CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Research Background

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. It is taught from Elementary school, Junior High School, Senior High School, and university level. Based on the education rule that is established by the government, students in junior and senior high school are required to master four skills in English such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Widiati & Cahyono, 2016). Those skills should be addressed in such a way to help the students in achieving the standard of English learning. Listening and speaking are two skills which are strongly interrelated and work simultaneously to assure purposeful communication in actual situations (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015). Meanwhile, reading and writing develop a good rapport for achieving effective written communication.

Among the mentioned English skills, this present study focuses on examining writing skill. Writing is considered as one of the English skills that should be advanced in language teaching and learning. White & Arndt (1991) as cited in Alves (2008) describe writing as a process of solving problems involving generating ideas, focusing, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating the writing. In line with it, Nunan (2003) defines writing as a process of generating ideas, organizing and expressing ideas in a paragraph. Byrne (1993) adds that writing requires both the physical and mental activity of the writer in transforming ideas into language. Harmer (2004) defines writing as a way of producing language

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and communicating ideas, feelings, and opinions. He adds that that writing can be used as a mean of encouraging the students to focus on accurate language use.

Besides, writing plays an important role as the features of communicative language teaching in the contents of foreign and second language (Tosuncuoğlu, 2018). As a consequence of communicative language teaching, writing is recognized as a method of thought and composition. Thus, teaching writing aims at helping the students to express their ideas in written form. Raimes (1983) states that the importance of teaching writing can be formulated into three reasons, namely reinforcing the grammatical rules, idiom, and vocabulary, practicing the students to use language in written form, and involving the students the language use as they need to consider themselves and their readers. Therefore, writing is not merely intended to put words together but it should have communicative purposes, that is, the communication also can be formed in a written way.

Writing is not an automatic process that can be done instantly (Langan, 2008; Oshima & Hogue, 2006). The writer has to deal with a complex process that a writer starts to think about what topic should be written, how to write it until producing the text (Richards, 1990). It means that the writing process is done in step by step. The writing process enables the writer to generate an idea, review and revise the text. According to Lincoln & Idris (2014), a whole writing process comprises some stages namely prewriting, writing, and post-writing. Prewriting is designed in order to generate background knowledge, selecting and narrowing appropriate topics, brainstorming ideas, and organizing thoughts. While writing is a stage of actual composing paper by constructing all collected ideas in prewriting.

Then, in post-writing, there is editing and revision of the text in order to produce good quality text. Furthermore, the teacher must perform the writing process in order to assist and improve the student's writing skill. The teacher role is shifted to help the students advance their writing skill in all writing stages rather than correcting and editing errors on the students' writing.

However, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teaching writing becomes a challenge for the teacher. It is quite difficult to stimulate the students to use the target language in expressing their ideas and messages in the written form (Sundari, Febriyanti, & Saragih, 2018). Besides that, writing as a communicative activity presents an enormous challenge for both EFL teachers and learners because of its complex process (Mohseniasl, 2014). Writing has a complex process involving cognitive and metacognitive activities such as planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, editing, and revising. This complex and long process enables to create anxiety in many learners (Richards, 1990). Thus, due to the anxiety, then the learners tend to procrastinate in writing since they confuse where and how to start or copy text directly from many sources.

Moreover, writing is quite difficult to be acquired because of the differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English in structural and grammatical terms and styles (Ariyanti, 2016). In foreign and second language context, a big problems in performing writing appears in the grammar structure since it has influenced by the native language learning (Fengjie, Jia, & Hongyi, 2016; Kamlasi & Nokas, 2017; Refnita, 2014; Utami, 2018). Thus, the students' problems in writing also could be seen from the quality of writing produced. Some previous studies revealed that the

students struggled in generating ideas, using appropriate vocabularies, using grammatical conventions, connecting paragraphs, constructing ideas into text coherently, and using correct punctuation (Chamot, 2005; Liu, 2018; Maznun, Monsefi, & Nimehchisalem, 2017).

In line with those previous studies, based on the preliminary observation in several favorite senior high schools in Singaraja, it was found that the students of SMA N 4 Singaraja faced similar problems. The result of interview revealed that the students still felt anxious in performing their writing skill. They admitted that they struggled in generating ideas, constructing their ideas, using appropriate vocabularies and grammar, and writing cohesive and coherent text. They also found difficulties in editing mistakes in their writing and revising their writing. They admitted that they rarely did editing and revising in the writing process. In addition, the result of teachers' interview revealed that there were also some problems found in the students' writing such as poor text organization, grammatical mistake, limited vocabulary usage, and sometimes there is no coherency in the text. It showed that writing became a tough case for foreign language learners because they still felt anxious and struggled when performing writing.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of writing anxiety is not only come from the individual but it also deals with the type of instruction, the teacher itself, and tasks given (Daly & Wilson, 1983 in Kusumaningputri, Ningsih, & Wisasongko, 2018). It means that apart from the students' individual problems, external factors also influences the students' writing skill. It refers to the limited exposure of learners to writing strategy instruction and the awareness of teachers about the wide range of

writing strategies (Kusumaningputri et al., 2018; Mastan, Maarof, & Embi, 2017; Suriyanti & Yaacob, 2016). Based on classroom observation, the students seemed like they were demotivated because of the lack of writing strategy instruction. The stages of writing were not implemented during the teaching and learning process.

In teaching writing, the teacher implemented conventional strategy in which the students were asked to write directly then collecting their writing after they finish it. In this case, the idea of writing strategy used by the teacher is quite the same as the strategy called POW (Pick topic, Organize the note, and Write and say more of modify). Recently, this kind of strategy is frequently implemented in teaching writing. The students are asked to pick a topic, organize their notes, and write. During the implementation of this strategy, the teacher did not control the students during writing as they were asked to write freely. Thus, it could be seen that the writing process were did not conducted based on appropriate writing stages that are started from prewriting, writing, and post-writing.

In respect to those phenomena, understanding the process of teaching writing should be started by acknowledging several writing strategies that can facilitate the students in writing process. Instructional writing strategy plays important role as one of writing strategies that can assist the students' writing in step by step. According to Mohseniasl (2014), instructional strategies are considered as techniques that can be used by the teacher in helping the students to become independent in selecting learning styles and use them effectively to accomplish tasks or meet goals. The use of instructional writing strategy provides support to assist the students in becoming autonomous learners who control their

own writing (Chen, 2011). In addition, instructional writing strategy also enables the students to produce better writing pieces (Bakar, Awal, & Jalaluddin, 2011). It is also supported by study conducted by Mastan et al. (2017) in which the result shows that there is a positive effect of writing instructional strategy on ESL students' writing performance and it should be implemented as an essential part of ESL writing pedagogy. Besides that, it also can motivate the students to enjoy the learning process, develop the students' writing, and optimize the writing achievement (Cheung, 2018; Mohseniasl, 2014). Therefore, the instructional writing strategy need to be implemented in assisting the students to develop their writing starting from prewriting, writing, and post-writing until they can produce a qualified writing.

There are some types of instructional writing strategies that could facilitate the students in writing (Graham et al., 2012; Harris & Graham, 1992). The examples of writing strategy that belong to instructional writing strategies such as PLEASE, POWER, SPACE, STOP+DARE, and TREE. According to Welch & Jensen (1991), PLEASE stands for Pick, List, Evaluate, Activate, Supply supporting sentences, End with concluding sentences and Evaluate the work. POWER stands for Plan, Organize, Write, Edit, and Revise (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991). Harris & Graham (1992) argue that through SPACE, the students need to consider Setting, Purpose, Action, Conclusion, and Emotions when they write a narrative text. In addition, another strategy such as STOP+DARE stands for Suspend judgement, Take sides, Organize ideas, Plan to adjust as they write, Develop thesis, Add supporting ideas, Reject arguments on the other side, End with

a strong conclusion (Graham et al., 2012). Then, according to Graham et al. (2012), TREE requires the students to consider about Topic, Reasons, Explanation, and Ending of their writing.

In the present study, POWER is chosen as an instructional strategy that is implemented in teaching writing due to some considerations. The first is that POWER can facilitate the writing process by involving three stages in writing, namely prewriting, during writing and post-writing (Englert et al., 1991). In compare to other instructional writing strategies, the steps of POWER are clearer, more logical, and very supportive (Rizqiya, Pamungkas, & Inayah, 2017). The students can remember and adapt the steps easily rather than other strategy. Besides that, it also can be implemented to teach all text genre. Meanwhile, other strategies such as SPACE is strategy to write a narrative text only and STOP+DARE is writing strategy for argumentative (Harris & Graham, 1992; Rizqiya et al., 2017). In brief, POWER as an instructional writing strategy is more effective to be implemented to assist the students in developing and producing a qualified writing.

The effectiveness of POWER as an instructional writing strategy is proved by the result of some previous studies. Istianah (2016) found that POWER strategy can develop the students' creativity in writing. Besides that, the implementation of POWER is effective for the students to select appropriate learning styles and enhancing motivation in learning (Rizqiya et al., 2017). In addition, it is also found that POWER strategy helps the students in improving the students' ability in writing based on certain writing components such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic (Muhari, Widiati, & Furaidah, 2017). From those

previous studies, it can be seen that POWER as an instructional writing strategy can be used in assisting the writing process and developing students' writing skill.

In respect to the effectiveness of POWER, this present study attempts to investigate the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill and it extends the line of the research exploring the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on student's writing skill across gender differences. Gender differences come into account as moderator contributed to this study because it is considered as one of the internal factors affecting someone's success in learning, including in writing performances (Chung & Chang, 2017; Hadjar, Krolak-Schwerdt, Priem, & Glock, 2014; Marc Jackman & Morrain-Webb, 2019). Another reason is as a response to a stereotype about female's superiority in learning the language.

Some previous researches have reported that the language skills of females are more highly developed across many fields in a foreign language, and often more complex than the language skills of their male counterparts (Adams & Simmons, 2019; Cornett, 2014; Ishikawa, 2015; Suganob-nicolau & Sukamto, 2016). Meanwhile, a study by Fidelia (2015) revealed that good performance does not rely on gender in any subject, but mostly on the use of effective instruction. Henceforth, in this current study, the researcher expects that the result of this study can fill the gap about gender differences in writing performances and obtain further information whether or not there is a significant difference on the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on student's writing skill across gender differences.

1.2   Identification of the Problems

This study is conducted based on phenomena that writing in English becomes a difficult task to acquire because there are some challenges that will be faced by the students when performing writing. It is found that EFL students are struggling in generating ideas, selecting word choices, constructing conventions of grammar, constructing ideas into text, connecting paragraphs and writing coherent and cohesion text (Chamot, 2005; Liu, 2018; Maznun et al., 2017). Moreover, it is identified that students at the beginning level are struggling to choose words and construct conventions of grammar, whereas it is difficult for more advanced students to connect ideas coherency and produce appropriate language discourse (Kusumaningputri et al., 2018).

In addition, writing is considered as a communicative activity that presents an enormous challenge for both EFL teachers and learners because of its complex process (Mohseniasl, 2014). Writing has a complex process involving cognitive and metacognitive activities such as planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising. This complex and long process that enables to create anxiety in many learners (Richards, 1990). The learners tend to procrastinate since they confuse where and how to start because of the limitation of ideas that they have about the topic and they tend to copy text directly from many sources and produce a poor quality of writing. Moreover, writing is quite difficult to be acquired because of the differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English in structural and grammatical terms and styles (Ariyanti, 2016). The study by Dwivedi & Chakravarthy (2015) revealed that students' writing were grammatically correct, but still inappropriate

because of the native language of the students interfered with style, usage, or arrangement of the ideas.

In the present study, in order to identify the students' problems in writing, the preliminary observation was done in several favorite senior high schools in Singaraja. It was found that among those favorite schools, the students of SMA N 4 Singaraja faced more problems in writing process and product. They struggled in generating ideas, constructing their ideas, using appropriate vocabularies and grammar, and writing cohesive and coherent text. They also found difficulties in editing mistakes in their writing and revising their writing. They admitted that they rarely did editing and revising in the writing process. In addition, the result of teachers' interview revealed that there were also some problems found in the students' writing such as poor text organization, grammatical mistake, limited vocabulary usage, and sometimes there is no coherency in the text. It showed that writing became a tough case for foreign language learners because they still felt anxious and struggled when performing writing.

Apart from the students' problems, the teaching strategy also influence the students' writing skill. The teacher admitted that he implemented strategy that was quite the same as the strategy called POW (Pick topic, Organize the note, and Write and say more of modify). The teacher asked the students to pick a topic, organize their notes, and write. During the implementation of this strategy, the teacher did not control the students during writing as they were asked to write freely. Thus, it could be seen that the writing process were did not conducted based on appropriate

writing stages that are started from prewriting, writing, and post-writing. POW strategy did not facilitates the students based on stages of writing process.

Furthermore, POWER as an instructional writing strategy is proposed to be implemented to provide support in assisting and developing the students' writing skill. POWER is used as an instructional writing strategy because it can facilitate the students in the writing process by involving them in three stages of writing: prewriting, during writing and post-writing.

1.3 Research Scope

This current study is restricted to the investigation whether or not there is a significant effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill across gender differences. Besides that, the study is also aiming at investigating obstacles faced by the students after the implementation of POWER. As stated previously, the study is conducted in SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja, focusing on eleventh-grade students which taken as population. There are two groups of eleventh-grade students taken as the sample in this study.

1.4 Statements of the Problem

Regarding the issue and rationale stated previously, the statements of the problem are formulated as follows.

1. Is there any significant effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill in SMA N 4 Singaraja?

2. Is there any significant difference on the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill across gender differences in SMA N 4 Singaraja?

3. What are the obstacles faced by the students after the implementation of POWER as an instructional writing strategy?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

In relation to the problems stated above, the study aims at investigating the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill across gender differences.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are formulated as follows.

1. To investigate whether or not there is a significant effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill.

2. To investigate whether or not there is a significant difference on the effect of POWER as an instructional writing strategy on students' writing skill across gender differences.

3. To describe problems faced by the students after the implementation of POWER as an instructional writing strategy.

1.6 Research Significances

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to provide significant knowledge and information which can be used by English language teachers in organizing an effective learning environment to improve students' writing skill.

Moreover, the result of this study can be used to facilitate the students in writing through a good writing process namely prewriting, writing, and post-writing.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

Practically, the results of this study are expected to be beneficial for the following.

a) Students

This research provides an effective learning strategy in writing. It can be used as a source for student's remedy learning and learning enrichment for their writing strategies which would impact the skill as well. Thus, students can be more responsible for their own learning.

b) Teachers

This research provides an empirical reference for designing and implementing appropriate learning strategies that can facilitate the students in writing. The teacher can be expected to treat the findings of this research as a consideration in planning the learning strategies that would meet the demands of today's learning and students' needs.

c) Other researchers

This research provides an empirical reference for other researchers who conduct further relevant research. Furthermore, this study can be used as a thinking framework for finding out another solution to solve students' problems in writing when they are going to conduct an investigation.