

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the overview of the research by introducing the main information covered in the thesis. It comprises six main topics arranged as follows: Background of the Research, Research Questions, Purpose of the Research, Significance of the Research, Definition of Operational Terms, and Organization of the Thesis.

1.1 Background of the Research

In the current context of Indonesian national curriculum, metacognition is regarded as one of the important indicators of students' success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Despite conceding its importance, there is an indication that Indonesian senior high school English teachers have not consistently emphasized metacognition in teaching EFL writing. Practically, the teachers are still not used to guiding the students to gain a good quality of metacognition in writing by experiencing the stages of a writing process. The indication of the teachers' tendency to neglect the teaching of writing process raises the concern over the negative consequences it might bring to the quality of students' writing metacognition, which is crucial to determining students' writing proficiency as the final goal of learning writing.

The concern over the possibly compromised students' writing metacognition is derived from the belief that, "writing is applied metacognition" (p. 154). The aforementioned statement indirectly suggests that in order to successfully write an English text, the students need to be directed to learn how to put their metacognition to work during the writing process. In other words, to be effective writers with a good quality of writing proficiency, the students should be taught with the effective ways to use their metacognition in terms of knowledge and skills during the writing process which commonly encompasses prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing stages (Gebhard, 2009; Hyland, 2009; Nation, 2009).

To get a clear idea about metacognition as the center of attention in this research, it should be noted that the term was firstly introduced by Flavell (1979) and used to cover its two main components, namely knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Hartman, 2001; Schraw, 2001; Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006; Veenman, 2012). In the more recent literature in which the concept of metacognition has been related to the writing instruction, Harris et al. (2010) suggest that the two components of metacognition are further referred to as metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation and considered influential to students' writing proficiency. Specifically regarding its influence towards students' writing proficiency, metacognitive knowledge as the first component of metacognition, if effectively taught to students would be potential to help them gain an understanding related to the importance of writing for communicative purposes, as well as the criteria to achieve in order for them to create a good writing. The second component of metacognition, self-regulation, if practiced during the learning process has also been regarded to be significant in leading students to be effective writers who are able to strategically make compositions through a systematic procedure, starting from planning, monitoring, to evaluating the process of writing.

Acknowledging the importance of metacognition for students in the learning of writing, the investigation of the components of writing metacognition which have been acquired by students has become a prominent focus on metacognition-related studies (Tobias & Everson, 2009). In order to carry out the investigation, studies in EFL context have been directed to assess each component of metacognition, namely metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation. In recent years, particularly, several studies in EFL contexts have been conducted by assessing the specific components of students' metacognitive knowledge in writing, which results have been considered to improve the teaching and learning practices of writing (see Farahian, 2015; Kim, 2013; Kodituwakku, 2013; Magogwe, 2013; Okoza, Aluede, & Owens-Sogolo, 2013; Oz, 2007; Smith, 2013; Tapinta, 2006; Yanyan, 2010; Yamini & Mandanizadeh, 2011). In addition to metacognitive knowledge, some other studies in EFL contexts have also been carried out to focus on the assessment of self-regulation in writing, to determine

the quality of students' skills in making use of their metacognitive knowledge during the process of writing (see Chien, 2007; Khaki & Hessamy, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Magno, 2009; Mohite, 2014; Qian & Yan, 2008; Surat, Rahman, Mahamod, & Kummin, 2014; Tapinta, 2006; Tsai, 2009; Zhao & Dong, 2011).

With the intention of giving more insight into students' writing metacognition in EFL educational context, this research was focused on investigating the current quality of students' EFL writing metacognition, specifically in the Indonesian senior high school context. The investigation in this context is worth conducting with the reason that Curriculum 2013 currently established in Indonesia, supports the concept of metacognition to be applied in teaching EFL, including the teaching of writing skills to the students in the senior high school level (Indonesian Ministry of Education, 2014). Besides, the investigation in this research was aimed at presenting more complete information on students' metacognition by assessing two main components of metacognition at once. Particularly, the research was focused on looking more into the quality of both metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation skills in EFL writing which have been possessed and could be performed by Indonesian senior high school students.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to reveal the quality of senior high school students' EFL writing metacognition in terms of metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation, the research questions were formulated as follows.

- 1) What are the components of metacognitive knowledge about EFL writing currently possessed by senior high school students?
- 2) How do students employ metacognitive knowledge to perform self-regulation skills during the process of EFL writing?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

In accordance with the research questions, this research was directed to analyze the metacognition of senior high school students learning EFL writing in the boundary of Curriculum 2013 as the currently established educational system, in terms of metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation. To be more specific, this research was focused more on describing the components of students' knowledge about EFL writing, which has already been acquired from their learning experience through the EFL writing instruction in their classroom context. In addition, this research also concerns students' self-regulation skills in writing that refer to the ways students regulate their cognition or thinking process by making use of their metacognitive knowledge during the process of composing an English text.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Consistent with its purpose, this research was projected to publicly reveal the valuable information related to students' EFL writing metacognition, which indicates the result of Curriculum 2013 implementation at the practical level, especially in the teaching of EFL writing. To be more specific, the research results describing the quality of students' writing metacognition would be beneficial for both the students and teachers involved in the research. The students would have a good picture of writing metacognition aspects they need to improve, in order to acquire the better proficiency in EFL writing. As for the English teachers, the description of students' writing metacognition could be learned to gain an in-depth understanding of metacognition-related factors influencing students' success in the process of learning EFL writing. With such understanding, therefore, the teachers are expected to be able to prepare more appropriate instructional strategies to get the students learn to be independent writers who could manage their own effective learning to pursue their writing skills mastery (Israel, Block, Bauserman, & Kinnucan-Welsch, 2005; Xiao, 2007).

Aiming for the bigger purpose, the research focusing on students' EFL writing metacognition was also directed to make a contribution to the development of the current curriculum implementation, and also the theory of metacognition and EFL writing. Particularly, this research was intended to present the information about how metacognition is applied to the teaching of EFL writing as a depiction of the current curriculum implementation at the senior high school level. Moreover, in contribution to the theory development, this research was specifically conducted to provide a portrait of metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation quality in the area of EFL writing which belong to Indonesian senior high school students. Thus, expectedly the results of this research can be used as a reference in order to further conduct more research on metacognition and EFL writing for the betterment of EFL instruction in Indonesian context.

1.5 Definition of Operational Terms

With the intention of giving the initial understanding of the main aspects investigated in this research, the definition of some key operational terms which have been used as the basis to practically conduct the research procedures are provided below.

1.5.1 Metacognition

Metacognition as the object of investigation in this research is an umbrella term representing its two main components, namely metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation which are currently possessed by students in the area of EFL writing.

1.5.2 Metacognitive knowledge

Metacognitive knowledge in the current research is a component of metacognition, which specifically includes students' declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and conditional knowledge about EFL writing. This metacognitive component is further studied in this research by means of students' self-report questionnaires in the Likert-type and open-response form.

1.5.2.1 Declarative knowledge

Students' declarative knowledge consists of person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge. Person knowledge involves students' understanding of their writing proficiency, environmental preferences for writing, attitude towards writing, self-efficacy in writing, and writing motivation. Task knowledge relates to what students know about the writing criteria to fulfill in order to complete a writing task. Finally, strategy knowledge is about what students know regarding the types of writing strategies and their importance in creating a written text.

1.5.2.2 Procedural knowledge

Procedural knowledge refers to students' knowledge about the steps they consider best to take in order to effectively process their writing.

1.5.2.3 Conditional knowledge

Conditional knowledge includes students' knowledge about effective strategies to use in order to meet the specific requirements of a writing task, problem solving procedures, and environmental structuring strategies which can be employed during the process of writing.

1.5.3 Self-regulation

Self-regulation refers to the ways students use their metacognitive knowledge to perform planning, monitoring, and evaluating skills during the process of completing a writing task. This component of metacognition was investigated in this research by getting students to work on a writing task and fill in two retrospective questionnaires, i.e. a checklist and open-response type, soon after the task is completed.

1.5.3.1 Planning

Planning is one of self-regulation skills which should be performed by students before they begin writing. Those include students' ability in setting the writing goals as required by the writing task, planning the steps to perform during the writing process, planning the time for completing a writing task, and performing writing strategies to invent and arrange the ideas in the text.

1.5.3.2 Monitoring

Monitoring needs to be employed by the students during the writing process, to make sure that the text they write has achieved the writing goals which are set based on the writing criteria demanded by the writing task. Overall, used as the basis for designing self-regulation questionnaire, monitoring involves the ability of students to draft, self-verbalize, self-monitor (pausing & rechecking the content of the text), review the records of writing aspects to fix, perform self-assistance, do self-consequating as a self-rewarding attempt, and seek social assistance during the process of writing.

1.5.3.3 Evaluating

Evaluating is a self-regulation skill which is performed by students after completing the writing task. Practically, it is conducted by students through the evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses in writing based on the quality of the text that has been written, as well as further efforts which the students consider taking for improving their writing proficiency.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

Reporting all details about the research on EFL writing metacognition of students in an Indonesian senior high school, the thesis is written under 5 main chapters. With the purpose of providing a clear idea of the main information covered by each chapter of this thesis, the brief descriptions are given as follows.

1.6.1 Chapter I

The first chapter of this thesis is an introduction to what the research is all about, which comprises the information about the background of the research, research questions, purposes of the research, the significance of the research, definition of operational terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.6.2 Chapter II

The second chapter contains a review of related literature to provide the theoretical foundation of why the current research is worth conducting. The chapter includes the theories and some related research mainly on Metacognition and the teaching of EFL writing.

1.6.3 Chapter III

The third chapter of this thesis presents the information on research methodology, which mainly contains the description of research design and the details of data collection and data analysis procedures to conduct the research.

1.6.4 Chapter IV

The fourth chapter includes the compilation of the research findings as the results of the data analysis process, which is further completed with the elaborations and discussions on their worth in the field of Metacognition and EFL writing.

1.6.5 Chapter V

As the final chapter, chapter V of this thesis reveals the conclusion of the overall research results along with their pedagogical implications, and the recommendation for conducting further research according to the remaining gaps found in the research of Metacognition and EFL writing.