

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the research, research questions, research purposes, significances of the research, rationale, research design that consist of method of the research, source of the data, techniques of collecting data, and data analysis techniques.

A. Background

The research is aimed at finding out how the use of Reflective Writing (RW) helps students to improve writing and critical thinking skills. Writing skill becomes important for every student and it becomes a challenge for them. In making an essay, one of the forms of formal writing, writers should focus on how they develop ideas for the content and the linguistic aspect such as grammar, structure, and vocabulary. A good writer serves a good content of writing which combines their various insights from the environment, experience, and interaction in daily life. In addition, A good thinker uses the activity of analyzing and evaluating the argument, idea, or viewpoint.

In writing, students improve the way of communication because the activity helps students to keep learning from their mistakes while writing a text. Suleiman (2000) states that writing skill has an important role in language. In addition, language represents the writer's thinking. By writing, students afford the same opportunity to learn new knowledge and language all at once. The new knowledge should be expanded and arranged to increase the writer's content of

writing and improve their thinking process. Furthermore, writing is the best way of forming thinking and thought (Beed et al.,2005).

Kamler & Thomson (2006) as cited in Burton, et al. (2009:1) states that writing is difficult and emotional. Writing activity needs the writer's high thinking process in accumulating and arranging ideas of writing. The ideas of writing do not simply flow through the writer's head into the paper, but it needs the stimulation of ideas such as by free writing and brainstorming. Moreover, it will be harder when the students are not accustomed to writing regarding the language which is related to a linguistic aspect. In Indonesia, the position of English is as a foreign language (EFL). It makes the ongoing practice in writing becomes necessary because the English for Foreign Language (EFL) students are struggling more than the English for Second Language (ESL) students related to the linguistics aspect.

This research purposes to use Reflective Writing (RW) as a tool for the teacher to improve students' writing and critical thinking skill. The research is focused on the use of Reflective Writing (RW) because it is commonly used and assessed by the tutor as the outcome of reflection according to Moon (2006:36). The term of RW is also recognized as Personal Journal Writing (PJW), Journal Writing (JW), Learning Journal, Diary Writing (DR), or Reflective Journal Writing (RJW). That kind of writing represents the students' feeling and thought towards the activity done in the classroom, convey opinion freely towards the books, articles, or texts read by students or reflecting some problem found in the daily life.

In Reflective Writing, students critically give some opinions, ideas, or reasons towards the interesting object of the lesson and develop their thought into a paragraph or a text without the anxiety of the sentence error. Moreover, making Reflective Writing helps students to record and to organize their feeling and thinking. RW also facilitates the student to gradually evaluate their learning process and it makes the students aware of the writing process. Evaluating learning process means that students do a self-assessment which is significant for knowing the students' progress. Doing the reflection is useful and positive for the students. However, making the reflective writing is consuming time (Yazım, 2014)

There are previous researches related to RW and its implementation in different field of study. Amirkhanova, et al. (2016) state that students who keep RW shows a good result at the final examination and increase students' intrinsic motivation. Based on Fritson, Forrest, & Boon, n.d (2016), students increase content comprehension of the lesson. Al-Rawahi & Al-Balushi (2015) have done a research in terms of the effect of journal writing to students' self-regulated learning strategies and the result showed that students increase self-regulation strategies if they structured in self-reflection which is related to students' learning goal, observation, and feeling. The diary writing is effective to help the student in improving writing skill and also their level achievement in vocabulary and grammar (Taqi, Akbar, Al-Nouh, & Dashti, 2015). Teachers are able to understand students' feelings, needs and thought through journal writing and also to know students' preference in learning writing or learning style (Tuan, 2010).

The previous researches above show that RW has a positive influence in its implementation in different aspects related to the learning activity. Moreover, there is a previous research which analyzed the influence of RW to the students' writing skill. However, the research focuses on how RW enhance the students' confidence and motivation to write. This research focuses on how RW can improve the students' writing and their critical thinking skill such as how the students generate ideas in writing and provide depth of reflection in improving thinking skill. Concerning to the topic above, the research would be entitled "*The Use of Students' Reflective Writing as a Tool to Improve Students' Writing and Critical Thinking Skill*".

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of the research that has been explained, there are three research questions:

1. What is writing skill that improve in Reflective Writing?
2. What critical thinking skills emerge in students' Reflective Writing?
3. How do the students' response to Reflective Writing?

C. Research Purposes

Based on problem formulated above, the purposes of research will be directed to assert:

1. To find out students' writing skill improvement through Reflective Writing.
2. To find out students' critical thinking skill emerge in Reflective Writing.
3. To describe students' response to Reflective Writing.

D. Significances of The Research

Research significances are explaining the benefits from the research. This research is expected to contribute to anyone interested in the similar research about reflective writing.

Theoretically, this study is expected to be able to add some information for the similar research related to reflective writing.

In addition, the practical benefits are also expected. First, this study is expected to be useful for the students to improve their writing and thinking skills. By being accustomed to writing reflection students might improve their comprehension, actively participate in the classroom, practice to better writing, and think more critically. Second, for the teachers, the result of the study could be used to practice the students' writing and their thinking process. Moreover, it assesses students' comprehension towards the subject matter. It also helps the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods, and it becomes a consideration to choose the appropriate methods which are suitable for students' needs and learning styles.

E. Limitation of The Research

According to the research questions and to avoid misunderstanding, this research is limited to these specific aspects. First, this research analyzes students' general writing skill by using the rubric from Brown (2007) and assess students' level of reflection by using the four scheme from Kember, et al. (2008). Second, this research only analyzes five Critical Thinking Dispositions based on the research result by Erzurum Vocational School, Ataturk University, Erzurum,

Turkey & Yorganci (2016). (CTD); they are Truthseeking, Open-Mindedness, Analyticity, Systematicity, and Inquisitiveness. Third, only a small number of participants are involved in this research.

F. Rationale

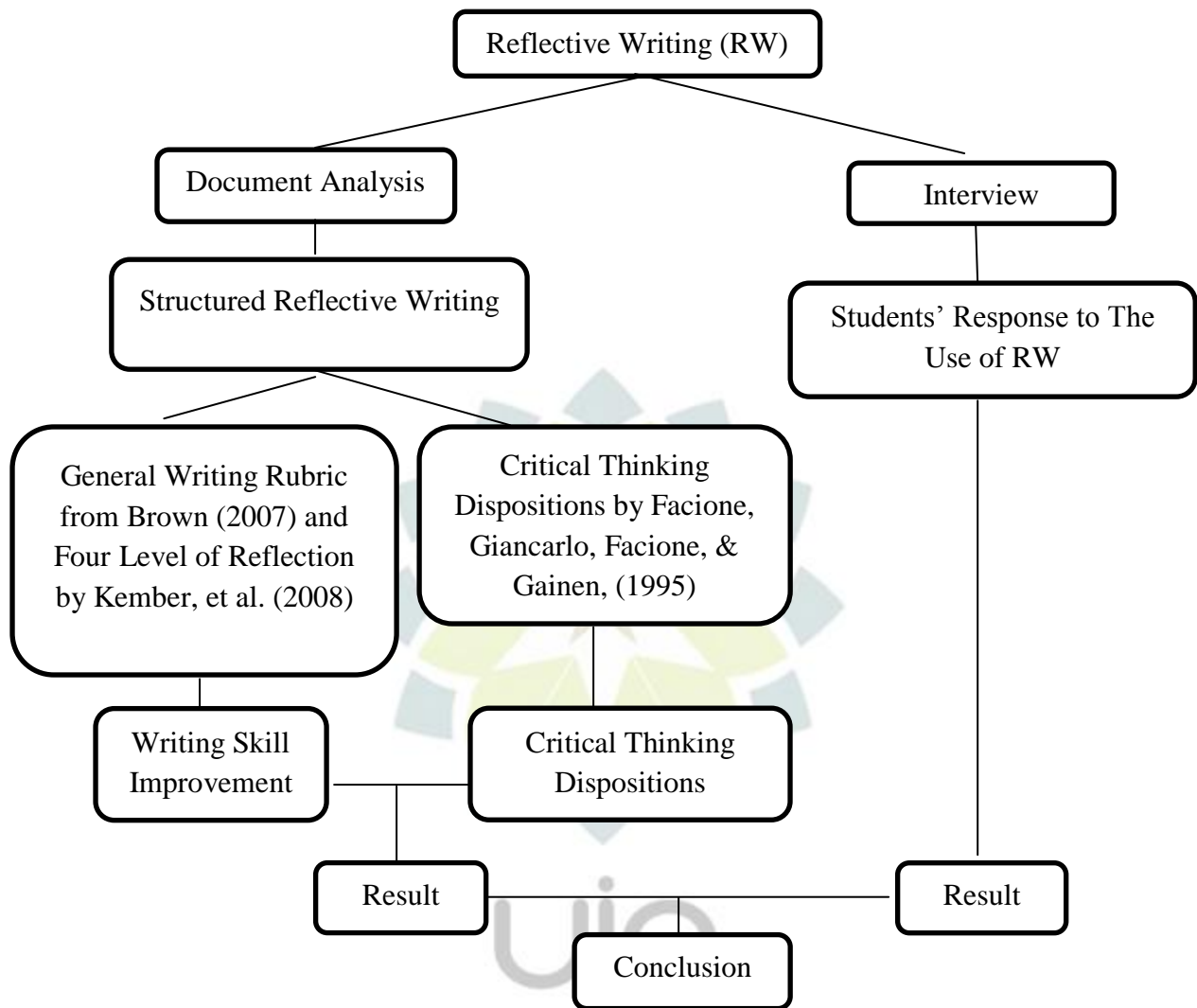
Native and non-native students confront a special challenge in mastering writing skill. It happens because writing activity involves high process of thinking. Nunan (2003) defines writing as a mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express into a paper, organizing them into some statements and paragraph that will be read and understood clearly by the readers. Writing is a communication tool as speaking, but it is more complicated and difficult because it has several rules to be involved before it is used. The writer's background knowledge, ideas, and opinion will be flowing through the words serves in the paper. In university, the students are introduced to both forms of formal and informal writing, and it also becomes one of the assignments. Through writing, students are able to generate their ideas and perspective to others. Hosseini, et al. (2013) states that writing skill becomes the main instrument in communicating knowledge, particularly for educational settings.

There are two kinds of writing; they are formal and informal writing. There are some differences between both of them such as in using particular vocabularies, but all kinds of writing need to be clear, simple, and direct (Kaplan University Writing Center, 2013). Before writing a formal writing which has some rules to be followed, the students are able to start writing RW to practice writing and thinking skill towards the interesting events, problems, or lesson

presented by the teachers or friends. Based on the research provided at The Learning Centre from The University of New South Wales in 2008 cited in Farah (2012), reflective writing is:

- a. The experience, opinions, events, or new information from students' daily life.
- b. The responses of Students' thoughts and feelings
- c. A thinking method to explore learning experience
- d. A chance to afford self-knowledge
- e. Students' way to gain clarity and a better understanding from what have been learned
- f. An opportunity to improve and reinforce skill in writing
- g. A making meaning method from what students' learn

The use of reflective writing facilitates students to learn from their experience. The learning process will be successful when a student can gain knowledge from self-experience. According to Moon (2006:27) "...even of one day, an opportunity to write reflectively can enable participants to 'collect their thoughts' about a matter that has been discussed with a variety of opinions aired". Students are able to connect new material of learning and their own previous experience and knowledge. As the importance of the reflective writing for students, this research will concern with the use of reflective writing to improve students' skills in writing and critical thinking.



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Figure 1.1 Model of Research

This research uses the structured reflective writing from based on Reflective cycle by Gibbs (1988). Amir Khanova et al. (2016) stated that the structured is a more preferable than the unstructured one. In addition, Brookfield (1995) cited in McGuire, et al. (2009) clarifies that the unstructured reflective writing is not likely to produce critical thinking. To find out the students' general writing skill, the rubric from Brown (2007) is used and to identify students' level of reflection, the four scheme level from Kember, et al. (2008) is applied.

In addition, this research uses critical thinking dispositions by Facione, et al. (1995) to find out students' critical thinking. Furthermore, the interview conducts with the students to know their response during writing the reflective writing. The dispositions in critical thinking will be used to identify whether student involves their thinking process or not in making reflective writing.

Tabel 1.1 Seven Subscales of the California Critical Thinking Dispositions (CCTD) Inventory.

Disposition	Description
Truthseeking	It inclines into the challenging questions and it tends to follow the reasons and evidence wherever they lead. Additionally, Intellectual honesty and courageous desire for getting best knowledge in any situation is expected.
Open-mindedness	It is being tolerance to the new ideas and the different perspectives.
Analyticity	It is being alert to the some difficult possibilities might emerge and individual is being involved by giving reason and evidence to solve problems.
Systematicity	The person with this disposition inclines to be organized, including focus and diligence.
Self-confidence	It relates with the ability of trusting in one's own and the ability for guiding others in making rasional decision.

Inquisitiveness	It inclines to the intellectual curiosity. Also, direction and purpose to study things even if their immediate application is not apparent.
Maturity	Judiciousness is related toward this disposition to check the complexity of problems and to desire prudently decision making.

Note: From California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory, by Peter A.

Facione, C. A. (1995). The Disposition Toward Critical Thinking. *Journal of General Education*, 1-25.

Facione, et al. (2000) state that critical thinking disposition (CTD) can be defined as the consistent internal motivation to act, to respond, and to make decisions through the use of critical thinking. CTD is the attribute of individual thinking ways. In addition, the activity of critical thinking can be measured by critical thinking disposition because CTD is acting as a tendency towards the critical thinking.

G. Research Design

This part contains a design in collecting and processing data and information. Kothari (2004:31) defines “A research design as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.” There is also a conceptual structure, the planning of the data collection, and the analysis of the data to answer the research questions.

1. Method of The Research

This research uses qualitative research as a research methodology, particularly a case study method by two considerations. First, the function of the qualitative research as Creswell (2014) asserts that in the qualitative research, the researcher identify the meaning of the human problems existing in social environment by exploring and understanding either in individuals or groups context. The research would gain depth information about the topic on how the reflective writing improves students' writing and critical thinking skills. In this case, the students' writing and critical thinking activity would be analyzed through students' reflective writing texts by using document analysis and gains their response of making RW through the interview.

Second, the data collection to answer the research questions is considered. The data is interpreted and collected according to the natural setting where the participant experiences the problem or issue related to the object of the research. In addition, the researcher is the one who gathers and analyze the data from the participants. As Maxwell (2005) notes that in the qualitative research, the researchers are the instrument for collecting data; their eyes and ears are the tools to understand the problem that exists.

2. Source of Data

Source of data discusses research site and population. The research site is the location where the data and information are collected. Meanwhile, the population is a person or a group of people who have the same characteristic to be studied in this research project.

a) Research Site

This research is conducted in one Islamic University in Bandung. The research conducts here because of two reasons. First, the activity of writing is mostly done by college students such as writing scientific journal, paper, or proposal. Second, critical thinking or critical approach is desirable for all subjects in university. Therefore, the research is organized in this university.

b) Participants

The participants of the research are the English Education Department students in the six-semester students. The participants consist of three students of English Education Department. They were chosen as the participant based on the result of the first draft of making reflective writing. In addition, six-semester students have done an activity related to critical thinking and they have experienced writing a journal in writing class. Journal is one of the form of reflective writing.

H. Techniques of Collecting Data

The data is collected through analyzing documents and interviewing participants.

1. Document Analysis

Document analysis is used in qualitative research as a tool to support the facts related to the research. Students need to make RW approximately for three or four weeks. The general skill in writing and the skill in making reflection would be analyzed by using rubric from Brown (2007) and level of reflection

from Kember, et al. (2008). Additionally, the critical thinking dispositions by Facione, et al. (1995) is used in identifying the students' critical thinking.

The structured form of reflective writing is created by adapting the template based on the Reflective cycle by Gibbs' (1988). Students choose the subject that would be reflected in their reflective writing template. As Pearson (2012) states that students often choose the lesson or the topic which is going to be reflected in the RW depending on their preference. In making RW, students involve the feeling of curiosity toward the topic which is varied among students.

2. Interview

The interview will be conducted in the informal setting. The interview is chosen because the optimal result is expected. Pearson (2012) asserts that the activities of making a reflection might not difficult to think, but it becomes more complicated to write on the paper. Furthermore, the process of making RW is a time consuming activity. The place and time can be determined depending on the situation. The interview is semi-structured which develop the issue and the theme of the research. To gain the students' opinion and to know their improvement, the discussion is related to the RW such as the problem faced during writing the reflection template by meeting personally with each student or using social media. The students are able to share freely related to the difficulties faced during writing the reflective template. Also, students are allowed to use Bahasa Indonesia during the discussion to make them more comfortable and understandable. The data or information during the interview is recorded by using handphone and note-taking. According to Creswell (2012:219), the email interview could be used to collecting

data. This type of data collection interviews students individually with open-ended data and by using the internet.

I. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process which is involving several steps and techniques to be followed in order to discover the information and data, to suggest the conclusion of the research, and to support the decision-making. Creswell (2009:185-189) stated that there are six steps in the process of analyzing the data. There are organizing and preparing the data for analysis, there are reading through all the data, beginning detailed analysis with a coding process, considering some remarks that provide detailed guidance for the coding process, advancing how the description and themes represented in the qualitative narrative, and making an interpretation or meaning of the data.

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis

In this step, all the data is collected and grouped according to the different types depending on the information. All the data are gathered from the document analysis of students' RW in form of structured reflective writing. The interview data is also collected.

2. Read through all the data

After organizing and preparing the data, the entire data would be read and the general information about the students' RW would be gained. Furthermore, the activity is making a note or recording the general thought from the document analysis of students' RW . The summary of information would be written from the interview.

3. Begin detailed analysis with a coding process

In this step, the process of coding is used. Creswell (2009:186) defined coding as the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before summarizing the meaning to information. The data from analyzing and collecting the students' RW template is coded based on the collage-writing rubric and critical thinking disposition analysis.

4. Consider some remarks that will provide detailed guidance for the coding process.

A code is created to represent the data analysis. Some processes are necessary; read carefully the transcription, identify the most interesting document, gather some documents with similar topic, make a list and abbreviate the topic into codes, take the most interesting data and turn them into words and put into categories, abbreviate each category and alphabetize these codes, put the data suitable for each category, and recode the existed data if it is needed.

5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative.

The chronology of events and activities do during research is written or discussed until the process of produces the findings or conclusion. The narrative, image, and chart may be used to discuss the detailed finding analysis.

6. A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data.

This step is the conclusion of the research. It provides the researcher's personal interpretation and the reflection from the finding to the literature review or the theory.

