Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the introduction of the study. The introduction includes the background of the study, identification of the problem, delimitation of the problems, and the research questions. Additionally, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and organization of the chapters are also presented in the chapter.

Background of the Study

Language learning includes mastering writing, reading, speaking, and listening abilities. The demands of fluent learners are also higher, especially the speaking and writing skills needed in many academic, business, and personal areas. Therefore, writing is considered the most intricate skill to master. According to a study, one of the concerns of graduate students in English-language writing (Ravichandran, Kretovics, Kirby, & Ghosh, 2017). The educational level also affects the writing level difficulties. Many activities and work at higher-level education include complicated writing, namely essay, report, thesis, and articles. Teacher assistance is needed here; they must facilitate the students during the learning processes by giving input, evaluating, and monitoring because teaching cannot be separated from assessing. Assessing students' skills is teachers' way to provide information about students' abilities. Hence, assessment should be handled using a suitable assessing technique.

An assessment is carried out to determine the students' knowledge, achievement, and strategies to improve teaching and learning quality. It is one of

the crucial teaching elements to measure the students' knowledge. The assessment will aid the students in seeing information about their strengths and what they lack. It is also created to be helpful in educational decision-making. It will assist the teachers in applying suitable teaching methods to develop and utilize the knowledge and skills so there will be positive class progress. Assessment assists some purposes, improves guidance, and measures learners' accomplishments (Scriven, 1967, as cited in Mussawy, 2009). Also, Fraenkel, Meyer, Anderson, Johnston, and Rees (2012) figured out that an assessment reveals the student learning, learning development, teachers' quality, and the program state.

Two main types of assessment occur at different times of the learning process. There are two assessments, namely formative assessment and summative assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2004, p. 6). Formative assessment is conducted to adjust the teaching and learning process by assessing the students' understanding during the lesson. Meanwhile, summative assessment is an assessment to evaluate the students' knowledge at the end of the course. Doing assessment would trigger some issues that may occur in the classroom testing, such as the effect of a new view of intelligence, the advent of authentic assessment, and the increase of CBT (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2004). Before assessing the students, assessment restriction is needed to form the limitations to focus the assessment. As an example of evaluating the writing-an of an essay, teachers would concentrate on the alphabet, handwriting, spelling, and basic sentence formation. Besides assessing writing, an alternative assessment is applied, like portfolios, observation, and essays. Each technique applies based on

the aims, advantages, and situations that the teachers want to obtain. A study by Rahman (2018) claimed that teachers thought using the new assessment techniques such as self-assessment and peer assessment was inconvenient. That is why teachers need to have their principle in assessment because assessment is regarded as suitability, practicality, and comprehension.

The technique for language assessment is designed appropriately according to the purpose of the assessment. Assessing writing did not end by measuring comprehension. It includes learners' ways of understanding the text. Thus, the techniques in assessing writing skills are written response, multiple-choice questions, picture-cued items and tasks, matching tasks, editing tasks, gap-filling tasks, cloze tasks, impromptu reading plus comprehension questions, short-answer tasks, ordering tasks, information transfer, skimming tasks, summarizing, and responding, note-taking, and outlining (Brown, 2004).

The problems faced in assessing writing are the teachers' ability to collect, analyze, and evaluate data to make effective decisions or produce solutions to matters. Wahyuni (2018) claimed that English teachers are concerned about assessing students' English achievement. It happens because they have not received specific training and are not prepared to evaluate because they lack mastery and references to authentic assessment. They also lack hours to perform the set requirements from the government and have to do individual observations with many students in one class. In designing the writing assessment, authenticity, scoring on the writing, and the time needed for the assessment should be considered. The authenticity of the writing should be present for content validity.

The scoring method should suit the purpose of the writing test. It must have an assessment rubric and be practical.

The next problem would be finding appropriate techniques for assessing writing skills. Teachers must have assessment references. According to Zulkifli, Mukaiyar, Syarif, and Rozimela (2018), a test should have different alternative approaches for different assessments, such as assisting student education by integrating the writing assessment with Blending community (Litterio, 2018), using online assessment (Zohre, 2018), doing an electronic assessment (Upton, Ene, 2018), creating assessment in Online Writing Forums (Birch, 2016), integrating within the literature (Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011), and using the web for the assessment (Williams, 2009). This approach should be considered for lecturers to make innovative writing assessments in various methods. A study by Lutfiah (2020) also claimed that when using online assessment, teachers applied six principles and strategies, namely doing reflection, giving feedback, using available tools, facilitating technology with authentic assessment, enhancing collaboration, using various techniques, preparing the Brainware, and monitoring the students.

Because of the issues, the study aims to distinguish what suitable techniques to utilize for assessing writing for high schoolers-case by investigating how the techniques are designed; nevertheless, this study would be limited only to find out what and how the teacher designs the techniques.

Identification of the Problem

The problem of this study is related to finding the techniques used by the senior high school teacher in assessing writing. Having a once or twice assessment is not enough to cover all topics as the time is limited; assessing things learned in the class is rarely done because of that. Hence, the teacher needs to find adaptive assessments that can be used. Not only that, a study by Budiyono (2022) discovered that almost all participants of PPG 2020 have a low level of assessment literacy. It shows that many pre-and in-service teachers still do not master assessment literacy or training.

The next problem is designing the assessment to assess students' writing ability. Using the proper assessment may be hard for some teachers because each result is variant. It depends on the information that the teacher wants to obtain. It also must follow the principle of assessment, namely practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback by Brown and Abeywickrama (2004). Designing the instrument must be based on students' characteristics, age, language learning content, teaching method, objective, and learning theories (Cameron, 2001). Because of this, teachers should apply a proper and suitable assessment technique that would be the best solution to find the students' writing proficiency.

Delimitation of the Problem

This research only focuses on the assessment techniques used by the teacher in assessing students' writing skills. Moreover, the researcher wants to determine how the teacher design the assessment instrument used. The research was conducted at two senior high schools in Yogyakarta. It implied a qualitative

approach using interviews and document analysis, so the result cannot be generalized.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1) What kinds of techniques do the teachers use in assessing students' writing skill?

2) What factors do English high school teachers consider when designing techniques in assessing students' writing skills?

The Objectives of the Study

The research aims to find out kinds of techniques in assessing students' writing skill performance used by teachers and find out how the teacher designs the instrument of the techniques used.

The Significance of the study

The researcher hopes that the research will benefit the pre- and in- service teachers, the students, and the researcher.

For Teachers. This study will help the teachers in exploring the techniques of assessment. It could contribute information on what and how the English teachers evaluate their students' performance in writing skills; it also promotes how to design assessment techniques and their instruments effectively.

For Students. This study would be helpful to the students because they will know and learn about their strengths and weaknesses in their language learning, especially writing through assessment. Because of that, they can monitor their learning progress and find a solution to fill their knowledge gap.

For Researcher. This study would be helpful to the researcher because they will have a source for further research in the same field in the future and enhance the comparison towards the theory obtained in the ongoing learning process at that time. It can also become a new insight for the researchers about the assessment techniques in assessing writing skills during online-learning processes.

Organization of the Chapters

This study is divided into five chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, and conclusion and recommendations. The first chapter is the background of the study. It covers the intentions of the researcher to study with the statement and delimitation of the problem, research questions and the objectives of this study, which are about the kinds of writing assessment techniques used by teachers and how the teachers design them. The second chapter discusses the literature review explaining several techniques for assessing writing skills. The third chapter, methodology, discusses the research setting, data collection method and procedures, and data analysis. The study was conducted in two senior high schools in Yogyakarta with four English teachers as the participants. It used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The data were collected using interviews and data analysis of the lesson plan. The next chapter, chapter four, is about findings and discussions. The finding presents the result of the data collection on the techniques used by the teachers in assessing students' writing ability and how the teacher designs the assessment. The findings are elaborated in detail in the discussions and connected to several theories. The last chapter is about the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions

explain several essential points from the research findings and the

recommendations for students, teachers, and researchers.