

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the research, objectives of the research, research questions, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and thesis organization.

1.1. Background of the Research

In language learning, writing is a challenging skill to master. Even in the native language, the ability to write effectively requires “extensive and specialized instruction” (Richards, 2004). For English writing, it requires meta-cognitive knowledge that covers process, system, content, genre, and content knowledge; and meta-linguistic knowledge which covers vocabulary, grammar, and writing mechanism knowledge (Hyland, 2003, 2006). In academic writing context, higher education levels demand students to write high-quality texts to achieve the hallmarks which maintain students’ ability to write thoroughly thoughtful essays and articles (Newfields, 2003). “Publish or perish” has demanded the scholars to productively publish journal articles as one of academic writing tasks. In Indonesia, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (2018) encourages the universities to publish journal articles in both nationally and internationally accredited journals. One of the reasons to publish the journal articles in international journals is to increase the nation’s position in an international scientific community. Beside that, universities are also now assessed and funded based on the publications and citation rates from the students, lecturers, and professors (Thomson & Kamler, 2013). Despite its importance, article publication is challenging for all fields of study in general.

Writing as a productive skill requires a long process that might be impossible to finish only in one session, especially writing a research article, as it requires effective planning, extensive reading, and a long research process. Students will have to go through series of processes and stages to finish their writing. However, writing is not a linear (Flower & Hayes, 1981), yet a flexible developmental process (Sharp, 2016) which can only operate when writers interact with their environment and peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Researchers believe that writing process is a series of problem-solving tasks (Braaksma et al., 2004; Bereiter

& Scardamalia, 1978) which generally consists of three stages: planning (pre-writing), execution/translation (in-writing), and evaluation/revision (post-writing) (Butcher & Kintsch, 2001; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Goldstein & Carr, 1996; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Rosário et al., 2019). Writing is also an attempt to communicate with the readers (Hyland, 2003) that varies according to the social context in which it is produced (Badger & White, 2000). Journal article writing can be concluded as one writing task that is done through long series of process to communicate with targeted readers.

Research by Chien (2019) showed that the difficulties of getting published are faced by the students, and even by proficient English speakers and senior researchers such as professors and professor assistants. Another research by Cheung (2010) found that even the doctoral students face difficulties in writing a comprehensive journal article to get published in international journals, especially journals accredited in Web of Science and Scopus (Benade, 2021). This study assumed that effective writing process could result in quality international journal articles. Previous studies support this assumption by showing that the successful academic writers adopted the effective writing process, while the less successful academic writer felt uncertain about the writing task and tended to write spontaneously without planning (Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Larios et al., 2008; Wingate & Harper, 2020). In Indonesian context, Abas and Abd Aziz (2018) research found that proficient writers went through five phases of writing processes with different activities in each phase. The previous research showed that an effective writing process resulted a successful writing composition.

Although writing process is an important aspect and consideration for the successful writing task, research exploring this topic, especially that focusing on specific academic writing task in postgraduate levels in Indonesia is still limited. However, investigating the process of writing only is not sufficient as process approach is not concerned with the text types and their purpose explicitly. Therefore, this study has also been informed by the genre-based approach to complement the process approach, especially in terms of genre and social aspects of the texts. This study aims to explore writing process of four English education postgraduate students who have successfully published journal articles in

international journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. This study is significant from theoretical, practical, and policy aspect as will be explained later in this chapter.

1.2. Research Questions

1. How is the process of writing internationally published journal articles of postgraduate students?
2. What benefits and challenges do the students have in each stage of writing process?

1.3. Objectives of the Research

This study aimed to investigate the writing process applied by postgraduate student researchers, master and doctoral level, in writing internationally published journal articles. This study also aimed to identify the benefits and challenges that postgraduate student researchers gained and faced in each of the writing process.

1.4. Significances of the Research

Theoretically, the results of this study were expected to bring insight into the issue of academic journal article composition, especially for EFL students at the university level in Indonesia. For the journal article process of writing, this study could provide the reference that journal article composition requires a long process of writing in which each stage is beneficial yet also challenging.

Practically, this study's results were expected to give guidance for the postgraduate students about the effective process in writing journal articles as one of the requirements of postgraduate study fulfillment. Through this study, postgraduate students could learn the benefits of going through each stage which can stimulate them to employ various activities in each stage. Postgraduate students could also learn the possible challenges in each stage. Thus, they could anticipate and design strategies to solve the challenges they might find.

By policy, the results of this study were expected to initiate the release of a policy for the extensive writing courses in university, especially in postgraduate levels, which focus on preparing students for international journal article

publication through each stage of writing process. The results of this study could also be used as a reference for integrating and combining two approaches to writing: process approach and genre approach. The integration of two approaches could complement each other to gain utmost benefits provided by each approach. Therefore, the writing course could help students to build the writing skills and writing strategies which are needed in journal article composition.

1.5. Definition of Terms

In the context of this study, several terms are defined as follows:

1. Writing process

Writing is a problem-solving process to achieve different goals of composition, which generally consists of; planning, sentence generating, revising, editing, with its benefits and challenges in every stage (see Flower & Hayes, 1981, pg.366-367; Graves, 1981, pg.11; Williams, 2003, pg.114-121). For the context of this study, the writing process refers to the planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing process of journal article composition in international journals.

2. Journal articles

A journal article is a concise presentation of one topic gained from empirical research that is typically written in 5000-7000 words to be published and used as a standard of academic research outputs (Benade et al., 2021). For the context of this study, the journal articles are limited to those published in Web of Science and Scopus as the most powerful abstract and citation databases (Benade, 2021).

1.6. Organization of the Research

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I in this proposal discusses the background of the research, the research questions, the objectives of the research, the significance of the research, the definition of terms, and the organization of the research. Chapter II provides comprehensive explanations of theories that have informed this study. Chapter III discusses the research design, the research methodology, including research design, participants, the population and sample, research procedures, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV presents the

findings and discussion of this study. Chapter V provides conclusion and recommendations from this study.