UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN EXPLORING IDEAS OF PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES IN WRITING CLASS

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Abstract

This study investigates university students' strategies in pre-writing activity, what students usually do to explore their idea before writing an academic paper. The participants of this study were students of writing class majoring English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. An exploratory mixed methods design was employed by interviewing students in writing class about the strategy they used before writing and administering questionnaire respondents. The findings showed that students used several strategies to enrich the idea before writing, most students used draft on the essay, and the draft was used to collect the idea so that they could arrange their writing into a good structure. This implies the need for future research to investigate more about the strategy they use not only in pre-writing but also the used strategy to solve their problem in a writing activity.

Keywords: *pre-writing activity, strategy in writing, exploring idea*

Introduction

Writing is one of the important skill in English learning which students have to master. When talking about writing, the writers need to include logical reasoning as part of it, because it can greatly persuade the readers to think deeply and participate with the topic (Rahmawati, 2016). A common problem of writing in English is students feel confused to explore, organizing, and generating their idea in writing text. Richards and Rinandya (2002: 313) said "the difficulty lies not only generating and organizing idea, but also in translating the idea into readable text." Because every students have different problem on their writing activity, however, students are need to create their own strategies to solve their problem. " Student's strategy in writing may be useful to lead them, plan their idea, directing and showing the path to the students to explore their idea, students should have their own strategies to help their selves to increase or even solve their problems in writing, because basically, the students or children will enjoy experimenting with writing and putting their ideas down in a paper. Based on all of their statement about prewriting, it can be seen that pre-writing activity is one of the important skill that students have to conquer in writing. There are numerous strategies that students can use to solve their problem. The common strategies are timeline strategies, schoology comment, and

mindmapping strategy. Some studies have been done to conduct the research about strategy to solve writing's problem.

Literature Review

There are numerous studies contducted to found the strategies students usually used to in writing activity. For instance, a research titled "Timeline Strategies" by Naumi (2016). In her research, Naumi found that students often find problems with their language skills and language components, such as the difficulty in speaking of what in their minds and writing their ideas in English, the difficulties in organizing and developing ideas, punctuation, and lack of vocabulary especially in recount text (Naumi, 2016). In her research, Fiza described that timeline strategy which was taught to some group of students had higher achievement than who was not taught by using timeline strategy. It means that timeline strategy has a good effect and impact to improve students' writing ability especially in her focus of research, recount text.

The second research is Schoology's comment in CALL 2 by Rahmawati (2016). Rahmawati used comments through schoology to her students in her research as the basic strategy before developing a piece of writing and this research was getting a good result. In her research, Rahmawati stated that the students who joined CALL 2 course have good ability in writing a wellstated thesis statement, contains well-defined and through explanation of topic, the students also good in addressing the topic sentence and including the critical aspects about the topic. Almost all of the students' opinion are logical and thoughtful, the students used spesific links, concrete and detailed examples, and also relevant evidences to support their opinion (Rahmawati, 2016). So, it means that the using of schoology's comment as the different kinds of strategy which the researcher used to attest that this strategy is very useful to improve students writing abilities.

The third is understanding and perseption of teachers in the use of mindmapping technique by Ergitasari (2014). In her research, Ergitasari stated that some teachers reflect that mindmapping is an important strategy to develop students' writing ability. Based on teachers' statements, using mind map in the process of teaching and learning has increased effectiveness of learning and teachers were able to identify several areas of student's cognitive and affective development that had benefited from using the technique, teachers also believe that mapping has improved pupils', makes thinking visible which promotes better understanding of subjects (Ergitasari, 2014). So, in these statement, the researcher told that mind mapping is the one of the good way to implement in students' writing, that is kind of the success way which is very useful to develop students' writing ability.

All of them has tended to focus on the development of the writing, rather than the prewriting it self . the gap of this study is This study focus on pre-writing it self. The research question is what strategies are used by students in

pre-writing activity? The aim of this study is to investigate types of students' strategies in exploring ideas before they finally decide to write and the specific reasons of their choices.

Method

The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the kinds of students' strategies in exploring ideas in pre-writing activities. This research is also to make sure that their strategies are good to use in doing a pre-writing activities, so the researcher also ask about the reason of their choices of the strategies using interview and questionnaire as the methods of this research.

This study used quanlitative method to get deeper data. Participants of this study were 20 students of Writing class on 3rd semester majoring English Education Department at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. To collect data on students' strategies in pre-writing activities, seven students were interviewed to investigate the types of students' strategies in exploring ideas before writing. In addition, 12 questionnaires was distributed to written English class in the third semester.

The researchers used two ways to analyze the data from the responses of interview and questionnaire. Responses for interview were categorized based on theme or key answer. Responses for questionnaire were counted that is the number of answer for each option in each question.

Discussion

The first popular activities students do in pre-writing is looking for ideas. Data from questionnaire show that almost all of the students (11 out of 12) look for ideas before writing. This data are confirm by data from interview in that 6 out of 7 students stated that they look for ideas before writing. Another findings show that there is also an activity of arranging idea. One student ticked "arranging idea" option in questionnaire and interview. "Thinking of how to develop ideas" , this can be interpreted as arranging ideas, because when someone is thinking of how to develop, she/he is actually arranging ideas in her mind.

The second common activities in students pre-writing is collecting the ideas which is reading information in Internet and books. Based on the data collection, either questionnaire or interview, a lot of students (12/12 =100%) ticked " reading references (books and internet)" to collect the ideas. Other respondens in questionnaire (5 out of 12) choose to have a discussion with their friends. The research from interview is different from the questionnaire, only one of seven students choose to discuss with friends. On the other hands, the data from the questionnaire showed

According to 4 out of 12 students stated to listing whatever words or phrases to get as many ideas as possible. Another findings showed that there is a different strategy which is asking the material to the lecture. It is proved by the

data from the questionnaire that 1 of 12 and in the interview 1 of 7 students chooses that.

The third is the strategies students use in arranging the ideas. The data from the questionnaire show that almost all of the responden (11 out of 12) read a lot of references to finally make sure about the kinds of strategies that they feel it can use in doing pre-writing activities. Beside that, the data from interview showed that there Another findings from questionnaire shows that 8 out of 12 students tick outline as their strategies in pre-writing activities. The data from interview shows that there are 4 out of 7 choose outline as their strategies. It shows that the outlining is one of popular strategies the students use. Another strategies the students use to explore their ideas in pre-writing activities is asking it to the expert person. As the proof, the data from questionnaire shows that there are 2 out of 12 students choose it as their strategies.

The popular reason why did students choose that particular strategy is showed by the data of the questionnaire and interview. There are a lot of students stated "it is help me to structure the essay as well as possible". The data from questionnaire tell that 7 out of 12 and from the interview 3 out of 6 state that the strategies make them easier to structure their writing. Another finding from interview (5 out of 7) show that the reason of their choices is because it is very simple to use.

Beside that, the other reason from the data in questionnaire show thta there are 4 out of 12 tick "it makes me easier to explore the ideas I have" as their answers. The students who choose "it helps me to get new ideas quickly" are 2 out of 12 students. In the same number, there are 2 out of 12 students choose "the strategies is the suitable strategies I could use".

The common source of "where could they get the strategies" based on the data from questionnaire (9 out of 12) is they got it from internet, beside it the data from interview showed that thee are just 1 out of 7 students tick it as their answer. Another findings showed that the students who get the strategies from their teachers in the class based on interview's data are 7 out of 7 students, but the data from questionnaire showed that there are only 2 out of 12 students who get the strategies from their teachers. The interesting one is there are 5 out of 12 students based on questionnaire's data who use their own strategies in pre-writing activities.

The best and the common strategies which the students often to use to explore their ideas based on the data from questionnaire is they choose getting it from internet to get as many ideas as they found (10 out of 12 students), but there are only 1 out of 7 students in interview which choose this strategies. Another finding from questionnaire showed that there are 4 out of 12 students choose "discussing with their friends" as their strategies. In the interview's data, there are 7 out of 7 students get the ideas from the materials in their class as their best strategies.

The popular reason of "are the strategies very useful to help their writing at all" from the data in questionnaire show that there are 6 out of 12 students who said that the strategies are help their writing at all and the data from interview showed that there are 3 out of 7 students choose the reason. Another finding from questionnaire showed that the students who said that the strategies only help them not at all are 5 out of 12 students, but in the interview's data, thee are 5 out of 7 students choose it as their reason. The data from questionnaire also showed that there are only 1 out of 12 students tick "no, the strategies only little in helping me to write" as their reason.

The popular answer of "could the strategies help all of people in writing?" based on data from questionnaire are 3 out of 12, and there are 8 out of 12 students said that the strategies are very useful for all of people but they can not really make sure for it. The students who said the answer for the question that "it is wrong. But I have the solution for it" is only 1 out of 12 students.

Conclusion

Students might have difficulty in writing, mostly students are lack of idea about what they will do in their paper. That is why pre-writing activity is needed to cope students problem in exploring their idea. There are some strategies that come up to help students to solve their writing problem. The findings of this study showed that to explore their idea before writing students use draft to arrange the idea and structuring the writing. The idea students got are variety, some of the students got the idea from Internet, Book, Magazine, and so on to explore the idea. After they got the idea, they draft it and start to structuring their writing.

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