ANALYSIS OF THREE SELF-ASSESSMENT MODELS IN EFL WRITING CLASS

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Abstract

Self-assessment is considered to be one of the ways to promote EFL learners' autonomy since it provides reflective practices. Some researchers claimed that self-assessment was effective in teaching EFL writing and enabled to promote learners' autonomy. This paper is aimed at comparing the models of self-assessment in EFL academic writing class. The method is descriptive-qualitative. Some models of self-assessment in EFL learning were collected mainly from books and journals. To limit this study, three models were selected. The analysis focused on how self-assessment practices were administered in the models. The strengths and the weaknesses of the research were then figured out as the bases of developing new models of self-assessment in EFL learning in the future research.

Keywords: comparison, self-assessment models, EFL writing

Introduction

In the teaching of EFL writing in many Indonesian colleges or universities, teacher or lecturer still plays a dominant role in which he presents the materials about grammar and rhetoric, sentence, and paragraph structures and then assigns students to write referring to the given norms or rules without having independent thinking and action. This phenomenon is contrary to the fact that the contemporary trend of English language learning in international context focuses on creating competent language learners and autonomous agents. The instruction should be student-centered. Students should be given wide opportunities to explore their ideas in learning that enable them to figure out their problems and find solutions to cope with them. Throughout this, learner autonomy can be easily achieved. Teacher not only becomes the presenter in transferring the lessons but also the promoter for the students to accomplish self-reliance and self-autonomy in learning. Illés (2012) stated that the task of language education is then to help learners develop self-reliance and autonomy, which will enable them to communicate successfully in international settings. Learner autonomy is, therefore, one of the issues that need to be addressed when the focus is on the learner

in present-day ELT. Many researchers tell that there many ways of promoting learner autonomy in EFL learning classroom such as implementing specific learning approaches, methods, assessment activities, etc. One of them is promoting self-assessment in the classroom. Many researchers claimed that self-assessment was proved to be effective in EFL writing class in promoting learner autonomy. Many books also provide some models of self-assessment in EFL learning. This study is limited to compare the three models of self-assessment: Taufiqulloh (2014), Sadek (2011), and Oshima and Hogue (2006). The selection is on the basis of the idea that three models are used in the teaching of EFL writing to university or college students.

Review of related literature

Presented in this part are the previous studies of self-assessment in EFL writing and its underlying theories.

Some studies claimed the effectiveness of self-assessment in EFL writing class. Taufiqulloh, 2014 developed a model of self-assessment in academic writing and tested for its effectiveness in EFL essay writing class. This model was developed on the basis of needs analysis and the results of the theoretical and empirical review on self-assessment practices in the context of EFL learning, particularly in academic writing instruction. Sadek (2011) investigated the effect of self-assessment on the EFL-learners' expository essay writing. Birjandi (2010) explored the role of journal writing as a self-assessment technique in promoting Iranian EFL learners' motivation. The participants were 60 intermediate students in two groups. The particular self-assessment technique used in the experimental group was journal writing. At the beginning and end of the semester, both groups took a language proficiency test to ensure their homogeneity and completed a questionnaire regarding motivation. The results revealed that writing journals in a regular base had a role in promoting the learners' motivation. Taufiqulloh (2010) conducted an action research relating to the implementation of the self-assessment model developed by Oshima and Hogue (2006) in the academic writing class at the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pancasakti University Tegal.

Oscarson (2009) explored a study on how upper secondary school students perceived their own general and specific writing abilities regarding syllabus goals and whether these perceptions were affected by self-assessment practices. It also explores students' and teachers' experiences of integrating self-assessment into everyday classroom practice. The study is based on the theory that metacognitive skills such as self-regulation and self-monitoring are important for the development of autonomous learning skills. The results of the study showed that at the group level students were

well able to assess their general writing results in relation to the criterion (the teachers' grades). The results also showed that the specific writing skills that students at upper secondary school focused on in their writing are spelling and grammar, rather than other skills such as sentence structure, vocabulary, paragraphing and punctuation skills. Students were self-critical with regard to these skills and tended to underestimate their performance in relation to the researchers' assessment of the same. Wang & Wang (2007) introduced both affect test and self-assessment into the traditional assessment scheme of non-English major post-graduates ESL writing classes. Learning results after the actual application of a whole semester are analyzed and compared to see whether such addition can improve or encourage ESL learner's writing performance. Results show that both affect test and self- assessment are welcomed by the majority of learners and play a relatively positive role in the whole ESL writing process. As reported by participants, affect test can promote and facilitate the process of English learning by stimulating learners to have a deeper thinking about their learning states and make favorable adjustments accordingly. Self-assessment, similarly, offers learners an opportunity to examine their own writing and find progress by themselves.

Meanwhile, there are four underlying learning theories of self-assessment; cognitive and social constructivism, metacognitive theory and social cognitive theory. Constructivism is a theory of learning teaches a person to function or to reach a function to be a whole person. The constructivist view presupposes the active role of the learner and that it is inherent in man to construct meaning from experience. (Oscarson, 2009). One form of constructivism underlying self-assessment is cognitive constructivism. The theory views that self-regulated learning emphasizes on a cognitive scheme. Based on the theory, learners have an active role to create or construct meaning from their experience. The constructivist view of learning implies that the learner actively construes knowledge from the surrounding world and in interaction with others. Different individuals will have different understandings of experiences and create meanings that are personal to them when knowledge is internal and personal to the individual. Being aware of one's own learning should then construct their meanings in interacting with others.

Another form of constructivism underlying self-assessment is social constructivism. This theory views knowledge as something that grows and develops due to the interaction between the teacher and the learner in a social environment. (Oscarson, 2009). This theory views that learners are required to be aware of themselves so that they could monitor and regulate their own learning. Learners are supposed to be independent and autonomous. The teacher's role here is facilitating them to achieve their goals in learning. The center of learning is very much students-oriented.

Another theory underlying self-assessment is metacognition. Its definition is figured out as follows :

Metacognition' essentially means cognition about cognition; that is, it refers to second order cognitions: thoughts about thoughts, knowledge about knowledge or reflections about actions. Gradually, the definition of metacognition has been broadened and includes, not only "thoughts about thoughts" and cognitive states as it was before considered, but also affective states, motives, intentions and the ability to consciously and deliberately monitor and regulate one's knowledge, processes, cognitive and affective states, motives and intentions. (Papaleontiou-Louca, 2008)

The definition implies the role of an individual in perceiving, understanding and remembering and so on. He/she should be aware of the importance of reflection of what she/he has done in learning.

The fourth underlying theory of self-assessment is the social cognitive theory. It emphasizes the notion that individuals have a system of beliefs about themselves that enable them to control their actions. The effective thought in learning is that individuals believe in the notion that they enable to produce the desired results or outcome. (Oscarson, 2009).

Method

The method of this study is descriptive qualitative. Literature search concerning with self-assessment models in EFL learning was conducted. Related books and journal articles were collected. As many were found relating the subject matters, three were taken to limit this study. They are (1) the model of self-assessment in EFL writing class by Oshima and Hogue (2006), (2) the model of self-assessment in EFL writing by Sadek (2011), and (3) the model of self-assessment in EFL writing class by Taufiqulloh (2014). Each model was then described thoroughly in terms of the components, the descriptions, and the implementation procedure. The analysis focused on how self-assessment practices were administered in the models. The strengths and the weaknesses of the models were then figured out as the bases of developing new models of self-assessment in EFL learning in the future research.

Results and discussions

Presented in this part is the analysis of three self-assessment models that were proved to be effective when implemented in EFL writing class. The analysis focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the models.

(1) The Self-Assessment Model of Oshima and Hogue (2006)

The model of Oshima and Hogue embraces a self-editing instrument that can be implemented in teaching academic writing, more particularly essay writing. Such an instrument is implemented in the polishing stage of writing process which consists of five stages: creating, planning, and writing, polishing and writing the final copy. (Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Taufiqulloh (2010) tested the model by conducting a classroom action research at the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pancasakti University Tegal in the academic year of 2009/2010. The participants of the study were the fifth-semester students of English Department of Pancasakti University Tegal attending an academic writing class. Of the five classes, one class with 21 students was selected randomly as the participants of this study. This study also involved one instructor working as the acting implementer who conducted treatments for 16 weeks in one semester, and two observers who observed the whole process of essay writing instruction.

The data were gathered from three kinds of the instrument: test, questionnaire, and observation. Students were asked to write at least 300 words of a cause/effect essay in 100 minutes duration on some topics given by their instructor: education, environmental issues, and health. Such a test was administered in pre-cycle for the previous reflection intended to gather students' previous ability. It was also conducted after the treatments of the first and second cycle to find out the effectiveness of the treatments in two cycles. The essays were then scored using the scoring rubric from Oshima and Hougue (2006). The questionnaire was distributed to the students at the end of the last cycle to gather students' responses to the implementation of the model. In addition to that, the observation was conducted to observe the implementation of the model in an academic writing class

This action research resulted in a finding that students' ability to write an essay was improved from pre-cyle into the second cycle due to the implementation of the self-assessment model developed by Oshima and Hogue (2006). The students' ability in the previous condition was low. After they learned about the writing process and self-assessment in the treatments for two cycles, the students' ability to write essays was improved. The results of post-test in two cycles showed that there was a significant improvement in students' average scores of essays compared with that of pre-cycle.

Despite its effectiveness, there were several drawbacks found as described in the followings:

(a) Self-assessment practices were administered with one instrument: the self-edit checklist of writing dimension included in the polishing stage of the writing process. It

only measures students' ability in writing an essay, merely deals with the cognitive aspect of the students. According to theoretical bases and related references, self-assessment of learning in the classroom should cover a wider domain covering aspects of both cognition and metacognition. There should be some other instruments of self-assessment that can be employed in measuring meta-cognitive aspects such as learning strategies, learning interest and awareness, and learning monitoring strategy as O'Malley and Pierce (1996) stated that self-assessment enables learners to monitor their progress in learning to write and set their own learning goals. In other words, it encourages the learners the reflection needed to gain increased control as writers.

(b) The form of the self-edit checklist was dichotomous. Students were only asked to write yes or no in the checklist without giving further explanation to their answers as they were supposed to do in responding to such questionnaire. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) suggest that it is a natural human tendency to agree with a statement rather than to disagree with it; this suggests that a simple dichotomous question might build in respondent bias. Thus, to avoid bias result, the form of the checklist should not be a dichotomous one, but multiple with more answers.

(c) The essay rubrics developed by Oshima and Hogue (2006) refers to assess computerized writing work. However, most students' essays were handwriting. The rubrics should cover both. Moreover, in grammar and sentence structures, more detailed grammatical aspects should be provided instead of making an estimation.

(2) The Self-Assessment Model of Sadek (2011)

It contains a self-editing instrument applied in the polishing stage of the writing process. An experimental research with two group design was conducted to test whether such an instrument was effective or not in teaching essay writing to EFL learners. The subjects of this study were 40 engineer freshmen at MSA (Modern Science and Arts) University. Subjects were drawn from two intact sections during the fall semester of the academic year 2004/2005. The experiment group consisted of 20 subjects who carried out treatment and the control group consisted of 20 subjects who got treatment without using the self-assessment instrument.

Data collected from a post-treatment questionnaire, and the pre and post-treatment tests. The questionnaire was intended to find out the effect of students' attitude throughout the implementation of the model. Data were then analyzed statistically and descriptively to draw the findings of the study. The findings were then analyzed to reveal its drawbacks that were used to develop the self-assessment model in this current study.

The results of pre and post treatment tests indicated that self-assessment led to a significant improvement in the experimental group' overall writing performance, defined in terms of three variables: content, organization, and language. Finally, the results of post-test questionnaire indicated that subjects of the experimental group favored self-assessment because it led to improvement in their expository essay writing. To sum up, the results of the study show that self-assessment has a positive effect on the EFL learners' expository writing.

Despite its effectiveness on EFL learners' writing performance, this model has some limitations as follows:

(a) There was only one instrument employed to carry out self-assessment practices in an academic writing class: the self-edit checklist of writing dimension included in the polishing stage of the writing process. It only measures students' ability in writing an essay. There should be some other instruments of self-assessment that can be employed in measuring meta-cognitive aspects such as learning strategies, learning interest and awareness, and learning monitoring strategy as O'Malley and Pierce (1996) stated that self-assessment enables learners to monitor their progress in learning to write and set their own learning goals. The checklist of writing dimensions as self-assessment instrument did not provide detailed information about overall aspects of an essay. For example, in the body of the essay, there was only 1 statement relating to editing process: "*each idea is explained, clearly supported, and illustrated in the body*". A body of an essay not only consist of a topic sentence or main idea, but it is comprised of supporting sentences (facts, opinions, etc.) that should be included in the editing work. Thus, more statements should be provided in the checklist covering information about overall aspects of an essay. The checklist didn't provide any information about language use, particularly grammar and sentence structures. The aspects of grammar and sentence structures should be explicitly stated in the checklist so that students are facilitated to do editing instead of working on their own.
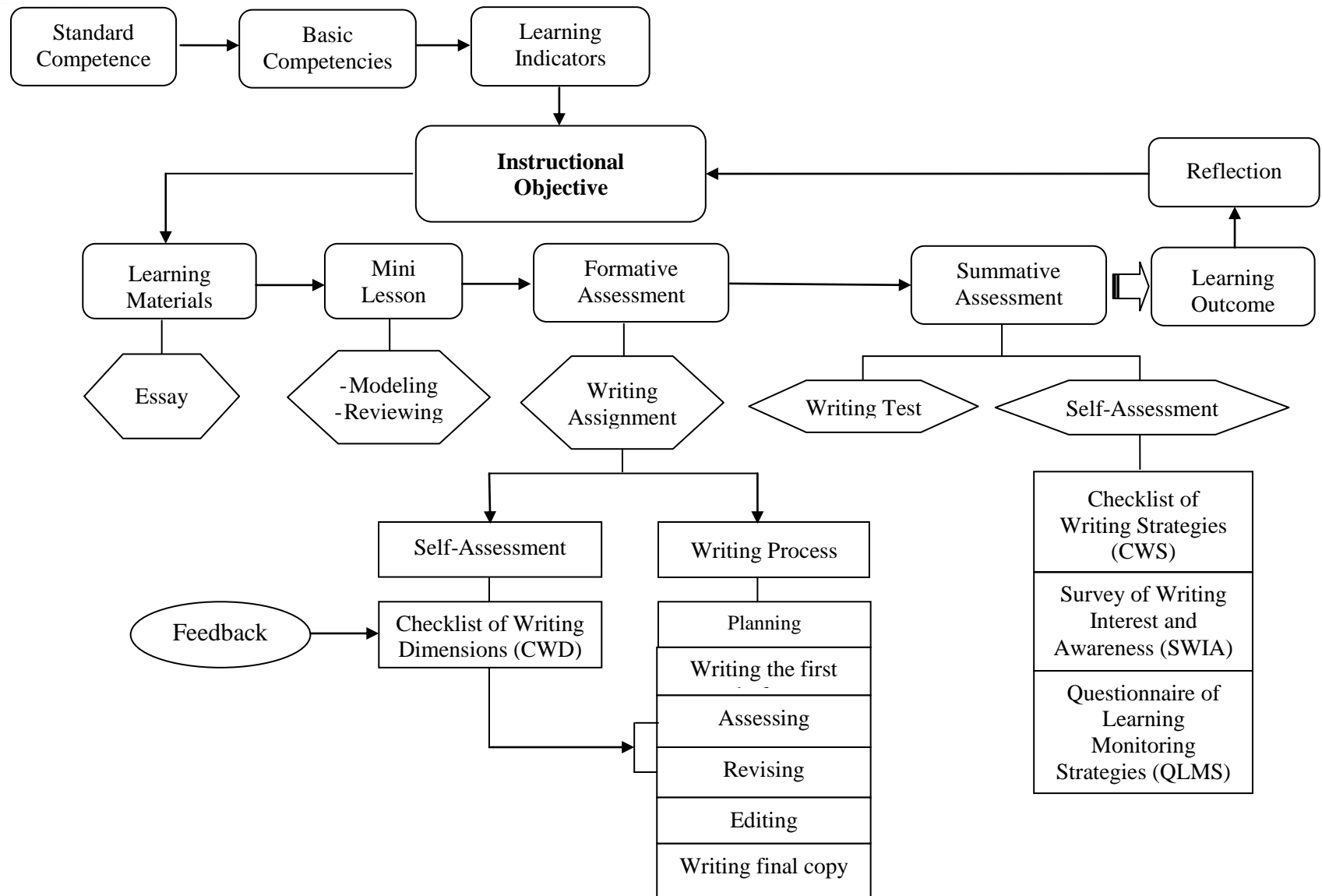
(b) The questionnaire distributed at the end of treatment to find out whether or not students had a positive attitude was not measured for its validity and reliability. Instead, a test measures what purports to measure. The presentation of the writing process was not explored further in the research.

Relating to the limitations of the study, the model of self-assessment of Sadek (2011) was considered applicable in teaching essay writing to EFL learners. However, it should be developed further. Self-assessment does not only deal with cognitive aspects but also metacognitive aspects. Thus, using an instrument of self-assessment which only measures cognitive aspects of the students was considered insufficient. More instruments measuring metacognitive aspects of the students should be developed.

(3) The Self-Assessment Model of Taufiqulloh (2014)

Taufiqulloh (2014) developed a model of self-assessment in academic writing for EFL learners. The model was developed on the basis of needs analysis and the results of the theoretical and empirical review on self-assessment practices in the context of EFL learning, particularly in academic writing instruction. The needs analysis was conducted at the English Department of Pancasakti University Tegal, intended to gather information relating to the teaching and learning process of academic writing. Throughout this model, students are expected to do effective self-editing strategies in writing, figure out their writing interest and awareness, learning monitoring strategies which result in better writing achievement.

The model consists of components and its implementation procedure. The components of self-assessment model in teaching academic writing for EFL learners are described in the following figure:

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┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│  Standard    │─────▶│    Basic     │─────▶│  Learning    │
│  Competence  │      │ Competencies │      │  Indicators  │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
                                                    │
                                                    ▼
┌───────────────────┐                                           ┌──────────────┐
│   Instructional   │◀──────────────────────────────────────────│  Reflection  │
│    Objective      │                                           └──────────────┘
└───────────────────┘                                                  ▲
       │                                                               │
       ▼                                                               │
┌───────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐  ┌──────────┐
│ Learning  │──▶│   Mini   │──▶│  Formative  │─────────────────▶│ Summative │⇨│ Learning │
│ Materials │   │  Lesson  │   │ Assessment  │   │ Assessment  │  │ Outcome  │
└───────────┘   └──────────┘   └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘  └──────────┘
      │              │               │                 │
   Essay      -Modeling        Writing         Writing Test   Self-Assessment
              -Reviewing      Assignment
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- Essay
- -Modeling / -Reviewing
- Writing Assignment
- Writing Test
- Self-Assessment

Writing Assignment →

Self-Assessment	Writing Process

Feedback → Checklist of Writing Dimensions (CWD)

Writing Process:
- Planning
- Writing the first ...
- Assessing
- Revising
- Editing
- Writing final copy

Self-Assessment (Summative):
- Checklist of Writing Strategies (CWS)
- Survey of Writing Interest and Awareness (SWIA)
- Questionnaire of Learning Monitoring Strategies (QLMS)

As shown in the figure, the model of self-assessment in teaching academic writing for EFL learners encompasses twelve components: standard competence, basic competencies, learning indicators, instructional objective, learning materials, mini-lesson, self-assessment instruments, feedback, the writing process, formative assessment, summative assessments, learning outcome, and reflection.

This model was developed as a technique in teaching academic writing, more particularly essay writing in the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pancasakti University Tegal. The structure of the model begins with the instructional objective developed and formulated on the basis of standard competence and basic competencies of academic writing instruction in the department. The materials as the subject matter taught is an essay. At the beginning of lecturing, the teacher presents the product knowledge of essay which consists of the nature and types of essay, parts of the essay, types of essay, unity and coherence, grammatical features and sentence structures, etc. The next step is conducting a mini-lesson. It consists of modeling and reviewing. Teacher presents some models of well-organized essays which have clarity in meaning, accuracy in format, mechanics, grammar, and sentence structures, and clarity in content and organization. Another form of the mini-lesson is reviewing. The teacher provides sample essays to be reviewed with students in the classroom to figure out their strengths and weaknesses.

After mini lesion, formative assessment is administered. This is where self-assessment practices take activities associated with process-based writing instruction. Such an assessment should be conducted at least two times during the teaching and learning process of essay writing. The results of the first formative assessment are used to make refinements or improvements in the next assessment. In formative assessment, the teacher assigns students to develop an essay on some topics using the steps of writing process which consist of planning, writing, assessing, revising, editing, and writing the final copy. The self-assessment instrument, the checklist of writing dimensions (CWD) is employed by students in assessing, revising, and editing stage. By using this checklist, students are dissolved in the situations in which they figure out their problems or weakness in writing and find solutions to cope with them by gathering feedback from their peers and teacher. At the end of the writing process, students do reflection. They fill out the self-assessment instruments: CWS, SWIA, and QLMS, intended to figure out their metacognitive aspects in learning relating to their writing strategies, interest and awareness, and learning monitoring strategies.

Summative assessment is then conducted. Teacher administers a time-based essay writing test to the students as an evaluation to obtain learning outcome. It is analyzed for reflecting or giving a meaning toward academic writing instruction with self-assessment

To test the effectiveness of the model, an experimental research with the factorial design was conducted to test whether or not the model was effective to teach academic writing to the students, particularly essay writing. (Taufiqulloh, 2015). It was conducted at the English Department of Pancasakti University Tegal Central Java Indonesia, in the odd semester of the academic year 2014/2015 from September 2014 to January 2015. The participants of this study are the fifth-semester students of English Education Department who attended an academic writing class. The total number of population is about 116 students from five classes. The population was then identified in terms of two kinds of individual differences: field independent and dependent students.

An essay writing test was administered as the instrument of this study. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the experiment to figure out students' ability in writing an essay before learning self-assessment model. The treatment (teaching self-assessment model to the experiment group) was conducted for 10 meetings of 100 minutes per each. Meanwhile, post-test was conducted to find out students' ability after the treatment.

This research has found that field independent students gained more understanding in implementing the model. They were more enthusiastic in making use of self-instruments embedded in the stages of the writing process. Those instruments helped them much in working on their own in writing. They were also actively engaged in the situations in which they searched feedback from their peers and teacher. In others words, through this model students gained more control as writers. Field independence and dependence are parts of the cognitive control. Students who are considered to be independent in learning, particularly in learning to write, gained more control as a writer. (Pierce and O'Malley, 1996).

The implementation of the model showed its effectiveness in teaching academic writing particularly essay writing to university students. The self-assessment model as developed in this study is comprised of some elements including the self-assessment instruments of cognitive and metacognitive aspects in which rating rubrics and rating scales are embedded. Checklist of writing strategies (CWS), for instance, consists of some statements of the strategies used by the students before, during and after writing. Throughout the checklist, students are able to identify what best strategies work for their writing. They are also able to identify their level of independence in term of writing strategies using the provided rubric and rating scales.

The self-assessment model in this study has developed a rubric of scoring an essay and its rating scales. When mini-lesson, as part of this model, was conducted, students were led to assess some essays using the developed rubrics as O'Malley (1996)

stated that in doing self-assessment, students must be led. Moreover, students developed and assessed their writing using the rubrics by gathering feedback from their peers and teacher. At the end of the writing, process teacher also used the same rubric to assess students' works. This means that there was a good correspondence between teacher's and students' assessment in assessing students' works.

Conclusion

The three models of self-assessment as previously described comprise of some self-assessment instruments and also other components. The instruments were intended to measure both cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning. It can be concluded that self-assessment was proved to be effective when implemented in the teaching and learning process of academic writing, particularly essay writing. Despite its effectiveness, the research can't be generalized because of its limited participants. Thus, it is expected that there will be more future research on self-assessment with larger participants and longtime run in order to successfully promote learners' autonomy.

Acknowledgement

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