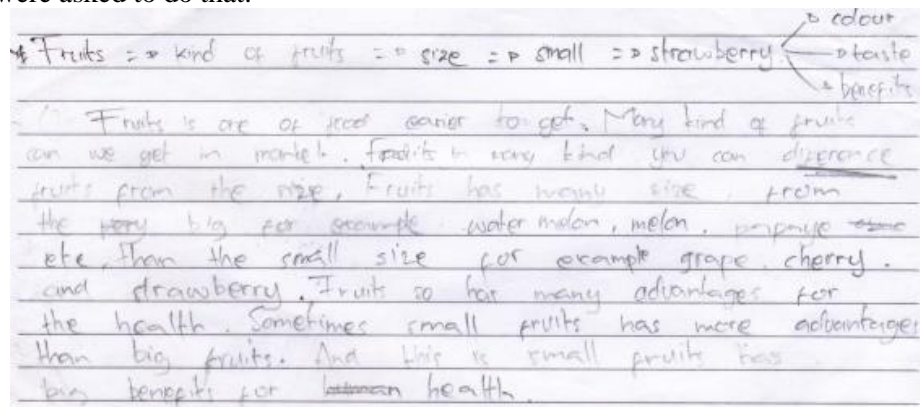
Figure 1. Example of Student's Introductory Paragraph
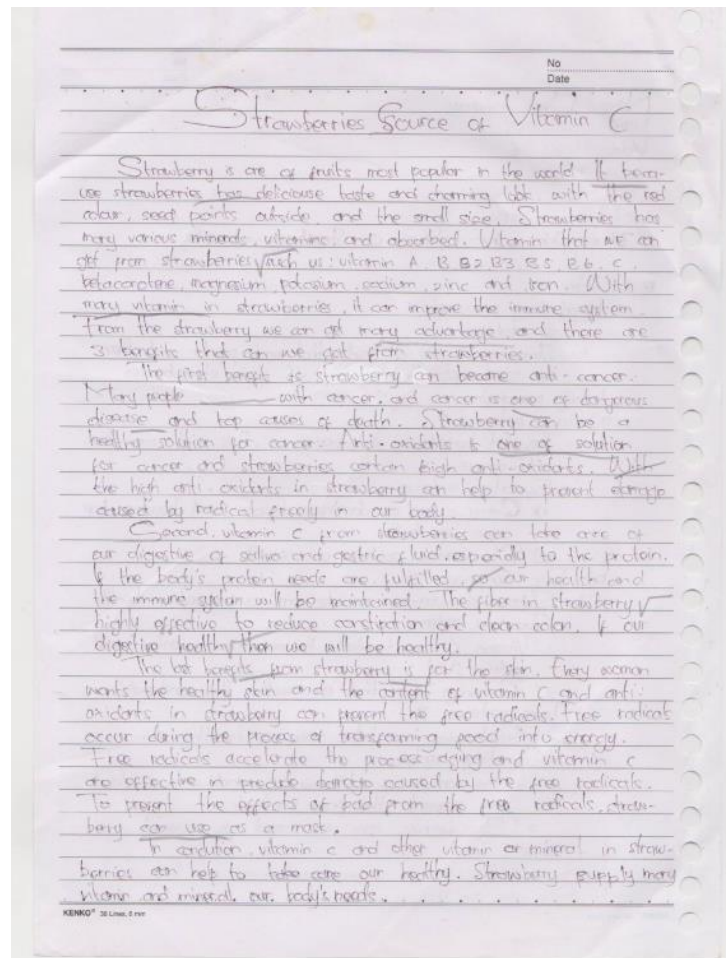
Figure 2. Example of Student's Essay 1

In the second meeting, the students worked in small groups to share ideas based on certain pictures. They continued working individually on the materials. They discussed the work. The students worked in pairs in doing the peer feedback, regarding their own consideration to improve their partner's work.

In the third meeting of the first cycle, the writing rubric was introduced in the meeting. they did not fully base their feedback on the recommended rubric. The students were asked to observe their peer's work in order to suggest improvement of the work. However, it did not run successfully, the students were still confused how to work with the rubric. After the class learning session in the third writing, the students continued writing the whole essay, exchanged with a partner, revised and submitted their work. The students, then, were asked to share any suggestions to improve their partner's work. Figure 1 is an example of student 's work progress from narrowing ideas, introductory paragraph to an essay.

Reflecting

The writing activities in the first cycle were not much actively involving the students. The teacher as the resource person and organizer in the classroom taught and talked much explaining the materials. The students reacted only after their teacher asked them to answer questions or to do something related to writing tasks.

In the first meeting, students did not have much time to interact with peers. They spent much time to listen to the teacher's explanation about the materials and about the rubric and they spent time to do the writing exercise. They needed an extra time to continue writing the introductory paragraph outside the classroom as a home assignment. The students composed their introductory paragraph individually.

The students were not given enough opportunity to contribute to the decision making. "*Topiknya mungkin, Bu, agak kurang pas, mungkin kalau mahasiswa dimintai pendapat mengenai topik yang akan ditulis, itu mungkin lebih menarik.*" One of the interviewed student suggested. More task types needed so that the students could work less dependently to the teacher.

By the end of the third meeting of the first cycle, the students produced an introductory paragraph. They commented friend's work presented. The whole class could listen to their comment, but not each of them could focus on peer feedback since they were still confused how to use the rubric. They were not yet familiar with the writing rubric which was analytic. After the class learning session in the third writing, the students continued writing the whole essay, exchanged with a partner, revised and submitted their work.

During the process of teaching and learning essaywriting in the first cycle, especially at the stage of the whilst-teaching, the teacher transferred only some the materials planned. These covered the materials on narrowing ideas, making thesis statements and producing an introductory paragraph. Indeed, the students paid attention to my explanation seriously, responded to the teacher's command and questions correctly, got the materials from her presentation. The tasks were mostly done in whole class activities. Among the task types suggested by Hyland, extracting information from a written text and practicing metalanguage were the favourite two in the class. However, the plan to introduce peer feedback was not yet successful. The rubric recommended was not well understood by the students. More information on what and how the rubric should be used was to be explained in the next cycle.

From the interview, it was also found out that some students thought that some descriptors in the rubric were confusing. "*It is not easy to understand some of the aspects and descriptors in the rubric. They are not clear for us. We have to get clear understanding on it so that we can give comment or feedback after observing our friend's work.*." Thus, the points of descriptors were discussed again so that for the next peer feedback, there should not be any confusion among students.

The number of students showing courage and participation remained still very limited. Only two students sitting at the front row tried to criticize and two male students shared their understanding to revise the grammar point. But still, students responded to the teacher only when they were asked.

In the next meeting, students had more activities to comment on their classmate's work on the board. Their comment focused more on grammar. The collaborator thought that the teacher only explained the points to observe not the the descriptors. There should be enough and clear examples.

The participation of the class members in the first action was very limited. Most of the students did what was instructed. Only two female students sitting in the front row did respond better to their teacher than their friends. From the observation it was found out that the students' enthusiasm was very

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limited. Only three to four students out of twenty two students gave response to the teacher's efforts to invite the students to participate actively in the class.

A variety of interactions was not fully realized in the class. Teacher – student interaction was the most often activity observed. And among students, only about 5 students participated because of the teacher's calling their names or request them to participate.

An initiative to encourage them to intearact was stimulated by inviting them to observe massively as the whole class members to some of their classmates' work. Outside the classroom, the students were required to do the peer work. It was monitored quite well when they did the peer work on the introductory paragraph, but then it was continued to write more paragraphs to complete their first essay.

The work was assessed using the rubric. The achievement after the first cycle is as the following.

Table 2. Details of Indicators of Writing Achievement in Cycle I

No.	Aspects	Indicators
1.	Organization	a. Complete and effective elements of essay: introductory paragraph, body and conclusion of essay
		b. Supporting evidences for generalization
		c. Logical conclusion
2.	Content	a. Assigned topic discussed √
		b. Clear ideas
		c. Thoroughly developed ideas
3.	Grammar	a. Correct use of subjects and verbs
		b. Parallel structure √
		c. Correct use of nouns
4.	Punctuation-spelling-mechanics:	a. Correct use of capitals √
		b. Indented paragraph or space between paragraphs √
		c. Correct punctuation √
		d. Correct spelling
5.	Style and quality of expression	a. Precise vocabulary/register
		b. Concise
		c. Variety of sentences
6.	Means and Categories of Students' Writing	63.09
		Adequate

Cycle II

Planning

The problems still remained on the efforts to improve the teaching and learning process as well as the results of the students' writing. The students needed more information, the clearer one on the rubric and how to use it to help improve the essay of the students' partner and of their own. In addition, time to enable the students to work in pairs and in groups had to be added. Similarly, opportunity for them to revise their work needed to be taken into account.

Doing Action and Observing

In the first meeting in the second cycle, the teacher linked the materials to the previous material in paragraph writing. This was to help the students remember parts of essay writing. The process was then continued by observing a piece of writing work. The purpose was identifying from an example how the ideas were organized in each part of an essay. They also discussed the content of the work. After that, the writing rubric was presented to enable the students practice and experience how the aspects and descriptors in the rubric were used. The students practiced giving feedback as a whole class and they were asked to swap their work with partners outside class to do peer feedback.

In the second meeting, the students shared their problems. One of them said, "*I still find difficult in developing ideas in writing." I held on my pen but I spent my time thinking about what to write and how*." The teacher had to lead the class to step back to guide them to write. They talked about what to do and how to do to help write. The class discussed again how to outline ideas before writing. "*...we can outline our ideas. Make your outline from your introductory paragraph, body to your concluding paragraph...*" The teacher tried to approach them to outline. It was decided to ask them to work in groups. A student worked with students sitting next to him/her. The group decided to find the topic to be developed. From the group work, it was found out that they like topics which were very familiar with

them. They chose topics on public figures especially artists. The teacher let them work on that topic. The group had to finish outlining. Following up this outline, each student wrote an essay individually based on the outline made by the group. Here are pieces of Student's work in the second cycle.
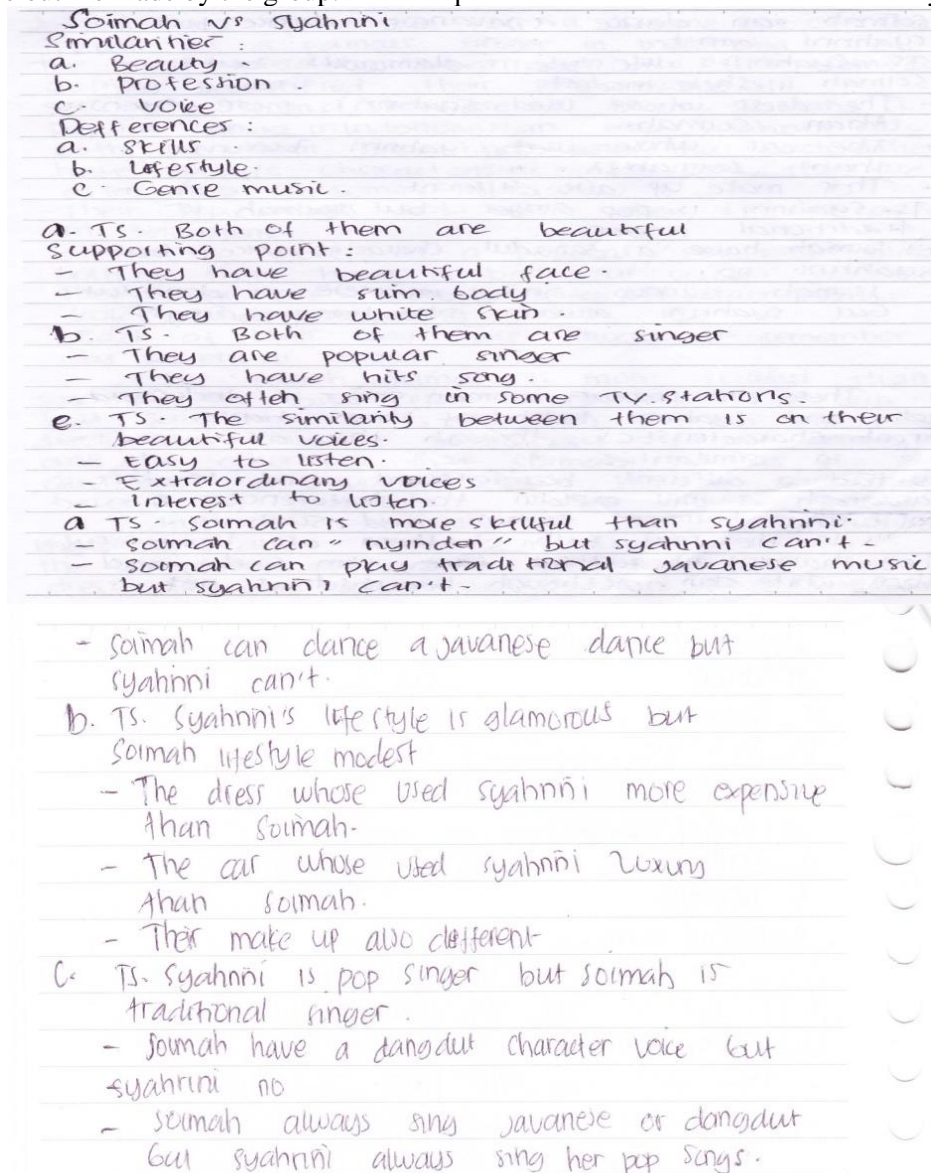

Figure 3. Example of Student's Outline ofComparison and Contrast

Figure 4. Example of Student S15's Essay of Comparison and Contrast

Reflecting

The descriptors of the rubric were explained and the students could have better understanding on the use of the rubric. Even, they were provided with indicators to observe and then to check their friend's work. In this second cycle, the students finally could have their idea to be outlined and they wrote and submitted their essay after the third meeting of the second cycle. They did a peer feedback and revise their work. They made their shared outline in the classroom, but finished the essay outside it.

From the interview, it was found out that the interviewed student thought that peer feedback inspired them in developing writing skills. "*Sometimes when I got stuck to start writing, I asked my friend about what possible topic to write. She shared her experiences in exploring and developing ideas in writing...I think I can do that, too.*"

Response was not only from the students in the front row but some in the middle and at the back showed their enthusiasm during the lesson. This happened especially when the problem shared was related to the class members, not necessarily from the teacher.

Student-student interaction started to happen. It was stimulated first by the case for the whole class. It was continued with students' interaction with peers in small groups. In a small group each student had more time to cooperate and collaborate while the teacher could monitor the progress. A clear task like producing an outline helped the group to accomplish the assignment.

Inthe second cycle, during the process of teaching and learning in the writing class, the teacher played her roles more than the ones as a resource and an organizer. The teacher also became a facilitator. The number of students showing courage and participation was also higher. Student's response to their friend's problem in exploring ideas to write and an opportunity to work together in small groups led in the increasing number of participating students in the process of teaching and learning essay writing.

Students had more learning activities to be active. First, to suggest what to solve friend's writing problems, to comment on writing work the board and to work together with group members to produce writing work. Their comment developed not only on grammar but also on other aspects of writing, especially on punctuation, spelling and mechanics. The points of grammar were mainly on subject verb agreement and nouns.

In relation to enforcing an attitude of being discipline, the collaborator thought that the teachershould have strategy to encourage the students to submit their writing work. They should not postpone it and alway asked for an extra time to submit their work. The teacher agreed with him and decided to use another strategy to have on the spot writing for the next meeting after mid term.

Inthe second cycle, the teacher succeeded in making more than half of the class members to contribute to problem solving. She continued to let the students cooperate and collaborate to find ideas for outlining.

In the second cycle, the teacher varied the activities to enable peer feedback to take place. She did her role as a resource that facilitated the students to do peer feedback. She guided her students by providing an activity to make the students work as a whole class observing and doing peer feedback first, and after that designed an activity for the students to do the peer feedback. She accomodated a student's problem leading to group work and peer feedback at last and they finished writing their revised essay.

There were several tasks done in the second cycle. In relation to ideas on tasks stated by Hyland (2003: p.113), the following happened in the writing class. Here were what the class did: extracting information from a written text, brainstorming to generate ideas, analyze an authentic text for patterns and features, practice use of metalanguage to identify parts of texts.

Table 3. Details of Indicators of Writing Achievement in Cycle II

No.	Aspects	Indicators
1.	Organization	a. Complete and effective elements of essay: introductory paragraph, body and conclusion of essay√
		b. Supporting evidences for generalization√
		c. Logical conclusion√
2.	Content	a. Assigned topic discussed √
		b. Clear ideas√
		c. Thoroughly developed ideas
3.	Grammar	a. Correct use of subjects and verbs
		b. Parallel structure √
		c. Correct use of nouns
4.	Punctuation-spelling-mechanics:	a. Correct use of capitals √
		b. Indented paragraph or space between paragraphs √
		c. Correct punctuation √
		d. Correct spelling√
5.	Style and quality of expression	a. Precise vocabulary/register
		b. Concise
		c. Variety of sentences
6.	Means and Categories of Students' Writing	a. 67.23
		b. Good

In the first cycle, that did not happen. The model of reading texts was limited, only parts of an essay. It was also a limited number of examples. Students did not have comprehensive ideas on how that part of an essay existed in the work of essay. The students' views on topics they liked to discuss were hardly exposed because the teacher determined the topics. She did not invite them to share what they liked what they were familiar or interested in.

Observation and investigation could help to find out whether or not there was improvement. In the second cycle, the students paid attention to her explanation and responded to her instruction. They got the rubric and learned how to use it to criticize the essay. They worked with their classmates to do the peer feedback, in small groups and or in pairs. To do this, they shared their work, and asked their partner to suggest them to improve their work. However, they were still not confident in doing the peer feedback. They needed more time to do it outside the classroom.

From some conversations with their teacher, it was revealed that they needed teacher's feedback. They did not feel confirmed if the feedback was only from their classmates. Therefore, in the third cycle, the suggestion, correction or confirmation from the teacher will be part of the activity to help the students improve their writing.

Cycle III

Planning

After the second cycle, there was a range of time for the mid semester exam. It took two weeks in April 2014. The teacher made the test items and shared with the collaborator before publishing them for the exam. To maximize the students' peer feedback, the collaborator and the teacher researcher agreed to use the essay produced during the mid-semester exam as the material to improve in the third cycle.

In the third cycle of this action research, the students could work better with the rubric. They recognized what to observe and they were able to focus on the descriptors in the rubric though grammar remained their concerns. Some aspects such as organization and content needed to be more paid attention to. To help organize ideas better, the teacher should remind the students of the importance of having unity and coherent in the paragraphs. Providing supporting details were the other point to concern. This was to develop ideas more thoroughly.

The students in the second cycle needed more time to work more intensively with their classmates. Therefore, there should be more time to work in pairs and in small groups. The third cycle was designed to enable the students more collaboratively with classmates and to get corrective feedback from the teacher.

Doing Action and Observing

The students' work with their essay from the mid semester exam session. The students were exposed to the points to observe during peer feedback because they used them after they got their writing work and exchange the work with their peer to observe for improvement of their work. When grammar was the aspect to focus, the students were required to inform the writer what points of grammar needed to revise. *If you think the grammar needed revision, make sure that your friend knows what to revise. Don't only put a circle on the aspect of grammar and let your friend find the way to revise his/her work. Show him/her the way to make his/her writing better in grammar. Does he need to change the verb into past, or should she omit the ing and use verb one, instead?" The teacher explained how to give clear feedback. "Cobadilihatlagi, check again your work.* **Vignette 23, May 6, 2015**. Each of the students revised the writing. The class made a conclusion of what has been done. Students submitted their revised writing work. The teacher did some interviews with some students, observed and analyzed the writing work of the students. Some common points in the rubric were discussed to consider in improving their work.

After experiencing some learning experiences to improve writing through peer feedback, the students were asked to respond to what happened by filling in the questionnaire

Reflecting

In this third cycle, the students finally produced their writing work. They could have their own idea to be outlined and they wrote and submitted their essay. The students were to produce an essay on a limited amount of time. They made their first draft during the mid semester exam. They did a peer

feedback and revised their work after they got their work back at the first meeting after the mid semester term.

From the interview, it was found out that the interviewed the studenthad a different feeling when they had to write under pressure. "*Tegang, tapi saya dipaksa berpikir untuk menyelesaikan writing karena waktunya terbatas. Materi outlining sangat membantu untuk menemukan bahan apa yang akan ditulis...*"

Sharing and caring emerged in the process of giving feedback and revising the writing work. The students had to find the strategy to enable their partner understand what they meant on the writing sheet. Unclear feedback resulted in making their partner confused and unable to revise the draft.

Doing peer feedback enhanced the students' caring to other people. Student-student interaction happened more often. It was stimulated first by the case for the whole class. It was continued with students' interaction with peers in pair work or small group work. In a small group each student had more time to cooperate and collaborate while the teacher could monitor the progress. A clear task like producing the final writing work helped the class members to finish revising their essay.

The students had more learning activities to be active. They had their time tosuggest what to solve friend's writing problems, to comment on writing work the board and to work together with group members to produce writing work. Their comment developed not only on grammar but also on other aspects of writing, especially on punctuation, spelling and mechanics.

Figure 5. Example of Student S8's Work

Figure 6. Example of Student S8's Work after Peer Feedback

Figure 7. Example of the Student S8's Work after Teacher Feedback

The process of giving feedback to classmates developed positive characters. Students were challenged to decide by themselves confidently what to suggest to other people. And this feedback or

suggestions or comments had to be easily understood for revision. They developed as well their discipline because their partner waited for them to give the feedback in a limited time. They had to manage themselves to work for others. They should not postpone it. In the third cycle, students had more time to manage themselves for a variety of activities to enable peer feedback to take place, to let themand their classmates produce a better quality of an essay. This effort was supported by the feedback from the teacher. Parts of this essay show how Student S8 did the process of improving her writing skills.

Discussion

From the first cycle to the third cycle of the action research, the efforts to improve students' writing skills find challenges. Since writing is a creative process, it is sometimes not as planned. The activity of designing and teaching a writing class implementing peer feedback sometimes does not run as prepared.

Based on the data collected from observation in the first cycle, the teacher directed the learning process that led to **the implementation of peer feedback in the essay writing**. Although the teacher tried to stimulate the students to write by presenting some pictures, however, it was not easy for the students to write. It took long time for them to produce a piece of essay. Therefore, there was not enough time to introduce the writing rubric and to do the peer feedback at first. Then the students were asked to give any useful suggestions for their partner. The work the students accomplished in the class at the beginning of the first cycle was an introductory paragraph. To make it a complete essay, the students were asked to continue writing outside the class. They were also to exchange work, to give suggestion for revision, to revise and to submit their essay.

Another challenge to implement peer feedback in the essay writing class is time management. It is important to better manage the time both for the teacher and the students. Too much time to teach, to explain, the teacher cannot allocate appropriate time for the students to write, to revise and to submit work punctually.

It is more complicated because the students need also more time to manage their ideas to help them write an essay. Working in pairs and in small groups can bear the problem in stimulating the students to find the ideas to write. This was done in the second cycle of the action research. In addition, under pressure writing is one of the strategies for the students to deal with this challenge. This strategy was conducted in the third cycle.

Furthermore, to do the peer feedback, there must be familiarity with the rubric, the analytic one. The rubric users have to focus on the aspects of writing as well as on the descriptors that guide them when observing or assessing the essay. The research gives a lesson that students need training to be familiar with the content of the writing rubric and to use it. Prior simple training on how to use it must be done. They need to recognize the descriptors that guide them in observing their partner's work while doing the peer feedback. Otherwise, the students will not be confident in using it. They were not enthusiastic in taking advantages from the rubric to improve their essay. Such happened in the first cycle.

To solve the problems, the rubric is more intensively discussed. All the five aspects are explained. They consist of the aspect of organization, content, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics, and style and quality of expressions. The descriptors are also presented in details. Asking the students to practice using the rubric is the following activity to enhance the students' confidence and enthusiasm in improving the essay writing skills implementing peer feedback.

The process of doing peer feedback improves. Step by step the students experienced the peer feedback, more independently inside and outside the classroom. This helped them revise their work before completing and submitting their essay.

The peer feedback was done both directly and indirectly as suggested by Bitchener and Ferris (2012: pp.148-149). Direct correction is a correction that not only calls attention to the error but also provides a specific solution to the problem. The student knows directly what to revise soon after he/she got the feedback. Indirect one demands the students to correct by themselves after having certain signs or symbols, or some words underlined on their work.

Other reasons based on what happened in the action research can be related to the five types of knowledge stated by Hyland (2003: p.313). In relation to content, in this action research, the students had difficulties in writing an essay because they were not familiar with or not interested in the suggested topics. Between learning sessions the teacher asked two students about the problems about finding

interesting topics. They suggested some topics they could define or they could choose. One of the topics was about celebrities. Then solution for the second cycle was finding the topics that the students knew better. The topic that the students were familiar increases their interest to write. Familiarity with the topic to write made the students ready with related discourse, vocabulary, and current issues on the topic. Their motivation to write was also higher.

This choice of topic was related to **the effort to provide suitable materials**. The materials could be created or taken from existing teaching materials. Further, regarding the system, it is important to equip students with the knowledge of the appropriate language forms to create the text. Responding to the students' difficulty in finding the topic and in executing the lesson plan, to produce comparison and contrast essay, the students also need supporting certain linguistic knowledge. Points of grammar become supporting knowledge to help the students accomplish the learning objectives in the essay writing class. The points of grammar to learn can be introduced explicitly or implied in the model texts.

Brown (2004: p.221) emphasizes the importance of micro and macro skills of writing. When dealing with micro skills of writing, the students need to pay attention to several skills to master. They are: producing graphemes and orthographic patterns of English, producing writing at a reasonable speed, using appropriate word order patterns, using acceptable grammar, expressing a particular meaning in a variety of grammatical form and using cohesive devises in writing. More advanced writing skills are demanded afterwards. For essay writing, what is more to learn is expressing a particular meaning in a variety of grammatical form and using cohesive devises in writing. These are two of the aspects to care in writing an essay.

The macro skills include: using the rhetorical forms and conventions in writing; showing communicative functions related to forms and purpose; linking between events and different relations such as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification; differentiating literal from implied meanings; dealing with culturally specific references in writing and developing writing strategies, for example writing fluency in the first draft, using paraphrases, soliciting peer and teacher feedback and using feedback for revising and editing.

Furthermore, considering the process, time for the students to make their first draft, to share with classmates to get peer feedback, and to revise before the final production of an essay must be of consideration. The design of tasks must accomodate these processes in order that the students have enough time and preparation to finish the writing assignment, more importantly, to express ideas through written language. In addition, the knowledge of communicative purpose and rhetorical structure (genre) is also important to consider. Students are required to recognize the generic structure of a certain essay to guide them express ideas through words. And the last, it is important to take the knowledge of context, i.e. of readers' expectation and beliefs. Writing is a medium of expressing ideas and feeling to the audience, that is the readers. Therefore, the ability to use the five mentioned types of knowledge is unavoidable so that the students can be successful delivering the message through words.

It is not only the knowledge, the success of the students is also influenced by the learning and teaching process. The process in the classroom must be designed to facilitate the students in realizing the needs of being able to write better. The tasks must vary including whole class activities, group work, pair work or individual work. When one type of task does not suit the class, it is necessary to replan and find variation in tasks. The first cycle applied more whole class activities, but since feedback needs more intensive interaction among students, pair work and group work were also conducted. It is needed to anticipate group work with heterogeneous members.

A variety of tasks in the learning process is strongly encouraged to enable the students to learn in better atmosphere. The variety is on the teaching methods, learning activities, tasks and materials. In the essay writing class, the four aspects mentioned are of importance to support students in improving their writing skills through peer feedback. This action research proves that to support peer feedback, feedback from the teacher is also important. The corrective feedback from the teacher makes the students comfortable, confirmed with what they wrote, and this helps them improve their writing.

According to Nation (2009: p.143), there are benefits of peer feedback. Doing this, the students get feedback from classmate(s) in addition to the one given by the teacher. This also helps them do the process of being a more balanced model for the reader. The peer feedback enables the students to learn from seeing others' work and hearing what others say about them. Thus, the students can obtain adequate product and provide training for future writing.

More advantages of peer feedback are stated by Gilmore (2009) in Richards (2015: p.503). When it is done in class, it reduces teacher's workload. It also gives the students more people to read their work. Further, it provides greater cognitive processing of errors by students and promotes learner independence. Collaboration and negotiation of meaning tend to occur in the classroom. Further, there is another advantage. Moore & Teather (2013: p.198) found that by reviewing students learn to read critically, getting insight on how to do their work better by involving in active learning.

Through a variety of tasks in addition to working individually, the students can develop to learn together with other people. They interact with the teacher, and with the class members as writing partners and reviewers. At the same time they have opportunity to learn how to learn writing and how to learn together.

The learning process happening from cycle to cycle is monitored with the observation. Progress report on what has been and has not been done to make the peer feedback meaningful for the students is supported with the observation sheet. Conversation and interviews with the teacher collaborator and students, as well as students' questionnaire results strengthen the evidence of the research results.
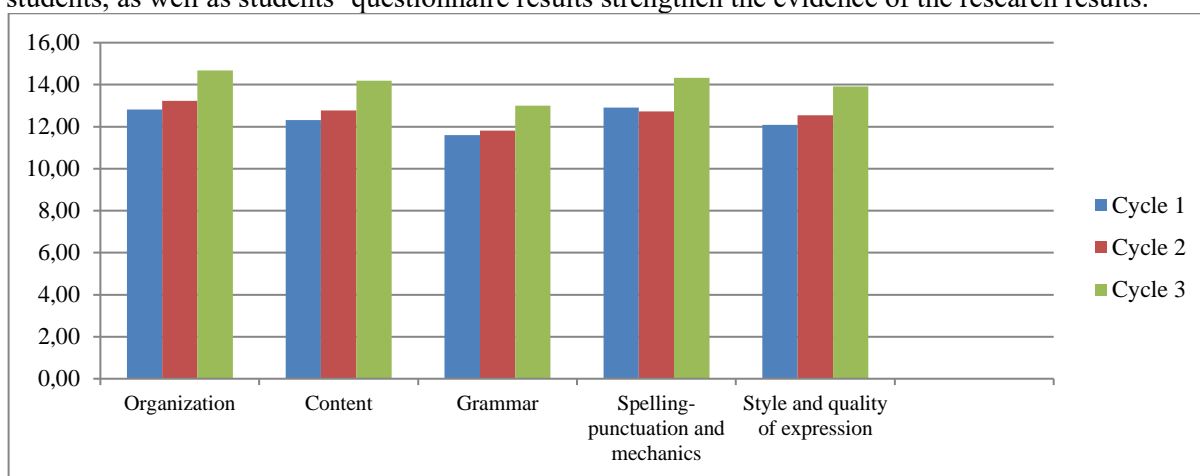

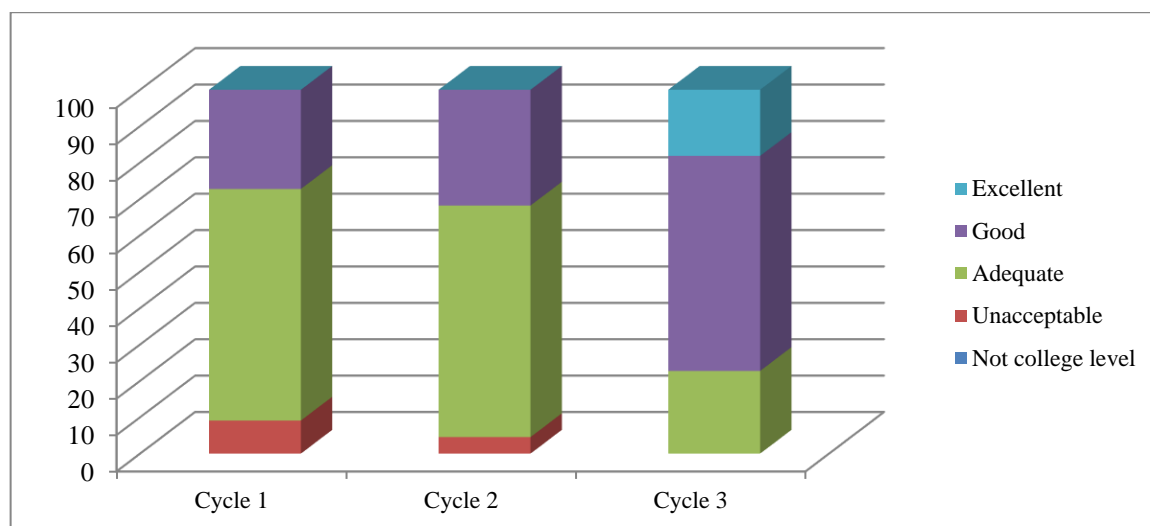**Figure 8.** Students' Achievement on the Aspects of Essay

Figure 9. Students' Categories in Essay Writing

The action research conducted facilitated the students to improve their essay writing skills and their other intelligences. From the three cycles and the three pieces of writing work that were taken to score, there is significant improvement. The means of the writing achievement from cycle one to cycle three improved. The means of work 1, work 2 and work 3 are : 63.09; 67.23; 70.09.

It is found out that there is improvement on the students' writing work. There are five aspects to observe in students' writing work. They are: organization, content, grammar, spelling-punctuation-and-mechanics, and style and quality of expression. Based on the aspects observed in the composition work, the writing skills of the students participating in the action research improved, more on in the aspects of

organization, content and spelling-punctuation-and-mechanics. However, the aspects of grammar and style and quality of expressions need to be more paid attention to.

The following presents the students' achievement on the five aspects of essay writing and their categories considering their scores (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

CONCLUSIONS

The results the action research conducted in three cycles show that the implementation of peer feedback improves the students' writing skill, especially essay writing skills. The assessments are mainly on the aspects of organization, content and spelling, punctuation and mechanics. The means of the students' writing work also improve from 63.09; 67.23; to 70.09.

Other results of the study are related to the learning process in the writing class. The students got varied learning experiences that enabled them to enhance their writing skills. They were involved in whole class, group work, pair work as well as individual work before, during and after writing activities in the classroom. This raised their awareness to share and care with classmates.

The research also gives the teacher and collaborator to learn to better prepare the class. What to prepare includes the materials, the tasks and the various interaction between teacher-student, student-student, and student-teacher-student.

This classroom action research gives lessons to the teacher and the students. It is suggested that both the teacher and students collaborate to let learning happen in the class. The collaboration to improve writing does not only deal with the ability of the teacher to design and teach the students to use peer feedback, and to provide materials, but also to vary the tasks and interactions. It is not only the teacher who makes the efforts, but also the students. They should actively participate by getting involved in the learning process, sharing with friends, giving suggestions for the peer students as well as for the teacher to create a good class to improve writing.

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