

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

In this millennium era, the needs for writing skill become apparent in the society. The ability to write will continue to be a decisive factor not only in college but also in the job field every year. Writing job-application letter is the real example for the applicants to expose and promote their abilities that they already had in the written mode. Later, writing business letter, memos, reports at work, and proposal will also demand the skill of writing. Axelrod and Cooper (1988:3) state that “The United States is now an information society, one in which the ability to organize and synthesize information and to write intelligently and effectively is even more important than it was in the past.” This condition above also happens in Indonesia, many companies and banks require the employers to be able to communicate actively both for spoken and written. Not only on the job field but also in college, students who write and learn well will earn better grades. This point is also stressed by Weigle (2002:5). According to her “writing and critical thinking are seen as closely linked, and expertise in writing is seen as an indication that students have mastered the cognitive skills required for university works.”

Therefore, teachers sometimes use the students’ writings as the basis of an evaluation for their students. The real example of the above fact is the making of a thesis. Through thesis teachers can evaluate their students’ writing ability because

in thesis the students must organize and synthesize the theory with the facts that are faced during the research conducted. According to D'Angelo (1980:4) states that "writing would still be valuable in education because it facilitates thought." Writing helps the students think more critical. When students write, students compose meanings by putting together facts and ideas in their compositions. Besides, writing also contributes to students' personal development. As the students are asked to write their personal experience indirectly, they learn how to record, clarify, and organize their experience. Thus the students come to a better understanding of themselves. So, it is clear that the importance of writing has spread over many areas in this life. Hence, it would be better to prepare the EFL (English as Foreign Language) students to be able to master the writing skill at the early stage of writing class so that they can start and develop the habit of thinking on paper too.

Writing is a skill that everybody can learn with practice over and over again. In lines with this, Langan (2001:10) states that "writing is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking and like any skill, it can be learned." Many students believe that writing is a natural gift as a result they never make a truly honest effort to learn to write. Shortly, it makes sense that the more the students practice writing, the better they will write.

Unfortunately, there are some difficulties that are faced by many EFL students in writing class, which are faced also by the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. First, the students usually have a trouble in getting started to write. When they face a blank sheet of

paper, they have difficulty in generating their idea based on the topic given. Second, the students also have difficulties in encountering appropriate vocabulary especially the word choice in their writings. Third, the students get confused in arranging their ideas coherently in the new language. The three difficulties above need serious concern when they occur during the writing process because their existence will make the result of the students' writings become unreadable. Gebhard, (1996:221) states that "the usual things associated with writing are word choice, the use of appropriate grammar (such as subject verb agreement, tense, and article use), syntax (word order), mechanics (e.g. punctuation, spelling, and handwriting), and organization of ideas into coherent and cohesive form." Later, according to Weigle (2002:35) "because of the constraints of limited second-language knowledge, writing in a second language may be hampered because of the need to focus on language rather than content." In line with Weigle; Silvia, (1993:668) "in a review of differences between first and second-language writing, found that writing in a second language tends to be more constrained, more difficult, and less effective than writing in a first language: second-language writers plan less, and write less fluently and accurately than first-language writers." As a result, for many students, writing is more an obstacle than an opportunity. Because writing seems difficult and threatening, many of the students write reluctantly. Consequently, some students are less motivated when they are joining the writing class.

Next, to overcome the difficulties during the writing process especially the difficulties in generating ideas based on the topic given, encountering the

appropriate vocabulary in writing, and arranging the idea coherently in the new language, the writer is going to conduct an experiment on writing narrative composition using Dictation-Composition (dicto-comp). The writer deliberately chooses dicto-comp because it is one kind of technique for teaching guided writing. Guided writing itself is a suggested technique for teaching writing to the EFL students at the early stage. Baskof, (1971) states “for EFL students with limited language skill; one way to start writing in the early stage is through guided writing.”

Next, according to Riley (1972) “dicto-comp can be used to help students develop continuity and fluency in speaking and writing.” In line with Riley, some researches suggest that dicto-comp may improve students’ fluency and sense of discourse coherence (Buckingham& Peck, 1976; Kleinmann& Selekman, 1980; Nation, 1991). In other words, by maintaining this technique, the students’ difficulties in organizing thought or idea in composing writing task are more or less solved. The dicto-comp also can be some help for teachers to motivate their students to enjoy writing in writing class.

In this experimental study, the writer will compare dicto-comp to brainstorming as techniques for teaching narrative writing. The underlying reason for this comparison is that writing teacher as technique in writing composition mostly uses brainstorming. Finally, in applying this technique (the dicto-comp) for teaching writing, the writer limits only to narration because the stress of writing in Writing A class – the subject that is going to be used in this study - in this department is writing narrative composition.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the above background, the central question to be answered in this study is: Is there a significant difference between students' narrative writing achievement who are taught using dicto-comp and those who are taught using brainstorming?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the objective of the study is to find whether there is significant difference between students' narrative writing achievements that are taught using dicto-comp and those who are taught using brainstorming.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give some valuable contributions for the students of English Department so that they no longer are fearful or hateful to write. Montalvan (1999) states that "One of the very best ways to use dictation is the dicto-comp; an effective exercise can be used even at beginning levels." The writer sees that this technique more or less can cover the difficulties faced by the students during the writing class. Moreover, based on the theory of dicto-comp, the students learn how to explain the idea of the passage in their own words, but they do it in controlled situation. Practically, dicto-comp not only requires the students to write, but also to summarize, to organize, to memorize, and to use

vocabulary or phrases based on the information read by the teacher. Shortly, through dicto-comp the students learn how to communicate their idea by using English in particular context through writing. Finally, this study is also dedicated for the teachers in this department in teaching writing so that both the teachers and the students enjoy the writing class.

1.5 Scopes and Limitations

The study is limited to the following points:

- The population of this study are the second semester students of the academic year 2002/ 2003 of English Department who are taking Writing A. Then, the samples of this study are two classes of Writing A (Class B and Class B). The writer chooses Writing A because it is the beginning writing class level in this department and dicto-comp itself is suitable for the beginner. Montalvan (1999) states that “One of the very best ways to use dictation is the dicto-comp; an effective exercise can be used even at beginning levels.
- The experiment only deals with narrative writing because the stress of the students’ taking writing A is writing narrative writing.
- The writing being experimented is the students’ posttest writings that consist of at least 150 words.
- The material in this study is in the form of narrative writing for experimental and control groups.

1.6 Theoretical Frameworks

The major theory that is going to be used to support the application of dicto-comp in this study is the theory of learning psychology and the nature of schemata. In addition, the writer also includes, the nature of writing ability, the nature of narrative writing, the nature of dictation, the nature of dicto-comp, the nature of brainstorming, and two previous studies.

1.7 The Research Hypotheses

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the students' writing achievement taught by using dictation composition (dicto-comp) and those who are taught using brainstorming.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant difference in the students' writing achievement taught by using dictation composition (dicto-comp) and those who are taught using brainstorming.

1.8 Assumptions

At the heart of the study, the following two assumptions are formulated:

- The two raters assigned to score the students' compositions are assumed to be doing their best and following the guidelines given.
- The dicto-comp that is used during the experimental will indirectly encourage the students to write the composition. Therefore, it is

assumed that the subjects are also quite motivated to do the dicto-comp during the treatments.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In this study the writer sees that there are some essential terms to be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding in interpreting this study. They are:

- *Writing*: White (1986: 12) regards writing as an act of sharing new ideas and old ideas with a new perspective with the human community. The relation of a part idea to the whole is communicatively with the reader.
- *Narrative writing*: Warriner (1977: 527) states that narrative writing is a kind of discourse, which answers the questions what happen, when that is and where that is.
- *The Dicto-Comp*: According to Richards (2002), dicto-comp is a technique for practicing composition in language classes. A passage is read to a class, and then the students must write out what they understand and remember from the passage, keeping as closely to the original as possible but using their own words where necessary.
- *Achievement*: Page & Thomas (1979: 10) use this term to describe performance in the subjects of the given curriculum. In this study, achievement is related to the subjects' writing performance only.

- *Brainstorming*: According to Langgan (2000) brainstorming is a process of generating a lot of information about certain subject within a short time.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction of the study that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, significance of the study, scopes and limitations of the study, theoretical framework, hypothesis, assumptions, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter two deals with previous study and review of related literature. The methodology of the study is described in chapter three. The data analysis and findings are discussed in depth in chapter four. Finally, a summary of what has been discussed in previous chapters is presented in chapter five which also includes some suggestions to be paid attention by the readers.