CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter introduces the details of the research at the beginning of this paper. The discussion of this chapter includes the background of the research, statement of the problem, significance of the research, the aims of the research, scope of the research, hypothesis, clarification of the key terms, research methodology, and the organization of the paper.

1.1   Background of the Research

Indonesian students should learn other languages to build relationship with other societies in the world. The basic purpose of this foreign language learning is for studying how to deliver a message and information, express feeling, and communicate with other people all over the world. Since English becomes more important, English is one of many foreign languages expected to be able to be used by the Indonesian students.

To make students understand English, it needs the role of instructors and teachers in teaching English. The main purpose of English teaching is to enable students to use English in its appropriate contexts although those students are not engaged in an English environment.

From the above explanation, it can be stated that the ability to communicate well is a worthy life skill. Generally, in English language teaching, teachers focus the teaching process on the "four skills"—listening, speaking,

reading, and writing—since research and practice have identified those four skills as of paramount importance (Brown, 2001: 232). However, sometimes those teachers relate one or two skill(s) to other skills.

In the education field, both teachers and students need to successfully express the ideas, opinions, arguments, explanations, and instructions through the written word. Besides, the students will understand and retain lesson material much better when those students write about it. Since writing helps students master material, shape ideas, develop critical thinking skills, and learn the subject matter, writing plays an important role in teaching and learning process.

However, many schools and colleges are increasingly dissatisfied with the writing skills of the students. This problem is due to the low ability or proficiency in English language use and usage when the students begin to write. Therefore, those students have the difficulties in grasping fully the contents and concepts of writing subject, and the scores of writing subject those students get are also dissatisfying.

Having seen the problem, this research focuses on teaching writing. There are some reasons why the writer takes the topic of writing in this research. First of all, people will typically write what they learn and get in the school and college, as well they will usually write down their feelings or experiences in the papers when they cannot tell or share those to the others. However, from such cases, people sometimes can still make a mistake while they are writing, especially in the grammatical context. Second, according to Eric Lenneberg (1967 cited in Brown, 2001: 334), people will learn to write if they are members of a literate

society, or if someone teaches them. Thus, students need the role of teacher to stimulate them to learn writing. Besides, teaching writing is a continuing process, which is about teaching the language skills and the language systems including vocabulary and grammar. However, after a little thought, those are not enough because writing requires much more.

From year to year, many researchers and teachers have tried some methods in teaching writing, in which they can neither ignore the writing process nor the writers themselves. The latest method will challenge the oldest one. In this case, the latest method is collaborative writing, and a lot of researchers and teachers have applied this method in their researches and teaching-learning process of writing. One of those researchers is Alwasilah (Alwasilah & Alwasilah, 2007: 26), who stated that writing is collaborating, in which there is social learning. Furthermore, Hadriyansyah stated the major benefits of collaborative writing for the process-oriented are self-awareness and self-confidence. In this case, a writer is affirmed in his or her ability to produce before the product is completed (Duin, 1991 cited in Hadriyansyah, 2006: 11).

However, there is still a big question whether collaborative writing method is effective to increase students' writing ability and bring benefit to them. Finally, this research is basically intended to examine the effectiveness of using collaborative writing method to increase students' writing ability in SMPN 7 Bandung through a quantitative research.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The problems going to be discovered in this research are stated in the following questions.

1)   Is there a significant difference between the group that used collaborative writing method and the group that did not use this method?

2)   What are the students' perceptions towards the use of collaborative writing method in the writing class?

1.3   Significance of the Research

Based on the writer's experience when she conducted teaching training in SMPN 7 Bandung, the writer assumes that writing in English subject is not an easy activity for the students. The students do not only need a good self-skill on writing, but in the practice, the students also need for help and guidance from the teacher and other students. Therefore, the teacher may also develop the students' interest in writing by using collaborative group because working in group can make students easier share knowledge, correct each other, and raise self-confidence in expressing their opinions. In this case, collaborative writing is one of the methods used to increase the students' writing ability.

Briefly, this research attempts to apply this method to the second grade students of SMPN 7 Bandung and find out whether there is a significant difference between the group that used collaborative writing and the group that did not use this method. Besides, this research tries to investigate the students' perceptions towards the use of collaborative writing method in the writing class.

Finally, this research is expected to contribute to the institution and the practice of teaching writing. If at the end, it is proved that the use of collaborative writing method is effective to increase students' writing ability in SMPN 7 Bandung, the researchers and teachers should consider this method in teaching writing.

1.4   The Aims of the Research

Identifying the aims of the research is one of several steps in formulating a research. Here, the aims of the research are:

1)   to find out the significant difference between the group that used collaborative writing and the group that did not use this method, and

2)   to find out the students' perceptions towards the use of collaborative writing method in the writing class.

1.5   Scope of the Research

To avoid the expansion of the problem, the research needs to be limited. Therefore, in this paper, the research basically covers the effectiveness of using collaborative writing method to increase the second grade students' writing ability in SMPN 7 Bandung. Besides, this research also examines the students' perceptions towards the use of collaborative writing method in the writing class.

1.6   Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative answer of the research problems, until it is proved through the collected data (Arikunto, 2006: 71). Moreover, Hatch and Farhady

(1982: 3) defined a hypothesis as "a tentative statement about the outcome of the research". Since it is not possible to test a hypothesis directly, the hypothesis must first be turned into a null hypothesis (H_o). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_o) proposed in this research is stated in the following sentence.

> H_o : "There is no significant difference between the group that used collaborative writing and the group that did not use this method".

1.7 Clarification of the Key Terms

Clarifying the key terms is also an important part in formulating the research, especially in the first chapter. Therefore, the writer provides some definitions of the main terms to give a clear view of this research as follows.

1)   Effectiveness

In a quantitative research, the word 'effectiveness' is often used as one of main words of the title, and many researchers have their own ideas of the meaning of 'effectiveness'. The UNESCO definition of effectiveness in the educational field is an output of specific review or analyses that determines the accomplishment of a specific educational objective, or the degree to which a higher education institution is expected to accomplish specific requirements (Vlãsceanu *et al*., 2004 cited in Harvey, 2004).

2)   Writing

A lot of scholars in English language teaching have their own definitions of writing skill. Pinter (2006: 74) stated that writing is a complex skill that grows

from the level of copying familiar words and phrases to the level of developing an awareness of text structures, genres, the processes of drafting and editing, and writing for a reader. Furthermore, a well-written piece is defined as integrating writing elements in such a way that a reader is able to experience the writer's proposed meaning, understand the writer's idea, accept or reject the writer's viewpoint (Abisamra, 2001).

3)   Collaborative Writing

As told in the background of the research, writing is collaborating. It means, in a collaborative writing, the written work is created collaboratively rather than individually. Spring (1997) stated that collaborative writing works are activities involved in the production of a written work by more than one author, and the components include pre-draft discussions and arguments as well as post-draft analyses and debates.

4)   Students' Writing Ability

'Writing ability' is ability to communicate information and ideas in written form so that others can understand with clarity of thought, organization, and good sentence structure (McGrew, 2003). Thus, "students' writing ability" is an ability involving a number of writing sub-skills (knowledge of grammar, the meaning of words, and how to organize sentences or paragraphs) that is owned by the students.

1.8   Research Methodology

1.8.1   Research Method

Since this research is conducted through a quantitative research, the process of measurement plays an important role in investigating causal relations or associations. In other words, a quantitative research is a statistical research, which uses collection of data in the form of numbers and statistics, and this quantitative research is used to test the hypothesis of the research.

Furthermore, the method used in this research is a *quasi-experimental design*. In this experiment, the writer will deliver pre- and post- tests to the experimental and control groups in order to find out the significant improvement in experimental class, which is treated by using collaborative writing method, compared to the control class, which is treated in the conventional way.

1.8.2   Population and Sample

Coolidge (2000: 24), in his book *Statistics: A Gentle Introduction*, stated that population is "most often a theoretical group of all possible scores with the same trait or traits", and sample is "a smaller group of scores selected from the population of scores". Referred to that definitions, the population of this research is the second grade of SMPN 7 Bandung due to the following reasons: the writer thinks that the second grade students of SMPN 7 Bandung are appropriate to be engaged in this research; there are limitations of time, energy, and fees; and the previous research conducted by Hadriyansyah (2006) had already chosen the UPI's students as the subjects.

However, considering that the second grade of SMPN 7 Bandung consists of ten classes and each class relatively has same characteristics, the writer chooses two classes (VIII.A and VIII.B) based on cluster sampling. According to Setiyadi (2006), in quantitative research, there are two models of sampling procedure, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling, and a kind of probability sampling is cluster sample, which is a procedure of taking sample in a population involving some different groups that are in the same stratum.

Furthermore, the students involved in this research are divided into two groups (from two classes): (a) control group and (b) experimental group. Further, the control and experimental groups will fill out the pre- and post- tests, and the experimental group will get a treatment using collaborative writing method.

Table 1.1 Research Design and Subject of the Research

Group Category	Class	Number of Students	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Control	VIII.B	37	T_1		T_2
Experimental	VIII.A	37	T_1	X	T_2
Total		74			

Explanation: X = The treatment of collaborative writing method

1.8.3   Instruments

Before analyzing the data, this research must gain some information and data about the topic of this research. For this purpose, this research applies "test" and "questionnaire" as the instruments to collect the data.

Since this research highlights writing skill, the tests used as instrument in this research are "writing tests", which are divided into "pre-test" and "post-test". Moreover, for the materials, the writer will adapt with the *School Based*

Curriculum Development, English syllabus, textbooks, and certain topics learned by the second grade students of SMPN 7 Bandung.

First, *pre-test* is designed to try out the students in order to measure the validity and the reliability of the data. The test is administered at the beginning of the research before the experimental group receives the treatment (the use of collaborative writing method). Besides, the test used for this pre-test is in the form of free composition based on McDonough and Shaw (1993: 178).

Second, *post-test* is managed after the treatment of using collaborative writing method has been completed. At the end of the treatment, the students have to collect their papers in the form of portfolio work. Form of this test is basically similar to the test used for pre-test, but it uses different topic.

Besides, this research also uses "questionnaire" as the instrument to get more information. The questionnaire will only be given to the experimental group because this group receives the treatment, and the questionnaire will be delivered after the experimental and control groups take the post-test. Here, the students will be given list of close-ended questions to be answered based on the students' opinions.

1.8.4   Data Collection Procedure

This research will apply these following strategies to collect the data: library research, try-out test, pre-test, treatment, post-test, and questionnaire. Firstly, the writer prepares the research by observing on the spot as well as preparing the teaching material and instruments. Secondly, the writer reads research papers,

books, journals and articles found in network, and other literature related to the research. Thirdly, the writer will try out the test to another class that is the class of VIII.C involving 31 students. Further, the experimental and control groups will take the pre-test. The pre-test is intended to find out students' grammatical errors in writing and to recognize students' writing ability before the experimental group receives the treatment. After taking the pre-test, the experimental group receives a treatment that is collaborative writing method, yet the control group does not get the treatment (the control group learns in the conventional way).

During the treatment, the students have to write some compositions by following the stages of collaborative writing process. First, the students are given certain topics to be developed. Second, those students will outline the drafting stage. Further, the writing drafts are revised by other peers. After those drafts have been revised, the students have to edit the papers until those are ready to be published. In the last stage, the students' papers are collected in the form of portfolio work, and the writing papers will be scored.

After receiving the treatment, the experimental and control groups are given the post-test in order to find out the significant improvement from the treatment of using collaborative writing method. Next, the experimental group will also fill out the questionnaire to know the students' opinion about collaborative writing method and factors contributing to the success of this method in teaching writing. Finally, the writer will interpret the result of the statistical computation.

1.8.5   Data Analysis

After the data have been gathered, the data have to be analyzed. Based on Arikunto (2006: 235), there are generally three steps in analyzing the data including: *preparation*, *tabulation*, and *implementation*. Since this research is basically intended to investigate the effectiveness of using collaborative writing method to increase students' writing ability in SMPN 7 Bandung, the data obtained will be analyzed by following some procedures and using *Microsoft Office Excel 2007, SPSS 15.0 for Windows Evaluation Version,* also the certain statistical formula.

For the procedures, firstly, the writer will score the writing tests (pre- and post- tests) based on the analytic scale in ESL (Jacobs, 1981 cited in Weigle, 2007: 115) including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Secondly, the writer will calculate the normality of distribution, the homogeneity of variance, as well as the *Independent-Samples t Test* of pre- and post- tests by using *SPSS 15.0 for Windows Evaluation Version*. Further, the writer will analyze the items of questionnaire by using the formula of percentage.

1.9   Organization of the Paper

To present the research systematically, organizing the writing work is also needed in this paper. Thus, the writer organizes the paper into five chapters.

The first part is Chapter I, which is *Introduction*. It contains the background of the research, statement of the problem, significance of the research,

the aims of the research, scope of the research, hypothesis, clarification of the key terms, research methodology, and the organization of the paper.

The second part is Chapter II, which is *Theoretical Foundation*. This second chapter presents several theories as the basis of the research. It contains the theories of writing, the teaching of writing and the process approach, as well as the theories and research of collaborative writing.

The third part is Chapter III, which is *Research Methodology*. This chapter discusses the methodology of the research. It consists of research method, population and sample, instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

The fourth part is Chapter IV, which is *Findings and Discussion*. This chapter reports the research findings. Here, the writer presents and discusses the findings based on the result of the research.

The last part is Chapter V, which is *Conclusions and Suggestions*. This last chapter consists of the conclusions and the suggestions of the research. The conclusions present the overall description of the result of the research, while the suggestions present some suggestions for the readers and other researchers relating to teaching writing.