

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general issues related to the study. These include background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper. This chapter would be described in Sections 1.1 through 1.8.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, students may begin to realize the significance of writing by becoming aware that writing takes particular conventional forms in different contexts. “At the university level, disciplinary knowledge and understanding are largely exhibited and valued through the medium of writing” (Coffin et al., 2003: 19). However, based on the researcher’s experience, the students found it difficult to compose their writing logically. Lack of understanding on how to write a good written product is the major problem the students encountered. This problem has led to an interest to investigate how to improve the students’ writing skill.

Writing is a language skill which is difficult to acquire (Tribble, 1996: 3). “It is an activity in which learners form graphic symbols, arrange them to form words, and put the words in order and link them together in a certain way to produce a logical sequence of sentences” (Hernowo, 2004: 43). Learning to write is not easy. If it is in foreign language context, it will be possible for the students to find some barriers in writing. As a consequence, writing becomes the most difficult skill to master for EFL learners. In addition, Alwasilah (2007) states that the difficulties in writing are not only in using appropriate vocabulary choice, sentence, and paragraph organization to generate and organize ideas, but also in turning such idea into readable text. Therefore, the writing becomes a complex activity since it requires many aspects, namely the writing purpose, paragraph organization, coherence, vocabulary use as well as presentation.

The writing complexity appears when students start to write. They do not know what they should write at first whereas the students are expected to be able to present their ideas well in the written form. Grenville (2001: 5) says that the trouble appears when the students think up the attention-grabbing first sentence and the really interesting stuff as well as when the students' mind is as blank as the paper they're staring at. Besides, most of students tend to memorize and imitate. They fail to integrate their ideas into their writings. As indicated in Hasan and Akhand (2010: 77), "the form of examination and evaluation only encourages students towards model-centered learning, where the students are guided by a model even though the opposite should be the case."

According to National Writing Project (2003), the complexity of writing causes teaching writing is very challenging task for English teachers in education field. Besides, this complexity may affect the students' attitude on writing. Considering the problems encountered by students, Harmer (2007a: 77) suggests that the teachers find appropriate methods and methodological beliefs to lead the teaching practice. In addition, if there are appropriate methods, it will be possible to change the students' attitude in writing, that writing can be an interesting, easy and enjoyable activity. In line with this, Gabrielatos (2002: 1) implies

In order to be able to select and use appropriate procedures and materials, as well as assess their students' needs and progress, teachers need to be clear regarding the desirable outcomes of a writing program and the processes involved in good writing.

Over the last 20 years, product and process based approaches have dominated much of the teaching of writing in EFL/ESL classrooms (Hasan and Akhand, 2010: 78). Considering that both approaches have their own strengths and weaknesses, teachers are not able to apply only one approach in classroom. It may be possible that while in some classes, the product based approach might prove successful, and the process based approach might be useful for another.

The product based approach and process based approach can be differentiated each from the other on the basis of their emphasis. The distinction

can be summed up in this way: “the process writing represents a shift in emphasis in teaching writing from the product of writing activities (the finished text) to ways in which text can be developed” (Hasan and Ahkand, 2010: 80). In addition, Nunan (2000: 86-88) clearly states that the product approach focuses on writing tasks in which the learner imitates, copies and transforms models of correct language while the process approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work. The product based approach emphasizes mechanical aspects of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures and imitating models. This approach is primarily concerned the correctness and form of the final product, and “highlights the learner’s final piece of work instead of how it is produced” (Hasan and Ahkand, 2010: 81). However, this approach fails to recognize that the ideas are created and formulated during the process of writing. On the other hand, “the process based approach emphasizes how the writing emerges as the result of a distinct process which advances through several stages until the writing is complete” (Harmer, 2007a: 326). The teacher guides the students during the writing process, but initially the teacher does not emphasize correctness and the final product. Instead of worrying about form, the students concentrate on writing. Therefore, the product of writing will improve with the discovery involved in composing.

There are some previous studies concerning the process based approach to teaching writing (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985; White and Arndt, 1991; Mahaletchumy, 1994; Chuang, 1995; Montague, 1995; Samuel, 1996; Mogahed, 2007; Mashori, 2007, Ngadiman, 2012, Diliberto, 2013; Holmes, 2014), the combination of product based approach and process based approaches to teaching writing (Gabrielatos, 2002; Hasan and Akhand, 2010), and the use of process based approach and genre approach (Foo, 2007). Given the fact that there are no studies existing in Indonesian about the use of the product and process based approach combination to teaching writing at undergraduates level, this study is

conducted to explore the implementation of product and process based approach combination to teaching writing in Indonesian context at undergraduates level.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study is designed to explore the implementation of product and process based approach combination in EFL writing classroom. Thus, it has three objectives. The first is to describe the teaching-learning writing activities when the product and process based approach combination is implemented in EFL writing classroom. The second is to investigate the effects of applying product and process based approach combination on EFL students' writing skill. The third is to describe the students' attitude toward the implementation of product and process based approach combination in EFL writing classroom.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do the teaching-learning writing activities proceed when the product and process based approach combination is implemented in EFL writing classroom?
2. Does the use of product and process based approach combination in EFL writing classroom affect the students' writing skill?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward the implementation of the product and process based approach combination in EFL writing classroom?

1.4 Hypotheses

In this study, there is the probability that the product and process based approach combination in EFL writing classroom affects or does not affect the students' writing skill. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982: 85), hypothesis means a tentative statement about the outcome of the research. Commonly, the most common hypothesis used is null hypothesis that states an exact opposite of what the research expects.

Therefore, in this research, the hypotheses are

- H₀: The product and process based approach combination does not affect the students' writing skill.
- H₁: The product and process based approach combination affects the students' writing skill.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study has the potential contribution to the theory and educational practice. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on teaching writing in the Indonesian EFL context. Practically, this study provides information related to how a teaching strategy is implemented. It is expected that EFL writing teachers would be able to teach writing by using the appropriate and useful teaching approaches.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of terms in this study, there are some definitions given as follows:

- 1.6.1 “Writing is a process of discovering and organizing your ideas, putting them on paper, and reshaping and revising them” (Meyers, 2005: 2).
- 1.6.2 “Product based approach is a traditional approach, in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage” (Gabrielatos, 2002: 5).
- 1.6.3 “Process based approach is an approach which pays attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through” (Harmer, 2007a: 326).
- 1.6.4 Discussion text is a text which aims to presents (at least) two points of view about an issue (Gerot & Wignell, 1994: 214).
- 1.6.5 “An attitude is a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given attitude object” (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005: 9).
- 1.6.6 “Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating two forms of data and

using distinct design that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell, 2014: 4).

1.7 The Organization of the Paper

This paper is composed of five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the general issues related to the study. These include the background of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper. Chapter 2 elaborates several theories that are relevant to this study. It examines theories of the basic concepts of writing, writing approaches, discussion texts, writing scoring rubric assessment for discussion texts, attitudes, and some related research. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology. It restates the three research purposes, and presents the research design, research site and participants, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussions of the data taken from field notes and videotapes, students’ tests (pre-test and post-test) and questionnaire. Chapter 5 concludes the present study and presents others recommendations.