

## SELF ASSESSMENT IN THE TEACHING OF ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

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### Abstract

This study investigated the effect of using self-assessment on Students' argumentative writing. The purpose of this study was to find out whether or not the use of self-assessment as was effective in developing students' English writing performance, argumentative writing processes specifically. The participants of this study consisted of 26 students chosen by using cluster random sampling. The results obtained from pre-test shows that students' writing performance was poor. However, the results obtained from the post test showed improvement in English writing performance using self assessment technique. It is proven by the data of pre and posttest, where the mean score of the pretest is 48 and the posttest is 75. The p-Value (0.00) was lower than  $\alpha$  (0.05). It indicated that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted and null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. It means that self assessment can significantly improve the students' argumentative writing.

Key words: Self Assessment, students' achievement, argumentative writing .

### 1. Introduction

Writing is one of an essential skills in learning a language. It is important for everyone including for students since writing can encourage students' creativity and exploration. Besides that, writing can also improve students' communication. Since its importance then the students should be able to have good writing, but in reality most of the students do not like participating in writing. This problem caused by many problems one of them is because the teacher just paid attention to the final product and marked it and they did not consider the process through which the learners had gone for producing that final writing. Meanwhile Fahimi and Rahimi (2015) said that writing is like the other language skills, it should be taught from the beginning and assessed, but in most of the cases, the assessment done by the teacher. Students are seldom involved in it, so they cannot evaluate themselves.

One way can be done to involve the students in assessing their own writing is by using self assessment. Self assessment is a valuable learning tool where students assess their own writing using assessment rubric. Using self assessment in teaching writing is very important since the students learn how to self monitor the quality of their works and they will also develop into capable and independent writers. Besides that, students use their self generated feedback to make improvements and revise their work. Self assessment in writing also promotes trust, deep thinking and problem solving.

## **Research Question**

The research questions proposed in this study is “does the use of self assessment improve students’ argumentative writing?”

## **Hypothesis of the Research**

The hypothesis of this research is “Self-assessment does improve students’ argumentative writing”

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **1. Self-Assessment**

Many researchers have done their researches on self assessment in teaching writing two of them are Lam, Ricky (2010) who did the research on self assessment but he focused his research on students’ portfolio and Fahimi, Zahra (2017) who focused her study on the possible relationship between self assessment and self regulation, but in this research, the researcher focuses it on the use of self assessment in teaching argumentative writing. For sure, in this research, the writer use self assessment as learning so the writer didn’t take the result of the students’ own assessment into grade since its validity and realibility are still questionable.

### **2. Characteristics of Self-Assessment Strategy**

Osscarsson (1989) defines six characteristics for self-assessment; the first characteristic is its support of students’ learning, the second one is that it promotes learners and teachers’ conscious of the learners’ knowledge, the third characteristic of self-assessment is that by getting knowledgeable about learning objectives, learners’ are encouraged for learning, next one is that participating of learners in the process of their own evaluation make them more knowledgeable in assessment, the fifth characteristic is that learners participation in the evaluation of their own work reduce the teacher’s responsibility toward assessment, and the last but not least important characteristic of self-assessment is that it has a lot of benefits during the time and make the learners more independent so that they can evaluate their own improvement in the instructional course.

### **3. Essential Principles of Self-Assessment Strategy**

Development One of the most key principles of self-assessment is conscious self-evaluation in which students become familiar with their errors and problems by which they can find ways of changing, adapting and developing. Another principle is the

reflection that teachers show to their students' work by considering which students find out the extent of their works' correctness. Harris and MacCan (1994) state that "In the learning based model both the teacher's assessment and student's self-assessment have a direct effect in the learning process" (p. 65). Harris (1997) states that in evaluation through self-assessment, learners are motivated as a result of getting involved in the process of learning and being aware of individual development. One of the most essential rules of self-assessment is sharing of learners in the process of evaluation. According to Hadidi Tamjid and Birjandi (2011) "learner participation in the assessment of educational effects is increasingly felt to be an important feature of modern views toward teaching and learning" (p. 245). Another principle for self-assessment strategy is that in this method of assessment learners perform real task. Shaaban (2005) mentioned that being practice-based is one principle of this type of evaluation, it make learners to do authentic practice.

According to Joyce, Spiller, and Twist in this method of assessment learners collect those works which show their learning, make comparison among their work and revise them when needed, define some objectives for themselves and have control upon their improvement to achieve to their objectives (2009). Other principle of self-assessment is learners' reflection to their own work. Khodadady and khodabakhshzadeh (2012) believe that making learners aware and reflective to their own work is practical through self-assessment. One way to make learners more autonomous is through using self-assessment. Harris (1997) states that "self-assessment is rightly seen as one of the pillars of learner's autonomy." (p. 12) In summary, when students have chances to reflect to their own work, instructor should give feedback to their work and have interaction with them to collect information about their problems and pave the way for more effective learning.

#### **4. Advantages of Self-Assessment**

As one of the alternative method of assessment self-assessment has many advantages which have been referred to in different studies. According to Birjandii and Hadidi Tamjid (2010) by using self-assessment learners can recognize their problems and strong point and work on them. According to Joyce, Spiller, and Twist (2009) when learners know how develop their learning and practice it in real world, they will be motivated intrinsically. Self-assessment is also helpful in learners' thinking. Garcia

Garrido (2010) states that for growing learners' thinking and giving them the chance to make their work meaningful, it is a good way for instructor to encourage them to evaluate their own work. According to Lam (2010) other advantages of self-assessment are "1) building up linguistic awareness, 2) self-assessment as monitoring tool, 3) improving future writing, and 4) having more practice in writing." (p. 25) Therefore self-assessment is a way for students to have control on their own work, and by using this method of assessment they can reach valuable information about their weak points, think about them critically, investigate different strategies to work on them and find an effective one to abolish them. So, by implementing this method learners would become more independent and aware of their capabilities.

## 2. Method

This research was carried out with fourth semester students of English Education Study Program of Cokroaminoto University of Palopo with one group pretest –post test design. The subjects of this research were randomly chosen 26 students. The sample then taught argumentative writing using self assessment for six meeting. Each meeting, the researcher gave one topic to be written using the steps of self assessment strategy. The students were given topic to be written and then gave them self assessment rubric and asked them to assess their own writing ...After doing the treatment, then the researcher gave post test. The t-test was used to measure the gain score in the pretest and post test. In assessing the students' writing, the researcher use the assessment rubric for writing which proposed by Heaton (1988) which consist of 5 component, they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic.

Tabel 1. Self Assessment Rubric

| Criteria                   | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1                        |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Topic Sentence (TS)</b> | TS terdiri dari topic idea dan controlling idea. TS tidak terlalu umum atau spesifik | TS terdiri dari topic idea dan controlling idea tetapi TS terlalu umum atau spesifik . | TS terdiri dari topic idea tapi tidak ada controlling idea | Tidak ada topic sentence |

|                                  |  |   |   |  |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Supporting Sentences (SS)</b> | SS mendukung TS dan dijelaskan dengan baik serta disertai dengan bukti dan contoh yang relevan.                | Hanya sebagian SS yang mendukung TS dan dijelaskan beserta dengan bukti dan contoh yang relevan.                                | SS mendukung TS tetapi tidak ada penjelasan dan contoh. | SS tidak dijelaskan dan tidak mendukung TS   |
| <b>Concluding Sentence (CS)</b>  | Pada CS terdapat tanda bahwa paragraph itu akan selesai dan menuliskan sesuatu yang bisa diingat oleh pembaca. | Pada CS terdapat tanda bahwa paragraph itu akan selesai tetapi penulis tidak menuliskan sesuatu yang bisa diingat oleh pembaca. | CS tidak menggunakan tanda bahwa paragraf akan selesai. | Tidak ada CS                                 |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>                | Penulis menggunakan kosakata yang tepat dan tidak ambigu   | Penulis menggunakan kosakata yang tepat namun terdapat beberapa kosakata yang ambigu  | Sebagian besar kata tidak tepat dan selalu berulang     | Hampir semua kata yang digunakan tidak tepat |

### **3. Finding and Discussion**

This research aims at finding out whether there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of pre-test and post test on the students' writing performance by using self assessment. The researcher hypothesized that self-assessment does effect on students' writing skill. The data were collected through pre-test – treatment - post test design and analyzed through SPSS.

After conducting six meetings treatment throught self assessment, the score of each observed components improved. The score of the posttest was higher than the score of the pretest (posttest > pretest). One sample t-test was carried out to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test. Table 1 and table 2 represent the result.

Table 1. The mean score and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test

|                | Pretest | Posttest |
|----------------|---------|----------|
| N              | 26      | 26       |
| Mean           | 48      | 75       |
| Std. Deviation | 6,34    | 7,66     |

The table 1 above shows the mean score of pretest is 48 and the mean score in post-test is 75 and standard deviation in pretest is 6,34 meanwhile in post-test is 7,66.

Table 2. The probability value of T-test

| P-Value | N-1 | ( $\alpha$ ) |
|---------|-----|--------------|
| 0.00    | 25  | 0.05         |

By considering significant level obtained from the data analysis that is equal to 0.000 and its comparison at 0.05 level with 95% confidence, it is concluded that there are statistically significant differences between students' writing performance in pre-test and post-test by using self assessment. By considering mean scores presented in the above table, it is observed that the mean score of the students in the pre-test is higher than the mean score of the students in the post test. After conducting six meetings treatment through self assessment, the score of each observed components improved. The score of the posttest was higher than the score of the pretest (posttest > pretest).

According to the results of this research, providing the opportunity for the students to use self assessments was helpful and influential in improving their argumentative writing ability. By providing alternative assessment techniques, learners could write better compositions. The results of this study showed significant change in the post test; therefore, the findings can help the lecturers who like to help students develop strategies for their own learning, to help them find their strengths and weaknesses, and to help them become more autonomous. Using selfassessment also gives the lecturer complete information about the students' progress and their failure in the process of learning.

Concerning the result of the explanation above, it was concluded that null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. It means that using self assessment can improve the writing skill of students especially in argumentative writing.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it indicated that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted and null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. The researcher can conclude

that the used of self assessment can improve the students' argumentative writing. It was supported by the significant difference between the students mean score of pretest and posttest. It means that self assessment technique significantly can improve students' writing.

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