

The Use of Positive Language on ELT to Promote Students' Writing Competence

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Teachers' language is one of the important aspects that contributes on students' competence in any levels. It promotes students' engagement in the learning process and also effects students' output of their learning. It doesn't prevail only on kindergarten students or primary students, but also on higher level such as college or university level. This research is aimed at determining the use of positive language to promote students' writing competence in university level. The focus of the research is on writing competence where students face terribly writing difficulties. Engaged by the 3rd semester of 41 students of Basic Writing class in English Education Program, the research was measured statistically in a correlational analysis. Findings show that there is a significant correlation between the use of positive language and the result of the students' writing competence. Most students show that they need positive language applied in their classrooms, so that they would fully participate in the learning process. Further, the students can reach their best results of their learning and gain their highest competence. Instead of vanish, language as a powerful teaching tool would be demanded by all levels of students for centuries.

Keywords: positive language, ELT, students' writing competence

Bahasa guru adalah salah satu aspek penting yang mempengaruhi kemampuan pemelajar pada berbagai tingkatan. Bahasa guru dapat mendorong keterlibatan pemelajar dalam proses pembelajaran dan dapat memberikan dampak pada hasil belajar pemelajar. Hal ini tidak hanya berlaku pada tingkat pemelajar taman kanak-kanak atau sekolah dasar, tetapi juga pada tingkatan yang lebih tinggi seperti akademi atau universitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat dampak dari penggunaan Bahasa positif terhadap kemampuan menulis pemelajar di tingkat universitas. Penelitian ini menitikberatkan pada kemampuan menulis yang menjadi tantangan terbesar bagi para mahasiswa. Dengan melibatkan 41 mahasiswa semester 3 di kelas Basic Writing pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian dengan analisis korelasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat korelasi yang signifikan antara penggunaan Bahasa positif

dan hasil kemampuan menulis mahasiswa. Para mahasiswa menunjukkan kebutuhan akan penggunaan Bahasa positif di dalam proses pembelajaran mereka, sehingga mereka dapat secara penuh mengikuti proses pembelajarannya. Lebih jauh, para mahasiswa dapat meraih hasil pembelajaran terbaik mereka dan menunjukkan kemampuan terbaik mereka. Dengan demikian, Bahasa sebagai alat pengajaran yang ampuh akan dibutuhkan oleh para pemelajar di setiap tingkatan selama berabad-abad.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of advanced technology, teachers of any subjects seem to catch up the mastery of the use of the advanced technology, including the English language teachers. Rather than evaluating the students' needs of the English learning, teachers become very busy with the technology as the tool in every aspects. Teachers forget that the most important tool of the English language learning is the language itself. Teachers' language is one of the most powerful tool in the learning process; it permeates every aspects of teaching. It can lift the students up to the highest potential, or it may tear the students down. What teachers say and how teachers say it, can help students develop their confidence, competence, and self-control (Denton, 2008). When teachers choose to use the words and tone of voice to enable students to learn in an engaged, active way; and guide the students toward choosing and maintaining positive behaviors, it is called positive language (responsiveclassroom.org, 2012).

The use of positive language functions as the fundamental tool to build effective learning atmosphere. It has been investigated in several researches for several levels of learners. One of the investigations was engaged by 169 teachers and 339 students in high school level in Korea. The investigation identified that the students perceived teachers with pedagogical knowledge as the highest demand. It means that teachers way of teaching, including the teachers' language is much determined as the effective teacher to help the students participating in the learning process and achieving the best learning output (Park & Lee, 2006).

In different country, a study in Turkey was engaged by 16 young Turkey learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and one EFL teacher. The research found that direct error correction, content feedback, prompting, extended wait time, and repairing are identified as the subcategories of constructive teacher talk. On the contrary, turn completion, teacher echo, and extended use of initiation-response-feedback turn-taking are the subcategories of the obstructive talk (Inceçay, 2010). Thus, teachers should be very careful with their talks.

In Istanbul, another study has found that teachers' attitudes has the effects on students' academic success with a lack of lifespan developmental perspective. Engaged by 353 students from different departments of Istanbul Kultur University and Maltepe University, the research indicated that teachers' positive attitudes have positively influenced students' personality as well as their live performances. This research proves that a teacher with his/her teaching methods and furthermore with his/her attitudes and behaviours provide his/her students to gain a mentally healthy personality and to have a new clear world view by leaving unforgettable traces on them (Ulug, Seray Ozden, & Eryilmaz, 2011).

Moreover, a wider investigation was established in the United States in 2011. Engaged by more than 300 teachers and 10.000 student responses in two middle schools in the western United

States, and applied a quasi-experimental research for over 4 years, the research found that the school with positive climate significantly decreased tardiness, unexcused absences, and office discipline referrals. It also increased in teacher ratings of school climate. (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011). Another comprehensive investigation was conducted in California, USA. Engaged by 578 Californians teachers, the research indicated the relations among teachers' perceptions of ELL (English Language Learners) strategies and school programs; teachers' ratings of collective efficacy in meeting all students' needs; and the general school climate. The results suggested that school-wide reforms designed to improve ELL instruction might yield greater collective efficacy. (Télez & Manthey, 2015).

In Indonesia, since the use of digital technology has disrupted almost all aspects of the learning process, researches on the use of teachers' language that effects students output have not been much investigated. However, in 2013, a research in Bogor, West Java, was administered. The research proved that the existence of positive English language teaching and learning environment is an important aspect for teachers to support the success of English learning in the classrooms setting. The situation was promoted by the influence of the teachers' teaching style, the physical environment of the classroom, and the consideration of the use of their learners' native language in class (Putra, 2013).

In 2016, a study on the use of positive language was investigated in different circumstance of the formal institution. It was an informal study where the use of positive language was examined in family environment related to the children's characters building. The study concluded that the use of positive language is needed in the very beginning of the children's age, in the family environment where the education is started. In the family environment, mothers and fathers have a fundamental position to hand-in-hand bring the positive environment in building positive behaviour of the children. (Rosyada & Retnomurti, 2017)

A year later, a study on applying positive language in the English language learning was administered. The research was engaged by 71 English students and 2 English teachers and resulted that there was a significant correlation between the teachers' performance and effective English teaching classroom. The study was extended and examined 142 students of eight-grade and 4 language teachers that distributed into 2 English teachers and 2 Bahasa teachers. Findings have shown that there is a positive correlation between the use of positive language and the effective language teaching classrooms. It is proven that the implementation of the positive language is effective in promoting the effective language teaching classrooms in the area of state junior high school. (Rosyada & Ramadhianti, 2017; Rosyada, Widyastuti, & Ramadhianti, 2018).

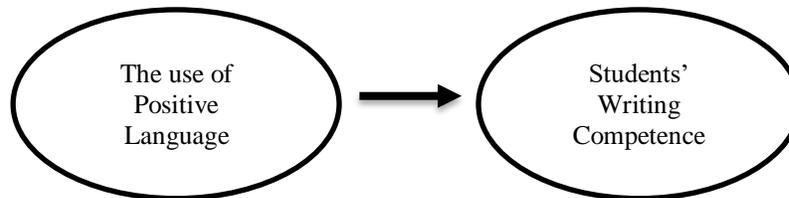
Regarding all the above researches, this study is conducted to find another perspectives in using positive language to promote effective English learning, particularly on students' writing competence in the university level. Students' writing competence is one of the tools to indicate the success of the English learning process. Teaching writing to students is started from teaching Basic Writing where the concept of the structures in different sentence types is delivered. Identifying and generating different sentences in different sentence types are the final goals of the Basic Writing learning. By applying the positive language in the classroom setting, hopefully, the students are fully participated in the learning process, so that the goals of the Basic Writing learning are completely achieved. As the powerful tool, the use of positive language in the learning process

would promote the best results of the students' writing competence.

METHOD

The research is a quantitative correlational design with explanatory research design analysis. The design consists of a simple association between two variables or more. The analysis explains the association between the variables where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other (Creswell, 2012).

Figure 1: Research Design



Based on the research design, the data was collected quantitatively by using two instruments. First instrument was a questionnaire consisting of ten statements that covered students' perception on the use of lecturer's positive language. Each statement was illustrated with scale from 1 to 5, which described: 1 for strongly disagree; 2 for disagree; 3 for neutral; 4 for agree; and 5 for strongly agree. Second instrument was a set of test that measured the students' writing competence consisting of 20 numbers of identifying sentence types and developing sentences. Those two instruments were collected at one point in time, statistically calculated, analysed, and finally interpreted based on the statistical results.

This research was carried out in the English Education Program and engaged by 41 participants that were the students of third semester. The participants were comprised into 33 female students and 8 male students. All the participants were assigned two instruments in one point in time, a questionnaire and a test. The answers of the instruments were collected, scored and statistically calculated. By correlating and analysing the students' answers between the scores of positive language questionnaire and the test of students' writing competence, the results are performed in diagrams and explanations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

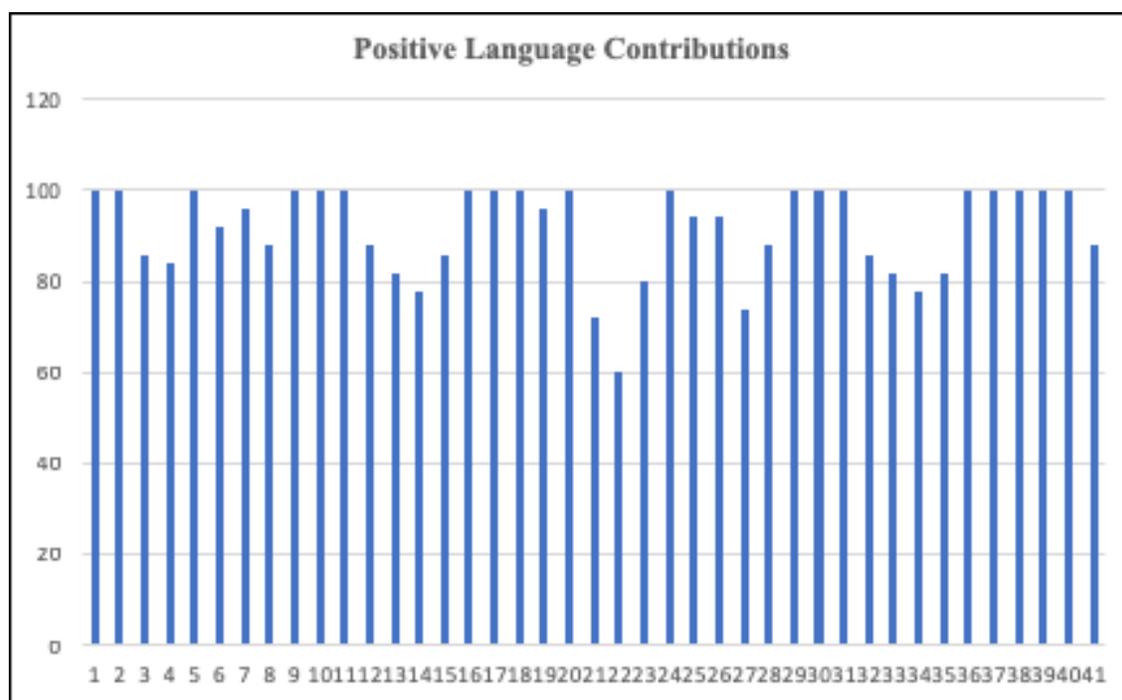
Findings

The research applied two instruments to collecting data based on the students' answers on the positive language questionnaire and the students' writing competence. It means that each participant contributed two different scores from a questionnaire and a test. The questionnaire covered ten statements of positive language, namely: 1) The lecturer shows appropriate eye contact, body language, and facial expressions; 2) The lecturer implements punctual and timely presentation; 3) The lecturer presents a clear and logical structure of the lesson; 4) The lecturer uses clear and concise language; 5) The lecturer conveys enthusiasm for the topic; 6) The lecturer uses appropriate aids to support verbal communication; 7) The lecturer checks the understanding of the students before moving onto a new point; 8) The lecturer conveys warmth/concern where

appropriate; 9) The lecturer maintains interest with appropriate pace and content; and 10) The lecturer listens carefully to questions and answers relevantly. Each statement was scored from 2 to 10 which means the highest score is 100 and the lowest score is 20. Meanwhile, the second instrument was an English Basic Writing test consisting of 10 numbers of identifying sentence types and 10 numbers of developing sentences. Each number was scored 5 which means the highest score is 100 and the lowest score is 0.

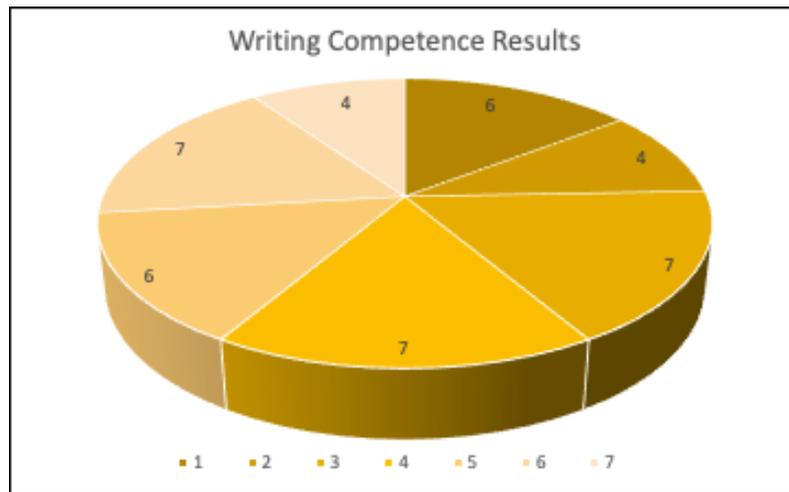
Due to the collated data of the positive language questionnaire from among 41 participants, there were 19 participants who contributed the highest score of 100; 17 participants who contributed middle score from 80 to 96; and only 5 participants who contributed less than 80 but not less than 60. In general, the data show that most participants determined the use of the lecturers' positive language as the crucial aspect in their English learning process, particularly in their learning of the Basic Writing. The following figure shows the detailed data of the participants contributions on the use of lecturers' positive language.

Figure 2: Positive Language Results



Along to the abovementioned data, another score was collated based on the test of the participants' writing competence. The results show that the highest score is 95 and the lowest score is 65; the mean score is 80.12, the median score is 80, and the mode score is 80. The highest score was achieved by 6 participants; 4 participants achieved the score 90; 14 participants gained the score 80-85; and 13 participants reached the score 70-75. Meanwhile, the lowest score of 65 was achieved by 4 participants. The following figure performs the detailed data of the students' writing competence that illustrate number 1 for 95; number 2 for 90; number 3 for 85; number 4 for 80; number 5 for 75; number 6 for 70; and number 7 for 65.

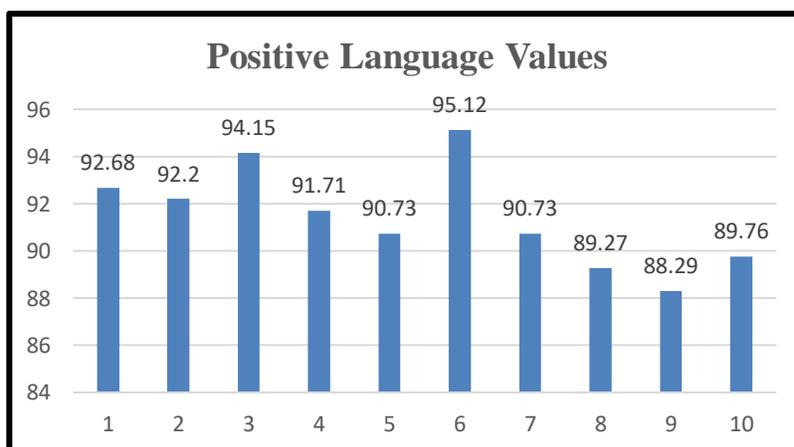
Figure 3: Writing Competence Results



2. Discussion

Based on the findings, a statistical calculation was conducted for both instruments. The scores were converted to percentage to find out an equal review on each item and number. For the first instrument, among the ten values of the lecturers' positive language, the participants perceived all values contribute important role to their learning process. The participants determined that all values have equal role in their Basic Writing learning process, which performed in the figure that follows. Almost all values collated scores more than 90 % and only three values collated scores under 90% for item 8, 9, and 10.

Figure 4: Positive Language Values



The above figure shows the highest score of value in item number 6 stated that the lecturer uses appropriate aids to support verbal communication. This item is determined as the most important value for the participants in the learning process. A number of 78% of participants decided to strongly agree for this value, 20% of participants agree, and only 2% of participants in

neutral position. The lecturer delivered the lesson by using slides, pictures and videos related to real life circumstances, and viewed in big screen. The result for this value is relevance to the previous study that applying picture helps students to enhance their engagement in the learning process and provide new experience in the learning process (Rosyada, 2018).

Besides item number 6, item number 3 stated that the lecturer presents a clear and logical structure of the lesson, also contributes a significant score to the learning process. There were 73% of the participants who strongly agree, and 24% of the participants who agree that lecturers should present a clear and logical structure of the lesson so that the lesson could be easily understood by the participants. This value is supported by item number 1 stated that the lecturer shows appropriate eye contact, body language, and facial expressions. Both values are crucial to be integrated as if the participants have to achieve a clear and logical structure of the lesson. The participants contributed 68% of strongly agree, 27% of agree, and only 5% in neutral position. A clear and logical structure is needed to develop the students' critical thinking. The improvement of the students' critical thinking is parallel to the development of the students' writing competence (Piergiovanni, 2014).

In addition, to find out an association between the use of lecturers' positive language and the students' writing competence, a deep analysis is needed. Both variables are correlated to find out the significant degree of the variables. The results show that the r_{observed} is 0.352 and the r_{table} is 0.308 where the r_{observed} is higher than the r_{table} . With this result, it can be said that the association between the variables is significant where the use of lecturers' positive language is positively correlated to the students' writing competence. In deeper analysis, the proportion of the correlational determination is measured and indicates that the lecturers' positive language contributes about 12.41% to the students' writing competence.

The results of the correlational analysis show that the use of positive language by the lecturer is indeed a positive variable in developing the students writing competence. Nevertheless, this variable is not a single factor, and need other variables to support the applied of positive language. In this digital era, lecturers might use a website or weblog that is widely applied to develop the students' writing competence. It is proved that this approach brings several benefits for the learners, namely: improving learners' writing skills, enhance the learners' motivation to write, and foster both learners monitoring strategies and learners' autonomy in the learning of English writing (Sun, 2010).

Moreover, lecturers might use automated scoring systems. This tool helps both the students and the lecturers to evaluate the students' writing with accuracy and validity. In this way, both students and lecturers are considered to the same guideline. (Weigle, 2013). In China, an investigation on several writing aspects stated that students' self-reported approaches to writing from sources and instruction that had helped them; the frequency, accuracy, and functions of citations in samples of their course papers; and their abilities to summarize a reading passage under test-like conditions, was evaluated. The evaluation showed the three aspects promoted the students writing performance (Cumming et al., 2018).

In accordance to the above discussion, it is impossible for the lecturers to respond each student needs individually, as if it is impossible to create a single-ideal method that fits each student's requirements. However, it is possible for the lecturers to establish the best learning atmosphere to stimulate the learners motivation, and design a systematic instructional strategies in

the learning process (Keller, 2010). Therefore, the ten instructional strategies of the lecturers' positive language are needed as the guideline in promoting the effective English learning in the classroom setting. By applying those ten guideline, students are encouraged to fully participating in the process of English learning; contributing the best effort and knowledge they have; and developing their competence in the English learning to the best performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings and discussion have shown that the use of positive language is needed in the university level environment. The applied of positive language is significantly correlated to the students' writing competence. Positive language is proved as the powerful tool in promoting positive environment in the classroom setting. However, it is not a single variable. Building positive environment needs to be supported by other factors including the lecturer's knowledge, the use of media and advanced technology, the qualified content of the lesson, and many others. All variables should be integrated to promote the best circumstances of English learning process in general, and learning Basic Writing in particular. This research tries to develop a systematic formula of the positive language application where students' best outcome is considered at the utmost. Further research in this issue that covers several variables is needed to be evaluated. This research and further research would definitely contribute a new and different insight in education, particularly in English writing for university level, in the field of the English Language Teaching.

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