Value Making in Writing Project in EFL Class

Mister Gidion Maru[1], Nihta Liando[2]

[1,2] English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Manado, Manado, Indonesia
mrgidionmaru@unima.ac.id [1], nihtaliando@unima.ac.id [2]

Abstract. The educational process recently is attached to the shaping of learners' character as reflected in the value making or discovery. This research paper shares the investigation toward the value making in the working process of writing project in English as a Foreign Language Class. The project refers to the writing assignment given to the students of advance writing Subject at English Education Department. In the paradigm of qualitative study, The data are gained by interviewing the students during and after they do the project. As respondents, students form groups which are regarded as forum group discussions from which the project is worked and elaborated. The analysis employs the perspective of the grounded theory that prescribes the open, axial and selective coding. The results reveals that the value making comes in the forms of leadership, learning responsibility, self-initiative, self regulated, and trust. These values occur and ensure the learners' interaction and development in the pursuit of the target of the assigned project.

Keywords. Grounded Theory, Group Discussions, Value Making; Writing Project;

1. Introduction

The urgency of value making is currently regarded to be inseparable aspect in learning process. The launch of Curriculum 13 was at beginning aimed at addressing the efforts to shaping students' character building which is founded in the basis of value planting. The curriculum was designed to stimulate and encourage learners to experience and enjoy the process of learning and discovering as well as implementing socio-cultural and religious values[1][2]. The learning process is viewed to incomplete with achieving the character strengthening. The value making in broader sense is framed in the context of character education must not only help learners to gain competence in a certain discipline but also to display the awareness of value living in the society. Hence, educational process constitutes comprehensive attempts to bring learners to be excellent in a learning motivation and certain competence, and to acquire strong character for global competitiveness[3]

Within this context, language learning process is objectified to enable students to develop their communicative competence as their language ability improved, and to build their character as the values absorbed. This investigates the value making in writing project assignment. It is carried out due to the assumption that writing integrates the opportunities for language competence development and knowledge elaboration. Besides, writing is crucial in terms of academics assessment. A product of writing visualizes the reflection of learners' analytical and critical thinking on certain issues of a given subject or discipline. A writing project is considered being a collaborative work[4]. This suggests that the task allows active participation among learners within which they experience value dialectic that ends at character building. "valuing is concerned with the worth or value a student (a teacher) attaches to a particular object, phenomenon or behaviors"[5]. It means that writing project can be a phenomena

withih which valuing takes place. This becomes more challenging as the jeremiad approach is implemented to frame the writing project. The approach, rooted in the rhetoric formula[6], prescribes learning process, in this case, essay writing project, should cover points of problem identification or the lamentation of the present, reference to the values, heroic figure and norms or the evocation of the past, and the text expectation or recalling for the future. This defines the output of the project writing implying the combination of language skill to express the ideas, the stock of knowledge to share, with the values to voice. In other words, this study highlights students' value making within the process of completing essay as the writing project assignment.

2.   Method

This study is qualitative in paradigm. It obtains the data by doing class observation and in-depth interview with students of fourth semester in English Education Department particularly 30 students taking advance writing and creative writing class. The students as the respondent are distributed into the form of six Forum Group Discussions (FGDs). The respondents are interviewed during and after they do the project. This study expands for one semester. The analysis applies the grounded theory perspective as following the phase of open, axial and selective coding[7][8][9].

3.   Results

The writing project drives learners to concentrate upon the quality of content and the language accuracy. As an independent work meaning that students are given autonomy to manage the working of their assignment. Teacher takes a role in the weekly meeting to evaluate the progress of the project and supply necessary feedbacks both written and oral ones. The feedbacks focus on the grammatical rules, referencing style, idea development, and language accuracy as well as knowledge elaboration.

As the writing project completed, each group of FGD presents the product of the project as required that is containing theoretical and generic structure as well as essay samples. Although it has to be admitted that the essay is not perfect yet, the process of finishing the project reflects several value making outcomes such as

a. Leadership

As the project is determined, each group gains its topic to work. The appointed group chairs play a role. "As the project started, we grouped and began to distribute task; each part for each member" (S2, G3). The project defines the leader of the group. The pro-active student, by natural process, bears the duty to lead others to do the given task. Dividing a task for the members reflects the leadership capacity. A value of being a leader and being lead emerge to guarantee the job distribution within the group and the success of the assigned project. Determining the right person for the part of the project requires leadership quality. This indicates that unconsciously the project working has stimulated students to think as a leader. At this point, value making occurs as the student positioned himself or herself to organize and to manage in order to achieve the group target. Leading a discussion in group and between peers that "introduce students to alternative viewpoints, to challenge them to think critically, and develop collaborative reflective skills necessary for participation in learning organizations"[10] mark the valuing of leadership within project work. At the same time, the members prepare themselves to follow the instructions and work for them. "We run for the part that is assigned for us, it is divided in the first group gathering and continued in WA group" (S25, G 4). These expressions illustrate the members' situation as they got the task division. The willingness to organize and to be organized is the indications of value making process have taken place. In comparison, few students refuse to be appointed by his classmates to be a chair, and even leave the group without further participation for the task completion. It suggests the inability to value a leadership role. "V (name) rejected to be a leader Sir, he said that he did not know and want either to work with us" (S12, G3). This attitude confirms that the project has processed a value of being leader in that small particular group. It is a negotiation of leadership. Leader selection happens at the time of task selection. Deciding whether to act a chair or member marks a mind process of accepting and understanding the leadership value within group interaction. That synthesizes the making of leadership value corresponds with the process of accomplishing the writing project.

b. Learning Responsibility Value

The accomplishment of the writing project allows students to engage themselves with different activities in the purpose of meeting with all the requirements for it. This foreshadows the learning process among members. Someone needs to take something for the success of the group work. "Doing the project like this is different from doing a homework or group assignment which is maximum two week due time, so now we need to have our own part to work as a team" (S17, G4). The output of the project dictates the responsibility of each member. Everyone views the willingness to share the responsibility as the credential of activeness. The points to do in the project assignment call for a learning responsibility. The attempts to construct theories, generic structure and samples of essay characterize the learning responsibility shared within the group.

One of the respondents describes, "S (name) finds for materials related theoretical definition, I search for the writing evaluation rubric. Our findings are obligatorily to be discussed in the group meeting", (S3, G1). This implies that in fact the outputs of the product can be attained as the students decide to take the learning responsibility. "Taking responsibility for their own educational progress empowers students and prepares them for life-long learning"[11] This kind of responsibility may take place when students decide to participate and actively interact their or group in pursuing more knowledge on the given task. It further stimulates students to learn the need to be ready at all cost to involve in learning process. Learning responsibility does not only influence the academic achievement, in this case, grade attainment, but also upgrade value awareness, even capitalize individual learning progress into character making.

c. Self-Initiative Value

The progress of doing the group project cannot ignore the intensive encounter and contact among the members. Moreover, the response toward teachers' feedback stirs and coordinates the actions of the group. The feedbacks on the quality of the content and structure of the given topic determine the stages of task distribution and frequency of discussion. One of the student respondents reported, "Our teacher gave us feedback every week. He checked our progress and correcting the mistakes. So, I usually take the initiative before and after weekly meeting, not necessarily wait for others; checking and editing our project" (S27, G6). This report portrays students taking the initiative to guarantee the progress of their project assignment. It is apparent that, following the learning responsibility, self-initiative marks the emergence of positive value in the process. Self-initiative refers to "active goal-directedness in problem solving and initiating an action"[12]. The initiative occurs in every group whenever they are called for the perfection of the assigned task. Other student respondent asserted, "Waiting for my friend, sometimes, it is too long to respond, I worried of the running of time, I encourage myself to do addition or revision and correction" (S5, G1). The target of the project fuels the initiative taken. It is obvious that the stages of the essay writing as the core of the project assignment can also be realized as the initiative rises. Students engage themselves with working with phases theorized for writing. In other words, the project is a remarkable stimulant for initiative and later for practicing the writing skill itself.

d. Self-Regulated Learning Value

The value of self-initiative is closely connected with students' self- regulated learning. It is conceptualized as "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the environment"[13]. The point is that students as learners manage to adapt themselves with the target of the given project and to regulate relevant learning behaviors. The context of the project assignment defines the intensity and attributes of the self-regulated learning. At this situation, students perceive the need of institutionalizing the value of regulating, in this case, tendency to subject and obey, to the attempts of the group to success. One of the student respondents stated, "Different opinions occurred several times in the group, I was mad, sometimes, but the target of the group is the main thing. So, we subjected ourselves to follow the assigned target to us by collaborating"(S24, G5). The variety of members' level of competence and character define the self-regulated learning within the group. The statement above clarifies that the self-regulated learning takes place as the students realize the vitality of finishing the project. "We need the grade", admitted one of the students (S29, G6). Thus, having a good even excellent grade seems to be a guiding point whenever problems and hindrances constrain the working process within the group. The

thought that the project has to result in a satisfying achievement drive students to regulate themselves as a group disagreement, not to say conflict, arises. "There is no point of clicking to debate if we cannot attain A in the subject", continued the student (S29, G6). This implies that students view that the baseline of their activity is the writing project as the passport for passing the advance writing subject. Such view monitors and regulates their interaction and role in the group. The shared goal of the group governs the attitudes of the members in all of the forms of contributions. This characterizes the making of self-regulated value in the accomplishment of the group project.

e. Trust

The other value that students learn in the process of finishing the writing project is trusting peers. In the learning process, it is not easy to believe in feedbacks and perspectives from peers. Students tend to the input from their teachers instead of their friends. However, the writing project drives students to rely upon peers' findings to perfection. It is confessed by one of the student respondents as follows, "After the task was distributed to all of members, we had to believe in our friends' findings" (S7, G2). This confession reflects that trusting peers is a capital for improvement and completion. Trust becomes necessary since the time projection of the work requires the quick and accurate response in the forms of part of task submission. It poses trust as pre-requisite for cooperating as a group. On the other side, trust may refer to the convenience of interaction among members including with teachers[14]. It suggests the sense of being free from being humiliated by others within the group. That particular sense grows to advocate of the exchange and acceptance of the opinion negotiation during the project working. The flourish of sense of trust in the group provide a conducive environment for learning within which students find the opportunities for social and educational interaction and development[14]. One of the respondents said, "I am from not really known school, I was, at beginning, too shy to talk in the group, after a while I started to trust in my friends. It then became easier to express ideas for the project"(S21, G5). The idea here is that trust serves as a stepping stones for development and achievement. As the students own the sense of trust toward peers, they are open for learning and sharing within group. It overcomes the inferiority and reluctance to communicate and discuss. Students who trust their peers tend to enjoy learning process despite different competence and capacity. In other words, the working of the project has opened a space for students to grow the sense of trust toward peers as the value demanded for ensuring the learning process and mutual enrichment among group members. Trust allows learners to involve in taking and giving ideas and guarantees the activities to be fruitful and meaningful.

4. Conclusion

The writing project constitutes a collaborative work that recalls for the sharing and learning process among group members. The interaction within the group during the working of the assigned project has helped students to grow in the value making particularly leadership, learning responsibility, self-initiative, self-regulated learning and trust. These values serves as the capital for the successful interaction and pursuit of the project target, which later characterize students' competence and character. The value making can be synthesized to be attached within group project work. Hence, further study on whether or how other skill subject projects in English as Foreign language contribute to making of values is recommended to be carried out.

5. Acknowledgment

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