

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Writing an essay is not easy to do in college level, even in school age. However, the most frequent assignment of academic writing that the students get is to write an essay, either in the class or as homework. The students often find difficulties in doing this work. At least, there are two basic problems that can be mentioned here: they do not know how to get started and they do not know how to write a composition.

The two problems above are related with the ability of the students to express ideas as many and quick as possible. It becomes harder for foreign language students who are demanded to be able to use another language besides their mother language. Stephenson (1989:45) states that the students faced problems of finding ideas and using vivid appropriate words since their knowledge of vocabularies did not permit them to write what they would like to write.

Concerning with this fact, the writer is interested to appoint a study of a method that might be a solution to the problem, which also often has been experienced herself above. It is about brainstorming in prewriting. Yet, she considered that it is important to inform here how the technique has been used in the nature of writing.

The problem of expressing ideas mentioned above is believed by many experts to be influenced by the teaching methods. However, the teaching of writing to second or foreign language learners has undergone a dramatic change in recent times. There has been a shift from the traditional product oriented approaches to a process product-oriented approach. The new approach stresses on writing as a nonlinear, recursive, and generative process that involves several steps which are prewriting, composing or writing, and rewriting (Oluwadiya, 1992:12). The prewriting activity, then, leads the students to overcome the problems of idea.

Brainstorming as a prewriting technique is believed by many writing-teaching experts enables the students to explore their ideas as many as possible in few time. Raimes (1983:14) states that it allows students to produce words, phrases, or sentences as rapidly as possible, just as they occur to them, without concern for appropriateness, order or accuracy.

Cited from White (1986:35), the term of brainstorming itself was originally used by Alex F. Osborn in 1957 as a problem solving strategy in a group discussion. In future, this strategy was developed by Professor Gabriele Rico in 1983 in his book, *Writing The Natural Way*, to be a technique to gain ideas in a form of *clustering* (it will be discussed later in another chapter). Even though commonly brainstorming is known as a group activity, it can also work in individual writing. Thus, this technique becomes a process of discovery for the students: a discovery of new ideas and new language forms to express those ideas (Raimes, 1983:12-14). This technique then can be used to overcome the students' difficulty in getting and organize their ideas.

In recent period, from library research, the writer found that brainstorming can work by two other ways besides clustering, they are listing and free writing. Goldman/Hirsch (1986:39) state that the students could do brainstorming by making list of words, compose notes and diagrams, or even write out full sentences.

To do the research, the writer, then, looked for the object of the study, particularly to find out how effective the brainstorming technique in field helps the students to overcome the problem of idea. It led her to Writing III Class of English Department in Airlangga University, in where the students have been learning to make a good essay.

In fact, brainstorming has been already taught there as a prewriting technique, even the students have known the technique since they were in previous class levels. Since they seemed reluctant and forgot to use the technique in Writing III Class, the lecturer enforced them to practice it again. Therefore, the study is developed into the next question to search out the attitudes of the students as the actors who experienced the brainstorming technique. Then, the writer will search out the correlation between the students' scores and their attitudes toward the brainstorming technique. By the result, the influence of the attitudes will be obtained in their proficiency.

Hence, the writer compiles the data by combining and relating the library and field researches. Hopefully, the results of this study may give more actual facts about the use of brainstorming technique in writing learning process.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the descriptions mentioned above, the statement of the problem can be stated as:

1. In what ways is the brainstorming technique as a prewriting activity used by the students of Writing III Class? Does it help them in writing essay?
2. How is the students' attitude towards the brainstorming technique as a prewriting activity to write an essay? Is there any correlation between the students' proficiency and their attitudes?

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

Related to the problems above, this study is intended to:

1. Find out the ways of the students of Writing III Class in using the brainstorming technique as a prewriting activity to write an essay and whether the technique really helps them.
2. Find out the students' attitude towards the brainstorming technique as a prewriting activity to make an essay and its correlation with the students' proficiency.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study here is oriented into three targets. First, it is expected that the study will be useful to inform an alternative way to the students to pour their ideas and feelings freely without being afraid of making mistakes by using

brainstorming technique. Second, it may be an idea for the writing teachers to teach their students in writing process. Third, it is expected that this thesis can be a reference to the next related studies. In short, this study has a purpose to give a contribution to the writing field, especially in teaching and learning process.

E. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In order to avoid misinterpretations of the terms used in this study, the writer provides the definition of key terms as follows:

- a. **Attitude** is the very gist of an individual's way of thinking; it is an individual's ideals, his concepts of right or wrong and all his/her aspirations (Kaul, 2002:260)
- b. **Brainstorming** is an activity to freely jot down ideas in few minutes to pull out of the ideas about the topic (Fawcett & Sandberg, 1984:14).
- c. **Clustering** is an activity to free-associate a nucleus word that is placed in the middle of a page and circled into such new words or phrases (White, 1986:35).
- d. **Essay** is a piece of writing that has more than one paragraph and divided into introduction, body, and conclusion (Oshima & Hogue, 1997:6).
- e. **Free writing** is an activity to write a passage without ever hesitating about anything that comes to mind, in where style, mechanics, and sense of direction are abandoned (White, 1986:38).

- f. **Listing** is an activity to make a list of words, phrases or sentence (Axelrod & Cooper, 1988:368).
- g. **Prewriting** is part of invention activity which is engaged in “mind-play” to discover a topic, the important details about the topic, and what the writer wants to say about it (White,1986:34).
- h. **Technique** is the method or procedure in artistic work, scientific activity, etc. (Guralink, 1984:614).
- i. **Writer’s block** is the inability to retrieve information or to conjure up new ideas quickly and thoroughly in detail (White. 1986:34).

The key terms above are used in the whole parts of this thesis. They are partial results of the library research done by the writer.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW