

WRITING TO SPEAK: INTEGRATING ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH A TOURIST BROCHURE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present an alternative technique in the teaching and learning for the higher institution of learning. This tourist brochure presents a new approach of creativity as a method of teaching and learning in the non-English departments. The whole idea is to make the students' presentations interesting by using visuals. Having students write a tourist brochure as a project offers important benefits like providing students with a context, a real-world purpose for writing, and strong motivation to find the words and develop the writing skills that will serve their needs. By breaking the boundaries between traditional courses by integrating writing and speaking skills, the students' communicative competence will be improved. In the activities described here, integrating writing and speaking skills deepen students' understanding on how to write a tourist brochure, and most importantly, let them apply the information they have written into authentic speaking practice that improve their fluency.

Keywords: a tourist brochure, writing, speaking, communicative competence

Introduction

The language learners regard the speaking skills as the most important skill they acquire. Baid (2002: 29) mentions, students feel dissatisfied if they lack confidence and fluency in speaking although they may be knowledgeable about grammar and skilled in reading for their study. They judge their success in language learning by their confidence in

speaking. This is in line with Ur (1996: 120; cited in Zhang, 2009: 32) that of all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important. In addition, Nazara (2011: 29) points out that speaking has always been considered as the most essential skill to master along the history of foreign language teaching and learning. This explains that there is a tendency to prioritize the mastery of speaking skills to measure one's competence of English.

Realizing the high importance of speaking skill English as foreign language (EFL) program, it is very important to find and use the best instructional methods, materials, activities, media, and other requirements that will help the learners master speaking skills. However, in addition to being an important skill, speaking is also a great challenge for the learners and the teachers. Hinkel (2005: 485; cited in Nazara, 2011: 29) further explains that speaking is the most complex and difficult to master, for it deals with several difficult microskills, including the pronunciation of unfamiliar phonemes, the correct placement of stress and intonation, and the appropriate use of formal and informal expressions. To complicate matters, students in an EFL environment have few opportunities to speak English outside the classroom since English classes are dominated with activities in overemphasizing on grammar and vocabulary, and the learners receive intensive but separate practice in reading,

writing, and listening, with no speaking activities involved (Zhang, 2009: 32). Nevertheless, speaking activities provide less chance for oral interaction as the time is limited and the large class (Bierley and Adams, 2009). Thus, a reasonable solution is to support a more integrated approach, where speaking is added to writing activity to ensure that students receive essential practice in oral communication.

Adding speaking opportunities to a writing lesson automatically allows students to integrate at least three skills because the listening skill is already a natural complement to any true speaking activity. This integration has many advantages, as explained by Zhang (2009), it adds variety, encompass students' different strengths, and creates interactive possibilities by focusing on both productive and receptive skills. Integrating writing and speaking skills is a challenge that all language teachers should take because not only does it help students become more efficient in their efforts to learn EFL, but also it provides a meaningful way to focus one's teaching effort (Kinoshita, 2003; Ikeguchi, 1997).

In addition, those language skills integrations should not hamper the purpose to achieve communicative competence, which means ability to create meaning when interacting with others in the target language (Norland and Westport, 2006). Therefore, when teaching EFL at tertiary level of the study, the classroom has to be a place in which language is not only taught but also used meaningfully. Supporting the ideas, Shin (2007) emphasizes that if language is being used meaningfully in the classroom, it is not taught only in isolated chunks or by breaking the language into its grammatical or semantic components. Instead, language is being used within a context that either mirrors real world discourse or possibly uses subject matter content like science,

business, or law, depending on age of the learners and their purpose for studying English.

Therefore, in the teaching of the non-English department, integration between writing and speaking skills presents a new approach of creativity as a method of teaching and learning English. Through writing a tourist brochure, the students obtain some benefits like experiencing a context, a real-world purpose for writing, and strong motivation to find the words, develop the writing skills, and interesting oral presentation using visuals.

A lot of research shows that the teaching and learning process is not managed well related to the teaching of English for non-English department in university. This condition has been taken place for almost thirty years (Sulistyo, 2008:2). Moreover, the problem arises when students are overly given grammar and translation exercises rather than meaningful activities. They are rarely exposed to classroom activities which employ integrated skills. As confirmed by Hussin, et al., (2001), many teachers are more interested in training students how to read and write well in addition to teaching students to master the grammar component of the language. Ikeguchi (1997) added, when the students are assigned to make a composition, the most common problem that confronts teachers of writing is not about the topic to write, but more on how to motivate the students to write interesting and effective materials,

Therefore, by understanding the characteristics and identifying the problems of non-English department students as stated above, the integration between writing and speaking skills through making a tourist brochure is presented in this article. It is intended to give an idea which might be applied in

non-English department classes to make the students speak actively.

This article describes how students asked to produce a tourist brochure on resorts in their country that offers the integration between writing and speaking skills to improve the students' oral communication skill. Obviously, the students can do other writing activities to strengthen their oral communication competence, but giving them opportunity to create a tourist brochure expose them to a style of writing relates to their lives and provides them with an opportunity to be creative. Those activities appear to bring integrating skills that require teachers to shatter boundaries between the traditional courses where the four skills are taught separately. To institute such a change, this article discuss how to introduce writing activity associated with tourist brochures and how to help student plan, write, evaluate, and present their brochures as the oral communication activity.

Writing to Speak

The non-English department students get English in their first or second semester. With influences from learning English since primary to secondary schools, they are now said to be able to write in paragraph form, with a paragraph being defined as a coherent sentences which tied together by messages. They should be able to create textual cohesion which refers to elements that tie sentences together using discourse markers. By this time, they should be able to use appropriate mechanics, including, capitalizations and punctuations. Consequently, the students are able to narrate, describe, report, and persuade to express what they want to communicate.

Writing a tourist brochure provides students with opportunities to practice their spoken English. According to Swain and Lapkin (1995) when students produce

English they may notice gap between what *they want to say* and what they *can say*, leading them to recognize those language structures or elements that they do not know only partially. In this class activity, the more important point is that writing a tourist brochure can help the students notice the gap between what they *said* and what *they wanted to mean*, so making them move from focusing their attention on meaning to focusing their attention on form.

The integration of writing and speaking activities in making a tourist brochure can be used in writing a descriptive text. The students will experience a process writing, as Richards and Renandya (2002: 316) explain that it incorporates the four basic writing stages- planning, drafting, revising, editing- and three other stages imposed on students by the teacher, namely responding, evaluating, and post writing. Due to the time constraint, the process writing stages used are planning, drafting, revising, editing, evaluating and post writing.

Planning stage is any activity that encourages students to write and stimulates thoughts for getting started (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 316). In this stage, the students are assigned to make a group. They discuss various resorts-area which offer the beauty of marine life. Meanwhile, at drafting stage, the students are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 317). In drafting stage, the students are assigned to decide the place, which should be different from other groups, format, and descriptions of the brochure.

Richards and Renandya (2002: 316) mentions that revising is an activity when the students review their texts on the basis of feedback given in the responding

feedback. In this stage, the teacher does responding activities, including do the mini lessons, and give some questions that actually lead to the content of the tourist brochure. After that, the students are engaged in tidying up their texts as they prepare the final draft for evaluation by the teacher, namely editing stage (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 318). The students will do it at home.

The following meeting is for the post writing and evaluating stages. Post writing activity constitutes any classroom activity that the students and teacher can do with the completed piece of writing (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 317). In this technique, post writing activity is presenting the tourist brochure using a power point slide show, and allowing other students to respond in the form of questions, comments, or suggestions. While having the presentation, the teacher does the evaluation using the scoring rubric that has been shown to the students previously. The other students may have polling on which tourist brochure is the best.

Through the process writing, the students can generate ideas and gather information for writing by doing group brainstorming in the planning stage. In responding stage, the teacher's response after the students produce the draft is a quick initial reaction to help them rediscover meanings and facilitate the revision. When the students revise, they reexamine what was written to see how effectively they have communicated their meaning in written form. It is done to improve global content and organization of ideas so that the writer intend is made clearer to the reader. Besides that, editing is meaningful because students can see whether their writing is unambiguous and clearly communicate the meaning intended. In evaluating stage, the students are made to be more responsible for their own writing. In addition, by

doing the presentation orally, the students are made to feel that they are writing for a very real purpose (Richards and Renandya, 2002: 316-319). Notably, through the integration between writing and speaking activities, students are advantageous since this technique allows students freedom to express themselves meaningfully.

Teaching Procedures

Prior teaching, the teacher chooses a text. This strategy works best with writing a descriptive text. The teaching session, then divided into three phases.

Pre-writing activities

1. Introduction to the tourist brochure

On the power point side show, the teacher displays a tourist brochure and gives some questions to the students. The teacher also can introduce vocabulary and discuss the appropriateness of the words used in a specific context and observe some expressions that can be used in descriptive writing.

2. Planning stage: generating idea to plan the tourist brochure

The students are asked to make a group of four or five, depending on the total number of the students. The teacher asks them to choose a place which offer marine life beauty, like Raja Ampat, Derawan Island, or Watuulo beach. They decide the place and write it on the board so that each group has different place for the tourist brochure.

3. Drafting stage: begin to write the brochure

The students decide on the overall format, descriptions of tourist attraction, artistic composition, and appropriate vocabulary after discussing the plan for their tourist brochure. They may refer their brochure format to the example given by the teacher.

Whist-writing activities***4. Revising stage: getting feedback***

The teacher gives revisions by asking the students to recheck the content of their tourist brochure through some questions such as, what is this place famous for? What can people see in this place? What can the tourist do? What is the quickest transportation? And what is(are) the alternative(s) of transportation to get there?

The next step is to have groups read each other's brochures, respond to and evaluate them. The students are encouraged to discuss their drafts and to give each other feedback on organization, development of ideas, and the language used by using Peer Responding Checklist (See Appendix 1).

The teacher does the mini lesson to the group by walking around the class. The students can ask the teacher questions on what they do not understand.

5. Editing stage: rewriting

After groups have got feedback, the next step is to have groups prepare for the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. They edit their own or their peer's work for organization, development of ideas, and the language used (grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure) as guided by the Peer Responding Checklist.

The teacher reminds them to add some pictures to make the tourist brochure more interesting. The teacher also announces that on the next meeting, each group should present the tourist brochure orally, meanwhile the other groups will have a polling (See Appendix 2), and can participate to ask questions, give comment, or give suggestions. The scoring rubric for the

oral presentation (See Appendix 3) is also shown to make the students be ready for their performance and be aware on what they will be assessed on.

Post-writing activities = Oral Presentation

This activity is done in the next meeting because the students are given time to rehearse and prepare the oral presentation because there will be questions and answer sessions during the presentation (See Appendix 4 for the example of the tourist brochure). At the beginning of the project, if the students are told that their work will be presented, they will have a clear purpose for the writing and will develop a sense of audience, and they will be energized and motivated to work hard to improve their writing.

Conclusion

In teaching writing in non-English department students, the teacher should select a technique that encourages the students to actively write a composition to make the learning process occur and give meaningful activities. As a project, writing the tourist brochure has beneficial impacts towards the learning process in providing students with a context, a real-world purpose for writing, and strong motivation to find the words and develop the writing skills that will serve their needs. This technique allows the students to extend the writing activity to oral presentation which break the boundaries between traditional courses by integrating writing and speaking skills. In short, by experiencing these skill integrations, the students' communicative competence will be improved.

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