

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, aims of the study, research questions, significance of the study, clarification of major terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

A current major goal of higher education is to create lifelong, independent, and self-directed learners. Lifelong learners are seen as those who are eager to learn new things, setting their own goal, and reflecting on their actions (Nilson, 2013). Nilson (2013) highlighted that lifelong learners are able to adapt with any explosive growth of knowledge and skills in their future career. As the development of technology boosts rapidly, learners are required to learn new skills provided and adapt to any innovations in professional and personal contexts (Robin, 2017). The dominance of teachers as the main source of knowledge has been considerably reduced and recent learning strategies have been focusing on student-centered approach. This means that students are no longer seen as passive individuals equipped with knowledge and information (Sardareh, Saad, & Boroomand, 2012). Consequently, students need to construct their own learning strategies in order to cope up with the development of knowledge. This is in line with the characteristics of lifelong learners as suggested by Nilson (2013).

Stimulating students to be lifelong learners could be implemented through writing activity because being skillful and experienced in writing is beneficial for students to be lifelong learners. In fact, writing skill is useful for learners' academic life, such as writing essays and papers which require a high skill in writing. This is as supported by Hosseini et al (2013) that students which are given a writing activity or task tend to adopt a meaning-making process which involves them in constructing ideas of what they comprehend from several information, adapting important ideas from texts, and integrating them based on what they find and comprehend. Moreover, Johnson (2003) states that becoming a good writer is not

simply limited to language expert, teachers, or professors because writing requires repeated practice that can be done by everyone.

In spite of its importance, writing is also regarded as one of the most complex skill among other skills in language. Zhang (2008) describes writing as a discovery process that involves brainstorming, multiple drafts, feedbacks, and revisions. Writing has multiple challenges for EFL students. Lacking of knowledge in linguistic, strategic skills, vocabulary, and grammar are some common problems in writing. Many students find writing a daunting task as they are required to coordinate those elements and they also need longer time to see the progress in writing than in other skills (Göy, 2017). Thus, many EFL students struggle in order to be able to become an adept writer (Grabe, and Kaplan, 1996, as cited in Majid, 2007).

Canale and Swain (1980) proposed that students lack of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Moreover, low motivation takes part in writing challenges as students need to keep their motivation in order to complete writing task with satisfying result. They may not have an ideal and relevant conceptualization about their purpose in writing other than requirements from the teachers. In this state, students may run into metacognitive deficiencies (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

EFL students in Indonesian context have been facing more complex problems regarding English writing. Firstly, some EFL students in Indonesian context tend to be passive learners in learning English. Many of them lack of self-direction toward their learning. Mbato's (2013) found that many EFL students in Indonesian context genuinely depended on teacher's instruction in teacher-centered environment and merely memorized what are taught by the teacher. Consequently, learning English tend to be more difficult and confusing when it comes to memorizing. Secondly, some EFL students in Indonesian context are unaware on making a good writing composition. They often encounter difficulties in transferring their native language to English (Widodo, 2008). Silva (1993 as cited in Brown, 2004) found that learners who learn English as the secondary language (L2) did less planning, less fluent in which they only used fewer words than learners who learn English as the first language (L1) did, less accurate in which

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they made more errors than L1 learners did, and less goal setting and material organization. Moreover, some students use irrelevant translating engine to translate their writing to English. Göy (2017) explained that students who have a lower level of English proficiency tend to use translation technique in writing English. Translation engine might be helpful but the result of the translation is inaccurate and irrelevant. Capehorn (2016) highlighted weaknesses of translation engine such as the ability to translate every word, inability to determine the most appropriate sentence, and fundamentally different grammatical structure. Additionally, teachers' feedback, response, and suggestion might not be enough and addressed relevantly for students to reflect on their mistakes in writing (Almazoum, 2018), 2018).

Students with these problems tend to have low self-efficacy. Research has proved that self-efficacy contributes an important role and impact to academic performance. Writing self-efficacy affects students' effort, interest, and persistence (Pajares, 1996). Common writing problems such as poor writing mastery experience, lack of modelling given, any forms of persuasion, and psychological indicators such as anxiety and apprehension contribute in students' low self-efficacy (Schunk & Usher, 2011).

For years, many studies have been conducted regarding practical methods to increase students' self-efficacy in writing. Magno (2009) states that students employ a variety of specific strategies and approaches when they are engaged in writing tasks. Such learning strategies depend on students' effort and habit on how they will compose a writing task. It is believed that students undergo a self-regulatory processes when writing a composition (Magno, 2009). Becoming an adept writer requires more than knowledge of linguistics. It also depends on the level of personal self-regulation as writing is usually self-planned, self-sustained, and self-initiated (Zimmerman and Risemberg, 1997). Therefore, learners can actively construct their learning process to set goals for their learning, attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, metacognition, and behavior. (Wolters, Pintrich, & Karabenick, 2003) This active and constructive process, according to Pintrich (2003) is called as self-regulated learning.

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The approaches of how students regulate their motivation and academic learning have been a prominent subject in social cognitive research lately. Self-regulated learning is broadly defined as an active process where students set goals for their learning, monitor their performance, and reflect on the result of the learning (Zimmerman, 1990). Seker (2015) also defines self-regulated learning as process which requires students to decide and perform their strategies in learning process. Self-Regulated students are expected to be active, independent and constructive. Zimmerman (1990) further explains that self-regulated learning engages two details: how students respond to self-oriented feedback about effectiveness of learning process, and how students motivate themselves interdependently in learning processes. It is believed that when students practice self-regulated learning more, the more they become competent language users (Majid, 2007).

Self-regulated learning practice is absolutely essential to writing skill in language. Göy (2017) proposes that higher level of writing requires higher self-regulation because writing or composing activity is often self-sustained and self-planned. Ultimately, SRL strategies help to prepare EFL learners for creating lifelong learning environment and the relevant capacity to transfer abilities, skills, and knowledge from one setting to another (Zumbrunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that self-regulated learning has attained a widespread research interest with significant contribution to improving students' achievement and strategy use (Zimmerman & Schunk 2011), it is still fairly new to the field of EFL learning. Although many studies have examined and explored its impact on academic achievement, there has been very little research on EFL writing (Andrade & Evans, 2012), particularly in the Indonesian context. Several researchers have conducted studies about self-regulated learning in EFL/ESL context. Magno (2009) found that both deep approach and surface approach in language learning have connection to 14 self-regulated learning strategies suggested by Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986). Göy (2017) found that self-regulated learning strategy instruction was effective to improve students' writing skills but only few strategies were used and a slight improvement was seen in student's writing. Majid (2007) also highlighted the importance of self-regulated learning practices in writing classes as they lead to the need for teachers to adapt

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better teaching strategies in writing classes. MacArthur and Philippakos (2013) found that self-regulated learning practice were effective to increase students' writing and motivation toward the process of writing. Ruan (2005) also discovered that students' participation in self-regulatory writing program assisted them to reconstruct their metacognitive knowledge as well as building their self-efficacy and improving their writing knowledge.

In spite of the promising findings stated, unfortunately, there has been very limited number of research regarding the use of self-regulated learning strategies in English writing composition for EFL students in Indonesian context. Exploring self-regulated learning of Indonesian context in learning English, especially in writing activity is necessary due to the number of promising studies conducted abroad. Additionally, It is also prominent to see how students apply self-regulated learning strategies in writing since there have been few research about the connection between self-regulated learning strategies in writing and students' academic achievement in terms of course assignments. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap by conducting a study to explore self-regulated learning strategies in writing.

Based on the explanation above, this study intends to examine self-regulated learning strategies in English writing composition with the focus of students from different achievement tracks and their perception toward the strategies.

1.2 Research Questions

According to the background of the study above, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1.2.1 What self-regulated learning strategies do students from different achievement tracks in writing composition employ?
- 1.2.2 How do students perceive self-regulated learning strategies during the process of writing?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study intends to investigate self-regulated learning strategies that students from different achievement tracks demonstrate in writing as well as their response toward the strategies.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study covers further explanation regarding self-regulated learning strategies in writing composition. It also reviewed several theories and studies regarding self-regulated learning and academic achievement, self-regulated learning strategies, and self-regulated learning and writing. This study involved participants from undergraduate students in an English Course who learn English as Foreign Language (EFL) with the focus on their achievement tracks. However, the result of this study cannot be generalized to all EFL learners since it was conducted in a specific group of students. In spite of it, this study can contribute in helping EFL teachers to apply self-regulated learning practice in writing classes. It also can assist other researchers who wish to conduct similar study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is intended to provide teachers with the description on students' self-regulated learning strategies in English writing activity.

Theoretically, the study is conducted to contribute in enhancing the literature studies on students' self-regulated learning strategies. Furthermore, it is expected to be one of the valuable references for other researchers to conduct further research in the same field since there has been few studies in promoting self-regulated learning for EFL students in Indonesian context.

Practically, the result of this study are expected to offer valuable contributions for teachers in understanding students' self-regulated learning strategies in learning English. The researcher also expects that the research could contribute in developing teaching strategies concerning students' use of self-regulated learning strategies. By acknowledging students' self-regulated learning strategies, it is expected that teachers can motivate students, plan, and organize

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classes in a way that facilitate them to develop self-regulated learning strategies, so students will be able to achieve better performance in English. It is also expected that English teachers would consider on promoting self-regulated learning practice in their learning activities as their consideration to improve EFL students' performance in English, specifically in writing activity.

Specifically, the findings of the study is expected to assist teachers who consider on teaching their students self-regulated learning strategies as a tool of academic success to make informed decisions. Consequently, making informed decisions can help them to shape their understanding of themselves, their students, teaching responsibilities and to map out appropriate pedagogical practices engendered from relevant theories.

1.6 Clarification of Major Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misjudgment toward some key concepts in this study, some terms are clarified in these following sections:

- 1.6.1 Self-Regulated Learning is defined as an active process where students set goals for their learning, monitor their performance, and reflect on the result of the learning (Zimmerman, 1990).
- 1.6.2 Self-Regulated Learning Strategies are classified into fourteen categories including self-evaluation, organizing and transforming, goal setting and planning, seeking information, keeping records and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-consequences, rehearsing and memorizing, seeking social assistance, and reviewing records (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986) and additional strategies suggested by Pintrich (1991; 2004) and Wolters (2003) including value encouragement self-talk, succeed encouragement self-talk, and self-efficacy self-talk.
- 1.6.3 Writing, in this study, specifies as the specific activity of composing a certain genre of text that participants of the research carried out.
- 1.6.4 Achievement tracks signify students' average score of English knowledge generally that they achieve in English Course.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters. Each chapter provides subtopics to give an insight into the topic under investigation:

- 1.7.1. Chapter I presents the background of the research, short literature review, research questions, research purposes, research significance and clarification of major terms, and organization of the paper.
- 1.7.2. Chapter II explicates elaboration of literature review related to Chapter I. It presents some conceptual frameworks of self-regulated learning and writing as the main topic of this study. This chapter also presents several theories and previous studies regarding the main topic of this research.
- 1.7.3. Chapter III focuses on the research methodology and research outline. It includes research method, research design, research site, research participants, data collection, research procedure, and data analysis.
- 1.7.4. Chapter IV elaborates the findings and discussion of the research.
- 1.7.5. Chapter V covers conclusion, recommendation and limitation of the study.