

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In learning a language, there are four language skills that should be mastered by the students, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is very important in education as a medium for students to express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts (Gupta & Woldemariam, 2011). Writing requires the students to focus on the development of the language used while solving problems in writing including generating ideas, planning, and evaluating the writing (Harmer, 2004). Thus, in writing activity, the students not only putting words together but they need to be able to transform their ideas into written form by using the target language meaningfully.

Additionally, in order to support their writing, it is essential for the students to master several things, such as the ability to interpret information, formulate ideas, organize ideas, use appropriate grammar, and pay attention to writing mechanics (Listyani, 2018; Reichelt, 2005). Writing is only focus on the product of the writing; it is also focus on the process of the writing. The process is when the students gathering ideas related to the topic of their writing and the product is the final version of the students' writing that can be read by the readers (Linse & Nunan, 2005). There are at least three major phases of the writing process, namely pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing. In pre-writing, the students developing their background knowledge, selecting and narrowing relevant ideas about the

topic, brainstorming and organizing ideas. During the writing phase, the students are required to develop the ideas that they have into a paragraph. The last phase is the post-writing phase in which the students focus on revising and editing their writing by following the agreement in terms of the content of the writing, organization of the ideas, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Lincoln & Idris, 2015).

Nevertheless, encouraging students to express their ideas and thought in written form using the target language is not an easy task (Sundari, Febriyanti, & Saragih, 2018). Moreover, writing is a complex activity that requires students to have good linguistic skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, writing mechanics, as well as text structure, in order to be able to express their ideas or thoughts in order to produce a cohesive text and they need to follow several phases (Yusuf, Jusoh, & Yusuf, 2019). In writing, the students commonly faced problems such as struggling in generating ideas of their writing, finding appropriate and suitable words with the context of their writing, use appropriate grammatical conventions, transforming ideas that they have into written text, connecting paragraphs on the writing coherently and cohesively (Al-jarf, 2009; Listyani, 2018; Naqbi, 2011; Ningrum, Latief, & Sulisty, 2016). In addition, writing is considered a challenging skill to learn because of the difference between the target language and the students' native language. Dwivedi (2015) found in his study that student writing could be grammatically correct, but it is still inappropriate because the students' native language interferes with the style, usage, or arrangement of ideas. As a result, students find writing is challenging to be learned.

In line with those previous studies, the students of senior high school in Singaraja also face similar problems. Based on preliminary research, after interviewing eleventh-grade students, it was found that similar issues were also encountered by the students. The interview result revealed that students found writing to be the most difficult skill they should master and they experienced many problems while composing a text, as they still felt the struggle to construct ideas during the writing process. On the other hand, students' writing shows that there are some issues with students' writing, such as poor organization, grammatical error, lack of sentence variety, less coherence of the paragraphs and insufficient use of vocabulary.

Apart from the problems experienced by students in writing, students' motivation in performing writing is one important factor that can help students in their writing. Motivation can be considered as one important aspect of successful writing (Aprizawati, 2017). When students are motivated, they can easily finish their writing tasks. If they are not motivated, they need more time to accomplish their tasks than the assigned time. Ryan and Deci (2017) argue that motivation concern with what moves the students to take action, or what energy that leads the students to start doing and reach the goal, in this case, is finishing their writing task. Furthermore, Hamidun, Hashim, and Othman (2012) believe that motivation plays an important role in the development of students' writing that it is a force for students to write meaningfully. Students' motivation in writing is affected by four main factors, such as self-efficacy which means students' belief on their ability in writing, writing task value which means the importance of the writing, goal

orientations which means the reason why the students write, and the students' interest on the writing task (Akyol & Aktaş, 2018; Boscolo & Hidi, 2007; Troia, Shankland, & Wolbers, 2012). In order to make the students motivating during writing activity, the teacher needs to design and prepare the writing lesson and activity which can captivate the students' interest in writing (Hamidun et al., 2012).

In the writing class, the teachers need to change their role from being an assessor to a reader and a student assistant in writing a text (Naudhani & Naudhani, 2017). They also believed that teacher can help the students to compose text more effectively by motivating them to finish their writing and help them to produce meaningful writing. Sundari et al. (2018) suggest that what students experience in the classroom should be used outside the classroom for real communication. In writing, the writing practice and the product is not just for learning and classroom use, they should be authentic, in which it could be relevant to the real-world language.

By pointing out the problems above, through moving from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered approaches, by emphasizing the language use in the learning process, learners' need in using the language will enhance their' ability to use the target language in real-life situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The English teacher needs to be creative in preparing material and using new techniques. As a result, the role of teachers is nothing more than guidance, while the role of students is really involved.

Recently, minister of education proposed a new policy namely 'Merdeka Belajar' program. The term 'Merdeka' is simply described as independence

(autonomy). Independence (autonomy) is closely linked to self-determination and it is a major factor in all aspects of human lives (Ryan & Deci, 2017). They further add that self-determination forces someone to have a high intrinsic motivation that might affect their social development. This ‘Merdeka Belajar’ in classroom learning situation is related closely to student-centered learning. In student-centered learning, the students are provided with an opportunity to take control of their own learning (Gupta & Woldemariam, 2011).

In relation to self-determination theory, through implementing student-centered learning in the classroom, the students are learn to be responsible for their own learning. This is also related to the theory of autonomous learning which requires action on the part of the students when he takes responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating his effort (Aliweh, 2011). Consequently, autonomous learners therefore identify their own priorities and establish their own learning opportunities. From this, the autonomous learner takes the initiative in his own learning (Aliweh, 2011). Instead of responding simply to teaching stimuli, he takes on an active role in approaching the learning task. In other words, the autonomous learner is not one to whom things merely happen; he is one who, by his own desire, causes things to happen. Learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world. Therefore, the teachers’ task is to provide the students with various authentic and challenging tasks and the students take an active role in the learning process.

Lately, there are many teaching approaches proposed by the experts for the teacher intended on helping the teacher in teaching writing, easing students in

practicing writing skill, as well as to meet the minister regulations of 'Merdeka Belajar'.

Task-based language learning can be used as an approach to give writing instruction that provides students with a real-life context task. Task-based language learning is driven by learning theory rather than by language theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Akil, Jafar, and Halim (2018), task-based language learning as an approach that provides students with material to actively engage in a process in order to complete the task or achieve the objectives. This approach provides students with a learning environment that focuses on the student experience of performing the task. The focus of this approach relies on the steps involved in drafting and redrafting writing. The task-based approach highlighted the concept of writing as a process of developing organization including meaning and ideas (Estarki & Bazyar, 2016)

Further, Richards and Rodgers (2001) also argue that task-based language learning is an approach that uses the task as a core unit of analysis, planning, and instruction. In line with this statement, Dost, Bohloulzadeh, and Pazhakh (2017) agree that task-based language learning emphasizing on requiring learners to perform meaningful tasks and use the target language. Therefore, task-based learning provided students with an opportunity to use the target language without worrying about accuracy and structures (Pierson, 2015; Zhou, 2016). In addition, Nunan (2004) argues that task-based learning is a learning approach that uses the task as a core unit of the learning process, involving learners in interpreting,

controlling, generating or communicating in the target language while emphasizing mainly on meaning rather than form.

Based on the previous studies, the implementation of task-based language learning is effective for the students to help them in producing better writing as it gives the students benefits in terms of their writing performance and developing their creativity (Marashi & Dadari, 2012). Task-based language learning helps the students to improve their writing skills in terms of sentence structure, language use, vocabulary usage, the content of the writing, and the organization of the ideas on the writing (Kafipour, Mahmoudi, & Khojasteh, 2018; Sundari et al., 2018). Besides, task-based language learning also increased the students learning motivation which can be seen in students' interest in the writing process, enjoyment, improvement of students' writing performance and improvement in the ability to select information (Huang, 2016).

In line with the demands of current developments, advanced learning trends are always followed by the advancement of information and technology, especially in the application of mobile-assisted language learning (Thomas & Reinders, 2010).

Nowadays, language teachers have the opportunity to incorporate digital technology into daily teaching and learning, as mobile devices are becoming an integral part of everyone's lives. In line with this, the government recently proposed a new policy allowing students to bring their mobile devices to school and use them to help them to learn in the classroom.

Kukulska-hulme and Shield (2008) believe that applying MALL to the learning process is a beginning to shift from a teacher/traditional learning paradigm

to something that can allow students the opportunity to work collaboratively on a problem-solving task. Mobile-assisted language learning focuses on the use of mobile technology in language learning, in which the students not merely learn in the classroom, but they might learn the target language outside the class, when they have an opportunity to learn and when they have a desire to learn the language (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012). Mobile learning provides modern methods to facilitate the language learning process through the use of mobile devices learning tools such as mobile phones, laptops, PCs and personal digital assistants (Arvanitis, Krystalli, & Panagiotidis, 2016). Further, Yedla (2013) adds that with appropriate use of mobile devices in the classroom makes the teaching and learning process easier, as students are able to gather information in depth. In addition, she argues that utilizing technology in classrooms can create a more interactive environment through an enjoyable, effective and exciting teaching and learning environment.

Many kinds of research on the use of mobile devices in language learning have shown that m-learning (mobile learning) is an innovative form of technology-based learning that can improve students' motivation (Arvanitis et al., 2016; Miangah & Nezarat, 2012; Yedla, 2013). Furthermore, the use of mobile devices in language learning may help students to improve their language skills, and one of them is writing skills. Bipinchandra, Puteh, Shah, and Din (2014) found that the ability to write can be developed through mobile learning, as it helps students use it anywhere and at any time, and can help students learn more collaboratively without worrying about time and place in improving their writing skills. Teachers and students might emphasize the writing through online text chatting, taking notes the ideas about a

certain topic, followed by sending emails the written text and posting their writing in social media as the target task (Park & Slater, 2014).

The implementation of a task-based learning approach, supported by the use of mobile phones (mobile-assisted learning) in teaching writing, is a good lesson plan to meet the demands of today's needs, both in terms of material development and strategy. Anwar and Husniah (2016) on their research found that that a task-based approach combined with technology provides a good impact on students' achievement and gives students greater motivation to finish writing. In addition, Ziegler (2016) on his research found that implementing technology-mediated task-based learning promoting the students' motivation, independence, confidence in using the target language, and willingness to communicate. The presence of mobile application in writing activity helps the students to have a better self-editing progress in terms of sentence structure, language use, vocabulary, the content of the writing, the organization of the ideas, as well as the writing mechanics (Kafipour et al., 2018; Z. Li & Hegelheimer, 2013)

The points of view and the discussions mentioned above support the teaching approach in developing writing skills, highlighting the importance of implementing task-based language learning accompanied by the use of mobile (mobile-assisted language learning) in writing skills and motivation of students. Henceforth, in this current study, the researcher expects the results of this study to provide further information on the effect of mobile-assisted task-based language learning on students' writing skills and students' motivation in writing.

1.2 Problems Identification

This study was based on the phenomena that students experience difficulties in writing texts, especially when using English. It was found that stimulating students to write is not easy work for the teacher (Sundari et al., 2018). Writing requires the students to have a complex cognitive skill, as it requires students to employ adequate skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, language rules, and motivation (Yusuf et al., 2019). They also argue that writers need to manage a number of separate subprocesses concurrently, such as content development, coherence, readership comprehension, and linguistic choices. Thus, the ability to write is considered essential as a means of developing, enhancing and testing student's target language communication skills, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary usage (Reichelt, 2005).

In writing, the students commonly faced problems such as struggling in generating ideas of their writing, finding appropriate and suitable words with the context of their writing, use appropriate grammatical conventions, transforming ideas that they have into written text, connecting paragraphs on the writing coherently and cohesively (Al-jarf, 2009; Listyani, 2018; Naqbi, 2011; Ningrum, Latief, & Sulisty, 2016). In addition, writing is considered a challenging skill to learn because of the difference between the target language and the students' native language. Dwivedi (2015) found in his study that student writing could be grammatically correct, but it is still inappropriate because the students' native language interferes with the style, usage, or arrangement of ideas. As a result, students find writing is challenging to be learned.

Besides, the students also being unmotivated when asked to write by the teacher. Aprizawati (2017) argues that motivation is considered as an important aspect of successful writing. When the students motivated, they will easily finish the writing task. If they are not motivated, they will finish the task less than the assigned time.

This current study was conducted at SMAN 4 Singaraja. According to an informal interview with the XI grade students, it is revealed that among the four language skills, writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered. As a consequence, the students being unmotivated when asked to write by the teacher, they tend to submit the writing task a day after the assigned day or submit their writing right after they finish their writing without rereading their writing. Moreover, on the students' writing, it was found that the students facing problems in constructing ideas, organizing their ideas, using grammar that suitable for the text and the context, lack in sentence variety, and limited vocabulary.

With respect to the explanations about writing, its importance, and some obstacles to the implementation in EFL, this present study extends the line of the research exploring the effect of Mobile-assisted Task-based Language Learning on students' writing competency and students' motivation in writing. Its effectiveness to improve students' writing competency, as well as students' motivation in writing, has been proved by abundant studies (Anwar & Husniah, 2016; Arvanitis et al., 2016; Bipinchandra et al., 2014; Miangah & Nezarat, 2012; Park & Slater, 2014; Yedla, 2013). Additionally, Task-based Language Learning combined with Mobile

Assisted Language Learning has not been applied by the English teachers in SMAN 4 Singaraja. Thus, this current investigation fills these gaps.

1.3 Limitation of Problems

This study is limited to the investigation of whether or not there is a significant effect of mobile-assisted task-based language learning on students' writing competency and students' motivation in writing. Two classes of eleventh-grade students in SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja were taken as a sample of this analysis. One group was taught using mobile-assisted task-based language learning, and the other group was taught using non-mobile-assisted task-based learning.

1.4 Research Questions

Regarding the issues above, this study was designed to address the following questions:

- 1) Is there any significant effect of Mobile-assisted Task-based Language Learning towards students' writing competency in SMA N 4 Singaraja?
- 2) Is there any significant effect of Mobile-assisted Task-based Language Learning towards students' motivation in writing in SMA N 4 Singaraja?
- 3) Is there any simultaneous effect of Mobile-assisted Task-based Language Learning towards students' writing competence and motivation in writing in SMA N 4 Singaraja?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objectives

In relation to the problems outlined above, the overall objective of this study was to address the effects of mobile task-based language learning on student writing skills and student motivation in writing.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study include:

1. To investigate whether there is any significant effect of mobile-assisted task-based language learning on students' writing competency.
2. To investigate whether there is any significant effect of mobile-assisted task-based language learning on students' motivation in writing.
3. To investigate whether there is any simultaneous effect of mobile-assisted task-based language learning on students' writing competency and students' motivation.

1.6 Significances of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

The researcher hopes that the results of this study can be used by English language teachers to arrange an effective learning atmosphere with the purpose of implementing mobile task-based language training in order to improve students' writing competence and motivation in writing activities.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

1. Students

Practically, the strategy used in this research can be used by the students on their writing exercises in order to improve their writing competency and enhance their learning motivation.

2. Teachers

Practically, this study can be useful for the teachers to help students to use technology in improving their writing skills by using task-based instructions, mobile-assisted instruction, techniques and activities for teaching based on mobile-assisted task-based language learning. Furthermore, this study can be useful as the source for the teacher's consideration in planning the learning strategies thus it would meet the demands of today's learning and students' needs.

3. Other Researchers

Theoretically, this study can be used as a reference for other researchers to carry out researches and studies on m-learning and other teaching strategies related to improving students' writing competency and students' motivation in writing.

