A Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract
Collaborative learning has long been done in the field of language learning. Collaborative learning is one of the characteristics of student-centered learning. Students are actively engaged in activities in which the teacher acts as the facilitator. Different from a teacher-centered classroom, the teacher gives instructions and students have to do what is instructed by the teacher. One of the applications of collaborative learning is working in groups or what is commonly known as group work. This study deals with collaborative work involving peer consultations done by twenty second-year students in an Academic Writing class. The students were required to analyze journal articles in groups of two or three. Data was gathered from journals submitted at the end of the semester, which was the Compact Semester of the 2018/2019 Academic Year. There were two questions to be answered in this research. The first question was "*How is a Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis (CPCTA) applied in an Academic Writing class, in ELEP at UKSW?*" The second question was "*What are students' perceptions about the collaborative peer-consulted text analysis*?" The aim of this study was to show how a Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis (CPCTA) was applied in an Academic Writing course, and what students' perceptions were. Data was also gathered from observations and interviews with two students. The findings showed that 90% of the students (18 students) liked working in small groups. The reason mentioned by most of the students was because of the partners. The rest (10%) admitted that they did not like group work because they got partners whom they did not feel comfortable to work with and because of unfulfilled expectations. This study can hopefully be useful both for students and teachers of writing courses who are trying to apply a collaborative peer-consulted text analysis for their students.
Keywords: collaborative peer-consulted text analysis, academic writing, collaborative learning

Introduction

Collaborative learning is not something new in the educational word. This kind of approach in language teaching has long been applied in many classes to teach various skills. Collaborative work has also been applied in writing classes, including Academic Writing class. A peer-consulted text analysis in this study refers to the analysis of a journal article done collaboratively in small groups in an Academic Writing class. Each member of the group works together with one another to find agreement on the content of the article.

This study aims to answer the following two research questions:
1. How is a Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis (CPCTA) applied in an Academic Writing class, in ELEP at UKSW?
2. What are students' perceptions about the collaborative peer-consulted text analysis?

This study is also intended to describe how a Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis (CPCTA) was implemented in an Academic Writing class, and also to find out students' perceptions when they were actively engaged in a collaborative work. This study will hopefully provide some benefits and insights for other Academic Writing lecturers about a collaborative peer-consulted text analysis and how it is applied in the class. Students of Academic Writing will hopefully gain some ideas and insights regarding what to do and how to behave while doing collaborative work and consultations with their peers.

Literature Review

As previously mentioned, collaborative learning has long been applied in second or foreign language learning and teaching. The forms can be various from the simple ones like games done in collaboration with other students, to the most advanced ones like working together on a project, or working together to solve problems. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2014), as cited in Wida Research Brief (2014), argues that collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity are among the *"4Cs"* identified as 21st century learning and innovation skills. It also claims that group-based learning designs are good ways to foster these crucial skills in English language learners, especially when the group engages in collaborative learning (two or more individuals creating new knowledge together. Kessler (2013) strengthened this idea, saying that in many cases, teachers may better understand the characteristics of human collaboration in general. This understanding in turn will help teachers to design collaborative projects, groups, and activities that incorporate the elements that contribute to success while avoiding those that present threats.

In language teaching, there are three terms which refer to the concept of collaborative learning; that is, *constructivism, collaborative learning*, and *cooperative language learning*. They are interrelated, and basically refer to a similar concept in language teaching. In a so called teacher-centered class, the teacher controls the class, the teacher's power is a determining factor in the learning process, and *"every student in class is doing more or less the same thing, at the same time, and in the same way"*. This methodology, nonetheless, tends to ignore individual differences and learners' contributions in the learning process (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 49). It can be said that the teacher is considered as the only "possessor" of knowledge in the classroom, while learners are the passive "receivers".

In contrast to a teacher-centered or instructivist classroom, in these three learning models, constructivism, collaborative learning, and cooperative language learning, learners are treated as active and important agents. This is in line with the paradigm of the new perspectives of teaching. The teacher's power or control is not seen as the only dominating factor in the class anymore, which determines the success of the learning process. Learners now can actively interact with the environment and gain an understanding by constructing their own concepts, which are important in solving problems and helping them to become autonomous or independent learners. That is the idea of the constructivist paradigm (Thanasoulas, 2001).

According to Doyle (1990), this learner-centered approach requires teachers and students to construct meaning out of information, which they have been exposed to, through active participation and interactions. In this process, students' points of view, teacher-student interactions, questioning, which can promote students' critical thoughts, as well as nurturing students' reflections and thinking, rather than producing one correct or wrong answer, are highly valued.

Kaufman (2004), in Aljohani (2017), explained that constructivism is rooted in Piaget's theory of cognitive development and in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of language learning. The notions of constructivists have influenced the pedagogical development as well. Aljohani (2017, p. 97) further clarified that in the past decades, many researchers and scientists had "elaborated the historical precedents for the constructivist learning theory". Constructivism represents the shift from education which is based on behaviorism, to education which is based on the cognitive theory. Constructivism has thus not played a visible role yet in language pedagogy and teacher education. However, the notions that are central to constructivism have been integrated into language education through other pedagogical models.

Kagan (in Çelik, Aytin, and Bayram, 2012) also strengthened this idea. He explained that the concept of cooperative learning is drawn from Vygotsky, Piaget, and Lewin's philosophies. These philosophers emphasized that a positive learning environment can lead to better academic performance, develop social skills, improve communicative ability, and provide a positive model for lifelong learning.

This is also supported by Árnadóttir (2014). She asserted that in order to work with a group through cooperative learning, students must have some social and small-group skills. Teachers should also realize that social skills need to be taught. A person will not just wake up possessing the skill to work well with others. Unfortunately, it often happens within group work that students are simply thrown into groups and expected to work together. This often leads to poor execution of the projects and there is a lack of learning.

In line with Kaufman (2004), Bada (2015) also stated that the constructivist view of learning considers the learner as an active agent in the process of knowledge acquisition. Constructivist conceptions of learning have their historical roots in the work of Dewey (1929), Bruner (1961), Vygotsky (1962), and Piaget (1980).

Dealing with collaborative work, Kessler, Bikowski, and Boggs (2012) also reinforced this idea, claiming that the theoretical basis for these projects largely rests on the work of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky put emphasis on the role of social interactions in learning and on the concepts underlying the communicative approach in second language learning. Hirvela (1999), in Kessler et al. (2012), developed the importance of social interactions when noting that collaborative writing provides opportunities for students to write as part of a community and use each other for support and guidance. Collaborative and pair writing in both first and second language settings has been recognized as contributing to a higher quality of writing, a better sense of audience, an increased pooling of knowledge and ownership in the writing process, increased student motivation, and attention to discourse structures as well as grammar and vocabulary usage. Storch (2005, p. 92) also noted the importance of "immediate feedback for optimal collaborative writing to occur".

Being in a constructivist classroom, learners are provided with opportunities to build on their prior knowledge and to understand how they can construct new knowledge from authentic experiences. The "experiential learning" covers personal involvement, learner initiation, an evaluation by the learner, and persistent effects on the learner (Rogers, 1994, as cited in Thanasoulas, 2001). Thanasoulas (2001) further stated that students learn from what they hear and what they read. Learners construct their own knowledge by looking for meaning and order, interpreting what they hear, read, and see based on their previous learning and habits.

That knowledge is socially constructed rather than received or discovered clearly is the underlying paradigm of the constructivist theory. This was asserted by Richards and Rodgers (2001, pp. 109-10, 199-200), who stated that in the constructivist learning theory, knowledge is socially constructed, not received or discovered. Constructivist learners "create meaning", "learn by doing", and "work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects".

According to this learning theory, constructivist learners create meaning, learn by doing, and work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects. In this situation, the teacher is more of a facilitator and active participant in the learning community than an expert who passes knowledge to his/her students. The teacher should create an atmosphere that supports collaborative learning, and is responsible for negotiating a plan of work with the learners. Learners, therefore, have a role as collaborators, collaborating with other fellow students as well as the teacher. Learners are also the directors of their own learning, while instructional materials become an essential part that creates opportunities for students' cooperation.

Oxford (2001, p. 372) reaffirmed this idea of constructivism, claiming that according to the constructivist approach, to understand or know something, one must use cognitive powers of interpretation in order to construct meaning. This happens only when language and social knowledge are closely integrated with cognition. When working individually, humans are involved in the "integrated triad" of cognition, language, and social knowledge. To separate one of these means to weaken the process of constructing meaning.

Brown (2000, p. 11) added that constructivism emerged as a prevailing paradigm only at the end of the century. Constructivists argue that all human beings construct their own version of

reality. Brown also stated that constructivism focuses on individual engagements in social practices in a collaborative group in a global community. He clarified further how social interactions with other learners is the focus of constructivism. The social constructivist perspectives, which are closely associated with the current approaches to both first and second language acquisition, emphasize the dynamic nature of interplay between learners and their peers, learners and their teachers, and learners and others whom they interact with. The interpersonal context in which a learner is engaged takes on great significance, and therefore, the interactions between learners and others is the focus of the observations and explanations (Brown, 2000, pp. 286-7).

Constructivism, in conclusion, prioritizes the interactions between the teacher and learners, as well as the interactions among learners with their peers. As Brown claimed, social interactions are the heart of constructivism. Bada (2015, p. 65) further explained about the implications of constructivism for teaching and learning**.** The **c**entral principle of constructivism is that learning is an active process. Information may be imposed, but understanding cannot be, for it must come from within. Constructivism requires a teacher to act more as a facilitator rather than an instructor, and the teacher's main role is to help students to become active participants in their learning and make "meaningful connections between prior knowledge, new knowledge, and the processes involved in learning". Patil and Kudte (2017) also claimed that many researchers who use constructivist learning theory in their study have seen better results in terms of students' achievements and learning success. Through the constructivist learning approach, students not only create their own knowledge, but also their interest for the course.

Brooks and Brooks (1993), as cited in Bada (2015), summarized the concept about what a constructivist teacher should be. Three of the characteristics of constructivist teachers are as follows. First, a constructivist teacher has inquiries about students' understandings of concepts before sharing his/her own understanding of those concepts. Next, a constructivist teacher encourages students to engage in dialog with the teacher and with one another, and the last is that a constructivist teacher provides time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors. It means that a constructivist teacher encourages learners to collaborate with other peer students.

Another researcher, Oliver (2001), in Tarricone and Luca (2002), added to the concept of constructivism. Oliver argued that as there has been a shift from instructivist to constructivist pedagogy, lecturers in tertiary education need to use various teaching strategies and methods, and incorporate student-centered team-based learning like project-based, case-based, and problem-based activities. Students working in groups and knowledge being dynamic, not static, but changing with experiences, are two of the characteristics of a constructivist classroom (Giesen, 2008).

Johnson and Johnson (1995), in Tarricone and Luca (2002), further added that students should be immersed in learning environments that promote real learning in real contexts. Teams and teamwork will definitely help to promote deep learning that occurs through several activities like interactions, problem solving, dialog, cooperation, and collaboration.

Related to collaborative learning, there is another concept called CLL or cooperative language learning. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), cooperative language learning (CLL) is a part of a more general instruction known as collaborative learning (CL). Cooperative activities, including pair work and small groups in the classroom, are optimally used in this learning model. In line with them, Jacobs and Hall (2002, p. 53) stated that there are some benefits associated with cooperative learning. They are found in important areas such as learning, self-esteem, fondness for school, and inter-ethnic relations. In EFL and ESL classes, cooperative learning improves student talk, encourages talk which is more varied, creates a more relaxed atmosphere, provides greater motivation, does more negotiation of meaning, and has a larger amount of comprehensible inputs. This idea is supported by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 192), who claimed that cooperative learning raises students' achievements, helps the teacher build positive among-student relationships, replaces a competitive learning atmosphere with a team-based structure, and provides students with healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development.

The collaborative learning model is also the basis for community language learning (also shortened as CLL_2). In that kind of a learning situation, learners are considered as members of a community with their teacher and fellow learners. Learning is not seen as an individual achievement, but accomplished collaboratively instead. Learners are expected to listen with great attention to the "knower", freely express their intended meanings, repeat utterances without any doubt, support and become "counselors" for other fellow community members, and be open in telling their inner feelings, frustrations, as well as pleasures in learning, to the teacher. On the other hand, the teacher has a role as *the counselor* for the learners: to respond calmly, nonjudgmentally, and supportively, and also to help the "clients" understand problems better. A CLL_2 course, in short, centers on the interactions of the community (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 94-5).

A classroom or curriculum that is cooperative is usually learner-centered and far from the idea of being competitive. When students work in pairs or groups, they share information and help one another. They work together to successfully achieve certain goals which have been set by the teacher. Underlining Jacobs and Hall, Oxford (1997) also highlighted the strengths of cooperative learning (in Brown, 2001, pp. 47-8). Oxford mentioned that research has shown an advantage of cooperative learning in such factors as promoting intrinsic motivation, heightening self-esteem, creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice. A group learning activity is dependent on the "socially structured exchange of information between learners". The learner engages with more capable others, who provide assistance and guidance.

Group work, in which there is peer consultation, is one of the manifestations of cooperative learning. Still according to Brown (2001, pp. 177-9), group work, being a step toward an individualizing instruction, offers some advantages. First, it generates interactive learning; it also offers an embracing affective climate, that is, it creates the security of a small group of students. When students are criticized or have an idea rejected in a small group, they will not feel embarrassed in public. Finally, it promotes learner responsibility and autonomy. An ideal group work is a small one, consisting of not more than six people. In a large group, not all students will have the opportunity to convey their ideas.

Reinforcing Brown's opinion, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 195) also mentioned that one of the objectives of cooperative language learning are to develop classrooms that foster cooperation rather than competition in learning. Another objective is to develop students' critical thinking skills, and develop communicative competence through socially structured interaction activities. Johnson (1994), as cited by Richards and Rodgers (2201), stated the contradiction between competition and cooperation. Within cooperative situations, individuals try to find outcomes which are beneficial to themselves and also to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of "A" (p. 195). Cooperative language learning and competitive language learning are thus two very different things.

From the facts above, it can be seen that students tend to be very competitive in a non-cooperative learning situation. A cooperative learning situation ideally will keep students away from a competitive ambitious atmosphere since they learn to help each other. Thus, it cannot be denied that language is closely related to, or, one might say, cannot be separated from social activities. As Halliday (1992) mentioned in Feez and Joyce (1998, p. 5, 24), "Language arises in the life of the individual through an ongoing exchange of meanings with significant others. Language learning is a social activity and is the outcome of collaboration between the teacher and student and between the student and other students in groups."

It is true that in learning a language, learners need to interact with their teacher as well as peers. There is no way that a language learner can be successful by learning the language alone, without getting involved with others. As what Halliday mentioned above, language learning is indeed a social activity.

As described previously, collaborative learning gives many advantages for students. Besides learning how to interact with peers, exchanging ideas and the like, they also learn interpersonal life skills, which will be necessary as they go to the community later and help them get along socially. The *cooperative skills* include communication, cooperation, problem solving, conflict resolution, and team building (Burden & Byrd, 1999, p. 238). In line with this, Brown (2001, p. 48) added that in pair or group work, students learn how to negotiate. Meaning, Brown claimed, is a product of negotiation. Besides that, they also learn an important value of take and give.

This collaboration with others can be reflected in the form of group work, which, in Brown's opinion (2001, pp. 177-9), refers to a generic term covering multiple techniques in which students "are assigned a task of collaboration and self-initiated language". Brown further claimed the advantages of group work. First, it generates learners' interactive language. In group work, all students have equal opportunities to talk; therefore, teacher's talk is no longer dominating. Another advantage centers on the climate that it offers, that is, an affective or secure climate. In Brown's insight, small groups become "a community of learners", in which sensitive or vulnerable students may feel secure to speak out, without fear of criticism or rejection. The next positive side of group work is it enhances the learner's responsibility and autonomy, because, as Brown asserted, it is

difficult to "hide" in small groups; everybody has his/her own part. The last advantage is group work can become a step toward individual instruction. In a class, it is acknowledged that students have different needs and proficiency levels. Small groups can bring students with various levels of abilities to achieve different goals. Teachers can recognize these individual differences by selecting small groups and assigning different tasks to different groups.

It is worth remembering a proverb, which says that every coin has two sides. The same thing happens to group work. There are some negative sides found in group work, unfortunately, like students' tendency to use their native language with their peers, students' errors that will be reinforced in small groups, and smaller teacher control over learning. However, Brown is positive that careful planning and good classroom management can solve all these problems, as long as they are rooted in learning style differences (2001, pp. 179-182).

Methodology

This study examined twenty Academic Writing students' perspectives on the application of a peer-consulted text analysis. Data was collected from reflective journals, which students submitted at the end of the Compact Semester 2018-2019 from all students. Interviews with two students were also done. The journals were submitted at the end of July 2019, while the interviews were done in the middle of August 2019.

The design of this study was qualitative, and it was participatory in nature. Research was done in the Compact Semester 2018/2019, with 20 Academic Writing students as participants. Data was collected through direct observations, journals, and interviews. The data collection instruments were thus journals, observation protocols, and interview protocols.

Research was done in an Academic Writing class, in the English Language Education Program (ELEP) at UKSW, Indonesia. It was conducted in the Compact Semester of the 2018/2019 Academic Year. The respondents were 20 Academic Writing students, all of whom were 2017 class year students. They were about 20 or 21 years old. These students had never taken or repeated this class before. They were all new in this writing course.

Findings and Discussion

This section covers the answers to the questions of *How is a collaborative peer-consulted text analysis applied in an Academic Writing class*? and *What are students' perceptions towards a collaborative peer-consulted text analysis in their Academic Writing class*? As mentioned before, peer consulted activities in this study refers to collaborative work in which students worked in small groups with one or two peer students which they selected by themselves. They were free to choose their peers whom they felt comfortable to work with. They were assigned to find one journal article which was related to language teaching, the use of technology in language teaching, or second language acquisition. Then, together with their friends in their groups, they analyzed the content of the journal article, and tried to find the main ideas and five key secondary ideas in the article. During the discussion, they consulted with each other about those points. Disputes and disagreements could happen during the group work. However, these students learned a lot of valuable things. The processes are described in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Steps of a Collaborative Peer-Consulted Text Analysis

All the students in this Academic Writing class had to go through all the stages described in the figure. Altogether, there were three pieces of group work which they had to work together. The first group work was on May 8, the next was on May 19, and the last was on May 31, 2019. They had to select one journal article and analyze the content. They had to find the main ideas and five other supporting ideas in the article. The students could do the group work inside or outside the classroom. Students' perceptions on the collaborative peer-consulted text analysis will be discussed in this section.

Observation Results

There was only one guiding question that had to be followed during the observations. The question in the protocol was: *How do students work together with their peers*? From the observations done during the group work, it was found that all students were serious in working, either with one or two partners. They all seemed deeply engaged in the activity.

Students' Journals

There were basically three questions that had to be answered in the students' journals. They were: *How did you feel during the collaborative work with your peer students?* The second question was: *How did you find your peer students during the group work?* The last one was: *Do you prefer to work individually or in small groups?* These journals were submitted at the end of the Compact Semester, on 25 July, 2019. The students were asked to write the answers in the form of paragraphs, either in their mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia) or in the target language, English.

Ten percent of the students (2 students) admitted that they were not happy working in groups, while the rest (90%, or 18 other students) said vice versa. They said that they were happy working in small groups. There were various reasons why the students were happy or unhappy to work

collaboratively in groups. Some students, like Student 1, Student 3, Student 6, and Student 11, for example, felt happy because they could share their thoughts and ideas with their other classmates.

Another reason for the students' happiness in doing group work was because they did not have to work alone, which in turn, could cause stress for them. This was stated by Students 4, 12, 15, 16, and 19. Cited below is Student 6's statement:

> Excerpt 1: Student 6's opinion:
> *Actually, I feel better when I have group work for reading a journal article because with group work I can share my opinions with my partners, and also when I get confused with the journal article I can ask my friends; thus, it helps me a lot.*

Another student, that is Student 19, mentioned that she was happy to have group work because this could change her habit towards something positive. She liked reading journal articles since she had group work in this course. She had a new positive habit. One answer which was stated by most students (50%, or 10 students), was that they enjoyed reading the articles because they could work with good friends. *Good* in this case means helpful, responsible, and comfortable to work with. In the second position was reason number 7, which was stated by five students (25%), that is, because they could share burdens with others, and there was no obligation to work alone. All these students' opinions about their journal articles can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Students' Reasons for Enjoying Group Work*

Reasons for Being Happy Working in Small Groups	Stated by Students
1. Opportunities to share thoughts and ideas	1, 3, 6, 11
2. Good cooperation/ conversations/ communication with friends	1,9,11,13
3. Working with close friends	1,4, 13
4. Working with compatible friends	3
5. Opportunities to develop their own thoughts	9
6. Working with good friends who were helpful, responsible, and comfortable to work with	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 18
7. Opportunity to share burdens, no obligation to work alone	4, 12, 15, 16, 19
8. Getting valuable inputs/ suggestions/ criticisms	13
9. Feeling weak or inferior in writing	14, 17
10. Freedom to choose their own partners	17
11. Changing reading habit, becoming more diligent in reading	19

12. Getting deeper comprehension of the journal article	20
13. Reducing stress	20
14. Covering each other's weaknesses	16
15. Getting new knowledge	16

Every coin has two sides. The same case happened with students' perspectives on the collaborative peer-consulted text analysis in this Academic Writing course. Two students were unhappy to work in groups. There were four main reasons for their unhappiness or reluctance. Student 8 revealed that he did not like group work because the results of the discussions with his partner were different from his expectations. He and his partner also had to go through a lot of negotiations which took time and he felt that it wasted his time. Student 8 further said that his partner often had changing moods, not to mention that Student 8 himself had problems with mood swings.

The good thing is that Student 8 realized that in the future, when he goes to the workplace, he has to work with everybody, and he cannot choose his colleagues. Stated below is Student 8's statement about his difficulty:

> Excerpt 2: Student 8's statement:
> *I cannot mention one word that describes my peer because she might have mood changes. It cannot be expressed as good or bad because it depends on the situation. Working with friends can be hard sometimes, but it helps me a lot especially in the future where I cannot choose who my friends are, so this is a practice prior to having a future job.*

In line with Student 8, Student 10 also had a difficult time working in small groups. Previously, she worked with two female friends who did not appreciate her opinions and thoughts. She did not feel happy working in small groups with partners who could not appreciate her.

Table 2. *Students' Reasons for Not Enjoying Group Work*

Reasons for Not Being Happy Working in Groups	Stated by Students
1. **A lot of negotiations which wasted time**	8
2. **Different expectations**	8
3. **Having a moody friend**	8
4. **Time consuming**	8
5. **Partners who are not appreciative**	10
6. **Partners who did not show respect**	10

Interviews with Students

Data was also derived from interviews with four students. These four students were selected because two of them stated that they did not like collaborative writing. They were Student 8 and Student 10. The other two students, Student 14 and Student 20 were also selected because they had surprising reasons for liking group work. On August 12, 2019, two personal interviews

with two students were conducted. The interviewees were Student 14 and Student 20. The reason for selecting these two students is, as stated above, because they stated something which was out of my expectations. Student 14 mentioned that she felt inferior in writing classes. Despite the fact that she was a very good achiever, she always felt that her friends were better than her in terms of writing. In her eyes, her friends had better vocabulary, even without the help of a grammar or spelling check, they could write well. This was something surprising, considering that this student was actually a good one, and there was no need to be worried about her ability in writing. In the interview session, she mentioned, "*I always feel that my friends can do better than I do. I feel inferior. That is why I like group work.*"

Another student who experienced a similar thing is Student 20. She felt that working in groups helped to reduce her stress. Similar to Student 14's case, Student 20 was a very good student in terms of achievements. Through group work, she felt relieved because she did not have to work alone. She thought that understanding journal articles was something difficult. The language in journals was "highly academic", she explained. That is why she needed friends to help her understand the journal articles.

On August 17, Student 8 was interviewed. He admitted that working in small groups always gave him different expectations. He expected that all students in the group would work hard and share ideas. In fact, only one student did that. The unequal sharing of work among the group members made him desperate. He also added that he himself had to control his mood swings, considering that he was considered as a moody student. His statements are shown below.
Excerpt 3: Student 8's statements:

> *I expected that group work would be really helpful if the members are reliable. It means that we share ideas and thoughts evenly. However, the fact is sometimes against my expectation, for example in a group there is only one or two persons who give ideas and who really give their best to finish an assignment. So I personally prefer working individually rather than doing group work in terms of a writing class. I would certainly have to control my mood because there should be a balance in doing group work. I did feel some pressure because of the difficulty of the course, but I tried my best to also deal with my partner by lowering my ego.*

Another student who disliked group work was Student 10, who was interviewed on August 18, 2019. As mentioned previously, Student 10 was in a group where her ideas were not appreciated and she was not respected as a group member. She mentioned that during peer consultation, she knew that her ideas were not appreciated, but she just kept silent. This might be related to the feeling of dominance that the other friends had. Student 10 mentioned,

> *When I tried to say my opinions, they wouldn't listen. When a task was submitted, I saw that my suggestions were not written on the paper. They should have explained to me about my opinions which might be improper or not good enough, so that I could know my weaknesses. I just kept silent knowing what they did to me, and tried to find other friends to work with.*

Student 10 seemed to be under pressure when working with her partners in the first group work. She did not enjoy the whole process of the collaborative learning, including peer consultation and interrelating ideas together.

Students' preference of working in the future

When asked about their preference of working in groups in the near future, three different answers were derived. Only three students wanted to work individually. Six other students liked both individual and group work. The rest, 11 students, which means more than 50%, preferred working in small groups.

Discussion

From the findings, it can be seen that not all students liked working in groups. This is in line with Listyani's (2006) study on students' opinions on collaborative essay writing. There were 17 students taking an Essay Writing class. Among the students, six students disliked groupwork, one had a changing attitude from dislike to like, and the other ten students liked working in groups. The reasons for disliking collaborative writing were because of incompatible peers, a lack of ideas, schedule clashes, and unfair distribution among the group members. Those who agreed with CL said that they learned to share and accept others' ideas, criticisms, and corrections; to express ideas more freely; and to cooperate with others. They admitted that CL also helped them in their individual writing. Besides that, they got a feeling of security while working in groups.

Another study in the past was also done by Listyani (2017). There were 20 students involved as respondents. Research was done in an Academic Writing class as well. From twenty students, ten (50%) showed dislike towards collaborative writing, and one student had both positive and negative attitudes towards group work. The remaining nine students showed a favorable opinion towards group work. The ten students mentioned that difficulties in interrelating ideas was the biggest problem.

Just like Student 10 in this study, she felt that she was not appreciated in the first group she had. She needed a good *nesting pattern* (Ellis, 1990, p. 100). A nesting pattern is the need for a secure and orderly home base before learning can effectively begin. Student 10 lacked this secure and orderly situation which made her unable to learn well within her group.

Košir, Sočan, and Pečjak (2007) highlighted that the perception of peer and teacher support is considered as an especially important factor in the students' achievements of learning goals. Students who put trust in their peers' support and care are usually more engaged in positive classroom behaviors than those who do not perceive such a support. The latter group of students represents a group which has a higher risk to develop learning difficulties. Košir et al. (2007) further stated that students who are accepted well by their peers are usually also more accepted by their teachers, as well. In contrast, teachers are more critical towards rejected students and offer them less help, which can lead to lower academic outcomes for these students.

Dealing with moody partners can also be a problem. Changing moods also needs to be controlled in order to collaborate successfully with peers. Dealing with the choice of partners, Hunter (2011), in Kessler et al. (2012, p. 2), claimed that collaborative writing will be more

successful when the writers share "common 'habits of mind' and contributors hold less 'author-centric perspectives' of textual ownership". It means that collaborative writing will work well when partners are compatible, so that no one depends on others, or no one is too domineering in the group.

The fact that collaborative work is not always successful is supported by Kessler et al. (2012). This can be caused by many factors, such as inaccurate peer editing, inexperience, interpersonal conflicts, or concerns about fairness. However, with the advancement of technology which enables document sharing and online discussions like what some participants in this study did, it is possible that group work will thrive in the future. There will be more collaborative writing projects. As Kressler et al. (2012) mentioned, collaborative writing can provide good opportunities for students to write, as part of a community and help each other for support and guidance.

Another problem that may emerge is classroom management. Çelik, Aytin, and Bayram (2012) conducted research on 14 Turkish English teachers. These teachers were asked about their perspectives on the implementation of cooperative learning in a language classroom. Some of the participants had a good understanding of the concept of group learning in general. They believed that cooperative activities were beneficial in a foreign language classroom.

On the other hand, some of the participants noted difficulties while implementing group learning. Pica (1994) and Thornton (1999), as cited in Çelik, Aytin, and Bayram (2012, p.1858), claimed that classroom management can be very problematic when the instructor gives up some of the control to the learners. Besides that, the respondents in Çelik, Aytin, and Bayram's (2012) study found that certain students took on most of the responsibility, thus allowing others to avoid participating actively in classroom exercises. Despite all those facts, overall, the teacher respondents expressed the belief that collaboration is an important element of communicative language learning.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, there are several things that need highlighting. First, group work is needed in writing classes. Students not only learn to share their ideas, suggestions, and thoughts, but also their soft skills in cooperating with others that they may not receive from printed or online materials. Secondly, there are always students who like and dislike collaborative work. They have their own preferences and their experiences later will be useful when going into the real world.

The teacher's role in assigning tasks for students in this case is also significant. It is better for teachers to assign students with compatible levels of competence to work together, so that everybody works hard for the best results. Assigning students to work with peer students by a lottery method or based on a certain system seems fair and seems to work well. However, this can cause problems of incompatibility among friends and may further cause discomfort while working. A study conducted by Murda, Flora, and Huzairin (2015) showed that there was a significant improvement in students' speaking skills after they were taught by using collaborative learning. It was proven from the students' improved mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test. In the pre-test, the average was 42.94, while the post-test was 72.43, with a t-table of 42.300 and a t-value of 2.028. It can be concluded that collaborative learning can improve students' speaking skills.

Besides those two things mentioned above, students should also be able manage their own feelings and moods when working in groups. Self-control and self-restraint are two key traits which students should have when dealing with 'difficult' partners or finding problems in interrelating each other's ideas. Non-verbal communication skills like facial expressions, the pitch of the voice, or paralanguage and eye contact (Human Communication Lecture, 2011) should be well-managed. Displaying anger, disrespect, and a lack of appreciation will lead to unsuccessful work.

Future researchers can conduct in-depth or phenomenological studies on students' reasons for liking or disliking group work. Other studies using questionnaires can also be conducted involving more participants in other kinds of writing classes. Thus, more thorough findings can be derived to enrich the literature on doing collaborative tasks.

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