

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

A survey by an International Education Company in 2016 has shown that Indonesia is falling behind Malaysia, Vietnam, and other ASEAN countries in English proficiency. Education First's English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranks Indonesia in 32nd place from 72 countries which are surveyed by their students' skills in English. The survey has found that one of the reasons behind Indonesia's rank is because learning English which is considered as a foreign language is very hard since they are not using it in their daily life.

Some strategies are needed in order to make students understand and still have curiosity in learning English. There are four skills that need to be mastered in English as stated by Brown (2001), such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Ayudhia (2001), from the four skills, writing comes as the hardest skill for the students to be mastered since writing needs accuracy in grammar, spelling, and also it needs to develop an idea in a certain way. That is why the teacher should find a way how to make various activities which can solve the problem that students face in writing class.

To solve that problem, teachers should be able to know their role in the writing class in order to determine what they will do in the teaching process. According to Brown (2001), the roles of teachers are as a facilitator and also a respondent. It means teachers should be able to facilitate the students writing by

helping students to engage with the process of thinking and giving a response after the students finish their writing.

According to Harmer (2007), there are three roles of teachers in the classroom. First is a teacher as a motivator that should be able to give motivation to the students to write. Second is a teacher as a resource that should be able to guide the students in the writing process and look at the students' writing progress, giving some advice and suggestions in an appropriate way. And the last role is teachers as feedback provider by giving a positive response to the students' writing.

However, the majority situation in writing class is contrary to it, especially at writing class in one of the English Education Department in Bandung. Writing activities in the class do not run well as it should be because of some causes. One of them is because of the big classes. It is supported by Pujianto (2014), which states in big classes, it is too difficult to correct the students' writing even the teachers instruct to do peer correction. It effects the situation that a lot of English Education Department students who have low proficiency in English, particularly writing skills. In this kind of situation, teachers should be creative and also careful to do an effective correction.

In order to do an effective correction, there are kinds of writing activity on the internet in a form of blog writing that the teacher also can use. Pollard (2014) states that writing in the online media positively affects the students' motivation. Students can receive many kinds of feedback since the reader may be varied too. According to Yastibas & Cepik (2015), writing skills are generally assessed and

taught with the use of e-portfolios, and it is agreed by Erice (2008) that states students can improve their writing skills through this process.

Afterward, there are some relevant studies that use E-Portfolio in writing aspects. One of them is the study from Kongsuebchart and Suppatsere in 2016 entitled “A Weblog-Based Electronic Portfolio to Improve English Writing Skills of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students”. The result of the study shows that Weblog-based E-portfolio was a suitable tool for Thai undergraduate students for improving their writing skills.

This research is different from the previous research that was conducted by Kongsuebchart and Suppatsere in 2016. The previous research only focuses on the impact before and after learning with E-Portfolio. This researcher is leveling up from the previous research. This research does not only try to find out the use of E-Portfolio to improve students’ writing skill but also tries to find out how significant the improvement is. So, the result of this research determines either E-Portfolio platform really improve the English Education students writing ability, or not.

B. Research questions

From the observation above, the researcher formulates the problems of the research as follows:

1. How is the process of improving students’ writing ability through E-Portfolio platform in writing class?
2. In what aspects can an E-portfolio platform improve students’ writing ability?

C. Research objectives

Based on the background above, the study is intended:

1. to observe the process of improving students' writing ability through E-Portfolio platform, and
2. to find out the aspects improved in students' writing by means of E-Portfolio platform.

D. Limitation of the Study

The present study focuses on two matters. First, portrays the “Wattpad” as an E-Portfolio platform implementation in teaching writing. The second concerns are on what aspects E-Portfolio can improve students' writing ability.

E. Research significances

This research gives several significances. *Practically*, this research is useful for a teacher that E-Portfolio platform can be used as a media in order to improve students' writing ability.

Theoretically, this research can be useful for information that E-Portfolio platform can be useful to go through some empirical studies conducted concerning the students' writing ability.

F. Rationale

According to Raimes (1991), process-based approach generally focuses on the way students writing. It is related with the constructivism which tells that in terms of interpretation of the world, each person is unique. It is a learner-centered approach in which learners have control over processes of their writing. It is supported by Zamel (1983) which states the definition of writing as a nonlinear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. It means writing is a process of discovery, not only focusing on the final product but also the whole processes such as thinking, drafting and reviewing.

As an effect of the latest developments in the technology that created an integration of writing into computers, the process-based approach is reinforced by providing both collaborative writing opportunities and skill development using computer-based programs. In this case, Web 2.0 tools in terms of online platforms such as wikis, blogs, and podcasts give students a great chance to collaborate each other during the process of the writing itself.

In process-based writing, portfolios take an important role. According to Blair, K. L., & Takayoshi, (1997), portfolios have become a widely accepted place in writing instruction as they assess the written proficiency of the students over time. During the development of the technology especially in this digital era, e-portfolio emerged as an evolution of the traditional portfolios in the 1990s (Madden, 2007).

By the time to time e-portfolio has replaced paper-based portfolios since it has several advantages in terms of teaching English for foreign language. The First is e-portfolios are much simple, smaller and also more compact than the traditional portfolios, so it is possible to be carried and be shared with others. The second is it is more effective and efficient since it requires students to spend less time. Thirdly, some extensive materials such as pictures, animation, graphics, sound, and videos are possible to be used by students. Lastly, e-portfolios are searchable and to when students want to manipulate or reorganize the records, it is simpler. Furthermore, the feedback is much faster to be delivered to the students (Abrami, P & Barrett, 2005).

In online writing, the role of teachers in this practice is to monitor and guide students, and revise their writings during the process when it is necessary. Little (2000) asserts that the condition in order to reach the desired goals of teaching in autonomous learning is to enable teachers to have their own independence. The learning situations which support self-determination are very advantageous in terms of learners' creativity, attention, cognitive development, and achievement.

In conclusion, blogs which are part of e-portfolio constitute a constructivist way of learning (Richardson, 2010). By reaching the information and making and the meaning in mind, learners develop a high level of thinking skill. It is also called as a collaborative learning tool which has aroused a great interest among educators lately (Godwin-Jones, 2003). By writing comments, critics and feedback to each other's page and interaction among users are necessary to improve the quality. The discussions may help to improve the feeling of community among students (Miceli

et al., 2010). E-portfolio is not only supported collaboration, but they also help autonomy. Learners may decide the topic and write freely whenever they want. By using blogs, ownership and creativity are stimulated. Learners use the foreign language in a comfortable way, they learn about the target culture, which is impossible to learn from a textbook alone (Ducate, L. C., & Lomicka, 2008).

From the explanation above, this research will use the E-Portfolio platform that is called Wattpad as a platform in order to improve students' writing ability in learning writing process.

G. Previous research

There are some studies that discuss the improvement of students' writing ability through the portfolio, with EFL learners in particular. There are some experimental studies have been conducted in last decade dealing with portfolio assessment that reports technical information and employs accepted research techniques (Herman, J. L., & Winters, 1983).

In Japan, Apple, M., & Shimo (2004) tested students' perceptions of portfolio creation in an EFL context. Sixty-one participants or students in two different universities were attending an English writing class. Some students' selected portfolio work was used in order to be the elementary means of assessment. The tests were not also used for assessment. In order to measure the responses of the students which showed that how they believed portfolio technique could helped them in order to improve expressive and compositional writing ability, the self-report questionnaire was used.

Paesani (2006) conducted a writing portfolio project in order to assemble language competences, content and the learning of skills through the literary study. Their reactions (the students) to the portfolio writing project stressed the successful value of the project in promoting the improvement of the students' writing skills and grammatical competence.

In other studies, Qinghua (2010) tried to consider the impact of Portfolio-based writing assessment on Chinese EFL students writing development. It is reported a comparative study designed to investigate differences between the non-PBWA class and the PBWA experimental class in terms of writing products involving fluency, accuracy, coherence, and complexity at the end of the semester. The data indicated that PBWA facilitated the growth of EFL writing ability at least in some dimensions, specifically, accuracy and coherence.

The focus of Moradan, A., & Hedayati (2011) research's was on the impact of portfolios and also conferencing on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. The result showed that there was some significant difference between the that of the control group on the post-test and performance of the two experimental groups. In other hands, after implementing portfolios and conferencing techniques, no significant difference was found between the performance of the two experimental groups.

Regarding the effectiveness of electronic portfolios in the field of writing an assessment, Collins (1992) states that portfolio assessment introduced a new scoring system whereby the teacher shares, controls, and works collaboratively with students which have changed the traditional scoring of writing itself. According to Pourvandi Vangah, F., Jafarpur, M., & Mohammadi (2016), an electronic portfolio

provides evidence of knowledge and skills which means it is included as an effective instructional and assessment technique. Furthermore, portfolio assessment not only gives an authentic information about the development of students but also could be used as a means of helping students to overcome their writing anxiety in foreign language learning.

However, this research is still different from the previous research that was conducted. Those previous researches only focus on the impact before and after learning with E-Portfolio. This researcher is leveling up from the previous research. This research does not only try to find out the use of E-Portfolio to improve students' writing skill but also tries to find out how is the improvement during the process and what aspects that are improved. So the result of this research determines either the E-Portfolio platform really improve the English Education students writing ability, or not.

