ENHANCING STUDENTS' INSIGHTS IN CONSTRUCTING REPORT TEXTS WITH ISLAMIC VALUES BY SCAFFOLDING

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Abstract

This study aims at presenting the effect of scaffolding on EFL students' writing ability in constructing a report text by integrating Islamic values through the writing process and class presentations and capturing the students' perceptions after the teaching-learning instruction process when scaffolding was implemented in the EFL class. In this study, 26 students from the Islamic students major in an English IV class at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) in Kendari, South-East Sulawesi, followed a writing process in portfolio and filled out a questionnaire. The writing process approach consisted of prewriting, revising, editing and publishing by presentation a final draft of the report text. The learning strategies were adopted from cycles and stages of learning proposed by Hammond, et al. (1992). Using experimental design, the data was analyzed quantitatively. Pre-tests and post-tests were conducted for assessing the outcomes achieved by the students from what they had been taught. The students' perceptions were gained from analysis of a questionnaire using a Likert scale. Students were provided with writing guidelines and assessed on five aspects such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The results showed that the students' achievements in the post-test compared to the pre-test revealed significant improvement, meanwhile most of them had difficulties with the basic elements of writing, e.g. lack of structure, poor grammar and limited use of language. However, afterwards, these learners could more confidently express their ideas in their writing and report presentations. Besides, there was a positive improvement in the students' attitudes and perceptions towards the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: *Integrating Islamic values, report texts, scaffolding, students' perceptions.*

INTRODUCTION

Constructing report texts for students of Islamic studies nowadays is still limited into scientific and solely incline to general terms. The students raise issue of dichotomy between English as a general subject without integrating their basic major of Islamic values as one of the values in science. In the other hand, on the basis of the national education goals regulated by Law No. 20 Year 2003, people should have education, morals, knowledge and spiritual health and a balanced mastery of science and technology in addition to having faith and righteousness (Depdiknas, 2005). Hanafiah (2007, p. 4) argues that among the three domains of education i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, the affective domain should become the shelter for the others. In line with these issues, knowledge and skills developed by the participants in education must be integrated with the glorious values of Islam. Students need a schema for report texts that can be in line with an

appropriate model of teaching and instruction in their English class. Hence, this study addresses the need to build the scaffolding for such a model.

"Scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively towards a greater understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. It adopts the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) which is mostly notable for the zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory. ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

To provide students with systematic learning experiences a lecturer needs to be familiar with the spoken and written cycles and the four stages. As Agustien (2001) posited two cycles; first, doing BKOF, Modelling of Text (MOT), Joint Construction of Text (JCT), and finally doing Independent Construction of Text (ICT). The second cycle aimed at developing the ability of using written language. The lecture and students go through all the four stages, but in MOT the students are exposed to written texts. Students develop reading skills, followed by JCT and finally they write texts independently. Agustien adds that, to carry out activities at all stages, lecturers need to use various teaching techniques they have already learned, known and used. When the lecturer prepares lessons, every activity designed has to be aimed at providing a learning experience to use language and, thus, to achieve communicative competence.

A report text is a text which mostly elaborates general information about something. Its purpose is to describe the way things are in the world, and so they tend to use relational processes and generic participants (e.g. Kangaroos are marsupial mammals, they have pouches and their young are born highly immature) (Gerot & Wignell, 1995, p. 190). Students are taught these features and a language for talking about language (a metalanguage) in the context of learning how these features contribute to the overall meaning of texts that they are reading or writing about. Besides, it is one of the factual genres which presents information, issues or ideas which function to document, organize and store factual information on a topic (Derewianka, 2011). Gerot and Wignel (1995, p. 196) point out that the social function of a report, is to describe the way things are with reference to the range of natural, man-made and social phenomena in our environment. The generic stucture talks about or describes the phenomenon under discussion in terms of parts, qualities and behavior or functions and habits. In line with the generic structure, these texts also have lexicogrammatical features such as technical language related to the subject, generic participation, use of relational processes, use of simple present tense, and no-temporal sequences.

English lecturers in Islamic institution should be able to conduct the processes of teaching-learning English integrated with Islamic values. This can be done in several ways: (1) by adding exercises reflecting the Islamic values relevant to the topic presented. (2) by embedding verses from the Al-Qur'an and/or *Al-Hadits* which are relevant to the topics presented in the main materials. For example, the verse of *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2):216 was embedded in the topic for expressing like and dislike, similarly, the Quran Surah Al Ghosiyah (88) verse 17 was used in a report text about camels.

METHODS

This study used experimental design for quantitative research as it aimed to establish the relationship between two variables and looked for an explanation of the basis for such a relationship (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008, in Khairuddin, 2013). It was conducted at IAIN Kendari with an English IV Class of 26 students following an Islamic Studies Major in the academic year 2015/2016. The sample was selected through random sampling. The pre-test writing of a report text was assesed using an ESL composition or writing rubric (Jacobs, *et al.,* 1981) through a portfolio of revising and editing until the last third draft. The students chose the material themselves to accomplish by grouping and presentation then independently writing the last draft with the addition of islamic views and linking the values to issues and daily activities. At the end of the treatment the student participants filled out a questionnaire to measure their perception of the treatment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, pair editing used comment and correction symbols (see Figure 1) to help the students think about their mistakes and to revise. Then, the lecturer gave feedback by correction

symbols above or next to the error made by the student. Students thus learnt about their mistakes and revised them to improve their text.

Symbol	Meaning	Example of error
S	A spelling error	He has a _fuuny_ hairstyle.
WO	A mistake in word order	I _like very much it._
G	A grammar mistake	He _give_ us only a half hour for dinner without any other rest.
T	Wrong verb tense	I went to the bookshop and I _buy_ a book.
C	Concord mistake (e.g. subject and verb agreement)	He _always telling_ the dumb jokes.
⋏	Something has been left out.	I ⋏ too tired.
WW	Wrong word	I like and interest _on_ my job.
{ }	Something is not necessary.	She wasn't {very} funny enough.
?M	The meaning is unclear.	I don't like the hours 4 to 9.
P	A punctuation mistake	_one_ of my coworkers is Shorsh.
F/I	Too formal or informal	We didn't have enough time to have a _chat._

Figure 1. Correction guideliness (adapted from Harmer, 2004, p. 111).

As Brown (2001) suggests, lecturers should have guidelines, such as an editing checklist (see Figure 2 below) to help them not to forget any point that should be checked.

> _____ 1. I have circled misspelled words.
> _____ 2. I have checked all sentences beginning with capital letters.
> _____ 3. I have checked all sentences ending with punctuation marks.
> _____ 4. I have checked the structure of each sentence.

Figure 2. Editing checklist (derived from Laksmi, 2006, as cited in Faraj, 2015, p. 135).

The tables below show the results of the students by category and statistical data from the pre-test and post-test scores of the students' writing by t-test paired two samples for means. The results are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 for the 26 students' first drafting until their report texts final drafts.

Table 1. The score range from pre-tests and post-tests for writing texts.

Score Range	Categories	Frequency		Percentages	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
90 <	Very Good	-	-	0	0
75-89	Good	11	15	42 %	58 %
60-74	Poor	14	11	54 %	42%
< 59	Extremely Poor	1	-	4 %	0
Total		26	26	100	100

Table 2. The Mean from pre-test and post-test.

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	72,5	75,9

The result shows significant improvement from the pre-tests to the post-tests. Based on the mean, which increased from 72.5 to 75.9, there was also significant improvement. From the table of categorization, the students' writing ability improved from poor to good, after applying the scaffolding model of instruction using cycles and feedback.

Table 3. Students' perception after following scaffolding instructions for integrating Islamic values.

No	Items	Mean
	In my opinion, after I started constructing Report text…	
1	I am being accustomed to read 15 minutes a day	3.42

Table 3 continued…

2	I am being motivated to read more about science and Islam	3.88
3	My knowledge about Islam has increased	3.73
4	My motivation level towards my religion has increased	3.69
5	I become motivated to study and use English in my daily life	3.34
6	My relationship with God has improved	3.88
7	The task trains me to be cooperative and more independent	4.11
8	My knowledge for constructing text has improved	4.15
9	My character has improved	3.34
10	I find more peace towards my studies/ responsibilities has improved and I become closer to my God	4.42

Based on the above tables, it was revealed that the English lecturers at IAIN Kendari had integrated instructional activities with Islamic values in several ways. First, the teachers conducted code-switching and code-mixing between English and Islamic expressions that are usually expressed in the Arabic language. This helped the students to become more accustomed to English, but the lecturers neither demanded nor stressed the translation of Arabic into English. Moreover, the topic presented for discussion was also integrated with Islamic values by linking the topics discussed with relevant Islamic teachings. Hence the students realized that what they were learning was a part of worship to Allah. Then too, the lecturers recognized the Islamic point of view, especially in terms of some terminology which was very important. Its function was to identify and be familiar with Islamic terms. Moreover, the linking for Islamic views based on the Qur'an and *hadits* or *ijtihad* (agreements from *ulamaa*) is considered will raise the students' insights and awareness to the marvels and the power of God, and how all knowledge is not separated from religion. Therefore, the scaffolding technique was effective to use in the classroom and to provide links to the Islamic values which are truly needed.

CONCLUSIONS

Students are challenged to know how to learn, to access changing information, to apply what is learned, and to address complex real-world problems in order to be succesful. Teaching literacy and culture through writing texts can be done to help students get high quality results and be well-educated as well as using Islamic values which can be integrated into their learning materials and daily life. Scaffolding is an alternative model for teaching-learning English that can be adopted by lecturers/teachers for integrating Islamic values which are regarded as one way for enhancing students' knowledge particularly for communications.

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