



Self-Reflection of Student Through of a Dialogic Inquiry Approach in Writing

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ABSTRACT

Writing instruction in EFL contexts involves not only the development of language proficiency but also the ability to evaluate ideas, revise drafts, and recognize strengths and weaknesses in the writing process. However, many students still experience difficulties in engaging in critical and sustained self-reflection. This study aims to describe students' self-reflection experiences and identify the factors that support and hinder its development through Dialogic Inquiry-based writing instruction. A qualitative case study design was employed with seven English Education students who had participated in academic writing instruction using the Dialogic Inquiry approach. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that students' self-reflection developed through dialogic discussions, questioning, peer and lecturer feedback, and revision activities. These processes enabled students to become more aware of the organization, coherence, argument quality, and clarity of their writing. The development of self-reflection was supported by instructional scaffolding, peer feedback, checklists, and rubrics. Nevertheless, students also encountered several challenges, including difficulty maintaining objectivity, confusion when applying feedback during revision, and fatigue throughout the writing process. The study concludes that Dialogic Inquiry provides a meaningful and interactive learning environment that encourages students to reflect on their writing more actively and critically. Its implication is that EFL writing instruction should integrate structured dialogue, feedback, and reflective tools to strengthen students' metacognitive awareness and support continuous improvement in writing. Dialogic and reflective practices have also been associated with greater self-regulation and awareness in EFL writing development.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of higher education requires students to master various competencies that are relevant to the demands of the twenty-first century. In

In addition to mastering academic knowledge in their respective fields, university students are expected to think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and solve problems creatively and innovatively. These competencies are particularly important for English Education students because they are required to develop language proficiency, academic competence, and the ability to become independent learners. Therefore, higher education should not focus only on students' final learning outcomes but also on the development of their ability to understand, evaluate, and improve their own learning processes.

One important competence in contemporary learning is self-reflection. Self-reflection refers to an individual's ability to evaluate learning experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan improvements based on previous experiences. It is closely related to metacognitive ability because students need to monitor how they receive, process, and apply information. Through self-reflection, students can identify what they have understood, recognize the difficulties they have encountered, and determine more effective strategies for improving their learning. Self-reflection may be manifested through self-evaluation, recognition of learning difficulties, interpretation of feedback, monitoring of progress, and planning for future improvement. Thus, self-reflection helps students become more active and independent learners who are able to examine not only the results of learning but also the processes that produce those results.

The ability to reflect is particularly important in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. EFL students are required to master linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure. However, they also need to evaluate the learning strategies they use, identify the problems they face, and determine how their language skills can be developed effectively. Students with limited reflection skills may tend to receive information passively, memorize language rules, and complete assignments without relating them to previous knowledge or authentic communication contexts. Consequently, the learning process may become mechanical, less meaningful, and less effective in developing critical thinking and independent learning. This problem is also evident in academic writing, where EFL students often experience difficulties related to organization, grammar, word choice, and idea development (Gudina & Wakuma, 2022)

Writing is one area of EFL learning that requires a strong ability to reflect. Writing is not simply an activity of transferring ideas into written form, but a complex thinking process involving planning, drafting, organizing ideas, revising, and evaluating the quality of the text. Paragraph writing is

particularly important because a paragraph constitutes the basic unit of longer academic texts, including research articles, theses, and final project reports (Kamal & Faraj, 2015). An effective academic paragraph should contain a clear main idea, logically developed supporting ideas, unity, coherence, cohesion, and appropriate language use. Nevertheless, many EFL students still face difficulties in constructing well-developed academic paragraphs. They may be unable to identify the main idea clearly, develop supporting ideas logically, or maintain relationships between sentences. These problems are not only related to linguistic competence but also to students' thinking processes. Students who are not accustomed to evaluating their writing may fail to recognize which parts require revision and may repeat similar mistakes in subsequent writing tasks.

The researcher also observed similar problems as an English Education student, particularly difficulties in organizing systematic paragraphs, developing ideas, and constructing clear arguments. This phenomenon indicates the need for a writing instruction approach that can support both students' writing competence and their reflective awareness. One approach that may respond to this need is Dialogic Inquiry. According to (Wells, 2006) Dialogic Inquiry is a sociocultural educational practice in which knowledge is constructed through interaction, questioning, discussion, argumentation, and negotiation of meaning between teachers and learners. Through this approach, students are not positioned merely as recipients of information. Instead, they actively construct knowledge by explaining their ideas, responding to questions, considering different perspectives, and negotiating meaning with lecturers and peers.

Dialogic Inquiry is relevant to writing instruction because writing itself involves a continuous process of constructing, evaluating, and revising ideas. Through dialogue, students can examine the reasons behind their ideas, identify weaknesses in their arguments, receive feedback, and reconsider their understanding. The learning process is therefore not one-way but participatory, allowing students to make their thinking visible and reflect on the decisions they make while writing. In this context, discussion, questioning, peer feedback, and revision can function as activities that stimulate students' self-reflection. Students may become more aware of the organization, coherence, argument quality, and clarity of their writing through interaction with lecturers and classmates.

Theoretically, Dialogic Inquiry is consistent with sociocultural theory, which views learning and cognitive development as processes mediated by social interaction and language. According to this perspective, knowledge is not

constructed individually but develops through participation in meaningful social activities. Language functions as a mediation tool that enables learners to organize thoughts, formulate arguments, and understand new concepts systematically (Scott & Palincsar, n.d.) emphasizes that cognitive development is initially shaped through social interaction before it is internalized by the individual. (Wells, 2006) further explains that dialogue can support the co-construction of knowledge by enabling learners to investigate problems and develop understanding collaboratively. In writing instruction, interaction with lecturers and peers can therefore help students formulate ideas, evaluate their arguments, interpret feedback, and improve their texts.

The relevance of this issue has become more apparent following the COVID-19 pandemic, when many educational institutions shifted from face-to-face instruction to online or hybrid learning. Although hybrid learning provides flexibility, it may also limit direct interaction between lecturers and students and between students themselves. The rapid transition to online learning created challenges related to access, interaction, learning resources, and students' participation (Dhawan, 2020) In this situation, the absence of meaningful dialogue may make it more difficult for EFL students to receive mediation and feedback during the writing process. As a result, students may continue to experience difficulties in organizing ideas and developing systematic paragraphs.

Although research on self-reflection and writing instruction has continued to develop, previous studies have more commonly examined reflection through reflective writing, reflective journals, or self-assessment. Such studies have emphasized outcomes such as increased self-awareness or improved writing performance but have not sufficiently explained how classroom dialogue facilitates the development of students' self-reflection. Research on Dialogic Inquiry in English learning has also been more frequently associated with critical thinking, reading comprehension, or classroom discussion in general. Its relationship with self-reflection in academic paragraph writing, particularly among English Education students in Indonesia, remains insufficiently explored. Therefore, this study argues that structured dialogue, questioning, feedback, and revision can provide meaningful opportunities for students to examine their writing processes and develop more active and critical self-reflection.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe students' experiences of self-reflection during writing instruction using a Dialogic Inquiry approach and to identify the factors that support and hinder the development of students' self-reflection in Dialogic Inquiry-based writing instruction. The study addresses

the following questions: (1) What are students' experiences of self-reflection through a Dialogic Inquiry approach in writing instruction? and (2) What factors influence the development of students' self-reflection in Dialogic Inquiry-based writing instruction?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a single case study design. It focused on students' experiences of self-reflection during writing instruction through the Dialogic Inquiry approach. The case investigated was the process of students' reflection on their writing ideas, organization, arguments, feedback, and revision in an Academic Writing course. The study was conducted in an English Education Study Program in Indonesia, particularly in a class that implemented Dialogic Inquiry-based writing instruction. A qualitative case study was selected because the research aimed to understand the meaning of students' experiences in their natural learning context rather than measure only their final writing results.

The primary data consisted of information obtained directly from the participants concerning their experiences of self-reflection during writing instruction. Secondary data were obtained from supporting documents, including students' writing drafts and reflection notes produced during the learning process. The use of primary and secondary data enabled the researcher to examine students' experiences from different sources and obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The participants were seven students of the English Education Study Program who had participated in an Academic Writing course using the Dialogic Inquiry approach. They were selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: they were English Education students, had experienced Academic Writing instruction, and had participated in writing activities involving dialogue, questioning, feedback, and revision. These participants were considered information-rich because they had direct experiences relevant to the research focus. The number of participants was determined by the depth and relevance of the information. Data collection was considered sufficient when the responses showed recurring patterns and no substantial new information emerged.

The research was conducted in three stages: preparation, data collection, and data analysis. In the preparation stage, the researcher reviewed literature related to self-reflection, Dialogic Inquiry, sociocultural learning, and academic writing. The researcher then determined the research focus, formulated the research questions and objectives, and prepared the research instruments. The

instruments consisted of an open-ended questionnaire distributed through Google Forms, a semi-structured interview guide, and a documentation format. The instruments were designed to explore students' reflective experiences, the role of dialogue and feedback, and the factors that supported or hindered self-reflection.

In the data collection stage, the researcher distributed the open-ended questionnaire to obtain an initial description of students' experiences and perceptions. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted to explore the questionnaire responses in greater depth and clarify information that remained incomplete. Documentation, such as writing drafts and reflection notes, was collected as supporting evidence. During the data analysis stage, interview data were transcribed, while questionnaire responses and documents were organized according to the research questions. The researcher read the data repeatedly, identified relevant statements, and assigned initial codes. Similar codes were grouped into categories, such as reflection through discussion, awareness of writing quality, feedback interpretation, revision, scaffolding, peer support, limited objectivity, revision confusion, and fatigue.

The data were analyzed thematically through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher compared the results of questionnaires, interviews, and documentation to apply source and method triangulation. The emerging themes were then interpreted in relation to self-reflection, Dialogic Inquiry, and sociocultural theory. Finally, the findings were organized to answer the research questions and presented in the research article.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that students' self-reflection in Dialogic Inquiry-based writing instruction developed through discussion, questioning, feedback, and revision. These activities encouraged students to reconsider their writing and evaluate it from different perspectives. Before receiving comments, several students tended to judge the quality of their writing based on general or visible aspects, such as neatness, margins, font, and the length of the text. After receiving responses from lecturers or peers, they began to examine more substantive aspects, including the clarity of the main idea, the relevance of supporting information, the accuracy of arguments, the coherence between paragraphs, and the integration of evidence and citations.

Several students stated that they initially considered their writing satisfactory. However, after receiving comments, they realized that the paragraph structure was weak, the main idea was not sufficiently focused, or the flow of ideas was difficult to follow. The feedback encouraged them to

compare the content of their writing with the suggestions they received. Students did not merely accept the comments but reconsidered whether the feedback was relevant to their writing. Through this process, they recognized that the quality of academic writing was not determined only by appearance or grammatical accuracy. They began to understand that writing quality was also related to clarity of ideas, paragraph organization, coherence, and argument strength.

The most frequently identified form of self-reflection was students' habit of reviewing their writing before submitting it. During this process, students checked grammatical aspects as well as the suitability of the content, paragraph structure, coherence, and strength of the arguments. Their review activity therefore developed from a technical examination into a broader evaluation of the writing. One participant explained that previously the length of the writing was used as the main indicator of quality. After participating in the writing activities, the participant began to check whether the thesis statement was clear, whether the paragraphs were logically arranged, and whether the writing was supported by sufficient evidence and citations.

The data also reveal that discussion and question-and-answer activities helped students identify the strengths and weaknesses of their writing. Through classroom interaction, students had opportunities to explain their ideas, respond to questions, and reconsider their writing decisions. Discussions also helped them evaluate the quality of their arguments and revise their writing more specifically. Students became more aware that revision should not be limited to correcting grammar. It could also involve reorganizing ideas, clarifying the relationship between sentences, strengthening evidence, and improving the connection between paragraphs.

Despite these developments, students experienced difficulties in evaluating their writing objectively. Almost all respondents indicated that they found it difficult to identify weaknesses in a text they had written themselves. Because they were familiar with their own intentions, they often felt that the writing was clear even when other readers experienced difficulties in understanding it. Students needed comments from lecturers and peers to obtain a more objective perspective. Interaction helped them recognize the difference between the meaning they intended to convey and the meaning that was actually communicated through the text.

Students also had difficulty deciding which parts of their writing required revision. Some were uncertain whether a sentence needed to be changed or was already sufficiently clear. Others were confused about revision priorities, particularly whether they should begin with content, organization, or grammar.

Although they understood that their writing needed improvement, they did not always possess a clear strategy for carrying out the revision. Consequently, some students tended to focus on minor language corrections and paid less attention to the organization of ideas or the strength of their arguments.

The findings further show that checklists, self-evaluation rubrics, and revision guidelines supported students' self-reflection. Several students indicated that they needed a checklist containing aspects such as the thesis statement, organization, coherence, grammar, and clarity. The checklist helped them identify which elements needed to be examined and made the review process more systematic. Students also reported that a clear rubric helped them understand the expected standards of academic writing. With these tools, reflection became more concrete and was not based solely on general judgments such as "good" or "not good."

Peer feedback was another important factor supporting self-reflection. Some students stated that comments from peers were easier to understand because they were expressed in simple language and from a perspective close to their own experience. When students commented on their classmates' writing, they not only helped the writer identify problems but also developed their own ability to read critically. Discussions of writing examples also helped students distinguish between weak and stronger academic writing. Through comparison, they became more familiar with the characteristics of clear, logical, and well-organized writing.

The data also indicate changes in students' perspectives as writers. Some students explained that they previously evaluated writing mainly by its length, but later began to consider the quality of the thesis statement, paragraph organization, evidence, citations, and counterarguments. After learning about the importance of counterarguments, some students attempted to include them in subsequent writing tasks. This demonstrates that students did not merely identify previous weaknesses but also applied the results of reflection to later writing. However, the development was not complete. Students still reported limitations in ideas and vocabulary, difficulty maintaining objectivity, confusion during revision, and fatigue when reviewing their writing.

Discussion

The findings indicate that self-reflection in this study developed as a dialogic and process-oriented activity rather than as an individual rereading exercise. Students' initial evaluation tended to focus on surface features, including appearance, length, and grammar. Through interaction, their attention shifted toward deeper dimensions of academic writing, such as the clarity of ideas, logical organization, coherence, evidence, and argumentation.

This shift is important because it shows that Dialogic Inquiry helped students redefine what constitutes good writing. The quality of writing was no longer understood only as correct language or attractive presentation but as the result of meaningful, organized, and well-supported thinking.

This finding supports the view that reflection involves more than recalling or rereading previous work. Reflection requires students to examine the reasons behind their decisions, evaluate the quality of their performance, and determine appropriate improvements. In the present study, students began to question whether their thesis statements were sufficiently clear, whether supporting ideas were relevant, and whether the relationship between paragraphs could be followed by readers. These questions demonstrate the movement from simple awareness toward evaluative reflection. The distinctive contribution of this study is that it shows how this change occurred through classroom dialogue, rather than through individual reflective writing alone.

The role of dialogue is particularly visible in the way students responded to feedback. Feedback functioned not merely as correction but as a trigger for reconsidering the meaning and organization of the text. Students compared their original intentions with the interpretations provided by lecturers and peers. When they discovered that their intended meaning was not fully communicated, they were encouraged to revise the text. This process reflects the dialogic nature of writing development because students constructed new understanding through interaction with other readers. Previous research on peer feedback has also reported that feedback can help EFL students organize essays, develop ideas, and improve supporting arguments. However, the present study differs by emphasizing the reflective process that takes place before and during the revision, particularly the students' recognition that their intention may differ from the meaning received by readers.

The findings also demonstrate that peer feedback contributed to students' development as both writers and readers. When students responded to their classmates' writing, they were required to identify unclear ideas, weak organization, or insufficient support. This activity provided them with an opportunity to apply academic writing criteria to someone else's text before using the same criteria to evaluate their own. The process helped students develop reader awareness and understand that writing should be considered from the perspective of an audience. This finding is consistent with research indicating that peer feedback can promote reflection, critical thinking, responsibility, and self-evaluation in EFL writing. Nevertheless, this study adds that peer feedback becomes especially meaningful when it is integrated into

Dialogic Inquiry, where comments are discussed, questioned, and interpreted rather than simply written on a draft.pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih+1

Another important finding concerns the development of metacognitive awareness. Students gradually moved from checking individual language errors to evaluating the overall quality of their writing. Their review included the thesis statement, paragraph sequence, coherence, evidence, citations, and counterarguments. This change indicates that students became more aware of the relationship between writing decisions and the quality of the final text. They also began to transfer what they had learned from previous writing experiences to subsequent tasks. For example, students who recognized the importance of counterarguments attempted to include them in later essays. This transfer shows that reflection influenced future action, which is a central characteristic of meaningful self-reflection.

However, the findings also show that self-reflection does not develop automatically. Students experienced difficulty assessing their writing objectively because they were closely connected to the text and familiar with their intended meaning. This condition may cause students to overlook weaknesses that are visible to other readers. The difficulty suggests that students need opportunities to distance themselves from their writing and examine it from a reader's perspective. Dialogic Inquiry addresses this problem by introducing alternative interpretations through lecturers' and peers' responses. The difference between the writer's intention and the reader's understanding becomes a productive space for reflection.

Students' confusion about revision priorities provides further evidence that awareness of a problem does not always lead to effective action. Students knew that their writing required improvement, but some did not know whether to revise content, organization, or grammar first. They therefore tended to make local revisions, such as correcting vocabulary or sentence structure, without addressing more fundamental problems. This finding is important because it distinguishes this study from research that measures only writing improvement after feedback. The present study shows that students' ability to recognize problems and their ability to plan revisions are related but different aspects of self-reflection. Students may identify a weakness but still require scaffolding to decide how and in what order to address it.

The use of checklists, rubrics, and revision guidelines responded to this difficulty by providing external evaluation criteria. These tools helped students transform a general judgment into a systematic examination. Instead of asking whether the writing was good, students could ask whether the thesis was clear, whether ideas were logically organized, whether paragraphs were coherent,

and whether evidence adequately supported the argument. In this sense, scaffolding helped students gradually develop evaluation criteria that they could later internalize. The findings therefore suggest that reflective writing instruction should not rely entirely on students' spontaneous ability to evaluate their work. It should provide explicit instruments that guide what to examine and how to interpret the results.

The findings are also consistent with the sociocultural understanding of learning. Students' reflective awareness developed through participation in social activities involving lecturers, peers, texts, questions, and feedback. Language served as a tool for explaining ideas, negotiating meaning, and reorganizing thought. In this process, reflection was initially supported externally through dialogue and feedback before becoming increasingly internalized by students. The difference from a conventional teacher-centered approach lies in the distribution of responsibility. Students were not merely waiting for the lecturer to identify errors. They were encouraged to explain, question, compare, and make decisions about their writing. Thus, Dialogic Inquiry created conditions in which self-reflection could develop through shared inquiry.

At the same time, the findings show that the approach did not eliminate all challenges. Limited vocabulary and ideas restricted students' ability to express arguments, while fatigue reduced their willingness to review texts carefully. These challenges indicate that reflective writing instruction must be realistic and gradual. Students cannot be expected to evaluate complex issues, organization, language, and argumentation simultaneously without adequate support. Teachers need to provide focused feedback, manageable revision stages, model texts, and sufficient time for discussion. The objective is not to make students revise every aspect at once but to help them prioritize the most important improvements.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by explaining the mechanism through which Dialogic Inquiry facilitates self-reflection in EFL writing. Earlier studies have often emphasized the benefits of reflective journals, self-assessment, or peer feedback as separate instructional activities. This study shows that self-reflection can emerge through the combined process of dialogue, questioning, feedback, comparison, and revision within academic writing instruction. The central difference lies in the emphasis on students' changing evaluative perspective: they moved from judging writing through surface features to examining ideas, organization, evidence, and argumentation. The study therefore demonstrates that Dialogic Inquiry is not only an approach

for improving classroom interaction but also a means of helping students develop a more critical understanding of themselves as academic writers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Dialogic Inquiry provides a meaningful approach to developing students' self-reflection in EFL writing instruction. The most significant finding is that students' reflective abilities develop through interaction, particularly when they are encouraged to discuss ideas, ask and respond to questions, receive feedback, reread their writing, and revise their work. These dialogic processes help students move beyond surface-level revision, such as correcting grammar, toward deeper reflection on the clarity, coherence, organization, and quality of their ideas. The findings also indicate that feedback from lecturers and peers, supported by scaffolding such as rubrics, checklists, and example texts, helps students identify weaknesses and make more purposeful revisions. This demonstrates that self-reflection is not an automatic ability, but a process that can be strengthened through guided interaction and continuous practice.

The contribution of this study lies in highlighting Dialogic Inquiry as both a conceptual and practical framework for connecting social interaction, metacognitive awareness, and writing development. It emphasizes that writing instruction should provide opportunities for students to actively construct, evaluate, and reconstruct meaning rather than focusing only on final written products. However, this study is limited by its qualitative scope and the limited number of participants, which may restrict the transferability of the findings to other EFL contexts. Students also experienced challenges such as limited objectivity, uncertainty during revision, and fatigue when reviewing their writing. Future research could therefore involve more diverse participants, different educational contexts, and longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine how Dialogic Inquiry influences self-reflection and writing development over time. Overall, the study demonstrates that dialogic and reflective practices can support students in becoming more aware, critical, and independent writers.

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