



The Needs for Developing Cooperative Problem-Based Learning (Co-PBL) to Promote Verbal Creativity in EFL Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study is the initial part for developing cooperative problem-based learning (hereafter Co-PBL) to promote verbal creativity in EFL writing. The study is aimed at: (1) investigating the previous teaching and learning model implemented in EFL writing class; and (2) measuring and analysing the extent to which the teachers and students need Co-PBL to promote verbal creativity (hereafter VC) in EFL writing. This study employed a case study method with the respondents of the research were 2 EFL writing teachers and the students who take EFL writing course in English Education Department of a private university in East Java, Indonesia. The data was yielded from questionnaire, in-depth interview, observation, and document analysis. After analyzing the data descriptively, the results show that teachers have used to implement cooperative learning and problem-based learning in EFL writing class; however, they never try to integrate the two models as a new one. It was also revealed that they did not notice verbal creativity as an affecting factor in EFL writing due to their insufficient knowledge to develop learning model that can promote verbal creativity. This study also reveals that teachers and students are eager to develop and implement Co-PBL in order to promote students' verbal creativity in EFL writing. The findings of this study might have implication for EFL writing teachers and learners.

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1. Introduction

There are many studies which revealed that verbal creativity is pivotal in EFL writing (see Al-jarf, 2015; Izadi, Mehri; Khoshsima, 2015; Pishghadam & Mehr, 2011; Rababah, Luqman; Melhem, 2014; Luqman M Rababah, Halim, Mohamed, & Jdaitawi, 2013; Luqman Mahmoud Rababah, Alshehab, & Melhem, 2017; Weisi & Khaksar, 2015). Verbal creativity is an ability to think creatively and to measure one's fluency, flexibility, and originality of a verbal form, which deals with words and sentences. Moreover, verbal creativity is an ability to form and create new ideas and then combine them into something new referring to the existing information. The new ideas reflect fluency, flexibility, and originality that can be seen in divergent thought revealed verbally (Munandar, 2009).

Realizing the importance of verbal creativity in EFL writing, teachers should be aware of VC in teaching EFL writing course. Students' verbal creativity should be stimulated through teaching and learning process. Verbal creativity can be stimulated through pedagogical activities (Avila, 2015, p. 101-102). The successful implementation of verbal creativity in EFL writing class also depends on teacher's beliefs about creativity (Bereczki & Kárpáti, 2018). Therefore, it is urgent for EFL writing teachers to be able to develop learning model which could promote VC in EFL writing class.

Promoting student's creativity (including VC) in schools is pivotal as learning entails thinking (Rababah et al., 2017). This is due to creativity is one of the factors that can be used to find solutions to problems. In fact, most students fail to use their higher order thinking skill in which it will affect their successful achievement in their profession in later life (Rababah & Melhem, 2014). Creativity is crucial for students as it is an imperative and effective skill. In writing, creativity also plays an crucial role. Creativity in writing (or VC) is a means for individuals to reflect their feelings, emotions, opinions, reactions and notion to the readers in a distinct literary manner (Shorofat, 2007).

Flower & Hayes (1980) elaborate that writing process involves planning, translating and reviewing. Planning comprises of generating idea, organizing idea and setting the goal. Translating comprises of producing language that is in line with the ideas from the writer's brain. In this case, creativity plays a crucial role in producing ideas in planning process. Flower & Hayes' (1980) model of creativity in writing is presented in the following figure.



Figure 1. The relationship between creativity and writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980)

There are some learning models which are joyful and attractive to teach EFL writing, such as cooperative learning and problem-based learning. Cooperative learning is a learning model where students are working together in small groups to help each other (Roger & Johnson, 1994). Further, Roger & Johnson (1994), argue that in a cooperative learning situation, interaction among students is characterized by positive goal interdependence with individual accountability. Positive goal interdependence requires acceptance by a group that they "sink or swim together". The next learning model is problem-based learning (PBL). It is commonly agreed that PBL starts with an unstructured problem that has more than one answer. Students have to collaboratively learn together through the PBL cycle (Mohd-yusof, Helmi, Jamaludin, & Harun, 2011; Yusof; Hassan; Jamaludin; Harun, 2012). The unstructured problems are used as the starting point of learning, creating deep interests among students to learn new knowledge and integrate existing ones, and forcing them to think critically and creatively to solve the problem (Boud & Feletti, 1997; Tan, 2003; Woods, Felder, Rugarcia, & Stice, 2000; Woods, 1996).

This study is a part of research and development of cooperative problem-based learning (Co-PBL) to promote verbal creativity (VC) in EFL writing. This study presents the results of needs analysis as the initial stage of R&D since this study was aimed at: (1) investigating the previous teaching and learning model implemented in EFL writing class; and (3) measuring and analyzing the extent to which the teachers and students need Co-PBL to promote verbal creativity in EFL writing.

2. Method

This study is a part of a research and development project in which it is aimed at developing Co-PBL (the integration of Cooperative Learning and Problem-based Learning) to promote students' verbal creativity. According to Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003), research and development is an industry-based development model in which the findings of the research are used to design new product and procedures, which then are systematically field-tested, evaluated, and refined until they meet specified criteria of effectiveness, quality, or similar standard. Further, Borg & Gall (1983) elaborated that there are ten steps that should be done in R&D research, i.e. research and information collecting, planning, developing preliminary form of product, preliminary field-testing, main product revision, main field-testing, operational product revision, operational field-testing, final product revision, and dissemination and implementation. However, Sukmadinata (2008) divides the four major phases in research and development, i.e. exploration phase, model development phase, model experimentation phase, and

dissemination phase. This study is the results of the exploration phase which was aimed at researching and collecting information of the existing product (Ghufron, Saleh, Warsono, & Sofwan, 2016), in this case is learning model.

This study is the initial part for developing cooperative problem-based learning (Co-PBL) to promote verbal creativity in EFL writing. In this exploration phase, which include research and information collecting, planning, developing preliminary form of product (Borg & Gall, 1983), a case study method was employed with the respondents of the research were the students who take EFL writing course in English Education Department of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia. The data was dug up through questionnaire, in-depth interview, observation, and document analysis. The different techniques of gathering the data were employed as triangulation process in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the research results (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2012).

The questionnaires were distributed to 75 students (from the first and second grade) and 2 writing lecturers. The questionnaire distributed to students was divided into two types, i.e. questionnaire for revealing the ideal condition, and questionnaire for revealing the real condition. This was done in order to find the gaps between the reality and the ideal condition. The first questionnaire was constructed by providing statements and 5 options (Likert-scale), i.e. strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). The latter one was constructed by providing statements and “yes/no” option.

In-depth interview was also conducted to the teachers and some students who were chosen purposively. Data from the interviews were recorded and collected. The responses from interview sessions were transcribed for analysis by using the coding processes. Coding process was used as it is more practical for the researcher to classify the data into specific categories and terms, related to the study. First phase is the open coding where researchers had to revise the responses frequently to understand the idea that is related to the study. Second step is axial coding where the researchers try to relate the first step to the second step by categorizing them into different terms and categories. The third phase, also the last, is selective coding where the researchers will select and also identify the primary categories, relating them back to the aim of the study. The coding is then manually typed into Microsoft Words for the transcribing of data.

Observation was done during teaching and learning process of EFL writing in order to evaluate the current practices applied in writing classes. Some documents related to teaching and learning process, e.g. syllabus and lesson plan, were also analyzed for further evaluation. After the data was gotten, then, it was analyzed by examining the “bottom-up” approach to analysis. Qualitative researchers first collect data and then prepare it for data analysis. This analysis initially consists of developing a general sense of the data, and then coding description and themes about the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The process is presented in the following figure.

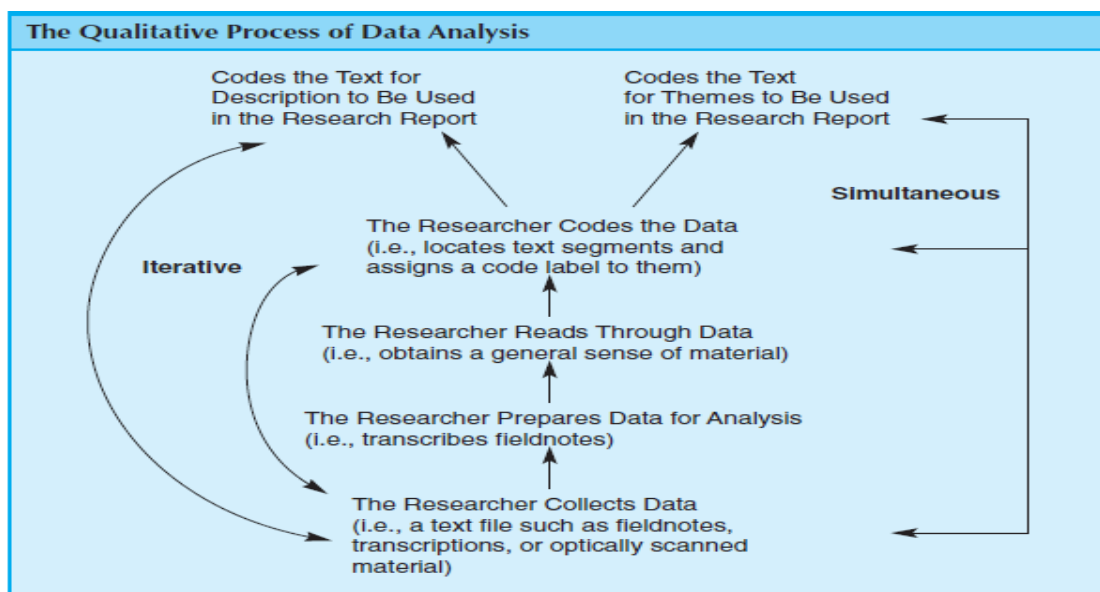


Figure 2. Qualitative process of data analysis (Creswell, 2012)

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, it is needed to make sure that the findings and interpretations are accurate. To guarantee the accuracy of the findings, the findings must be validated by determining the accuracy or credibility of the findings through certain strategies (Creswell, 2012). Here, the researchers used two strategies to describe the accuracy or credibility of the findings and to validate qualitative data, i.e. triangulation and member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3. Discussion

After gathering the data through questionnaires, in-depth interview, observation, and document analysis, the research findings are as follows.

The previous teaching and learning model implemented in EFL writing class

Before developing a new product, reviewing the previous model is beneficial for researchers in building some understandings (Ghufron et al., 2016). To reveal the previous teaching and learning model that was implemented in EFL writing class, the researchers employed some techniques, i.e. in-depth interview with teachers and students, distributing questionnaire to teachers and students, and analyzing some documents, in this case were syllabus and lesson plan.

Table 1. The results of in-depth interview with teachers are presented as follows.

Question	: What kinds of teaching methods that you usually applied in EFL writing class?
Teacher 1	: In my class, I sometimes use <i>in-pair works</i> . I mean <i>the students are grouped in pairs or two students</i> . They must work together in brainstorming the topic that they must write, then, they will start their own writing. After that, they will also check their rough writing by exchanging their work with their partner's. Each of them will give some feedback to their partner's writing. But, this is not always.. uhmm.. I mean, sometimes I also ask them to work individually.
Teacher 2	: Ya, I sometimes use lecture method. I mean, I explain the material, then, I ask the students to write. But, sometimes, I also ask them to <i>work in group</i> . I mean, <i>small group</i> . This is effective enough for them to brainstorm ideas that they are going to express in writing. With their partner in that group, the students usually check their work together. From grammatical mistakes, content, organization, diction, even spelling and punctuation. Sometimes, I also asks them to <i>do peer evaluation</i> .
Question	: Well, have you ever asked your students to write based on a contextual problem? In which the students are given a certain real case, so that they must conduct such kind of mini research by reading a lot in the issues you give and then they write what they got from research in writing?
Teacher 1	: Ya, as I know, it is what the so-called <i>problem-based learning</i> . I also <i>ever implement</i> this model in my EFL writing class. This model is very challenging for me and also for students. I usually use this model when I teach about argumentative essay.
Teacher 2	: Ya ya.. I ever ask them <i>to do a mini research</i> dealing with the <i>current issue</i> at that time. If I'm not mistaken, it was about the issue of <i>Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional</i> (or International Designated Rating School). That issue, once, became a very controversial issue among school teachers and students. I ask the students to read a lot dealing that topic and even interview some teachers and students. Then, they write the results of the research in writing. It is very challenging. But, actually the most frequent method that I use is <i>lecturing</i> ... (chuckled..)

The interview code of the transcript above is presented in the following table:

Table 2. The results of interview with EFL writing teachers

Category	Code	Answers	
		Teacher 1	Teacher 2
The usual teaching approach/method/technique used in EFL writing class	Lecture method	Yes	Yes
	Cooperative learning	Yes	Yes
	Problem-based learning	Yes	Yes

Based on the interview above, it can be inferred that the teachers have been familiar with cooperative learning and problem-based learning; even, they ever implement those learning models in their EFL writing class. They clearly state that beside lecture method, they usually implement cooperative learning by grouping the students into small group and/or in pairs; and problem-based learning by asking the students to write based on contextual problem or issue.

Table 3. Those results were also supported by the students. The following is the interview transcript with the students.

- Question** : Have you ever been asked by your teacher to work in group in EFL writing class?
Student 1 : Yes, sure. ***Sometimes our teacher asks the students to make a group and do the work in a small group.*** In a group, we discuss about the topic together and check our writing together.
- Question** : Have you ever been asked by your teacher to write based on a contextual problem?
Student 2 : ***Yes, we have ever been asked to write based on contextual issue.*** Even we must also interview some respondents at that time, then, we write the results of our interview.

The interview code of the transcript above is presented in the following table:

Table 4. The results of interview with EFL writing students

Category	Code	Answers	
		Student 1	Student 2
The usual teaching approach/method/technique used in EFL writing class	Cooperative learning	Yes	Yes
	Problem-based learning	Yes	Yes

Beside in-depth interview, the researchers also distributed questionnaires to teachers and students. The results are as follows.

1. Questionnaire for teachers

Table 5. A part of questionnaire for teachers

No.	Questions	Answers
9.	What kinds of teaching methods that you ever implemented in your EFL writing class? Put a cross (X) to the following options (more than one answers is allowed): a. Individual b. Cooperative and/or collaborative c. Problem-based learning d. Project-based learning e. Others:..... (specify)	Teacher 1: a, b, c, d Teacher 2: a, b, c, d
10.	Have you ever implemented cooperative learning and problem-based learning in EFL writing class? Why? (answer briefly!) a. Yes b. No c.	Teacher 1: a. Yes (because both of them are challenging learning model) Teacher 2: a. Yes (because the models can improve students' EFL writing skill)

2. Questionnaire for students

Table 6. A part of questionnaire for students (Revealing the real condition)

No.	Statements	Total Respondents	Total Answers	Mean	St.Dev	Conclusion
1	In EFL writing class, teachers have already applied cooperative learning model	75	41	0.5	0.5	Yes, but not always
2	In EFL writing class, teachers have already applied contextual problem-based learning model	75	63	0.8	0.4	Yes, but not always

Based on the results of questionnaires distributed to teachers and students, it was revealed that teacher ever implemented cooperative learning, problem based learning, and project-based learning. However, the focus of this study was cooperative learning and problem-based learning.

The next is the results of documents analysis, in this case were syllabus and lesson plan. The results of documents analysis are as follows.

1. Syllabus analysis

A syllabus is a plan showing the subjects or topics of materials to be studied in a particular course, especially a course which leads to an examination. A syllabus consists of several elements, such as: course identity, course description, competence standard, basic competences, topic of materials, teaching and learning method, and teaching references.

After analyzing the syllabus of EFL writing course used by the teacher, it was found that in the part of teaching and learning method teacher uses several methods. The teaching and learning methods that were mentioned in the syllabus are lecture method, discussion method, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and project based learning. Therefore, it can be said that the results of questionnaires and in-depth interview that revealed that teacher ever implemented CL and PBL in EFL writing class is in line with the syllabus.

2. Lesson plan analysis

A lesson plan, commonly known as teaching scenario, is a set of steps of how to teach a certain course in the future. It consists of course identity, competence standard, basic competences, learning materials, teaching and learning method, and teaching references, teachers and students' activities, assessment technique, and also quizzes. A lesson plan is usually made for one meeting. Based on the results of lesson plan analysis, it was also confirmed that teacher ever implemented CL and PBL in EFL writing course.

The teachers and students' needs to develop Co-PBL to promote verbal creativity in EFL writing

Needs analysis plays a significant role in curriculum development (Brown, 1995; Graves, 2000; Murray & Christison, 2011; Richards, 2001; Sundari, Febriyanti, & Saragih, 2016). Through needs analysis, it will be revealed how the ideal condition is and how is the real condition. Therefore, it will be able to identify the gaps. Needs analysis refers to analyzing wants, desires, demands, expectation, motivation, lacks, constraint, and requirement (Richards, 2001) as well as the difference between what students currently do in language performance and what they should be able to. Graves (2000) states that needs analysis is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students' needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and making course decisions based on the interpretation. The process of needs analysis consists of deciding what information and the instruments to get it, interpreting it, making some decisions, and evaluating the decisions.

To analyze the teacher and students' needs toward the development of Co-PBL to promote VC in EFL writing, the researchers used questionnaires distributed to teachers and students, in-depth-interview to teachers and students, and class observation (during teaching and learning process of EFL writing).

As it was previously mentioned that there were two types of questionnaires distributed to the students in this study, i.e. questionnaire for ideal condition and questionnaire for real condition, the findings of the questionnaire for ideal condition are as follows.

Table 7. The Results of Questionnaire for Revealing Ideal Condition

No.	Statements	Total Respondents	Total Answers	Mean	St.Dev	Conclusion
1	In EFL writing class, teachers should apply cooperative learning model	75	244	3.3	1.1	Undecided
2	In EFL writing class, teachers should apply contextual problem-based learning model	75	282	3.8	0.8	Agree
3	In EFL writing class, teachers should not only focus on product, but also writing process (including the promotion of students' verbal creativity)	75	319	4.3	0.7	Agree
4	Verbal creativity (VC) influence students EFL writing skill	75	293	3.9	0.7	Agree
5	VC should be promoted through creative and innovative learning activity.	75	323	4.3	0.8	Agree
6	VC test should be done continuously in a certain time during EFL writing course is taken (e.g. twice in one semester, at the beginning and at the end of the semester) in order to know students' VC level.	75	292	3.9	0.8	Agree
7	Creative and innovative learning model can help the students to improve their motivation in EFL writing class.	75	315	4.2	0.7	Agree
8	Teachers should integrate cooperative learning model and problem-based learning in EFL writing class in order to promote students' VC.	75	283	3.8	0.9	Agree
9	Teachers should pay more attention to students' VC in EFL writing.	75	299	4.0	0.8	Agree
10	VC should be promoted through modified learning model and learning activities such as the integration of Cooperative learning and problem-based learning model.	75	287	3.8	0.8	Agree

Table 8. The Results of Questionnaire for Revealing the Real Condition ("Yes" answer is given 1 point, and "No" answer is given 0 point)

No.	Statements	Total Respondents	Total Answers	Mean	St.Dev	Conclusion
1	In EFL writing class, teachers have already applied cooperative learning model	75	41	0.5	0.5	Yes, but not always
2	In EFL writing class, teachers have already applied contextual problem-based learning model	75	63	0.8	0.4	Yes, but not always
3	In EFL writing class, teachers have already focused on not only product, but also writing process (including the promotion of students' verbal creativity)	75	6	0.1	0.3	Not at all
4	Teachers have been aware with students' Verbal creativity (VC) since it can influence students EFL writing skill	75	73	0.97	0.2	Yes, but not always
5	VC has been promoted through creative and innovative learning activity.	75	6	0.1	0.3	Not at all
6	VC test has been done continuously in a certain time during EFL writing course is taken (e.g. twice in one semester, at the beginning and at the end of the semester) in order to know students' VC level.	75	0	0	0	Not at all
7	Creative and innovative learning models have been applied the students to improve their motivation in EFL writing class.	75	68	0.9	1.3	Yes, but not always
8	Teachers ever integrate cooperative learning model and problem-based learning in EFL writing class in order to promote students' VC.	75	0	0	0	Not at all
9	Teachers have paid more attention to students' VC in EFL writing.	75	8	0.1	0.3	Not at all
10	VC has been promoted through modified learning model and learning activities such as the integration of Cooperative learning and problem-based learning model.	75	0	0	0	Not at all

By comparing the results of the two kinds of questionnaire above, it can be summarized that there two main gaps between the ideal condition (students' expectation) and real condition in EFL writing class. The gaps are as follows. 1) There is still no effort from teacher in improving students' VC in EFL writing, 2) Teachers never integrate CL and PBL in EFL writing class in order to promote students' VC.

The results of interview with students also revealed the same as the results of the questionnaires distributed to them. They confirmed that there is still no effort from teacher in improving students' VC in EFL writing. They also confirmed that the teacher never apply creative and innovative learning activities that could promote the students' VC. Further the students are also eager to know their VC level, so that they will be able to promote it in order to be better learners in EFL writing.

The results of the questionnaire distributed to teachers also revealed that they never pay more attention to students' VC in EFL writing class. They never conduct VC test to the students. They also never insert some learning activities that could promote students' VC. When they were asked whether or not they ever integrate CL and PBL in EFL writing class, they answered that they never do it. Further, they revealed that this was because they do not know that students' VC can be promoted through the learning activities such as by integrating CL and PBL. They also argue that they do not know the principles of how to integrate CL and PBL (later, Co-PBL) in EFL writing class. The researchers also found the similar answers from the teachers with the results of the questionnaire when in-depth interview with them was conducted. From in-depth interview with teachers, it was also revealed that they realize the importance of VC in EFL writing, therefore, they suggest that there will be studies that focus on the improvement of VC through creative and innovative learning activities such as the integration of CL and PBL or Co-PBL.

From the findings of this study, it was admitted that this study was limited to the needs for developing the new model (modifying and integrating cooperative learning and problem-based learning or Co-PBL) which is modified by some pedagogical attempts that could promote verbal creativity in EFL writing in higher education context.

4. Conclusions

As the aim of this present study was to investigate the previous teaching and learning model implemented in EFL writing class; to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the previous teaching and learning model implemented in EFL writing class; and to measure and analyze the extent to which the teachers and students need Co-PBL to promote verbal creativity (hereafter VC) in EFL writing, therefore, the conclusion of the study can be presented as follows.

The EFL writing teachers ever implemented CL and PBL in writing class. Those two learning models were implemented as the variation in teaching and learning of EFL writing course. However, the teachers still ignore the importance of VC in EFL writing. They do not know that by implementing CL and PBL could promote students' VC in which it will affect students' EFL writing skill.

The last, the teachers realize that VC is important in EFL writing, since it can affect the students EFL writing skill. Unfortunately, the teachers do not pay more attention to students' VC. This was because they do not know what they should do to promote students VC. Therefore, the teachers suggest that if it is possible there should be some studies that focus on the techniques or methods that could be implemented in EFL writing class to promote students' VC.

Dealing with the conclusion above, for the next step, the researchers will conduct a study on develop a new learning model which could be implemented in EFL writing class to promote students' VC. The researchers are intended to integrate CL and PBL (later, Co-PBL) in order to be a new learning model. It is also suggested to EFL writing teachers to implement creative and innovative learning activities, i.e. learning model/method/technique that can promote students' VC. Avila (2015) suggests that students' VC can be raised through some activities such as: remembering English grammar and structure, creating a fictional story, promoting creative writing, boosting vocabulary through screen writing, sharing a speech, circle of life, drawing and speaking, asking and answering questions, asking students to create their own activities.

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