

## AN ANALYSIS OF TEXT WRITING ACQUISITION BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

Writing is a complex process in which the process of putting the ideas and organizing the grammatical sentences into written statements as a means of communication. The study dealt with analyzing text writing acquisition by pre-service teachers in Bali. The samples were 60 pre-service teachers who are currently taking teachers training in the English language education study program. The participants were determined using a random sampling method with a lottery system. The data were collected by administering an essay text writing instrument. The obtained data were analyzed by using a norm-referenced measure of five standard values showed that 0.00% of the samples got excellent achievement of recount text writing ability; 41.67% of the samples got good achievement; 30.00% of the samples got sufficient achievement; 18.33% of the samples got the insufficient achievement, and 10.00% of the samples got the poor achievement. This indicated that 71.67% of the samples who were categorized successfully in text writing and the other 28.33% samples were categorized unsuccessful as they were below the sufficient achievement. This finding implies that further serious training in text writing should be undertaken by pre-service teachers.

Keywords: Analysis, Text, Writing, Acquisition, Pre-Service Teachers

### I. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is the most important learning aspect for both teachers and students which is compulsory activity to be undertaken in every learning session. It is the process of gathering analysis, interpreting and using information about student's progress. It can be used to measure the quality of the education system. More specifically, it can be used as a reference to the strength and

weaknesses of teaching. It is also considered to be a powerful way of collecting information about the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, the assessment is conducted for many learning purposes. It is, however, ultimately intended to improve classroom instructions to improve students' learning achievement. Consequently, assessment is very important to be carried out to know students' achievement toward the material during the teaching-learning process.

Several assessment techniques can be selected by the teacher to assess the students' text writing ability. Teachers, however, have to be selective in choosing the appropriate assessment strategy which is considered to be effective. Every technique has some weaknesses and strengths, therefore teachers should have comprehensive knowledge about a variety of assessments for the objectives of conducting assessment can be successfully achieved (Miller et al., 2009). Assessment is a systematic process that includes preparation, administration, scoring, and grading. Moreover, feedback should also continuously be conducted to ensure that the learning competency standard can be attained completely (Bitchener, Cameron, & Young, 2005).

In addition, analyzing text writing is a form of getting information about students' abilities in text writing. This is in line with McKay (2006) who emphasizes that assessment is a process of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and using information about students' progress and achievement to improve teaching and learning. Moreover, classroom assessment is the most important process in a classroom activity. It is an important process where the teachers measure the ability of the students and use the information to further develop students' learning achievement.

Assessing students' writing is the most difficult activity than furthermore, Brown (2004) describes that assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. It means whenever the students respond to a question, offer a comment, or try out a new word or structure, the teachers subconsciously assess the students' performance. Moreover, Miller et al. (2009) emphasize that assessment is a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about students' learning. Consequently, assessing writing can provide feedback for the students to enhance their writing ability.

In addition, Barkaoui (2007) emphasizes that designing and implementing a writing assessment is an interactive process that should include consideration about scoring procedures from the very beginning. Furthermore, Assessment is needed where it must be applied in every field of the subject even though in language skill field. Assessment of text writing is an integral process with teaching and learning activities. Alderson and Bachman (2002) additionally explain that assessment of writing involves at least two basic components such as test instructions and writing tasks. In assessment, the test must be valid and reliable. Fulcher and Davidson (2007) explain that validity in assessment has been traditionally understood to mean discovering whether a test measures accurately what it is intended to measure. Weigle (2002) urges that the final point to be made concerning the design stage of test development is that it is important to consider all aspects of test usefulness from the very beginning of the test development process. Therefore, the key issue of validity refers to what if it

purports to measure and what meaning can be drawn from the results of the assessment (Hawthorne and Glenn, 2011)

Furthermore, Hyland (2003:229) explains that analytical scoring procedures require readers to judge a text against a set of criteria seen as important to good writing. Analytic scoring is based on depth analysis of aspects of writing such as focus or organization, elaboration or support, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Analytic scoring is usually based on a scale of 0-100 with each aspect receiving a portion of the total points. On the other hand, in scoring students' text writing ability, teachers should score all components in the scoring rubric such as format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar. Moreover, Oshima and Hogue (2007:196) mention that there five criteria such as format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar, and sentence structure.

Kane (2000) emphasises that writing is not an easy product that students can do without any steps, to make it easier the writer should follow the following steps such as pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising, and writing. Pre-writing is the first stage in the writing process, in which in this step the writers choose a topic to start to write a paragraph. In addition, planning (outlining) is to organize the ideas of the learners generated by brainstorming in an outline. On the other side, there are two steps in planning. The steps are constructing outlining and writing the topic sentence. The next step in writing is drafting in which this is the basic step in writing good paragraphs. Then, drafting the draft in this stage will be done by doing three steps such as: writing the first rough draft, revising content and organization, and proofreading the second draft. Furthermore, writing the final copy to hand is the last step in writing. As the final step in the writing process, writers have to rework the written drafts and polish them for the publication and the presentation (Ismail, 2011). Moreover, students' writing should meet the criteria for good writing. additionally, students should capable of constructing vocabulary in sentences, sentences into paragraphs, paragraphs into text (Webb, 2009).

In respect with the description above, a scoring rubric was used to score writing task to provide an effective means of scoring the particular type students' performance in text writing, to allow for consistent scoring of students' performance, and to provide information to students on how to improve their work well. The term rubric means a set of guidelines for giving scores. A typical rubric states all the dimensions being assessed, contains a scale, and helps the rater place the given work properly on the scale.

Regarding students' problems in writing, Taylor (2009:4) describes that most students find that writing is an extremely difficult task if they are trying to convey their ideas in English. The difficulties are encountered by the students when they have to write correctly in terms of the correct format, punctuation, and mechanic, content, organization, and grammar, and sentence structure and it must be understandable. Students sometimes find real difficulty in expressing their ideas in the right generic structures of writing (Pour-Mohammadi, Zainol Abidin, & Cheong, 2012). Therefore, assessing the students' achievement in text writing ability becomes a very important thing because it may provide appropriate information concerning the students' current ability. Therefore, teachers can use the finding as a reference for

further improvement of teaching. Students, on the other hand, may use the information to further develop their strategy in learning text writing.

## **II. METHOD**

This present study focused on assessing text writing acquisition by pre-service teachers who are currently under training in English Education Study Program. There were 60 pre-service teachers participated in this study. This study made use of ex post facto research design with descriptive analysis. An ex post facto research is a method that can also be used instead of an experiment, to test hypotheses about cause and effect in the situations where it is unethical to control or manipulate the dependent variable. Ex post facto research is particularly appropriate when simple cause and effect relationships are being explored. An ex post facto study or non-experimental study is a specific investigation in which the researcher cannot directly control and manipulate; the researcher investigates variables by giving certain treatments or randomly creating a certain condition. In ex post facto research, the researcher takes the effect and examines the data retrospectively to establish causes, relationships or associations, and meanings.

An ex post facto research design was employed in this study because text writing as the research variable has already taken place before the understanding of this study. Students in this study have learned writing and they have attended different assessment activities. Although there are many disadvantages of ex post facto design, it nevertheless is frequently the only method by which educational researches can obtain necessary information about characteristics of defined groups of the students or information needed for the intelligent formulation of programs. The researcher cannot manipulate the data of the study because the researcher does not have direct control of the independent variable. The data required for this study was collected by administering an essay test to the participants of this study. The data was comprehensively analyzed and descriptively presented and described clearly for the findings to become vividly understandable.

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## **III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Writing is also one of means of communication that allows students to put their feeling and ideas on a piece of paper, to organize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and to convey meaning through well-constructed text. Tylor (2009:2) states that students need to know what they want to write before doing the process of writing. Students should learn the steps of writing. Writing starts with the first simple sentences to elaborate stories and essays. Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and organization come

together and grow together to help the students demonstrate more advanced writing skills. To get some understanding of students' writing ability, the data of the study are presented in the following.

Acknowledging the importance of writing skill, therefore, the present study was conducted to reveal the existing ability of the students' in text writing. The scores of the samples were arranged based on the result of the data analysis in which the scores were considered as excellent, good, sufficient, insufficient, and poor achievement. The result of the data analysis using a norm-referenced measure of five standard values resulted in the converted scores indicating excellent achievement (A) of recount text writing ability was  $\geq 98.02$ ; good achievement (B),  $\geq 90.10 < 98.02$ ; sufficient achievement (C),  $\geq 82.17 < 90.10$ ; insufficient achievement (D),  $\geq 74.25 < 82.17$ ; and poor achievement (E),  $\geq 74.25$ .

The data of the samples' scores and their corresponding converted scores on the basis norm-referenced measure of five standard values showed that 25 samples got good achievement; 18 samples, sufficient achievement; 11 samples, insufficient achievement; and 6 samples, poor achievement. After the number of the samples' achievement had been counted, the degree of the samples' achievement could be computed.

The obtained data of the present study were in the form of the scores that showed the ability of recount text writing of the samples under study. The obtained scores from the subjects that were analyzed by using a norm-referenced measure of five standard values that pointed out that 0.00% of the samples under study got excellent achievement of recount text writing ability; 41.67% of the samples, good achievement; 30.00% of the samples, sufficient achievement; 18.33% of the samples, insufficient achievement; and 10.00% of the samples, poor achievement. Based on the percentage above, if the sufficient achievement was used as minimum achievement, the findings of the present ex post facto research concluded that there were 71.67% of the samples under study who were successful and there were 28.33% of the samples under study who were unsuccessful in writing recount text which was assessed by administering dicto-comp. Moreover, the text had to fulfill five criteria of a good recount text, namely, format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar, and sentence structure.

Appropriate use of writing criteria in writing is very important because they make the text is easily understood by the readers. This is because writing is a way that is effective in how the writers do a kind of transmitting a message to another. It is very essential to be mastered because it is a productive language skill. Productive language skills mainly function as an effective means of communication. Writing is a powerful instrument for students to use to express their thoughts, feelings, and judgments about what they have read, seen, or experienced. In comparison with other language skills, writing is considered to be the most difficult one. It needs hard thinking to produce ideas, words, sentences,

paragraphs, and compositions. Brown (2004) explains that writing has four categories that capture the range of written production that should be considered. Furthermore, each category resembles the categories defined for the other three skills, but these categories as always reflect the uniqueness of the skill area. Therefore, the four categories imitative, intensive, responsive, and extensive. In imitative, the learners have to attain skills in the fundamental, basic task of writing letters, words, punctuations, and very brief sentences. In intensive, the learners focus on the meaning and context which are the point to create the correct and appropriate paragraph. In response, the learners learn how to connect sentences into a paragraph and create a logically connected sequence of two or three paragraphs.

Furthermore, Brown (2004) explains that in extensive, the writers should focus on achieving a purpose, organizing, and developing ideas logically; as a result, the final product is engaging in the process of multiple drafts. Therefore, writing is still considered a difficult skill especially for Indonesian pre-service teachers because it was found that they still experienced many problems in constructing their ideas into a written text. This study revealed that many pre-service teachers had low grammatical and vocabulary ability which burdens their ability to express their ideas in English.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Writing is also one of means of communication that allows students to put their feeling and ideas on a piece of paper, to organize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and to convey meaning through well-constructed text. The data was collected by administering text writing tasks in the form of essay writing to the participants. The findings of the present ex post facto research concluded that there were 71.67% of the pre-service teachers in this study were categorized successfully in text writing and the other 28.33% pre-service teachers were categorized unsuccessful in text writing. It meant that there were some pre-service teachers still found difficulties in writing English text. The findings suggest that students should be more creative in learning writing and teachers are suggested to more intensively teaching writing skill using various learning and teaching strategies.

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