Abstract
English as a foreign language (EFL) writing is one of the most important skills besides speaking for candidate teachers in the undergraduate English programs at higher institutions. The current study hypothesizes that pair-reviews or collaboration in the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing contributes to students’ successful language development. The subject of the study was a class (N=28) of third-semester students majoring in English language teaching at the Faculty of Islamic Education and Teacher Training of Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol in Padang, Indonesia. The students’ writing skills were developed through exposure to actual writing by introducing paragraph developments. Through the process of planning and writing, they were guided to the use of pair-reviews. After a training period, they were tested for the final exam, in which no review was allowed. The study found that students’ writing competence as the result of pair-reviews varied depending on the type of paragraphs being developed. The student’s average score was 73.5 in the illustration type, 78.28 in the comparison type, and 71.96 in the categorization type. In general, students’ average scores during this pair-review were 74.58. In the post-test, students’ average score was 79.3, indicating that pair-reviews significantly affect their writing competence. A conclusion was drawn regarding the influence of pair-reviews on their final writing product (post activity). The study further elaborates on the

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activities during pair-reviews, roles, and the practice of collaboration in Minangkabau culture and traditions in Padang.

**Keywords:** Collaboration, pair-reviews, paragraph, review, writing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of collaborative learning (two or more people working in a group to complete the assigned task) has been robust in almost all disciplines due to the wide range of skills or competencies and affective values it transfers to learners. Its contributions in an educational setting are salient; as Miguel et al. (2023, p. 2) put it, “Collaborative learning settings constitute a field of study that enables the investigation of crucial factors such as learning participation and its degree of active interaction, the features or profiles of the workgroup, and the degree of group engagement”. In the current development of the learning model, the literature noted various types of collaborative learning, such as pair and peer collaboration, depending on the number of participants involved (Alwaleedi et al., 2019; Besral et al., 2021; Elola & Oskoz, 2010). In addition, the digital system was used in collaborative learning to facilitate peers in groups to complete a writing task (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2023). In addition, Ruvalcaba and Barbara (2022) asserted that research on cultural disparities in the form of children’s collaboration provides significant information for how to ‘promote children’s growth as collaborators’. They believed that children varied widely in their ability to collaborate, which is a crucial 21st-century talent for classrooms, businesses, and community life.

Pair-review or collaboration is used in this study because learners communicate or engage with each other to add or construct information or to share thoughts and feelings while completing tasks. Since ‘interaction is the heart of communication’ (Brown, 2015), it fits the development of third-semester students of English major at Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol in Padang, Indonesia. The students are already in the post-elementary level but still lack communication skills, especially in grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, special attention must be paid to their language development in the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing.

The current study examines the advantages of pair-reviews, which implement pairwork. As stated previously, pair-review is an activity in which students collaborate in pairs to provide written and oral comments on one another’s writing through active involvement with one another’s development over numerous versions. Pair response in this study is what Liu and Hansen (2002) referred to as ‘peer feedback’, ‘peer review,’ or ‘peer editing’ in teaching L2 writing, which is the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities usually taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats.

The Pair Interaction Model (PIM), created by Yassi et al. (2023), significantly impacts the present practice of pair-reviews in writing. As such, its design and effectiveness have been scrutinized for more than a decade. The teaching strategy is relatively efficient in enhancing the learners’ grammatical competence and four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), particularly their communication skills and speaking performance.
Recent studies on writing in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning show that students may be encouraged to communicate orally to their pairs or peers to check, share, or negotiate ideas (Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Both types have been practiced worldwide, resulting in positive awareness of students as writers, readers, or reviewers. In addition, most studies on these topics reported that students produced better-quality paragraphs or essays after teachers used pair and peer reviews. This improvement happened because they were reminded of their mistakes (spelling, grammar, and choice of words) and other writing components, such as the organization and content of relevant ideas (Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). However, these findings lacked focus on the target language (e.g., English) achievement. In addition to the absence of exact writing components for elementary and intermediate levels, the previous studies go beyond describing what students do in the review process, particularly in Indonesian or Asian contexts. Thus, to eliminate the gaps, this study focuses on describing students’ average achievement of paragraph writing during the implementation of the pair-reviews process and proving the hypothesis that students had better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews. Most importantly, the current study would determine what the students did when exposed to the pair-review process in writing.

Vygotsky (1978) theorized that learners could surpass their current level by engaging in collaborative learning activities with more skilled individuals in a particular area. Learners’ comprehension of specific knowledge can be improved with the assistance of more capable peers. In other words, social interactions contribute to learners’ comprehension and progression toward higher-order thought by activating their existing information or constructing new knowledge to encompass a new cognitive framework. In addition, Ma (2009) discovered that high-quality social interactions in the collaborative learning activity, i.e., negotiation of meaning, testing tentative constructions, and applications of newly constructed meaning, supported the development of higher-order thinking skills. Similarly, students in an ESL grammar lesson can improve their grasp of grammar and acquire higher-order thinking skills through social interactions in a collaborative learning exercise.

Each sentence must fit into this organizational framework while composing a paragraph (Hussen, 2015). In a well-written paragraph, thoughts and sentences are organized, logically, and united by the main theme. The more precise and unified a paragraph is, the more meaningful the message it conveys to readers. In addition, students should be able to use a series of grammatically accurate, related words and sentences. If students do not organize words in at least the minimally acceptable order, they may be unable to convey the desired message effectively. A strong paragraph results from the intelligent selection of a subject sentence; knowing how to select a good topic sentence for each paragraph helps students organize the sequence of their material logically.

EFL students need English writing skills ranging from writing a short paragraph and a summary to composing an essay. This highlights the significance of paragraph writing for students. This is because composing paragraphs is a prerequisite for composition and essay writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Ly et al., 2021). Therefore, students require assistance from their teachers to develop the skills necessary to create excellent English paragraphs. The essential concept of the process approach to writing instruction, which includes the steps of pre-writing (planning), drafting, editing, and rewriting (Brown, 2015; Reid, 1988), must be taken into account to produce good and
qualified paragraphs. To address the issues, this study poses the following research questions to be answered:

1. What is the average achievement of students’ paragraph writing during the implementation of the pair-reviews process in EFL learning to write?
2. Do the students have better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews?
3. What did the students do when exposed to the pair-review process in writing?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative learning theory, in which learning and knowledge are socially created, provides the foundation for pairwork and written reviews. Liu and Hansen (2002, p. 3) described collaborative learning as the form of learning that occurs through dialogue with peers and asserted that particular types of knowledge are best learned in this manner. Recently, collaborative learning theories have begun to influence both the theoretical and methodological aspects of L2 writing education. Collaborative learning theories have had a significant impact on L1 writing instruction. Studies have shown that in writing groups, students were promoted to self-reflection, knowledge sharing, and critical thinking (Sukirman, 2016; Zhang, 2020) and that learning is engaged through the classroom environment and enhances students’ work.

Social cultural research indicated that collaborative writing activities encourage students to reflect on their language use and work together to solve language-related difficulties (Tok & Kandemir, 2015) and to facilitate the co-construction of language knowledge and a higher level of performance by pulling their linguistic resources to overcome the encountered challenges (Ohta, 2001; Swain, 2000). The students work collaboratively to generate writing within a structured framework that encourages them to use a greater variety of temporal linkers, attitude words, contrast clauses, set phrases, and discourse markers.

To aid partners in focusing on the review, a review format in the form of a worksheet should be provided. Collaborative writing is defined by the writer’s knowledge of the writing process and the intervention of a teacher or peers at any moment during the writing process to improve writing abilities rather than solely correcting errors (Yang, 2006). To better equip students’ learning, Dobao (2012) created collaborative discourse, the dialogue between learners while they collaborate to solve language challenges, to facilitate L2 learning (e.g., Kim, 2008; Storch, 2002).

2.1 Collaborative Learning Theory

Latifah (2020) contend that collaboration varied in how they add to learning. Other researchers, such as Lai et al. (2016), considered it critical to understand collaboration learning partnerships. According to Zhang (2018), collaborative writing is usually used to facilitate an engaging classroom environment in the second language classroom. Therefore, collaborative writing is a useful educational exercise in language classes to enhance learning opportunities. EFL teachers witness that collaborative writing provides many opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of the language, allows students to work together in pairs or groups to produce good writing, and helps the students write with their peers a specific email.
The students must work together to produce good learning, in other words. In short, collaborative writing offers an opportunity to practice literature review and scholarly writing and promote reflection, knowledge sharing, and critical thinking (Sukirman, 2016).

In the mid-1970s, when teachers and researchers examined what children performed when writing, the process-based approach to writing instruction was introduced. Several ways typical to this methodology were discovered, such as ‘process’, ‘making sense’, and ‘innovation’ have replaced ‘accuracy’, and ‘pattern’. Teachers are advised to delay training on using subject sentences and outlines until after students have begun to investigate their ideas (Zamel, 1983). At this level, linguistic precision was deemphasized. Instructors began providing adequate time for students to draft and refine their ideas. Nonetheless, writing instructors should allow students to select their writing tasks to boost their confidence so that they can adequately use their English to modify what they know about their chosen writing topic.

2.2 Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development

According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development is the product of social interaction in which an individual learns to extend his or her existing competence under the leadership of a more experienced individual. It was well-known then that social contact is a mechanism for individual development because, in the presence of a more proficient participant, the beginner is dragged into and operated within the area of the expert’s strategic problem-solving processes. The distance between a person’s actual level of development and their prospective level of development is referred to by Liu and Hansen (2002) as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

There is a high probability that an individual ZPD will be created if efforts are focused in the right direction. Regular use of pair-reviews among students of the same age or status will make it easier for them to communicate, and this social connection and dialogue with others is regarded as essential for the transition from complicated to conceptual thought (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.3 Feedback in Collaborative Writing

Ferris (2003, p. 70) acknowledged the following practical benefits of peer response: (1) students gain confidence, perspective, and critical thinking skills from being able to read texts written by peers on similar tasks, (2) students receive more feedback on their writing than they could from the teacher alone, (3) students receive feedback from more diverse guidance bringing multiple perspectives, and (4) students receive feedback from non-expert readers on how their texts could be improved.

Classroom community formed through novice paragraph writing classes can be sustained if there are at least a few members as initiators whose skills are above average. Referring to Vygotsky (1978), these master students are usually appraised and respected; therefore, the rest of the class usually accepts their critiques and comments.

3. METHODS
This study mainly reflected our experiences during the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing. Since the study explored students’ competencies and performances during and after the pair-reviews, it applied the Ex-Post Facto method in which analysis and conclusion were drawn in accordance with the past event or situation. It is argued that the effects were caused by immediate treatments before the event or condition. The phenomenon has occurred, so the researchers intended to trace causal factors or what affected or influenced something.

### 3.1 The Participants and the Course

This study population consisted of 28 third-semester students (III TBI-A) enrolled in the Paragraph Writing course during the Academic Year 2022/2023. In this case, one of the authors served as a lecturer and documented all of the students’ products of writing together with their reflections on the teaching and learning process. Students were assigned to write six different types of paragraph developments during the course, each containing 100 to 150 words. The course consisted of 16 sessions to achieve the goals of learning, namely, “students are able to plan, write, and revise English texts for the purposes of describing, explaining, comparing, or discussing certain topics by using appropriate techniques and procedures either individually or in groups”.

Through the learning activities, students were introduced to the types of paragraph development together with topic, purpose, and target readers. Discussions in pre-teaching activities were directed to plan (drafting) the paragraph. Therefore, each student should write the outline, including the topic or title, topic sentence, and supporting sentences. Once the draft was completed, each student continued to write their paragraphs. Meanwhile, students were introduced to the assessment of writing because they are prepared to be future English teachers. They were also introduced to the particular format review to be implemented in the following review process. Students chose their pairs independently without the intervention of the lecturer. The rest of the weeks were used to do the same activities, depending on the types of paragraphs being taught. The students sent their paragraphs to their pairs (in-person or online) for review, then reviewers returned them to the authors. In the third paragraph writing session, the lecturer asked the students to change their pairs while doing the same task. Finally, all the students’ review processes were submitted with reflections for final grades.

Based on the syllabus, the teacher brainstormed the week’s topic or learning session and then presented relevant grammar to achieve the exact purposes. The creation of the outline was left to the student’s efforts. This aligns with previous recommendations in which teachers are recommended not to present instruction using topic sentences and outlines until students have begun exploring their ideas (Zamel, 1983).

### 3.2 Instruments

A format for evaluation was used to assess or grade students’ writing. The scoring system adopted from Jacobs (1981) consists of five indicators: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.
The use of Jacob’s ESL composition in this study is based on its popularity, as cited in Setyowati (2020), who claimed that this profile was an analytical type developed by Jacobs (1981). In their rubrics, essays are rated on five different rating dimensions of writing quality with an a100-point scale, each having a different weight: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). Each set of criteria changes a four-level subjective judgment scale into interval scores. This profile is one of the most commonly used and dependable profiles for ESL composition rating (Lee et al., 2008), and its traits were designed by writing researchers working for a testing organization and are probably one of the most recognizable rubrics in the field of second language writing (Brooks, 2012). Furthermore, Ghanbari et al. (2012) stated that Jacob’s ESL Composition profile had gained popularity among second language teachers and researchers since its introduction in 1981.

To assess students’ performance during peer review, we employed a set of questionnaires in the form of a Likert Scale, which reveals the frequency of ideal activities ranging, i.e., (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) always. The indicators revealed activities in the post reviews, roles of reviewers, and attitudes toward reviewers.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Two independent raters (R1 and R2) who had been trained before the assessment rated each of the students’ paragraphs. The scoring system was adopted from Jacobs (1981) because other models have been debatable in some writing research journals. The respondents’ scores were the average scores given by R1 and R2. Thus, the average scores of the three products (Illustration, Comparison, and Categorization) were counted to see the average achievement during the practices of pair-reviews. The latest scores were compared to the scores in the post-activity to see or prove the previous hypothesis that ‘students had better achievement in writing after the implementation of pair-reviews’. Meanwhile, percentages of students’ responses to the questionnaires were counted and considered significant at .05.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Students’ Paragraph Writing Skills During Pair-Reviews

During pair-reviews, two students collaborated to produce good and qualified paragraphs. Based on the instruction, fourteen students acted as authors, and fourteen others worked as reviewers in three types of paragraph development: illustration, comparison, and categorization. Raters finally scored these products of writing and gave average scores of 73.5 (in illustration), 78.28 (in comparison), and 71.96 (in categorization). Putting together, the average of the three types was 74.58. Complete details of these skills are presented in Table 1.
Table 1. Average scores of students’ writing (during class/pair-reviews).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Prg. Dev</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Language Use</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illustration</td>
<td>(13-30)</td>
<td>(7-20)</td>
<td>(7-20)</td>
<td>(5-25)</td>
<td>(2-5)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>16.57</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>78.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorization</td>
<td>19.54</td>
<td>14.57</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.07</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>71.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20.14</td>
<td>15.36</td>
<td>15.32</td>
<td>18.49</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>74.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ writing competence as the results of pair-reviews varied as the assigned type of paragraphs were also varied. Students’ average scores were 73.5 for illustration, 78.28 for comparison, and 71.96 for categorization. Students’ average score of these types during the pair-reviews was 74.58. Based on a normal distribution of scores on each indicator, the average score for content (20.14) was still below normal achievement (the ideal score is 21.5). This suggests that students’ knowledge of the assigned topics was slightly below the requirement. However, students successfully achieved the indicators of organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. It can be concluded that students’ competence in paragraph writing was satisfied through collaborating with their pairs. Although students’ language was consistent in the illustration and categorization types of paragraph development, the comparison type contradicted the case. Thus, this phenomenon leads to the conclusion that students had difficulty stating or showing two different ideas in English. This is probably due to the more complex grammar they used for this type of paragraph than in the types of illustration and categorization.

4.2 Impact of Pair-Reviews on Students’ Achievement

The impact of pair-reviews in this study was explored from two sets of tests: pre or during pair practices and post-test, in which students worked individually to finish the products. The comparison of the two scores is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison between pre- and post-tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Language Use</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13-30)</td>
<td>(7-20)</td>
<td>(7-20)</td>
<td>(5-25)</td>
<td>(2-5)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>20.14</td>
<td>15.36</td>
<td>15.32</td>
<td>18.49</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>74.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the course continued, the classification type of the students’ paragraph development showed better results. The average score of 79.3 overrides the previous training (74.58), indicating that such pair-reviews significantly affected their writing competence. The overall indicators (except the indicator of mechanics) showed the trend that each indicator reached the expected score. It can be concluded that students had better writing achievement after training or working in pairs.

Students’ previous training in pair-reviews provides them with the habits of corrections. Thus, it improved their self-awareness of correct grammar and the decision to use more appropriate words in writing. Their weak paragraph organization, previously found in training, turned out to be better and more precise, as seen in their flow of sentences, such as conjunctions, particles, and prepositions. As a result,
underachievers could equalize with their classmates, but more talented students earned more appreciation and enhanced their self-confidence.

4.3 Students’ Performance in Pair-Reviews

Students’ review process took place in and out of the classroom for each assigned type. Data on their activities are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Students’ performance in pair-reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Activities in pair-reviews</th>
<th>Frequency (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reformulating the title</td>
<td>14.3 32.1 42.9 10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Making or revising the Topic Sentence</td>
<td>0 36.7 34.3 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Revising the Supporting Points/ Details*</td>
<td>3.6 21.4 46.4 23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revising the Concluding Sentence*</td>
<td>3.6 17.4 57.1 21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Revising the Grammar*</td>
<td>3.6 7.1 39.3 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Revising the vocabulary*</td>
<td>0 10.7 42.9 46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Revising the Spelling and Punctuation*</td>
<td>3.6 7.1 28.6 60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>As Reviewer: Suggesting pair to change the topic and use of grammar, as well as vocabulary*</td>
<td>8 10.7 28.6 46.4 14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Showing the pair the mistakes and propose correction*</td>
<td>0 7.1 14.3 50 23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Encouraging the pair to be more careful and serious in writing*</td>
<td>0 7.1 32.1 42.9 17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Giving comments and scoring the paragraph*</td>
<td>0 3.6 21.4 39.3 35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Revising all that has been told conveniently*</td>
<td>0 7.1 10.7 35.7 46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Arguing with the pair *</td>
<td>0 7.1 32.1 50 10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I do not have enough time to revise what the pair have given*</td>
<td>35.7 21.4 21.4 21.4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I know exactly what my Writing Lecturer wanted from the collaboration activity</td>
<td>3.6 3.6 35.7 39.3 17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I collaborated with the same pairs*</td>
<td>3.6 7.1 25 39.3 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 (never); 2 (rarely); 3 (sometimes); 4 (often); 5 (always).

* Significance at .05

Three main parts are revealed in the questionnaires: what the students did after the review, the roles of reviewers, and attitudes toward the review process. In the first part, the purpose dealt with the impact of the review activity on the students’ writers. It is evident that, although none of the items was valid, the trend showed that the student writers reformulated the topic or title (53.6%). The student writers also revised the topic sentence (59.3%).

In addition to the development of their language, the student writers made significant revisions in terms of supporting points (70%), concluding sentences (78.5%), grammar (89.3%), vocabulary (89.3%), and spelling or mechanics (89.3%). All the activities were done under the pressing situation because they had to do other tasks assigned by other lecturers. Conversely, they also had to manage and conduct extra jobs for their expenditures or daily needs.

Most student reviewers gave comments and scored their pairs (75%). They also showed mistakes and proposed corrections (73.6%), while others suggested changing topic sentences, grammar, and vocabulary (60.9%). Reviewers also encouraged their pairs to be more serious (60.8%). This situation encouraged students to balance their
energy or investments and care for their classmates. Thus, deep care and respect motivated by an intention to help others were critical to implementing pair works in this context.

After working in pairs, most original authors or writers made the revisions as suggested by pairs (82.1%). Although students tended to collaborate with the same pairs (64.3%), they argued with pairs (60.7%). Nonetheless, most were willing to make the revisions (57%). These findings suggest that pair-reviews allow the students to think critically and innovate based on their current perceptions and knowledge of the topic.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Students’ Paragraph Writing

Since the practice of paragraph writing in this course was directed to develop students’ feelings, imagination, and relevant knowledge, they seemed to enjoy turning the ideas presented in the pre-writing activity (planning) into their paragraphs. This finding confirms the previous research that Alwaleedi et al. (2019) pointed out: collaborative writing allows students to produce ideas while jointly producing text, discussing language, acquiring L2 information, and engaging in meaningful conversation. This is further backed by the notion that a pair-review at the university level was “a non-threatening method for students, resulting in purposeful employment of the target language across abilities and verifiable writing advances” (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011, p. 5).

Students’ adequate achievement during the pair-reviews in three types of paragraph development (illustration, comparison, and categorization) was caused by two significant factors: the instructional procedures in the pre-writing stage and the benefits of pair-reviews. Discussing the roles of writers and readers, which Reid (1988) called ‘audience’ in the formation of text and functions and purposes of certain texts as students experienced prior to their writing activity, has significantly added to their prior knowledge of writing. In addition, exposing the students to the purpose and target readers has positively encouraged them to think and develop ideas by considering relevant grammar. Topic enrichment as the center or focus of the activity was in line with Zamel (1983), who recommended teachers not to ‘present instruction in the use of topic sentences and outlines until students have begun to explore their ideas’. As evidenced in brainstorming, students tended to pour their whole ideas into their outlines. At this point, however, they were not allowed to write because they had to complete their outlines, which consisted of a title, purpose, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. The pedagogical practice of the above instruction is relevant to Reid (1988), that students in general, and ESL students in particular, need to spend more time practicing writing than reading about theories of writing.

Students’ low competence in categorization type (71.96), as evidenced in Table 1, indicates that they did not have adequate knowledge of grammar and the topics being exposed. Referring to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), factual knowledge is the fundamental skill students need to understand or use to solve problems. It includes knowledge of language and expertise in specific components, such as vocabulary. It then directs to conceptual knowledge, which is the relationship between the
fundamental components of a more significant structure that allows them to work as a unit. It contains informational classification and categorization systems. Instructions must be upgraded because both issues are related to insufficient higher-order critical thinking skills. The higher the text level, the more complex the structure or grammar is required. To make a good categorization, one needs to understand, apply, analyze, and synthesize ideas (Erdiana & Panjaitan, 2023).

5.2 Impact of Pair-Reviews

We hold pedagogical principles in teaching grammar through writing activities. As communicative language teaching (CLT) suggests, grammar is taught when necessary to support the students (Zhou, 2020). So, in our current practice, grammar is given or presented while introducing the types of paragraph development. The principle is that because social co-constructions of knowledge are not guaranteed in all collaborative learning activities, ESL grammar instructors and ESL program administrators must balance collaborative and individual learning to promote student learning.

Students’ improvement in language accuracy and vocabulary development confirms Boesley (1989, p. 19) that “the practice of collaborative writing helps learners focus on grammatical accuracy, lexis, and discourse as well as pooling knowledge about the language”. Several ways in how students developed grammar in the study were in line with Zhou (2020, p. 46) that ESL learners construct grammatical knowledge, including, but not limited to, “explaining grammar structure, telling differences and similarities between grammar structures, and illustrating grammar by example sentences”.

The implementation of pair-reviews might serve as a stepping stone for the students to continue the writing profession for some purposes. As the first experience in actual writing in English, they wanted to demonstrate to the class or pair that they could produce a piece of good work, and therefore, they needed to know the pair’s response to such work. Some other students were not confident enough to hand over their assignment to the pair, being anxious about their mistakes or undesirable responses. However, after some review process, such ‘bad mood’ turned out to be positive because their pairs showed them their mistakes, gave the choice of words, and revised their topic sentence. The finding confirms previous studies such as Swain (2000) that pair-reviews ‘push learners to reflect on their language use and work together to solve their language-related problems’.

5.3 Cultural View of Pair-Reviews

Working together in a group is one of the main features of Malay or Minangkabau culture. The principles of togetherness in Minangkabau cultures are very strong, as found in the proverb: ‘barek samo dipikua, ringan samo dijinjiang’, meaning that whatever big a problem can be solved if it is done collectively. Everyone, regardless of their position and welfare, should contribute to the development of society. In addition, the fundamental values of Minangkabau culture belong to a commonality in which individual life depends on a group - the smallest group is called ‘paruik’, referring to the mother. Next is ‘kaum’, referring to grandmother, then ‘suku’ (tribe) to at least four Nagari (area) and five clans. A clan or tribe also sits together to
discuss an issue using their specific idiosyncrasies, practicing and embracing the old tradition. The principles of handing on the tradition to the younger generation are relevant to the language learning and acquisition theory. Pichler and Koulibrova (2015) contended that the capacity to use language successfully requires acquiring various tools, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and an extensive vocabulary. Language can be vocalized as in speech or manual as in sign.

Unlike Hussen (2015), who found serious errors in students’ paragraph writings, in this study, however, students’ actual use of language during the pair-reviews (although not recorded) is thought to be friendly and communicative or acceptable, since they were willing to share in a non-threatening way. Such a phenomenon is in line with Mirzaei and Eslami (2015) that ‘collaborative dialogic in writing’ provided students with the opportunities to solve misunderstandings, upgrade their English language skills, and enhance their meta-discourse, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge.

Directing students to the purpose based on topic and audiences in prewriting activity, as we implemented during the training of peer review, was in line with Iskandar (2020), who contended that the process approach was expected to ‘provide positive and collaborative workshop atmosphere in which students can work through their writing process’. It could be possible if students had enough time and minimal intervention. Helping students develop practical strategies for starting, drafting, revising, and editing their writing proved effective, as Mangelsdorff (1992) experienced. Spack (1988) categorized ‘starting’ as finding ideas, focusing, and planning the writing structure. In our current drafting practice, students were allowed to employ multiple drafts instead of one. Thus, this also adds to our knowledge that ‘revising’ is an act of adding, deleting, or modifying certain parts of the writing, and ‘editing’ concerns word choice, sentence structure, and grammatical accuracy.

6. CONCLUSION

The improvement in students’ competencies in the pair-reviews sessions, either in types of paragraphs (e.g., illustration, comparison, and categorization) or indicators of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, suggests that students were encountered with transitions from lower thinking skills to higher or more critical thinking skills in line with the development of (English) language. Thus, relying on pairs to share, negotiate, ask, or confirm ideas and grammar is effective in developing their language. Based on this analysis, pair-reviews have sufficient impacts on students’ writing.

EFL learning to write in the 21st-century education era constitutes many life skills for communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. These higher-order thinking skills align with teaching and educating EFL learners to be taught honest, patient, and highly motivated to innovate. To do this heavy task, every teacher, regardless of their subjects, must implement process writing in revealing final tasks in the form of problem-solving and projects. The teachers must carefully help students plan, write, and edit for final revisions.

Among all the poor or average students, there must be the best one who can direct and motivate his/her classmates. Although they have similar knowledge of grammar, it is always possible for them to correct their mistakes, provided they are
given adequate opportunities to do so. Therefore, teachers need to balance their attention as to whether provide individual or classical treatment on grammar. The principles of pair-reviews align with ‘gotong royong’ (togetherness) and have long been handed down through generations in Minangkabau.

The findings of this study generate some implications for ESL/EFL learning, especially in the higher education setting that (1) students should constantly be reminded of the importance of the genuine or novelty of every idea they sound to classmates or pairs, (2) to appreciate one’s idea, teachers should encourage students to think globally and explore and relate it to surrounding areas so that they have and maintain critical thinking skills, and (3) it is high time for the lecturer involved in grammar instruction to teach grammar effectively based on context or purposes instead of emphasizing understanding or rote learning.

Within the width of range in EFL writing, there remains much to be upgraded as to the limitations of this study. First, the presentation of language aspects through a short and straightforward explanation of each type of paragraph, as we experienced in the study, provided fewer benefits. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to find or create more challenging ways in which grammar and types of text organization are presented at the exact moment. More importantly, as dealing with students who suffer from low communication skills in terms of grammar and vocabulary and yet have high access to mobile or smartphones, the shortcoming studies should be directed to implement models or methods of teaching such as problem-based learning, problem-solving, and task-based instruction for which ideas and language development are sustained in the entire program.

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