

Developing Students' Critical Thinking Awareness through Interest-based Claims Writing Publication

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Research Summary

Writing, especially argumentation, is essential for academic purpose. This language skill, as commonly believed by students, has been the most complicated skill to acquire since in writing they have to involve other language skills and critical thinking as well. Therefore, applying process approach in the teaching of writing is preferred to develop student's skill geared from some writing activities. Such approach is more socially oriented and focuses on the way in which writers and texts need to interact with students (Tribble, 1997). It means that the texts produced by students should also be oriented to reach larger audience, not only to be read by their teacher. Process approach introduced in writing class helps students to develop their writing skill and better understanding on academic writing perspective (Herdiah, 2005; Laksmi, 2006; Siu, 2007). Accordingly, argumentative writing should also incorporate the teaching of critical thinking in EFL instruction (Triastuti, 2006).

Argumentation starts from developing a claim which must involve much reading and brainstorming activities. However, the problem most of beginner writers face is the same: not knowing what to write. As the result, cliché claims are used for instance smoking is harmful, or

students must not cheat in exam. Some students also write odd arguments since they translate or adopt texts accessed from online resource. When confirmed they failed to explain its essence. Such plagiarism is definitely intolerable. Therefore, students need to have better critical thinking awareness by producing interest based claims starting from their interest, idea or experience.

The purpose of this research is to encourage the students to develop argumentative writing skill and critical thinking awareness by using interest-based claims to make their essay sound and convince more readers. The method used in this research is classroom action research involving two writing classes. The students, given the project in the form of magazine production, enjoy the writing process which involves the following steps: (1) Potency mapping; (2) Brainstorming in groups; (3) Schemata broadening; (4) Holding class conference; (5) Peer-editing; (6) Revising the evaluated drafts; and (7) Publishing mini magazines.

The activities above have resulted in some advantages. First, students start writing more easily since the claims are interest based. Second, they participated actively in class conference. Third, their reading skill is also promoted. Fourth, no more plagiarism found. Fifth, error in diction and grammar is minimized since students learn from each other's mistakes. Sixth, they reach larger audience since the magazines are distributed to other classes. Seventh, students are challenged to write more productively and creatively.

Keywords: critical thinking, interest-based claim, argumentative writing skill.

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Biographical Data

Rohmani Nur Indah teaches Writing, Intensive English Course, Structure and Psycholinguistics at Humanities and Culture Faculty. She is the head of Self Access Center of UIN Maliki Malang. Her researches concern with autonomous learning strategies. She earns her magister on English Education from State University of Malang. She wrote *Psikolinguistik: Konsep & Isu Umum* in 2008 and is accomplishing *Gangguan Berbahasa* to be published this year.