

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This research elaborated the aspects of development in students' writing before and after taking an IELTS preparation course and the influence from the test on their learning process. Writing development in natural setting can typically be reflected from stages based on a sequence of skills appropriate for all students, but more recently, it come along with two paradoxes that the development is not always visible on the page, and it involves steps both forward and backward (Graham et al., 2013; Schultz & Fecho, 2000; Sommers, 2008). A note for any preparation course was tests can theoretically have effects on classrooms, including on teachers, learners, teaching and learning sequence, their content, etc. (Fulcher, 2010; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; A. Green, 2006b; Harmer, 2007). Concerning the students' writing development and the influence of test on their learning, this study dealt with three research problems; 1) the extent of the students' writing development in the IELTS preparation course, 2) factors influencing the students' learning for IELTS writing task 2, and 3) in what ways those factors influenced the students' learning for IELTS writing task 2. The description of findings of the four research problems are presented in Chapter 4.

To identify the range and aspects of students' writing development in the first research problem, the writing scripts of two IELTS preparation course participants, who have different academic background and different experience with IELTS test, were collected after they took four test simulations. From thorough examination, it was identified that both students could be considered as modest writers (IELTS, 2018). The descriptor explained that modest users of English may have a partial command of the language and may cope with overall meaning in most situations although they are likely to make many mistakes. Furthermore, it turned out that both students maintained different course of

progress from time to time, forward and backward (Sommers, 2008). Although her overall scores fluctuated, Maria's progress seemed positive with gradual development in almost all aspects of her writing. In contrast, Angel's performance repetitively regressed although there was an overall progress in the second test occasion, and constant condition in lexical resource aspect.

For the third research problem, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended items was distributed to the students. The items were based on and adapted from the components in the washback model of students' learning (Shih, 2007). In general, it can be inferred that although there was a difference between Maria and Angel in the types of influential factors from each category based on the significance of the influence, both students were considerably affected by a large number of factors from all three categories. This situation supports the idea that the extrinsic, intrinsic, and test factors have to be considered before the potential washback of a test can be ascertained (Shih, 2007). To identify what impacts and how those influential factors contributed to the students' learning in the fourth research problem, a semi-structured interview was conducted and it was based on leads from the questionnaire and relevant points from the document review. The interview was recorded and then transcribed for coding process. Based on the analysis on the coded interview transcript, it was identified that the influences had impacts on the students' learning process for the test, especially in terms of the content of learning, time of learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety. Nonetheless, at some points the impacts resulted from each factor may have been different regardless how significance the influence they perceived from those factors.

5.2. Recommendation

With significant findings presented in Chapter 4, this research can be a reference for teachers especially those involved in a test preparation program similar to improve their evaluation method, to give more relevant and helpful feedback, and to employ better approaches in the teaching and learning process. Consideration on the influential factors for the learning process of the students are also useful for students to optimize positive influences for their development, for the teachers to do self-reflection based on students' point of view, and for policy makers or program designers to make improvement on the next programs similar to one conducted in this study.

Related to the limitation of this study, it is also recommended that other researcher interested similar research topic correlate the analysis with writing section from other proficiency test, like TOEFL iBT, widen the number of participants, and/ or use different research design. It is expected that the result can provide better understanding and better depiction to improve the quality of teaching and learning process of English writing. Besides, further research is expected to support the theory of washback, the influence of a test on teaching and learning (Fulcher, 2010; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; A. Green, 2006a; Harmer, 2007), especially referring to the washback model of students' learning from Shih (2007). Since the model is relatively new, many aspects in the model can be explored in more detailed measurers to provide better understanding on the concept.