

# Treating of Content-Based Instruction to Teach Writing Viewed from EFL Learners' Creativity

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## Abstract

The objectives of the research are to examine: (1) whether Content-Based Instruction is more effective than Problem-based learning to teach writing to the EFL Learners; (2) whether the EFL Learners having high creativity have better writing than those having low creativity; and (3) whether there is an interaction between teaching methods and EFL Learners' creativity in teaching writing. The research method of this research was quasi-experimental research. The techniques of collecting data were creativity test and writing test given to the both classes. The data were analyzed by using Multifactor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test of  $2 \times 2$  and *Tukey* test. The result of data analysis showed that: (1) Content-Based Instruction was more effective than Problem-based learning to teach writing (2) the EFL Learners having high creativity have better writing than the EFL Learners having low creativity and (3) there was an interaction between teaching methods and EFL Learners' creativity in teaching writing. Based on the finding, it can be concluded that Content-Based Instruction was an effective method to teach writing.

**Keywords:** EFL, creativity, ANOVA

## 1. Introduction

In EFL learners, writing is one of the compulsory subjects that must be mastered. To enhance the learners' expertise about language skills and language elements, learners have to be able to team up those language skills and language elements. One way to develop and increase the learners' knowledge then as well as make them learning easily is by mastering of writing. Writing is one of the main keys for the learners in learning English.

In accordance with that condition, writing is very important to help the EFL Learners improve their writing, know the message and understand what other people write to measure their writing. Furthermore, by writing the EFL Learners can also develop their idea and express it in written and they can also enlarge their vocabulary mastery.

Teacher should always motivate the EFL learners and must be creative in creating enjoyable atmosphere that can stimulate the EFL learners to write. In such condition, there will not be more EFL learners who think that English is so hard to study, especially for those who have low creativity, they will enjoy with writing class, because it is fun and interesting.

Furthermore, the fact shows that many of EFL learners are less interested in writing. The EFL learners' writing is still low. It is caused by their low learning motivation and interest; they also have low creativity because the techniques and methods used by the teacher are not appropriate for the EFL Learners; they can't write well; lack of vocabulary mastery, in addition, they can't express their ideas using appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical forms.

The EFL Learners' low creativity must be dealing with the teaching and learning process and considering the phenomenon above, to help the teachers in teaching writing to the EFL Learners, teachers may use an interesting method. One of alternative methods is Content-Based Instruction which is suggested to be applied in teaching writing. CBI is effective to teach English as a second language because with CBI, EFL learners can develop their writing as well as gain access to new concepts through meaningful content.

Kranche in Richard (2006, p. 204) states that CBI is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being

taught. Content refers to the information or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it (Richard, 2006, p. 28). Content has also become popular one both within language teaching and in the popular media. In other words, content is meant as the use of subject matter as a vehicle for second or foreign language teaching or learning.

Therefore, in CBI, the content plays the important role, and language is used to communicate meaning. The language teaching focuses on how information and meaning from meaningful content are utilized in discourse or texts, not in a single sentence. The EFL Learners learn through doing and are actively engaged in the learning process. They don't depend on the teacher to direct all learning or to be the source of all information, they can learn through peer input and interaction. Skills of the target language are not separated from each other, and they together are involved in all activities, so that, they will assume active, social roles in the classroom, and involve interactive learning, negotiation, information gathering, and the co-construction of meaning. Authentic and meaningful contents will motivate the EFL Learners to make greater connections between topics, elaborations with learning material, and can recall information better.

Another method affected teaching writing is Problem-based learning (PBL) that can be described as a learning environment where the problem drives the learning. EFL Learners are given a problem that is posed such that they realize the need to gain up to date, evidence-based knowledge before they can solve the problem. This drives the EFL Learners to investigate and discuss identified learning issues in groups with the instructor as facilitator and coach. The following immediate benefits to EFL Learners have been identified: increased retention of information; an integrated (rather than discipline-bound) knowledge base; development of lifelong learning skills; exposure to real-life experience at an earlier stage in the curriculum; increased student-faculty liaison; and an increase in overall motivation (Greening in Klegeris, 2011, p. 1).

Another factor that also determines the success of teaching writing is the EFL Learners' creativity because without creativity EFL Learners will be passive. In education, creativity is the most important source of activities or experience. In other way, we can say that when EFL Learners are interested in the activity, they will do it with their pleasure, they will get the satisfaction from it and of course they will be very responsible for the things they have and do. In addition, the learners will be interested in English when the learning activities or methods applied by the teachers are creative, interesting, and challenging.

Creativity is the generation of imaginative new ideas, involving a radical newness innovation or solution to a problem, and radical reformulation of problems (Newel & Shaw 1972, Safertzi, 2002, p. 2). Furthermore, they explain that creativity involves the generation of new ideas or recombination of known elements into something new, providing valuable solutions to a problem.

Therefore, this research was aimed at finding out (1) whether content-based instruction was more effective than problem-based learning method to teach writing for EFL Learners; (2) whether the EFL Learners having high creativity had better writing than those having low creativity for EFL Learners; and (3) whether there was an interaction between the teaching methods and EFL Learners' creativity.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Participants*

In order to answer the research questions, the EFL Learners were 80 EFL Learners or two classes from all of population as the sample of this study. In this research, the sampling used was the cluster random sampling. To determine which class would be the experimental group and the control group, the researcher took the class randomly by lottery. So, among the five classes, the researcher decided to take only two classes as the sample of the study, which consisted of 80 EFL Learners. Therefore, The experimental group chosen was given a treatment by using content-based instruction. On the other hand, the control group was taught by using problem-based learning method.

### *2.2 Procedure*

#### *2.2.1 Preparation for Assessment*

In order to get the data of EFL Learners' writing, the reseacher gave them a writing test. The test was used to know the EFL Learners' writing after being given treatment. The researcher administered the steps as follows: (1) the writer gave the certain topic; (2) the EFL Learners were given 20 minutes to describe the topic given; (3) the EFL Learners presented their writing; (4) the EFL Learners' submitted their own writing. In this test, the researcher assessed the readability of test instruction to know whether the test instructions are readable for the EFL Learners. Dale and Chall (1949, p. 23) define the readability as the sum total (including the interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success a group of readers have with it.

Furthermore, DuBay (2004, p. 3) defines readability as the ease of understanding or comprehension due to the style of writing. The test can be said that it is successful if the EFL Learners can master: (1) vocabulary; (2) grammar; (3) organization; and (4) content/meaning.

Another test given to the both classes was creativity test, it was provided in written form with 30 items. There were six indicators, each consisted of 5 items. This test was tried out to 40 EFL Learners. In giving a test of creativity, it is important to set and determine an understandable instruction. It is needed because there are some cases in which the EFL Learners failed to do the test due to their inability to understand the instruction. To know the readability of creativity test, the researcher asked the EFL Learners who were not from the member of experiment and control group to read and understand the creativity test. If the EFL Learners can understand about the instruction from the test, it means that the test is understandable. By checking the readability of the test, the researcher knew whether the content was too simple or too complex for the readers.

### 2.3 Data Collection

The writing test and creativity test were given to the both class classes with the same test but different time and location. Each test was given once after treatment conducted in both classes.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The technique used in analyzing the data of this study was descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to know the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of EFL Learners' scores in writing. In this study the researcher applied multifactor analysis of variance (ANOVA).

#### The Design of 2×2 ANOVA

Teaching Methods Creativity	Content-Based Instruction A <sub>1</sub>	Problem-Based Learning A <sub>2</sub>
High Creativity (B <sub>1</sub> )	First group EFL Learners (A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>1</sub> )	Second group EFL Learners (A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>1</sub> )
Low Creativity (B <sub>2</sub> )	Third group EFL Learners (A <sub>1</sub> B <sub>2</sub> )	Fourth group EFL Learners (A <sub>2</sub> B <sub>2</sub> )

Then, *Tukey* test was used to know the difference between teaching methods and the mean score obtained is used to know which method is more effective to teach writing, whether Content-based Instruction or Problem-Based Learning.

### 3. Results

Based on the result of analysis, it was found that the data of A<sub>1</sub> shows that the score is 53 up to 83. The mean is 70.98 and the standard deviation is 8.798, the data of A<sub>2</sub> shows that the score is 55 up to 80. The mean is 67.4 and the standard deviation is 7.712, the data of B<sub>1</sub> shows that the score is 55 up to 83. The mean is 75.75 and the standard deviation is 8.605, the data of B<sub>2</sub> shows that the score is 53 up to 80. The mean is 67.5 and the standard deviation is 7.511, the data of A<sub>1</sub> B<sub>1</sub> shows that the score is 65 up to 83. The mean is 77.1 and the standard deviation is 5.236, the data of A<sub>2</sub> B<sub>1</sub> shows that the score is 55 up to 78. The mean is 64.5 and the standard deviation is 6.786, the data of A<sub>1</sub> B<sub>2</sub> shows that the score is 53 up to 75. The mean is 64.8 and the standard deviation is 6.973, and the data of A<sub>2</sub> B<sub>2</sub> shows that the score is 58 up to 80. The mean is 70.3 and the standard deviation is 7.159. It was also found that the data was normal because L<sub>o</sub> (L obtained) is lower than L<sub>t</sub> (L table) at the level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$ . L stands for *Lilliefors* and the data was homogenous because  $\chi_o^2$  (4.00) is lower than  $\chi_t$  at the level of significance  $\alpha = 5\%$  (7.81). So  $\chi_o^2 < \chi_t$  (4.00 < 7.81). Furthermore, based on the result analysis by using 2 x 2 ANOVA and *Tukey* test, it was found that H<sub>o</sub> was rejected because F<sub>o</sub> > F<sub>t</sub> (F<sub>o</sub> is higher than F<sub>t</sub>) and there was a significant difference between the two groups (Group A and group B).

### 4. Discussion

Based on the result above, it can be stated that (1) Content-based Instruction is more effective than

Problem-based learning in teaching writing. Content based instruction (CBI) is a teaching method that emphasizes on content. Content here is related to the information or subject matter that is learned through language rather than language to convey it. The focus of a CBI lesson is on the topic or subject matter. It is one of the ways that can be used to improve EFL Learners' writing because it deals with the study that focuses on content. Krahnke in Richard (2006, p. 204) states that CBI is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught.

Furthermore, Richard (2006, p. 28) emphasizes that content refers to the information or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language use to convey it. In content-based instruction EFL Learners can acquire the content area with a subject matter comprehensibly and simultaneously can increase their language skill. The teacher has to fulfill several roles, such as being a good language teacher and in addition having an appropriate knowledge of the subject matter. First of all, teachers can and should use authentic materials such as newspaper articles and advertisements (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 213-214). In addition, the teacher has to choose material. If the material is not suitable enough, he has to adapt it to the learners' language level.

In PBL, participants of PBL course often work as a whole from the beginning to the end. The work procedure is defined collaboratively by the group and executed by the same group within the work processes, although sometimes they work on different tasks individually or in sub-groups. Participants with different roles (e.g., teacher and learner) can collaboratively perform activities at the same step. In workflow systems, a participant with a certain role works only at the role-related steps and does not care about the work at other steps. For each activity, exactly one role is defined. Even if multiple performers with the same role are engaged in the same step, they deal with different work items individually.

Mathews (2007, p. 2). describes PBL that the teacher's responsibility to teach EFL Learners about the rationale and structure of a problem-based approach to language learning. For EFL Learners who are accustomed to more traditional, teacher-centered classrooms, it is critical that they know they will be given direct, follow-up instruction, but that during the problem-solving phase, the teacher's role is to observe and support. EFL Learners also need to understand that their goal is to work together to comprehend the text.

That is why this Content-based Instruction method was more effective than Problem-based learning to teach writing and the EFL Learners having high creativity have better writing than those having low creativity. It is essentially important for EFL Learners having high creativity because if they are creative they will be able to explore their creativity with the way they have in joining the teaching learning process. Creative EFL Learners are remarkably able to adapt themselves in any situation or condition to achieve their ambition. They also have brilliant ideas or concepts to create something and have a great deal of physical energy in learning. They study and work long hours to create the production of novel and develop their ideas with great concentration and enthusiasm only to get what they want. Amabile (1996, p. 1) states that high creativity student is good at the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. In order to be more creative, a product or an idea must be different from what has been done before.

Furthermore, Atwater (1990, p. 155) states that EFL Learners having high level of creativity expect to do well in their accomplishments and try to be successful. In this case, the EFL Learners explore their ability to create some new words given based on the initial of word, find out some words based on the letters in one word provided, construct a word based on the first letter of every words in a sentence provided, find out an object that has double characteristics, find out the unusual usage of the daily things, and the ability to find out the effect of the event. Creativity is very important for EFL Learners because it is related to how the EFL Learners' imagination is and how they use their creativity to recreate and reproduce things with the process viewed from EFL Learners' fluency and originality in thinking in their life.

In contrast, the EFL Learners' having low creativity has the opposite characteristics. they tend to be passive in joining the class. They are shy to do something because they are afraid of making mistakes. They don't have innovation to make something different they do something monotonously, and they can't develop their idea. They don't know what to do because they have no inspiration. The EFL Learners who have low creativity have less activity. They wait for their friends' action and then follow it. They will also keep silent without talking anything even when the teacher asks the EFL Learners to do something.

The problems mentioned above are because the EFL Learners are not focus in what they do. Guest (1984, p. 4) states that EFL Learners with low creativity underestimate their worth, think less of themselves than they should, and focus on their weaknesses. In addition, McGhee (in Sefertzi 2000, p. 21) Confirms that most people think

less creatively when they're not so seriously and intently focused on the task. The problem in most cases today is that the pressure is always on. They need more attention that is the reason why the teacher should treat them by controlling intensively during the class, so the EFL Learners will enjoy the teaching and learning process. That is why the EFL Learners who have high creativity have better writing ability than those who have low creativity because without creativity, mankind would not progress, (3) There is an interaction between methods and EFL Learners' creativity in teaching writing.

Applying a good method to teach writing is the success of learning. One of the methods used to teach writing is Content-based Instruction. Content-based Instruction is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content. Content here is meant as the use of subject matter as a vehicle for second language teaching or learning. It is supported by Richard (2001, p. 204) content is used with a variety of different meanings that refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it. It is believed that it is good because it provides natural context for using the target language in the classroom in which the focus of learning is in the content of what is being taught, so EFL Learners can acquire the content area with a subject matter applied in learning process. They can also explore their writing because they have many opportunities to express their ability.

The EFL Learners having high creativity are active, creative, curious, having good participation, and have their own spirit in exploring their ability for getting competency and skill. Because of their curiosity, they like to have a challenging activity to invent something new. They always have new idea and innovation to make greater achievement. Coulson in Rodriguez (2002, p. 23) states that high creativity EFL Learners are those with a focus on the four stages of exploring, inventing, choosing and implementing creativity into the organization. He suggested that creativity and innovation are behaviors that have to be fostered throughout the organization by a measurable process in order to get results. It is undeniable that Content-based Instruction was more effective than Problem-based learning and it was effective for EFL Learners having high creativity because they are more challenged and interested to learn and practice their English. They can also explore their writing because they have many opportunities to express their ability.

Otherwise, The Problem-based learning used in teaching foreign languages is based on behaviorists' theory. It is based on the theory that language learning is a question of habit formation. Since learning is thought to be a question of habit formation, errors are considered to be bad and to be avoided. It is supported by Brown (2001, p. 23), behaviorist psychologist advocated conditioning and habit-formation models of learning that were perfectly married with the mimicry drills and pattern practices of Problem-based learning logy. Further, teachers "reward" EFL Learners by saying "Good!" and praising the class when they perform well. EFL Learners with low creativity will face some obstacles to write well with good content, grammar, vocabulary, and organization because they are not creative and need more stimulants to practice their English writing.

Besides that, they were also shy if the teacher asked them to write their idea in the class because they had less motivation to study. They spent much time only to keep silent and face each other without creating and sharing idea. They had nothing to do because they didn't have innovation and can't develop their idea. Amabile et al. (1996, p. 75) low creativity EFL Learners are those having less motivation, stimulants and obstacles as a means for identifying the enabling and disabling forces to innovation and creativity. Based on the treatment of the research, using Problem-based learning in teaching writing is better than using Content-based Instruction for the EFL Learners having low creativity. That is why Problem-based learning is more effective than Content-based Instruction for the EFL Learners having low creativity. Therefore, there is an interaction between teaching methods and EFL Learners' creativity.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the result of the data analysis, the research findings are as follows: (1) Content-based Instruction was more effective than Problem-based learning to teach writing for the EFL Learners; (2) The EFL Learners having high creativity had better writing than those having low creativity of the EFL Learners; (3) There was an interaction between teaching methods and EFL Learners' creativity in teaching writing to EFL Learner. From the research findings, it can be concluded that Content-based Instruction was an effective method in teaching writing for the EFL Learners. The effectiveness of the method was also influenced by the EFL Learners' creativity.

Therefore, English teachers are expected to be able to select and use the appropriate teaching methods to teach writing for the EFL Learner having high and low creativity.

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