

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Suggestion

7.1 Introduction

The present study was concerned with portfolio-based instruction in order to empower EFL students in writing. This instructional program was typical because of some reasons. Firstly, it employed the process of writing where a series of writing stages were involved, namely prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These stages were represented through the existence of writing drafts from the first to final drafts. Secondly, it concerned self reflection as the part of process in improving the writing ability. Through self reflection, students were given an opportunity to reflect and review the strengths and weaknesses of their writing that finally empowered them in writing.

7.2 Conclusion

In general it can be concluded that, despite some weaknesses, the present study was successful in some ways. The first one is that the present study could successfully address the research question: “How can portfolio-based instruction empower EFL students in writing?” Concerning this, the present study was successful in exploring and elaborating the concept of empowerment in writing. In this context, there were two issues of empowerment in writing explored in the present study: lingual and personal empowerment. Lingual empowerment was concerned with improving student writing. In this case, students were expected to be able to produce a proficient text. Concerning the present study, students could improve their writing in respect to the four dimensions of writing used in the present study: idea development or organization, fluency or structure, word choice, and mechanics. Of these four dimensions, the most obvious tendency of the empowerment was indicated by the increase of word number written by students. In this concern, students learned how to write at greater length with a clear idea organization.

Meanwhile, personal empowerment was to do with psychological conditions in which students had a positive response (attitude) towards their writing performance. There were three components of attitude observed in the present study: cognition, affection, and performance. With these three components, students responded positively towards their writing performance. Concerning personal empowerment in writing, empowered students have several characteristics, among others, self-confident and motivated in writing, independent in writing by using all sources that can improve the quality of their texts, willing to pass the process of writing which often needs more revisions to produce a proficient text, willing to increase knowledge for the topic they are going to write by asking resource persons or reading materials related to the topic, willing to receive feedback or critiques from others in order to improve their writing, and self-reflective by considering the strengths and weaknesses of their writing.

Regarding the two issues of empowerment in writing addressed in the present study: lingual and personal empowerment, it can be conceptualized that empowerment in writing is the improvement of both writing and the writer. In this case, empowerment is the improvement plus. Through such an improvement of writing, empowered writers will perform a writing behavior in doing their writing activities. This concept can be formulated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Writing empowerment} &= \text{lingual empowerment} + \text{personal empowerment} \\ &= \text{writing improvement} + \text{writer improvement} \\ &= \text{writing improvement plus} \end{aligned}$$

The second one is that the present study, despite some limitations, could address the research question: “What problems may EFL students and lecturer encounter in implementing portfolio-based instruction in an EFL context? Regarding this, there were three kinds of problems perceived by students, namely peer-response or feedback, time consumption, and multiple drafting or revision. In peer-response, to some extent, students were not satisfied with their peers’ feedback, and they were sometimes unconfident to give feedback to their peers’

writing. In time consumption, students had no enough time for revisions due to immediate schedules for every draft. In multiple drafting, students got bored with multiple drafts or a too long process.

Pertaining to the difficulties encountered by the lecturer, it was found that the lecturer had trouble in classroom management and instructional materials. In classroom management, the lecturer had no chance for paying attention to the whole class when individual conferencing was held. The lecturer also got difficulties to treat the late students when peer-response was established. In instructional materials, the lecturer was perceived to be doubtful in determining the materials for instructional phases.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

There are some limitations of the present study to be admitted for the improvements of the further research. Firstly, it is to do with data collection that involved a classroom observer in obtaining observation data. The data from the classroom observer may have some weaknesses, especially “a potential loss of objectivity in every stage of the research” (Emilia, 2005: 282). In this case, the researcher may not directly feel or agree with what the classroom observer does. However, this kind of data can decrease the researcher’s subjectivity through “unbiased advice” (Burns, 2010: 45) from the classroom observer in understanding the phenomenon. In the present study, the weaknesses of these data were minimized using the researcher’s reflective notes about the conditions of the classroom of every session. Beside that, the use of case study with action research design which involved “multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 1998: 62) can also corroborate the result of the study. For further studies, this drawback of data collection can be diminished, among them, using films or videos which were, due to some reasons, not applied in the present study. Films can aid the researcher to S were only three texts analyzed to represent the tendency of empowerment in writing. This can of course lessen the validity and reliability of the study. In this context, the more texts analyzed, the more valid the result of the study. Therefore,

to increase the validity and reliability of the study results, further studies can involve much more texts in the analysis so that the findings can be more convincing for the readers.

Lastly, the present study did not much explore the personal empowerment from students' texts. In the present study, personal empowerment was much more obtained from the data of questionnaire and interview describing students' psychological conditions where they had a positive response (attitude) towards their writing performance. In this concern, it is assumed that the text can also represent the attitudes of the writers in expressing their ideas or feelings about a social phenomenon (Martin & Rose, 2007). Because of this, further studies are expected to include the analysis of personal empowerment from student texts in order to more strongly convince that portfolio-based instruction can empower EFL students in terms of these two issues of empowerment in writing.