UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

INTERACTION AMONG UPPER INTERMEDIATE ESL/EFL LEARNERS ENGAGED IN COLLABORATIVE WRITING

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FBMK 2013 32

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By

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,

Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

August 2013

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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August 2013

Chair: Yong Mei Fung, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Learning to write collaboratively is important to develop team spirit as more workplace writing involves teamwork. Although it is known that collaborative writing could help students produce better written work, little attention has been paid to how the role of a group member affects interaction during collaboration. This study identified the roles of the participants during collaboration and the effects on their interactions. It also investigated the different types of conflict that occur during collaborative writing and how collaboration improved ESL / EFL learners' writing skills.

Collaborative writing is grounded on socio-cultural theory in second language learning. Vygotsky (1978) claims, that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. This can be seen when the "less expert (novice) participant can appropriate and internalise knowledge or skill which is collaboratively developed in the course of the interaction" (p. 84). Therefore, this study used sociocultural theory as

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the theoretical framework.

The study used a qualitative and quantitative research design. Data was collected from three case study groups which comprise four members of different cultural backgrounds. The participants were assigned to write an individual argumentative essay as a pre-test before collaboration and an individual argumentative essay as a post-test after the collaboration. They also participated in three collaborative writing sessions over seven weeks. After each collaborative session, the participants were interviewed individually. The interactions during collaboration was video and audio recorded. Participants also jotted down their experiences and perceptions on collaboration in journals. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were analysed by selecting significant episodes which reveal how the roles affect interaction during collaboration. Besides that, significant episodes that reveal the different types conflict that the groups face were also identified. The pre-test and post-test were compared to identify how collaboration among ESL / EFL learners improve their writing skills. Data from the interviews and journal were used for triangulation.

The findings reveal that group members may exchange roles throughout the tasks and it has a considerable impact on their interaction as they strive to complete the tasks given. It also shows that familiarity among group members is crucial for successful collaboration. The participants found that through collaboration they became more confident writers and developed idea generation skills besides learning from each other, thus improving their writing. The study also shows that the success of collaborative writing depends very much on how conflict is handled and resolved among the

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members. Several implications and recommendation have been drawn regarding the usage of collaborative writing in ESL / EFL classrooms based on the findings of this study.

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

INTERAKSI SEMASA PENULISAN BERKUMPULAN DI KALANGAN PELAJAR BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUAA ATAU BAHASA ASING (ESL/ EFL)

Oleh

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Belajar menulis secara berkumpulan adalah penting untuk meningkatkan semangat berpasukan kerana kebanyakan tempat kerja kini lebih banyak melibatkan kerja secara berkumpulan. Walaupun diketahui bahawa penulisan berkumpulan dapat membantu pelajar untuk menghasilkan penulisan yang lebih baik, sedikit tumpuan perlu diberikan kepada peranan ahli kumpulan semasa berinteraksi dalam kumpulan. Kajian ini telah mengenal pasti peranan ahli dalam kumpulan semasa penulisan secara berkumpulan dan kesan daripada interaksi tersebut. Kajian ini juga untuk melihat perbezaan jenis-jenis konflik yang berlaku semasa penulisan berkumpulan dan bagaimana penulisan secara berkumpulan ini dapat meningkatkan kemahiran penulisan pelajar yang mempelajari bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua atau bahasa asing (ESL/EFL).

Teori penulisan berkumpulan adalah berasaskan pada teori sosio-budaya dalam pembelajaran bahasa kedua. Menurut Vygotsky (1978), interaksi sosial memainkan

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peranan penting dalam pembentukan kognitif. Hal ini dapat dilihat apabila "pelajar yang lemah (novis) boleh memperbaiki dan mendalami pengetahuan atau kemahiran melalui interaksi semasa bekerja secara berkumpulan" (m.s 84). Oleh itu, kajian ini telah menggunakan teori sosio-budaya sebagai kerangka teori kajian.

Penyelidikan ini adalah berbentuk kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data diperoleh daripada 3 kumpulan kajian kes yang terdiri daripada empat orang dengan latar belakang budaya yang berbeza. Setiap ahli dalam kumpulan telah diberikan tugasan untuk menulis karangan secara individu sebagai pra-ujian sebelum penulisan berkumpulan dan karangan individu sebagai pasca-ujian selepas penulisan berkumpulan. Mereka juga telah mengambil bahagian dalam tiga sesi penulisan berkumpulan selama tujuh minggu. Selepas setiap sesi penulisan berkumpulan, para pelajar telah ditemuramah secara individu. Sesi temuramah tersebut telah dirakam secara video dan audio. Para pelajar juga mencatat setiap pengalaman dan persepsi mereka mengenai penulisan berkumpulan di dalam jurnal masing-masing. Setiap rakaman audio telah ditranskrip kata demi kata. Transkrip dianalisis dengan memilih beberapa bahagian yang signifikan untuk mengetahui tentang bagaimana peranan mempengaruhi interaksi semasa penulisan berkumpulan. Selain itu, bahagian yang signifikan ini juga telah memperlihatkan perbezaan konflik yang dihadapi semasa penulisan berkumpulan. Perbandingan antara pra-ujian dan pasca-ujian turut dilakukan bagi mengenal pasti bagaimana penulisan berkumpulan dalam kalangan pelajar ESL/EFL dapat meningkatkan kemahiran penulisan mereka. Data daripada temu bual dan jurnal telah digunakan untuk tujuan memperkukuhkan data.

Penemuan kajian menunjukkan bahawa ahli-ahli kumpulan boleh bertukar peranan di sepanjang proses penulisan berkumpulan berjalan dan ini memberikan kesan yang besar pada interaksi mereka semasa menyelesaikan tugasan yang diberikan. Hal ini

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menunjukkan bahawa hubungan antara ahli dalam kumpulan sangat penting bagi mewujudkan suatu hubungan yang teguh di samping menghasilkan mutu kerja penulisan berkumpulan yang berkesan. Responden kajian mendapati bahawa melalui penulisan berkumpulan mereka menjadi lebih yakin dalam penulisan dan kemahiran merungkai idea juga bertambah baik. Selain itu, melalui teknik pembelajaran di antara ahli kumpulan sekaligus dapat memperbaiki penulisan mereka. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kejayaan penulisan berkumpulan amat bergantung kepada cara konflik dikendalikan dan diselesaikan dalam kalangan ahli kumpulan. Melalui hasil kajian ini telah memberikan beberapa implikasi dan cadangan dengan memprlihatkan secara langsung mengenai proses penulisan berkumpulan di dalam kelas ESL/EFL.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for always being there for me. For listening to all my complains and cries throughout this journey of ups and downs. There were times when I felt like giving up, but He was there to strengthen me.

I am also grateful to my wonderful supervisor who has provided me with constructive feedback and encouragement in completing my studies. She would patiently guide me and point out my mistakes. Thank you Dr. Yong, for being meticulous in reading my drafts and for providing feedback that often challenged me. Thank you also for taking all the extra time to meet me or email me even when you were on sabbatical.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to Dr. Tan for all her support, encouragement and feedback. I am grateful for all her guidance in organizing my thesis and for taking time to meet me during joint supervisory meetings amidst her busy schedule.

I would also like to thank my family and all my friends for always being there for me. For lending me a shoulder to lean on when the journey was too difficult. Thank you so much for being so understanding and kind.

Lastly, my mother who is with the Lord. My reason for pursuing my studies this far. I promised my mom that I would further my studies and come up in life. I finally fulfilled my promise to you, mom. Though you are not with me physically I know you are watching over me with your ever comforting smile.

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APPROVAL (1)

I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 2nd August 2013 to conduct the final examination of Santini a/p Pathinathan on her degree thesis entitled "Interaction among Upper Intermediate ESL/EFL Learners Engaged in Collaborative Writing" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date: 27 September 2013

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

_____

SANTINI A/P PATHINATHAN

Date: 2 August 2013

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