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STUDENTS' OPINIONS TOWARD WRITING ACTIVITIES
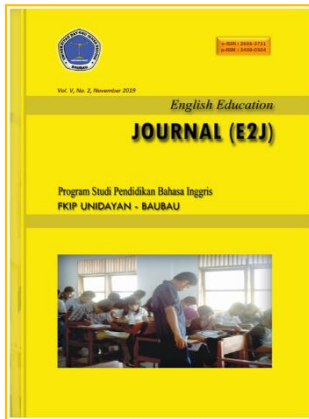
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Abstract
Problem in this research is how is students' opinions toward writing activities. This research is a qualitative research. The subject of the research is First semester consisted of 21 students who pragrammed Basic Writing subject in English Study Program at Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, academic year 2019-2020. The instrument used in this research is questionairre about students' opinion toward writing activities. The test consisted of 10 numbers with 5 optional degree of feeling, are: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Data analysis uses the percentage formula as the frequency is divided by the number of the students, then the total number of the percentage is multiplied by 100% (Sugiyono,2010 in Husain, 2012).[1] The research outcomes is majority students at the first semester of English Study Program, Teaching Training and Education Faculty, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, academic year 2019/2020 presented their positive opinion and responses toward writing activities.

Keywords*: opinion, students, writing activities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The most valuable knowledge to be learnt since it is used to receive all of the information we need in life is language. When we learn a second or a foreign language, it is of course have a meaning that we learn in communicating with other people, in other words that we learn to understand others, speak to them, read what the have written, and write to them. Similarly with English, which this language plays an important role

in global era as it used as a means of communication among the countries in the world and throughout the job fields. Seing the importance of learning English, therefore in Indonesia English become one of the compulsory subject that have to be learnt by the students since elementary to tertiary level of education. English is taught by integrating the four skills as speaking, reading, listening and writing, which is among the four skills,, writing is regarded the most challenging subject to learnt.

Therefore, learning English must not be separated from writing activity, as this skill included in the four skills beside speaking, listening, and reading that have to be mastered by the students, at least have to be taught and learnt by the students. Experts believe that writing is an important skill in the EFL setting as having an effective writing skill is required not only in higher education but also in the world of work and be a best predictor of success in course work. Having a good capability in writing, helps the learner to acquire English language because the activity stimulates thinking and facilitates them to develop some languages skills simultaneously, (Bello, 1997 in [1]). Likewise, Satya, et al. [2] expressed that writing is very important that communication is transmitted more through writing than another type of media. So, students need effective writing skills to meet their academic needs and workplace requirements.

Furthermore, he stated that writing is an essential language factor. It takes good writing skills for all students to meet their educational and employable requirements.

On the contrary, writing well is a major cognitive challenge means that being a skilled writer is not easy as writing is a difficult subject to be mastered, because in doing this activity it is at once a test of memory, language, and a thinking ability. Students find that writing is a tedious process. Teachers find that writing is a difficult subject to teach. Writing skill involves several steps to do as planning, editing, revising, and perhaps re-writing, and these skills are not easily taught nor learnt. In addition, psychologists agree that standards play a very important role in assessing the success of the students in learning how to write well in this case.

Refer to this idea, writing teachers would agree that among some of the reasons that showing that why students cannot write well caused by they find that ESL academic writing is difficult. This is as line with the idea of Riswanto [3] that studying writing is not as not as natural as learning to speak. All people who can write in any language can be assured of having the ability to speak in that language in any way, but not all people who can speak have a good or average ability to write, especially academic writing. As stated by Raimes, 1983 in Riswanto [3] that spoken word is universal, means that in the first few years of life everyone acquires a native language but not everyone learns to read and write; speakers use their voices and bodies to help convey their ideas, but writers only have to rely on words to express their meaning on the page; speakers use pauses and intonation, writers use punctuation; speakers pronounce, writers spell the words; Normally speaking is spontaneous and prepared, writing takes time and is scheduled; a speaker speaks to a listener who is right there, nodding or frowning, interrupting or questioning. For the writer, the readers' responses is either delayed or nonexistent. The writer has only that one opportunity to get the information and be interesting and accurate enough to hold the readers' attention.

Additionally, among some of the main reasons why students dislike writing are, firstly, they have inadequate groundwork and this can turn into fear and frustration. Second, students often feel that writing is a subject that has "no answer". This is valid since there can be answer keys to essay questions but the actual marking scheme of the essay can only be done by the writing teacher [4].

Based on the background above, the researcher conducted the research entitled " Students' Opinions Toward Writing Activities." The research aims to know students opinions toward writing activity the students engaged with.

2. METHODS

This research is qualitative research. The subject of the research consisted of 21

students in the first semester of English Study Program in Education and Teacher Training Faculty, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, academic year 2019-2010. The instrument used in this research is questionairre of students' opinion consisted of 10 numbers with 5 optional answers as strongly agree, agree, Neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The data analyzed by using the percentage formula in which the frequency is divided by the total number of the students, then it is multiplied by 100%, (Sugiyono, 2010 in [5]).

In analyzing the data of the research, the researcher applied the percentage formula as follow:

$$P = \frac{F}{N}$$

P= Percentage
N= Number of Students
F= Frequency

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The result of the research showed that students' opinion in relation to the way they practiced writing skills via pair and work group, majority they expressed the positive opinions as strongly agree is 52% and agree 33%, while the remaining is neither agree nor disagree is 15%, in questionairre item number 1. Then, toward the questionairre item number 2, most of the students presented their good opinion as 43% of strongly agree and 38% of agree that along with their friends and partners, they planned and discussed the topic given or in which they were interested, only 19% who stated neither agree nor disagree. Students' opinion related to the item of questionairre 3 that more than half of the students respond positively (52% is strongly agree and 33% is agree) that their language competence is used to create pieces of writing. Only 15% is neither agree nor disagree about this opinion. Further, in term of item questionairre 4, mostly students gave their favourable reaction that is 76% of them is strongly agree and 24% is agree that

friends and partners provided them suggestions and information about writing techniques. Similarly, toward the item questionairre 5 that their teacher suggested them about writing techniques and information, a great number of the students replied positively as 85% is strongly agree and 15% is agree toward this item. Again, in item of questionairre 6, great number of the students viewed positively (81 % is strongly agree and 19% is agree) toward the writing activities that they had a chance to share and exchange opinions and ideas with friends. Relating to the item of questionairre 7, morethan half of the students that is 38% is strongly agree and 38% is agree, pointed that while the process writing conducted in class, they were able to help their friends, only 24% is neither agree nor disagree toward this item. Furthermore, in the item of questionairre 8, more than half of the students gave affirmative response that 29% is strongly agree and 47% is strongly agree that they like writing process and they enjoyed with the writing classes. The remaining, that is 24% is neither agree nor disagree. Again, in the item of questionairre 9, almost all of the students gave their positive perception that is 52% is strongly agree and 33% is agree that according to them, studying process writing is a leaner-centered approach. The remaining that is 15% is neither agree nor disagree in term of this item. The last, in the item of questionairre 10, greater number of the students gave their affirmative reply that is 81% is strongly agree and 19% is agree that the process of writing is essential and useful to them.

Table 1. Result of Questionairre about Students' Opinion toward Writing Activities

Questio nairre Items	Frequencies of Students' Responses and Percentage				
	5	4	3	2	1
Writing skills are practiced by me via pair and work group, etc.	11 & 52 %	7 & 33 %	3 & 15 %	-	-

I along with my friends and partners planned and discussed the topic given or in which we were interested.	9 & 43%	8 & 38%	4 & 19%	-	-
My language competence is used to create pieces of writing.	11 & 52%	7 & 33%	3 & 15%	-	-
Friends and partners provided me suggestions and information about writing techniques.	16 & 76%	5 & 24%	-	-	-
My teacher suggested me about writing techniques and information	18 & 85%	3 & 15%	-	-	-
I had a chance to share and exchange opinions and ideas with friends	17 & 81%	4 & 19%	-	-	-
While process writing conducted in class, I was able to help friends	8 & 38%	8 & 38%	5 & 24%	-	-
I like writing-process and I enjoyed with writing classes	6 & 29%	10 & 47%	5 & 24%	-	-
According to my opinion, studying process writing is a learner-centered approach	11 & 52%	7 & 33%	3 & 15%	-	-
I agreed that process writing is essential and useful	17 & 81%	4 & 19%	-	-	-

Source: Naresuan University, Phayao Campus, Thailand

3.2 Discussion

Based on the data obtained, majority students pointed their positive opinions related to the item of questionairre given to them. In term of item questionairre 1, they in this case preferred that their writing activities practiced in form of pair or group work. This is a good source of information especially for the lecturer who taught writing in the research place as teaching the students by considering the students' needs. Supportive arguments referring to this condition, stated by Fitria [6]that peer interaction is a key factor in promoting second language learning. It enables learners to collaboratively explore L2 to solve linguistic problems. Storch and Aldosari [7] add that in teacher centered class, teachers or skilled learners tend to dominate class discussion. Hence, it limits the learners L2 production and also restricts the responses of learners. In this regard, they note that for a variety of purposes, pair work or group work is one of the ways that provides learners to practice L2. Moreover it also encourages learners to develop their own strategies that will develop the interaction levels (Choudury, 2005 in [8]). Based on the idea above, the researcher considered that in English study Program, Teacher Training of Education Faculty, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, especially in this case is the students in class B of the first semester tend to learn writing in form of pair or group work. This opinion is acceptable as students learn in this model of learning will have more opportunity to discuss with their friends in relation to the topic given. They can discuss about the topic given, share ideas and the vocabularies used in their writing. This way of learning, peer and group work also increase their learning interaction.

Next, most of the students presented their good opinion that along with their friends and partners, they planned and discussed the topic given or in which they were interested. As stated by Coffin et al. (2003) in [9] that the students' discussion in peer review promotes confidence in students' ability in writing. The confidence will be achieved as the students learn from the work of others. The students, then, can interpret and compare their own writing based on the review of others. In other words, students can learn by reviewing each other's writing to

improve their own writing. This is as line with Chisholm (2006) in [9] suggests that correcting should come later as focusing too early mechanical aspects of writing detracts attention from rethinking and restructuring. In sum, responding and correcting in peer review facilitates students to give feedback to others' writing in the form of discussion rather than in the form of judgment. The idea is as line as the researcher, while students learn with their friend in for of peer or group, they have more opportunity to talk and discuss their ideas since the planning stage to determine the topic, brainstorming their ideas, in drafting, even when they find mistake in their writing through the process of reviewing and editing. The students did all those activities with their friends. Indeed, this process motivated them as they considered that writing is a difficult subject to master, and with friends they can discuss all ideas together and overcome their problems through discussing process.

Related to this item of questionairre, more than half of the students stated their positive opinion about peer and group work that writing in peer or group motivated them to proposed good ideas. As in peer or group work, students believed that their firends would read their ideas written on the paper or listen the ideas proposed orally. Toward their friends' existence in peer or group, students indeed showed their best to present their ideas in their writing activities as their friend were with them to give correction. Knowing their peers will read and directly commented on their papers gives students a concrete sense to write better.

Again, more than half of the students respond positively that their language competence is used to create pieces of writing. This is as line with Fatmawati [10] that writing as studying to focus our mind on important matters, and learning about them. By this activity, a person can find the solution of difficult problem, master the fact even by writing. A person can also communicate their mind that cannot be done through other ways. In other ways, she stated that the act of expressing something through the application of language system. When we write, there are two problematic areas, namely what to write

and how to write it. It is then clear that language skills are defined as the ability to conventionally manipulate the language rules, while extra languistic system or world knowledge refers to what the writer knows about the topic to be written. The idea is as line with (Widdowson in Saleha, 2008) cited in Asriati [11] that writing is a communicative activity and is carried aout in accordance with certain general principal in which underline the use of language in communication. Based on the students' opinion above, the researcher agree that students' language competence is used to create pieces of writing as writing is considered the difficult language skill to acquire since it involves many aspects of linguistics, social, and writing knowledge and conventions. In othe words, developing the theme ideas in writing included the author's ability to use the language type as sounds, terms and sentence structures; the capacity to understand and construct language forms which are no more than sentences; the skill of using language in different contexts; and the ability to compensate for lack of ability in any of the other ideas. In the end, language learners who really need to communicate in their adopted language tend to develop a number of strategies for making themselves clear inspite of their incomplete knowledge.

Then, mostly students gave their favourable reaction that friends and partners provided them suggestions and information about writing techniques. As stated that peer' feedback refers to the suggestions or comments, questions or inquires thal learners offer each other after reading any piece of writing with the aim of producing reader based prose, (Flower, 1979) in [12]. The researcher support those ideas that students works in peer or group writing is worthwile experience as this tehcnique offered the students an opportunity for social interaction with their friends. It is also improved students' writing skills. Furthermore, the technique enhanced students' critical thinking, confidence, creativity and motivation. In addition, it helped in improving their assignments.

Their teacher suggested them about writing techniques and information, a great

number of the students replied positively toward this question. Feedback plays an important role in enhancing the students' confidence in writing in English as well as their overall writing performance. If the students are affraid of being evaluated, the writing instructor can apply different types of feedback which are not threatening to students' self confidence. Some feedbacks are highly recommended to be used in ESL/EFL classroom, such as direct feedback (Hamidun, Hashim, & Othman, 2012), selective written feedback (Andersson, 2011), progress feedback (Duijnhouwer, Prins, & Stokking, 2010) in [13]. Seeing students' opinion in this item, the researcher agree that teacher's suggestion about the writing techniques and information is really important to students in writing activities. Students need to talk about their topics before they start to write and teacher provides opportunity not only for talking but also listening students in their writing activities in which the activities help the students to focus and get the initial sense of audience for their writing. During writing, talking and listening can help students clarify and check for meaning and will often lead to revising and rewriting. Besides, teachers' provides opportunity for students to share the sources of their inspiration for students' writing can be a source of knowledge for students in crafting their writing and gathering the content knowledge. In the end, teacher provide feedback is very encouraging for students in writing.

Great number of the students viewed positively toward the writing activities that they had a chance to share and exchange opinions and ideas with friends. A number of studies reported that the process of providing feedback on peers' work increasing the opportunity of meaningful interaction with peers and maximize the opportunity of sharing new ideas as well as understanding different perspectives on the wtriting process. (Liu and Hansen, 2002; Tsui and Ng, 2000; Zhang, 1995) in [12]. The researcher in this case is totally agree as writing activities is also a social process more over done collaboratively. In colaborative writing, students done their writing process by discussing the topic or their ideas with their friend. Students share opinions related to the content, do revising and also editing their friends' writing. In this model of learning. Students engage the meaningful and interaction process of sharing knowledge and information in finishing the task given. The social process in writing activity itself indeed help students improve the quality of students writing. Therefore, students work with their friends in their writing have many benefit toward students relation with their friends in their writing process beside their writing product.

Furthermore, more than half of the students pointed that while the process writing conducted in class, they were able to help their friends. In relation to this students' opinion, Walkabayashi [14] stated that through peer feedback in process writing, learners engage in critical evaluation in peer text for the purpose of exchanging help for revision. This opinion is as line with the idea had been proposed by the researcher previously that as a social process, writing can promote the activity of sharing ideas, knowledge and information between students with their friends, the way can be as the opportunity of helping each other in writing as writing itself regarded as a difficult skill to master.

Majority of the students like writing process and they enjoyed with the writing classes. Arya [15] stated that students assumed that English is a difficult subject, especially writing. As many problems occured in teaching and learning writing. By applying process writing approach, it motivates students to do their writing well and enjoy the writing process. Based on the idea above, the researcher agree that students like and enjoyed writing process as through this activity students have more opportunity in discussing and sharing ideas with their friend since in determining the topic, brainstorming their ideas, drafting their composition, revising and editing process. The activity of doing the task together with friends will motivated them as they have friends to discuss about the topic given. The students will be more anthusiastic to learn as they have friend to discuss with, to correct the

mistake an to solve their problems during their writing process.

Again, almost all of the students gave their positive perception that studying process writing is a leaner-centered approach. As Brown (1997) in Farah [12] presented that peer feedback as a model of writing process, the learners have a great responsibity for their learning as we are moving from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning. The ideas is as line with the researcher that writing process is a learner centered approach. In writing process, students did their writing activity which is consisted of several stages as pre-writing activities consisted of several steps as determine the topic, brainstorming their ideas and drafting. Then, students develop their ideas as writing a paragraph or essay. while the activity of revising and editing process is conducted every time during the students writing their paragraph or essay. The last is the final process or preparing their writing product. Engaging themselves in writing process, is totally the way of learning centered to students itself.

The last, greater number of the students gave their affirmative reply that the process of writing is essential and useful to them. Richard and Renandya (2002) in Arya, [15] delivered their idea that there are many reasons and benefits of process writing as well. When the feedback is given on the draft, it is more useful since the students find the opportunity to correct their mistakes by writing again. Therefore, it is possible to apply process writing in the class. Instead of giving the writing topic to the students and asking fo the final product, through that way, the teacher can help the students go through the stages of process writing. In addition Arya [15] presented the idea that the use of process writing approach is very useful to the students because they were expected to be able to learn writing well and think that writing is not so difficult. Through process writing, they learn writing through a process or step which makes them easier to learn writing in education area. Those ideas are similar with the researcher that students did their writing activity in writing process,

which consisted of several steps, first, prewriting which is consisted of deciding the topic in this way students attempt to determine the topic to write, then brainstorm the ideas related to the topic, in this way students begin to list several ideas related to the topic had been determine. Braistorming can be done in form of clustering, mapping or list. After the stages in prewriting, next is drafting in which students begin to develop their ideas in form of paragraph or essay. While the step of revising and editing occur during the two steps before. This process of course are really essential and useful for students in learning writing itself.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on data presented previously, the reseacher concluded that majority students at the first semester of English Study Program, Teaching Training and Education Faculty, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, academic year 2019/2020 presented their positive opinion toward several items relating to the writing activities in the class. Those items are as follow: first, students had a positive opinion toward writing activities which is delivered in pair or group work with their friends. This opinion is acceptable as students learn in this model of learning will have more opportunity to discuss with their friends in relation to the topic given. They can discuss about the topic given, share ideas and the vocabularies used in their writing. This way of learning, peer and group work also increase their learning interaction. In addition, along with their friends and partners, they have opportunity to plan and discuss the topic given or in which they were interested. In other words, responding and correcting in peer review facilitates students to give feedback to others' writing in the form of discussion rather than in the form of judgment. Additionally, peer and group work that writing motivated students to proposed good ideas. As in peer or group work, students believed that their friends would read their ideas written on the paper or listen the ideas proposed orally. Toward their friends' existence in peer or group, students indeed showed their best to present their

ideas in their writing activities as their friend were with them to give correction. Knowing their peers will read and directly commented on their papers gives students a concrete sense to write better. Finally, in colaborative writing, students done their writing process by discussing the topic or their ideas with their friend. Students share opinions related to the content, do revising and also editing their friends' writing. In this model of learning. Students engage the meaningful and interaction process of sharing knowledge and information in finishing the task given. Therefore, students work with their friends in their writing have many benefit toward students relation with their friends in their writing process beside improving the quality of their writing product. Second, students enjoyed the writing process and they stated that process writing is essential and useful to them. Through writing process, students did their writing consisted of several steps, first, prewriting which is consisted of deciding the topic in this way students attempt to determine the topic to write, then brainstorm the ideas related to the topic, in this way students begin to list several ideas related to the topic had been determine. Braistorming can be done in form of clustering, mapping or list. After the stages in prewriting, second is drafting, in which students begin to develop their ideas in form of paragraph or essay. While the step of revising and editing occur during the two steps before. This process of course are really essential and useful for students in learning writing itself according to students.

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