

Project-Based Approach by Using the Song-Lyric Method in Teaching English Writing for Students of Music Department

Prima Dona Hapsari, Indonesia Institute of the Arts of Yogyakarta, Indonesia
FA. Wisnu Wirawan, Tarakanita School of Communication and Secretarial Studies,
Indonesia

The Asian Conference on Education 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This study discusses the problems that arise to increase the ability of English writing skill of students at the Department of Music, Faculty of Performing Arts, Indonesia Institute of the Arts of Yogyakarta. Project-based approach that becomes a part of English for Specific Purposes is one of the alternative proposed approaches to be applied to art students where English is certainly necessary to accommodate their competence. The needs of English lecturer and students of Music Department to study the method of such approach to learning English writing skill which is more interesting and challenging would be accommodated when the English song-lyrics writing is considered to strengthen the ability of their English writing skill. The writing skill by writing the English song lyrics also involves the vocabulary and grammar skills at the same time. This research is a qualitative and descriptive research. Interviews, distribution of questionnaires, and observations have been made to support the research and show that learning English for the students of Music Department should include their needs for English and the provision of English language materials which are more varied by engaging the creativity of students in applying their English language skills in the classroom and outside the classroom. In addition, the research results demonstrate the effectiveness of the teaching writing and the understanding of vocabulary and grammar as well as their application in writing song lyrics.

Keywords: Project-Based Approach, Teaching Writing, English Song Lyrics Writing, Students of Music Department

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Projects in English language learning may provide many opportunities for art students to be actively involved in the use of language in an authentic manner. In addition, they are also required to use their English skills when working and presenting the results of a project that have been done. In responding to these issues, a project-based approach is then supported being implemented in the English class of music students as it also becomes an alternative method for teaching English in the art colleges, particularly for actively supporting the teaching and learning process in the Music Department, Faculty of Performing Arts. This can help the students of Music Department who have different level of English mastery to be more active in implementing the ability to write, speak, read, and listen.

This research is considered to represent the needs of English language lecturers and art students of the Music Department to learn the approach method of English writing which is interesting and challenging by writing the English song lyrics so as to strengthen their English writing skills by involving the processing of vocabulary and grammar ability at the same time.

Based on the previous description, there are two main problems which are examined by this study, how the project-based approach is applied in English writing class of Music Department and how the project of song-lyrics writing can be implemented in the English class which can give the significant effect to the writing skill of students of Music Department.

Literature Review

Teaching English in foreign language classes for art students requires several approaches and methods to be applied. Although in the era of post-modernism the lecturer as the main role of the learning-teaching is currently not obsolete, the lecturers still can be a facilitator for students and the ones who decide the most suitable and appropriate methods. However, lecturers must be committed to the success of teaching and learning English so that either the expected results or the objectives of the learning process itself can be achieved well.

Teaching English which is applied in art colleges is basically a part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP is an approach to teaching a language in which all decisions on the content and methods based on the learner's needs and reasons for learning (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 19). As it has been known for the English lecturer in the arts colleges, English which is taught or presented to the students is English for special needs (English for Specific Purposes). The core question of the ESP should be: "why do students need to learn a foreign language?" According to John and Machado in Murcia (2001: 43), ESP is a movement that is based on the proportion of all language teaching delivered to students by considering the special needs of learning and language of the learners in which they are to use the English as a socio-cultural context and cannot be separated from the needs of English in all areas where English is widely used involving many components.

Based on the above description, the English teaching-learning process and activities at art colleges refer to the characters of ESP for which the language learning is designed to meet the specific needs of learners; relate to the content of specific fields; relate with or be designed for specific disciplines; can be used in particular teaching situation or for different methodology of teaching general English; and emphasize basic knowledge of the language system, but can be used for beginner level learners. This study discusses on the project-based approach which provides more opportunities for students to engage directly with the authentic language. According to Stoller in Richards and Renandya (2002: 109), a project-based approach is a vehicle for the English teaching as a whole and integrated, where it also assists lecturers in implementing the patterns of English teaching in general, EAP (English for Academic Purposes), ESP (English for Specific Purposes), and English for Job, Vocational, and Professional Purposes. As Stoller's ideas in Richards and Renandya (2002: 110) become the reference for the applied approach to the provision of independent tasks or groups held in English classes for art students, especially students majoring in music who are supposed to engage actively to the learning situation where a project-based approach can be applied in the English class. For the art students need to be more independent learners and get involved in active communication as musicians or art workers, therefore, the English lecturer should find some projects which can be done in groups or individually.

The song lyrics writing is one of the proposed techniques of English learning activities applied in the English classroom of Music Department. The lecturer has been deeply investigating the students' competence and mastery of English, and the needs as well. By considering the level of English competence of Music students, the lecturer also takes proposed ideas by Sokolik as the points to set the project of song lyrics writing implemented in the English class. Sokolik in Nunan (2003: 92-95) states some principles in the teaching of writing that can be adapted to the different learning atmosphere, namely:

- a. Understand the reasons of learners to write.

A lecturer and learners should have an understanding which is in line with the objectives of the school curriculum and teaching institutions, and the lecturer must be able to convey the purpose of learning to the learners.

For the project of English song lyrics writing is a part of the learning purpose of achieving English mastery for music students, then it is supposed to accommodate the need of applying vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills of music students. The lecturer gives more freedom for students to explore their critical thinking and ideas by making English song- lyrics.

- b. Provide many opportunities for learners to write.

Writing skills always increase by more frequently practices. Therefore, lecturers should provide a wide range of diverse writing activities in class.

In accommodating the needs of the students, the lecturer should be aware of always bring the up-to-date phenomena or issues in relations with their major as musicians and young people into discussion.

c. Give helpful and meaningful feedback.

Learners need any feedback or assessment of their writing, although it does not always give the intended effects. Lecturers must have the extra time to discuss with students in the classroom.

Frustrating and lack of interest may occur during the process of writing. Therefore, the English lecturer of Music Department provides some guidance to assist the students in writing the targeted topic to be explored as mixed level of students' competence need to be considered when the lecturer gives feedback to the students' English performance.

d. Explain yourself and students how their writing will be evaluated and assessed clearly.

It gives us clear information that a lecturer should avoid subjective assessment in order to avoid statements which are not expected from learners. The lecturer can provide a systematic assessment of transparent and systematic for learners as a material to develop the content and ideas of their writing.

The English topic developed into a writing project encourages students to compose more writing ability in class. Clearly explanation with the standard of the evaluation and clear purposes of writing should be carried out as the lecturer and students get more values in communicating the project, applying the language skill, and exploring their ideas freely.

Kroll in Murcia (2001: 224) suggests the techniques of teaching writing in a language class which are suitably applied in this project, they are as follows:

1. Brainstorming, which is a technique of exercise in which the learners in the class are encouraged to play an active role in sharing knowledge about a certain topic.
2. Free writing, which is a technique of writing exercise which helps foreign speakers to overcome the difficulties of starting the writing exercise freely. In teaching English as a foreign language, this technique is the best when lecturers provide the guiding or opening sentence for learners.

Free writing combined with brainstorming is commonly used in teaching English writing at Music Department. Some basic considerations are taken during the process of need analysis of students in learning English. Free writing which is combined with brainstorming may influence students to draw their concept of thinking while they try to figure out the topic to explore into writing. Although language errors made during the learning activity become the lecturer's attention, however, the most important part of this activity is that students can explore the topic based on their critical thinking and points of view in developing their ideas to compose the song-lyrics. The result of this project lies on how they can produce good song-lyrics.

Methodology and methods

This study uses a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. In analyzing the song lyrics writing in teaching of English writing, the researchers used a subjective approach which produces the qualitative research.

The samples of this study were students of music department who took an English subject. The sampling technique used was "non-random sampling", i.e. not all

individuals in the population are given the same opportunities to set up as members of the sample.

This study also used some instruments, such as students' journal, photos and videos, questionnaires, as well as the CD-audio recorded music as the project results. Meanwhile, for the research implementation, the qualitative data was obtained by doing the followings:

1. The observation of music students who joined the English class, especially during the process of writing project;
2. The distribution of questionnaires to students majoring in music following the English class in even semester period 2015. Respondents in this study consisted of thirty students which were divided into six groups and were considered as the representative of the population.
3. The video recording and taking photographs of student activities during the writing project in the classroom.
4. The collection of students' journal on the writing project from the beginning to the end of the class period and then provided feedback to the students to obtain the expected results.

The object of this study was the results of writing project of students majoring in music who joined the English lecture and at the end of the project they gave the result of musical compositions and song lyrics in English. The result of the study was in the form of the song-writing project done in groups of thirty students consisting of four to five students per each. Meanwhile, the subject of this study was the Music Department students who joined the English subject in the even semester period of 2014-2015.

In this study, the observation and interview techniques were used to see, observe, and record any information from the sources and object of research, allowing the researchers notes that the situation with regards to knowledge which is obtained directly from the data. Interview and distributing questionnaire techniques which were also combined with the observation technique were useful to determine the acceptance and understanding of the students in implementing the song lyrics writing project. The researchers also documented the journal of song lyrics writing project from the beginning to the end in the form of their original works in the format of a song with the musical composition.

The analysis technique of this research was descriptive analysis. The data analysis process was done through several stages. The first stage was to identify, collect, and select the relevant data with the object and subject of research, so that the data presented was in accordance with the subject of the issues raised in this study. The data analyzed was based on the results of the literature study; observation, which includes the distribution of questionnaires; taking pictures and recording activities in the classroom, and the results of student's project. These four things were then processed into data which were analyzed and evaluated as the basis and reference for answering the problems proposed in this study. The final data analysis stage was to present the data in accordance with the needs of researchers in interpreting the results of the research and as the reference of researchers in designing the instructional materials for teaching English writing.

Discussion

The English lecturer provided clear and understandable instruction of project. This was clearly used to minimize the lack of information occurred and to maximally obtain the students' focus in applying their English writing skill. For the focus was the exploration of vocabulary and grammar skills, the lecturer suggested the students to carefully emphasize on their productive sentences which were always discussed in each meeting for formulizing the final productive result of English song. Their effort was being appreciated and it was the lecturer who gave them points to be revised and clarified the mistakes of grammar or vocabulary products to be well acknowledged. Each meeting was accommodated by each group to compose good English sentences referring to the English song project. Through several meetings of discussion and revision, the final outcomes of the project were finalized. The students were impressed and enthusiastic toward the project. The impacts and contributive learning outcomes were seen through the song lyrics and performance of each group.

According to Harmer (2007: 326), there are two main ideas in teaching writing; we can either focus on the product of writing or on the writing process itself. In this project of song-lyric writing, both ideas proposed by Harmer are used. Students are encouraged to brainstorm ideas, draft a piece of writing, generate more ideas, re-draft, re-edit, and so on. The process of writing the song-lyrics was then focused as the students of music department should understand the writing process such as: pre-writing phase, editing, re-drafting, and producing. Focusing on the process of writing, the project-based approach applied in the teaching of English writing in the Department of Music was performed in several stages: preparation, implementation of the project, assessment and presentation of work. These stages would also refer to Fulwiler (2002:16-17) who proposes a composing process of writing which later be adjusted to the needs of students' project of song-lyric writing as he proposes exploring, drafting, researching, revising, and editing which can be adapted to the students' project of writing the song-lyrics.

a. Preparation

This stage refers to the process of brainstorm ideas, exploring ideas, and drafting a piece of writing work, i.e. song-lyrics. For this stage, the role of the lecturer as the researchers assisted the students in exploring their ideas and letting them free to navigate the ideas into a sequence of flow-ideas.

b. Implementation

In implementing the process of composing the song-lyrics, the lecturer and students may focus on editing, re-drafting, and producing into a final stage of writing process. The lecturer's role as the facilitator would be important when she did the research of students' writing and checked the students' works to revise. Then, after revising and editing the works, the students may come to the next stage that is producing in which their product of song-lyrics writing could be presented and assessed through a music composition.

c. Presentation and Assessment

This is the last stage of students' project of producing the writing work. And it can be understood that the writing process is as important as the product in which the students' ability to pass the process would be addressed to the final stage of producing the song-lyrics. Through this final stage, the final presentation and assessment would be positively reinforced the students' self-confidence and free-expressed nature of their musical skill which later may influence their English acquisition.

Below is the 10-meeting of finalizing the project which was carried out by the students of music department.

Meeting 1: The researchers conducted a pre-study to provide details of project information and review of students' English competence orally or written, and the subject of research. This could reveal the understanding to which the subject of this study has the ability or level of competence in English.

Halida Bunga Fisandra
14100040133

No
Date 1 - 4 - 15

I'm Dido. I am 19 years old, and I'm a composition student at Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta. My musical journey was incredibly amazing, at least for me. I started my violin lesson since I'm in the 3rd grade of elementary school. At that time I join some orchestra, like Oris (Orkes Simfoni Nasional Indonesia), and Taman Surapati Chamber Orchestra. Time flies, after graduate from high school, I decided to take the vocational high school music collage. Since 2011, I focused to my passion, Arranging, play violin, and sing, and one of the greatest experience in my life was in 2013. I went to Spain, with The Indonesia Choir, being one of the Asia's Representative for Tolosa Choral Contest. It was a really great time, I met a lot of people from different country, and got a lot of lesson, like a real vocat technique, conducting, and of course culture. After graduate from highschool, I take a Violin master class & Music Camp with Prof. Terje Moe Hansen from Norway.

I'm really thankful for My God, for giving me such a beautiful life. I enrolled as a new student at ISI Yogyakarta, and there's no doubt for me to not to take a composition program. That was what I write in my diary since I'm in the 1st grade at elementary school as a composer, and now I'm a secretary in the G.S Composers Collective, an organization for composition students in Campus.. and now I permanently one of the 1st violin at Indonesian Youth Symphony Orchestra (IYSO), with a great music director from Japan, Kanako Abe. So that's all my story for you. Last but not list, there's a hope in this whole description. I'll push myself, until I got what I dream, not only for me, but I want spread my music, to friend, people, and of course my Indonesia Raya.

Regards

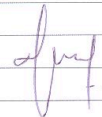


Figure 1: Free Writing.

Meeting 2: The researchers explained the project of song-lyrics writing in English to give clear ideas of the project. Afterwards, the researchers asked the students to make a group of four students for each. On average they chose friends that they had known as the members of the group, not based on the ability of English.

Meeting 3: The researchers asked each of the groups to create a common literary theme which they then used to make a mind mapping and brainstorming in order to guide them for flowing or songwriting ideas. The mind mapping of each group was then collected and researchers made corrections and provided feedback.

Meeting 4: The researchers gave examples of song-lyrics in English and asked each group to analyze them based on their understanding. Afterwards, the groups were suggested to develop their own song-lyrics by using the mind mapping they had done as a source of ideas.

Meeting 5: As each group started to present the weekly report, the research directly provided feedback by doing a little interview to representatives of the group about what they had done and what the problems they encountered.

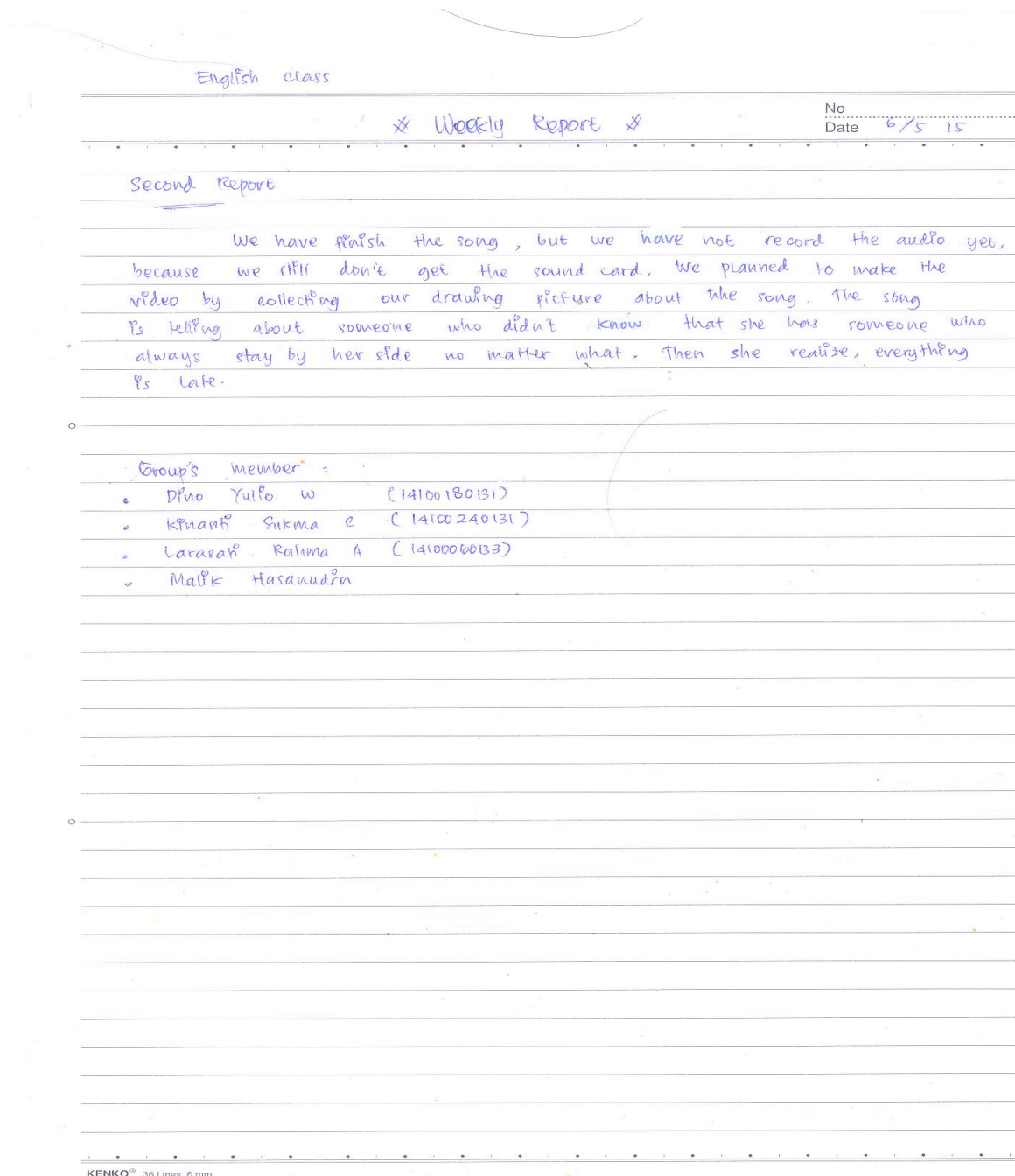


Figure 2: Journal of Weekly Report.

Meeting 6-8: The groups gave their progress report to the researchers and if the researchers assumed that the song-lyrics was considered good and did not need to revise both in terms of grammar and vocabulary, then they were recommended to start composing and arranging the song.

Meetings 9-10: The researchers conducted interviews and distributing questionnaires to individual research subjects.

Meeting 11-12: Upon completing the production of song-lyrics and musical compositions, and recording in DVD or CD format, furthermore, they presented the results of their song-lyrics project in front of the class at the end of the semester. The evaluation of working on the project was started from the first meeting when the students provided weekly reports of the project until the day when they presented a song accompanied by music instruments in front of the class.



Figure 3: Students' Performance

The findings of the study addressed to the following discussion are based on the data reviews of thirty students as the research subjects and research results. They are as follows:

1. The results of questionnaires and interviews carried out by the researchers are as the supporting data to analyze the students' needs on doing the English project for their English mastery which are as follows:
 - a. English is important because it is widely used around the world. By having a good command of English we can perform activities related to networking and building relationships, and sharing ideas with other people as well.
 - b. English is one of the most important ways of communicating. By having a good command of English, students have more opportunities to develop their talents and skills.
 - c. Students are expected to master the English language because they have to get more vocabulary and reading skills of English literature in developing their critical thinking as a student.

- d. Students of music department need to learn English to more easily communicate with foreigners/experts/musicians that come to Indonesia, in particular. By learning western music, they automatically welcome any cooperation and partnerships with the native speakers of English.
- e. English has become one of the major important elements for studying abroad.
- f. Learning English for students of music department is said to be very important because it is an international language. Arts workers and experts in the field of arts are easier to get more opportunities to develop their potential in the world.
- g. Music is widely developed in the universe and being well received by all people from different genres, ages and countries. Therefore, English makes communication and learning process easier.
- h. As a musician and an artist, the English language is needed, especially for students to broaden and strengthen their knowledge and understanding in music.
- i. English not only becomes one of the international languages so as to face the development of the twenty-first century, the music students have to master the language, especially English as the primary language in developing skills and potential to understand music more extensively and comprehensively.
- j. The English language is required in the learning of music because there are many things about literature to music and its development. By having the knowledge and understanding of English language, reading and understanding the literature in English are much easier and helpful.
- k. Providing a song-writing project is very attractive to students in the Department of Music where they can develop the ability to write in English which is in line with their abilities in music.
- l. The project of writing the song lyrics and making the musical compositions with friends in one group has demanded them to be able to work well together to produce an original English song which competitive and deserves to be presented.
- m. Writing English song lyrics has been implemented through several stages of evaluation in which it can be used as a reference for students of Music Department in processing vocabulary, choosing the right words which are appropriate to the musical arrangement, applying the standard grammar but not stiff for being used in English song.
- n. The awareness of Music Department students for the importance of English writing exercises constantly may develop the writing skills based on the mastery of grammar, reading, listening, and vocabulary of English.

2. The project-based approach on the English song lyrics writing refers to the applied stages and is presented and as the followings:
 - a. Preparation
For the preparation, the researchers prepared materials of project or assignment given to students. There are three main points for this material for which the project was a group project and the final outcome of this project was in the form of song-lyrics in English accompanied by the composition of the song with the musical arrangement as well; themes and composition of songs were free in forms or genre; and the project must be original work of the students and free from any plagiarism or copy version.
 - b. Implementation
The researchers gave a time scheduling of the implementation of the project of song-lyrics writing and the musical composition for ten (10) meetings with the assumption that each group gave its weekly report of what had done and did the presentation or consultation with the lecturer. When the analysis of song-lyrics writing in English was completed, each group must present the work of their songs. Students reported their progress in writing the lyrics weekly. The lecturer as the researchers gave feedback and suggested revision on students' vocabulary and grammatical errors. There were fourteen active meetings in the semester term, and then the students made the finalized English song-lyrics before they recorded it along with its music composition.
 - c. Presentation and Assessment
After finalizing the lyrics and music composition they recorded their music composition accompanying the song into DVD or CD format which were performed in front of the classroom at the end of semester term. The assessment was conducted by the researchers considering several aspects, namely: lyrics, included choice of vocabulary and grammatical correctness adjusted with the song, arrangement and composition of the music accompanying the song, and the presentation of the song in the group.
3. The significant results of implementing the project in the English class of art students of Music Department are also supported by the project-based approach which is suggested by Stoller in Richards and Renandya (2002: 110), namely:
 - a. The project-based work of song-lyrics writing focuses on learning the language, which focuses on the process of writing.
 - b. The nature of the project-based work by students of music department is more collaborative that they collaborate to compose song-lyrics with the musical composition for the song accompaniment.
 - c. The project-based work done by students of music department is potentially able to motivate, stimulate, empower, and challenge where it leads to the results of building the learners' confidence, self-esteem, and self-reliance.
 - d. The project-based approach is a part of English teaching writing methodology which is actively able to support the process of teaching-learning at Music Department.
 - e. The given project to music students at the English class can give them many opportunities to get actively involved in applying the language authentically.

- f. Free writing and brainstorming are two writing assessment techniques to support students at Music Department in overcoming any obstacles in starting the writing project or tasks freely, especially in writing the English song-lyrics.
- g. The English project in writing English song lyrics and composing the music can help students become active learners to implement and practice the language abilities, such as writing, reading, listening, and vocabulary.
- h. The English writing which is interesting and challenging in the form of writing the English song lyrics can strengthen the students' writing skill by involving the ability of vocabulary development and English grammar at the same time.
- i. The English lecturer actively supports cooperative learning by guiding students to share their competence, minimize negative competition among students, and enhance students to consider themselves as a team and more to work in groups.
- j. The lecturer's role is as the facilitator who is able to support and increase students' writing ability which is accordance with students' needs and English curriculum for arts students.

From the above research analysis and discussion, it is well acknowledged that the English teaching-learning method which should be applied in the English class of Music Department is by more focusing on active learning, various techniques and methods based on students' needs and art curriculum, various learning activities based on students' level of competency, and learner-centered basis.

Conclusion

The project of English song lyrics writing implemented in the English class of Music Department students has been regarded successful when they students have successfully followed the stages of processing the English writing technique. The proposed technique is in accordance with the needs of students to acquire English. As the project-based approach is a part of English for Specific Purposes applied in the English class of art students, then a certain technique in teaching writing has been set up to the highly configuration of students' English mastery. English song lyrics writing becomes one of the writing techniques which is implemented in the English class of music students. By doing the final stage of composing song lyrics along with the music composition, the need analysis of students of the Music Department is formulated. Therefore, it may be concluded that the project-based approach with the song lyrics writing is done successfully yet also needs to be developed more in obtaining the more language acquisition of students.

References

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. (2nd ed.). New York: Longman, Inc.

Brown, H.D. (2002). English Language Teaching in the 'Post-Method' Era: Toward Better Diagnosis, Treatment, and Assessment. In Richards and Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* (pp. 9-17). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Burden, P.R. and Byrd, D.M. (2010). *Methods for Effective Teaching: Meeting the Needs of All Students*. (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn&Bacon.

Fulwiler, Toby. (2002). *College Writing: A Personal Approach to Academic Writing*. (3rd ed.). New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Harmer, Jeremy. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. (4th ed.). Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Hutchinson, Tom dan Waters, Alan. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centered Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johns, Ann M., and Machado-Donna Price. (2001). English for Specific Purposes: Tailoring Courses to Student Needs – and to the Outside World. In Murcia, Marianne Celce, *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. (3rd ed). (pp. 44). Boston: Thomson Learning, Inc.

Kroll, Barbara. (2001). Considerations for Teaching an ESL/EFL Writing Course. In Murcia, Marianne Celce, *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. (3rd ed.) pp. 224. Boston: Thomson Learning, Inc.

Sokolik, Maggie. (2003). Writing. In Nunan, David, *Practical Language Teaching*. (pp. 94-97). New York: Mc Graw-Hill, Inc.

Stoller, Fredricka L. (2002). Project Work: A Means to Promote Language and Content. In Richards and Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. (pp. 109-110). New York: Cambridge University Press.