The Teacher’s Efforts in Solving Students’ Writing Problems
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Abstract
As one of language skills that is learned in schools in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia, writing skill has been learned at the level of senior high school. Additionally, the problems in this study were the problems in writing as faced by EFL students. This research was intended to describe the difficulties in writing faced by students, and the efforts to overcome these problems that given by teacher. To collect the data, the writer conducted a descriptive qualitative research at SMA Negeri 3 Banda Aceh. Twenty-five students in XI IPA 6, twenty-four students in XI IPS 1 and two English teachers participated in this study. To conduct this study, the writer used questionnaire and interview. The result of this research shows that the difficulties faced by the EFL students in writing were lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, grammar, content, organize idea, idiomatic expression and spelling. Therefore, there are some efforts were given, namely; learning more about grammar, memorizing the vocabulary, and motivate the students to practice their writing, and grouping students.

Key words: Writing, Problems in Writing, Teacher’s Efforts

1. INTRODUCTION
As one of the language skills, writing is one of the ways to communicate to others. As a means of communication, writing is used to convey ideas in written forms. It is one of the language skills that is learned in schools in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Besides, writing is one of the competencies that must be developed in Senior High School based on the 2013 Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum stated that “teaching writing at the level of Senior High School is started by introducing a variety of English text types (e.g report, narrative, and analytical exposition) in daily habits activity” (Depdiknas, 2013). In other words, the expectation of curriculum in teaching writing skill at Senior High School level is that students are able to write some texts in English such as report, narrative and analytical exposition text well.

The importance of writing skill mastery is quite reasonable for EFL learners. In terms of this, Harmer (2004, p. 3) said that the ability to write in English is an important skill for foreign language learners. In addition, writing can offer more opportunities to learn English. Furthermore, Andrew (1996, p.90) said that writing
skill can offer students considerable opportunities to increase their vocabulary, refine their knowledge of the grammar, and develop their understanding of how things are best expressed and how well their message is understood. Tangpermpoon (2008, p. 1) states that writing is the most difficult skill, because it requires the writers to focus on lexical and syntactic knowledge of organization in L2 to produce a good writing. In addition, a result of study in Taiwan by Chen (2002, p. 35) showed that there are some problems faced by EFL students from Taiwan for instance, word usage and English expressions, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, organization, errors on preposition (idioms) or slang, L1 influence. In relation with lack of vocabulary, Lee (2003, p. 14) also says EFL students have always complained about their lack of vocabulary and are frustrated by their inability to express what they want to say in writing.

Because writing is hard to master, the teacher has to make some efforts to overcome the difficulties in writing skill faced by the students. Teacher has to guide and give more attention to the students during the process of writing. Cimcoz (1999, as cited in Al-Buainain, 2006, p.14) states that teachers who want to help their students gain confidence in writing should try to follow a writing process that takes the student from insecurity to success.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is one of the language skill which must be learned. It holds the important role in mastering a language. Hedge (2005) defined that writing is a part of communication process which can use formal or informal language. Students as the language learners should learn writing skill and have the purpose in writing to make it as a goal or aim. Nunan (2003, p. 88) defines writing as the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly. Thus, if the students want to write English well, they have to organize their ideas well too. In addition, Byrne (1988, p. 14) says writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind: that is, we translate our thoughts into language. As a conclusion, writing is the process of transferring ideas in our minds to a written form by involving its components to a language.

2.2 The Learner’s Problem in Writing

According to Smith (1991, as cited in Berbace, 2007, p. 2), the students face difficulties in writing because they do not often practice. It means that, in order to be good in writing, we have to do more practice. Kim (2005, p. 181) argues that there are five major writing problems such as contents, organization/structure, language, academic writing style and mechanics. Msanjila (2005, p. 17) also states that there are some classification of writing problems: capitalization problem, punctuation problem, inexplicitness/ fuzziness, poor organization/illogical sequence, spelling problem and grammatical problem. Mousavi and Naeeini (2011, p. 589), have similar ideas with Msanjila that are aspects that influence the students’ ability in writing skill such as punctuation, grammatical difficulties and spelling.

In addition, Anderson (2005) urged that vocabulary play major role in second language research to classroom teaching. This vocabulary problem also a major problem in both oral and written English to success in school (Kamil et al.,
This case also happened in Indonesian context, according to Irawati and Maharani (2012, p. 123), many EFL students in Indonesia thought that writing is difficult. Generally, they had a problem with English complex vocabulary, which are related to the spelling and meaning. The students stated that they got difficulty to remember the English vocabulary since they often found many unfamiliar words.

2.5 The Teacher’s Efforts in Improving Students’ Writing Skill

There are some efforts suggested by experts to overcome the difficulties in writing skill. According to Wyrick (1996, p. 3) to have a good writing, the students have to know how to gather and organize their ideas well because good writing is a good idea organization. In addition, Mojica (2010, p. 13) suggests some ways to overcome writing problems, for example, jotting down new words, keeping a diary, reading good materials, getting more input from teachers, being given encouragements, studying grammar, practicing, and consistently writing in English. Blanton (1987, cited in Chokwe, 2011, p. 39) states that introducing journals to students will assist them to become better writers. She is fully convinced that journals are effective tools for organizing the idea in writing skill. After students read those journals, they can see how the writer writes the journals correctly like how the writer organize the idea, make coherence and cohesion paragraph, determine words which easy to be understood so that the students can imitate the writer how to write properly.

Unsuccessful in writing skills, students’ vocabulary and idiomatic language are also very important language components to consider. Nation (2013) explained that learning vocabulary in another language is close connection to the ability to negotiation the meaning of idiomatic language. To understand the lack of ability to understand idiomatic English, Lennon (1998) noted that the approaches in teaching idiomatic English ability is by training more new words to the learners. If the teacher wants the students to write well, she should help them. For instance, Hedge (2005, p. 20) states that helping students with getting ideas together, planning, and drafting is only a part of teacher’s task.

3. METHODS

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. Since this study is descriptive qualitative in nature, thus, the results of this research are not intended to generalize to a wider context or scope. There are two kinds of instruments used in this study. They are interview and questionnaire. This study was conducted at the SMA Negeri 3 Banda Aceh. The data was collected from 25 students of class XI IPA 6, 24 students of class XI IPS 1 and two teachers who teach in these classes.

In relation to interview, the researcher asked several questions related to the efforts made by the teachers to solve the students’ problems in writing. In addition, she asked some problems in writing faced by students based on her experiences in teaching learning. To support the data from the interview, the researcher also used the questionnaires for collecting data in this study. The questionnaires was distributed to 49 students. The interview guide consisted of 10 questions about teacher’s effort in solving students’ writing problem.

After completing all of the data collection process, the data of interview and questionnaire were displayed and analysed to find the final result of the research focus. The results of interview were described in the form of narration. While the
data from questionnaire were analysed by using the formula taken from Sudijono (2010, p. 43) in the form of percentage

4. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Result

The instruments used in this study were interview and questionnaire. In order to know the problems that faced by students in writing, the writer distributed a set of questionnaires to the students to see the most common problem that faced by them in writing skill. In the following part, the results of the questionnaire will be discussed.

![Figure 4.1 The Result of the Students' Problems Percentage from XI IPA 6](image)
Accordingly, from the chart present we can see that both of class had the same problems in writing skill. Students in class XI IPA 6, most of them had problems in getting ideas, vocabulary, grammar, content, organize ideas, and idiom. In addition, 11 students in this class find it easy to learn and understand spelling although the others students sometimes had problems with it. On the other hand, most students also state that they never faced the obstacle in learning and understanding about capitalization and punctuation.

Then, students in class XI IPS 1 also had the same problems with students in class XI IPA 6. They sometimes had problems in getting ideas, vocabulary, grammar, content, organize ideas, idiom and spelling. However, 66.7% students in this class never had problems in learning capitalization while the others sometimes find it hard to learn. So, the usage of capitalization is not a major issues in the students’ writing problems. For the problem in learning and understanding punctuation, 10 from 24 students find it easy to learn and understand but for 14 students sometimes still had problems with it.

In order to have the reliable data, the writer also interviewed two English teachers who taught in the second grade class. Both of them realized that the students still faced the difficulties in learning English, especially in writing, such as grammatical, vocabulary and organize idea. Most students tended to not understand how to organize idea than grammatical and vocabulary. They did not have enough knowledge about organizing ideas and they are confused what they have to write, then they were reluctant to practice writing English and they had lack vocabulary due to they could not adjust the word when they tried to write in English. They also have problem about the grammar to arrange the good sentences in a paragraph.
Therefore, to overcome the students' problems, one of the teacher usually asked the students to read materials to increase vocabulary, find difficult words firstly after the students read a book, then she asked students find the meaning of the word and memorize vocabulary. In addition, the teacher also put student in writing group so that student can write in cooperative way and students can sharing their work with their friend. The teachers added that in the teaching and learning process, they asked students to practice to write in English, and the teacher motivate the student to write often to improve their writing skill. One of teacher often asked students to write anything what they want to write like write a diary as homework. It could be about their daily activity or their experience. At the next meeting she will collect their writing and correct it.

4.2 Discussion

The result of questionnaire given to 49 students, the writer found that the students still have the difficulty in learning writing skill. From the result of the questionnaire with students about the difficulties that were faced by them in writing, it was found that the difficulties faced by the students in writing were lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, grammar, content, organize idea, idiomatic expression and spelling.

In order to overcome those problems, the teacher had many efforts to solve students' problems, such as the teacher asked to the students to find difficult words firstly after they read a book, then she asked them to memorize vocabulary to increase their vocabulary, learning more about grammar, give feedback, and use multimedia in writing class to make the writing class more fun. In addition, the teacher also put students in writing group so that students can share their ideas and work with their friends. Doing work in group will be easier for them to write in English. Last but not least, the teacher motivate the students to practice their writing, and asked them to write anything such as about their experience or their daily activity in English.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The aims of this research are to find out the writing problems faced by the students and also the efforts to cope the problems from their teacher. In fact, there are some problems faced by the students are found in this study. The problems that mostly faced by the students were lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, grammar, content, organize idea, spelling and idiomatic expression. There were some efforts taken, namely; asking the students to find difficult words firstly after they read a book to increase vocabulary, ask them to find the meaning of the word and memorizing vocabulary. Moreover, the teacher should motivate the students to practice writing in English, give meaningful feedback to their writing, and the teacher taught more about grammar. In addition, the teacher asked them to form a group so that the students can share their ideas and knowledge with friends. She also use multimedia in writing class to make the writing class more fun and interesting.

Therefore, the writer suggests the teacher to know some kinds of difficulties in writing faced by them so that teacher can give the strategies in teaching writing to help them to overcome the difficulties. Many strategies/effort that can be used by them as mentioned and explained in the discussion. For example, teachers should give more feedback to students, give some good materials for students, providing
daily time for writing, sharing teacher works, and provide many opportunities for students to write. The teacher should be creative to make the teaching learning process more interesting so that students don’t get bored with the writing process.

For other writer, it is expected that this research can be a reference for other writers to conduct the study about English problems and efforts/strategies. And for the students, They should practice English especially writing regularly inside or outside the class. They should try to apply some efforts to overcome their problems when they write in English in order to improve their writing skill.

6. REFERENCES


