

# THE TEACHING OF EFL WRITING IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT: THE STATE OF THE ART

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**Abstract:** Along with the establishment of the national policy which acknowledges English as the first foreign language taught in schools, writing has been part of the teaching and learning of English in various levels of education. Accordingly, many research studies on EFL writing in Indonesia have been reported and practices in the teaching of writing outlined in various types of publications. However, no publication has offered a comprehensive synthesis of the findings of those studies and teaching experiences. In response to the need for providing an overall analysis as such, this article discusses the state of the art of the teaching of EFL writing in the Indonesian context. Taking into account the historical development of teaching methodology and theoretical framework of research on writing in a wider context, this article discusses current development of EFL writing research and teaching, and elaborates the future trends of this area of investigation.

**Keywords:** EFL writing, writing as product, writing as process, writing as social activity, genre-based approach.

Writing is one of the four language skills and many believe that it is the most complex one compared to the three other skills, i.e., listening, speaking, and reading. In English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) context, the teaching of writing began along with the introduction of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which signalled the beginning of the methodology of language teaching (Richard-Amato, 1988). As far as the GTM is concerned, writing was regarded as a language-based skill that assisted students to learn English (Reid, 1993). Students were reading texts in the target language and writing translations in their native languages, or vice versa. Later, when the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) dominated second language learning, speech was considered primary and writing served to reinforce speech in that it stressed mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms (Raimes, 1983). The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) then moves toward seeing writing as the exercise of lin-

guistic skills. With the view of writing as a communicative ability, EFL/ESL students are expected to be more empowered (Coe, 1988).

Since the early years of the GTM, through the era of other language teaching approaches such as the ALM, to the most recently-introduced CLT, writing has been an important aspect of language teaching. It continues to be taught as a language skill though each of the teaching approaches gives writing a different emphasis (Doggett, 1986), from using it as the “handmaid of the other skills” (Rivers, 1968: 241), as a support skill in language learning, for example, to reinforce grammar, vocabulary, and reading, to using it as a means of communicating. There has been a shift from talking about what writing ought to look like when it was read to thinking “to demystify the process by talking about the craft, mechanics, rituals, logistics, atmospherics of the [writing] process” (Tobin, 2001: 3).

In her account of the question of “why do language teachers ask their students to write,” Raimes (1987: 36) classifies the purposes of teaching writing into sixfold, i.e., writing for reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency, and learning. In the writing for reinforcement type, students are asked to write in order to demonstrate their accuracy in using English sentences. As it emphasizes accuracy over fluency, this type of writing is criticized as inhibiting production of ideas. In the writing for training type, students are given model texts longer than sentences and asked to write according to the rhetorical patterns of the texts. Thus, similar to the writing for reinforcement type which emphasizes accuracy of grammatical structures, this type of writing operates at a discourse level. In the writing for imitation type, students are asked to write according to the linear and various types of texts as produced by native speakers of English. Through this type of writing, students are made familiar with typical formats of English writing which may be different from those in their native languages.

In the writing for communication type, students are made aware of the purpose in writing and the audience they are writing to. Thus, in this type of writing students write with a reader in mind and they can also have feedback from the teacher as the reader of their written texts. In terms of the writing for fluency type, writing is considered to be a means to generate and explore ideas. Students are given freedom to develop their ideas and continue writing, without taking into account grammatical accuracy as they are eventually given time for revisions of their drafts. The last type, writing for learning, is meant to encompass the other five purposes in the teaching of writing which are presented discretely. Thus, through the writing for learning type which overrides the principles of the five other purposes, the students may be given various writing tasks either of any of the five types or combination of some of them.

Drawing on the variety of language teaching methodology and the purposes of writing pedagogy, Miller (1998) classified the teaching of writing into four main approaches: text-based, communication-based, writer-based, and context-based. Text-based approaches emphasize grammatical and discursive forms as promoted by the ALM. Communication-based approaches, as highlighted in the CLT, focus on the delivery of messages with a sense of purpose and audience in writing rather than on form practice. Writer-based approaches signify the efforts of the writers in formulating and

communicating ideas. As these approaches give an important place to the process of making meaning, the principles in writing process which involve goal-setting, drafting, revising, and editing (discussed further later when discussing models of writing), are put into practice through individual or collaborative writing activities. Context-based approaches consider the external world of the writer which may influence texts to be written. For example, in an academic context of university study (e.g., in exam situation), time-constraint requires the writer to consider both audience and rhetoric when writing.

Regardless of the various approaches in writing instruction, any of the writing tasks are given to provide students with opportunities to write and at the same time to learn. Thus, writing is considered to be a learning activity which is beneficial for a language learner. Miller (1998: 341) further states, “For the learner writing is an important skill in supporting other learning experiences, as a means of recording, assimilating and reformulating knowledge, and of developing and working through his or her own ideas. It may be a means of personal discovery, of creativity, and of self-expression”.

Parallel with the fact that writing is beneficial for a language learner, methods of teaching writing nowadays should respond to students’ needs to function effectively in most of today’s world. As suggested by Kroll (2003), in this twenty-first century, the phenomena known as “globalization” and the Internet revolution have brought the expansion in the use of English throughout the world. She further indicates that full participation in the world community, particularly within interconnected economic, technological, and geo-political realities, can require a fluency in English that goes beyond the spoken language and embraces a variety of uses of the written language as well. In other words, more students need to develop more writing abilities than ever before in history (Coe, 1988: 291).

The above philosophical underpinnings of teaching writing in the EFL/ESL context should inevitably have some implications on the teaching of writing in the Indonesian context. This article traces how writing has been taught in Indonesia in all levels of education in respect to the philosophy. Following this is the description of a variety of specific studies concerning writing that have been carried out. At the end, this article provides a view of current thinking in the field of teaching writing, serving at the same time as a guide for writing teachers and researchers in Indonesia who seek to formulate a principled philosophy of teaching writing. However, in order to provide a more comprehen-

sive picture of ESL/EFL writing pedagogy and research, the following section will first outline major models of writing prior to focusing on the description of EFL writing in the Indonesian education system.

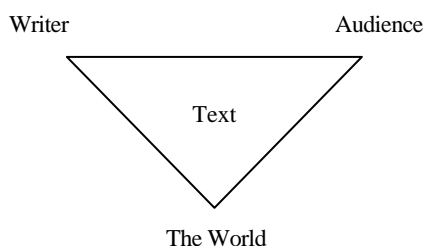
**MODELS OF WRITING**

There are three main models of writing which underlie most of research studies and teaching methodology: ‘writing as product’, ‘writing as process’, and ‘writing as social activity’ (Miller, 1998: 341-344). This section discusses the nature of these three models of writing.

**Writing as Product**

In light of this model, writing is considered to be the final product of writing activity. Thus, the word ‘writing’ refers to ‘a written text’ or ‘a composition’ which is visible as prints, handwritten products, or digital documents. Research into written products investigates the writing qualities in terms of components (discussed further later) or compares texts written in different languages (contrastive rhetoric) with regard to ‘thought patterns’ (e.g., Kaplan, 1966) and aspects of discourses such as cohesive markers and stylistic features.

Writing activities lead to the production of various texts. According to Kinneavy (1971), as cited by Beard (1984: 56-57), the texts produced may be determined by the emphasis given to any of the components of the ‘communication triangle’ which include writer, audience, and (knowledge of) the world (see Figure 1).



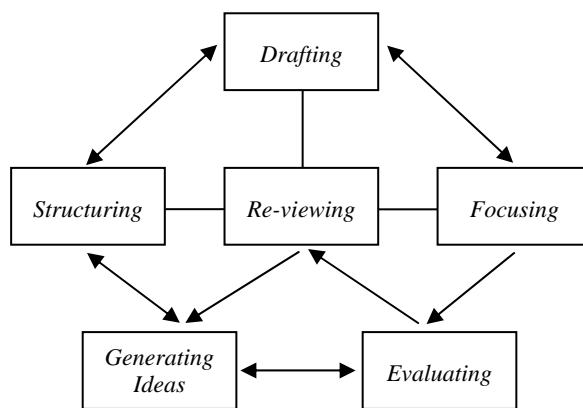
**Figure 1. Communication Triangle (Kinneavy in Beard, 1984: 56)**

If the emphasis is given to the writer or the producer, the texts have “expressive features” such as those in journals or diaries. The stress on the audience leads to the production of texts with “persuasive features” such as in argumentative and persuasive essays. If the focus is on the description or knowledge of the world, the texts have “referential

features” such as those found in reports and expositions. The combination of three components of the communication triangle leads to the production of texts bearing on those features such as stories.

**Writing as Process**

In the context of language teaching and research, the model of writing as process came into being later than writing as product, and it is considered to be the antithesis of the approach which over-emphasizes the end result of the process (Caudery, 1995a). The model of writing as process relies on the conviction that writing is not a single activity, but one which is recursive. By ‘recursive’ it means that writing has several stages and these stages can be performed from the initial to the final stages, and can proceed through again, until the final product is presented. The recursiveness of writing is illustrated in White and Arndt’s (1991) model of writing (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. White and Arndt’s (1991: 5) Model of Writing**

White and Arndt’s model considers writing to be an activity which proceeds from ‘generating ideas’, ‘focusing, and ‘structuring’ (pre-writing) to organizing the ideas (‘drafting’) leading to a conclusion with a sense of completion. The next stage is critically ‘evaluating’ the text and then ‘reviewing’ it in order to present the final product.

An important question is “when does the recursive process end?” The process of writing ends when the process of drafting results in the presentation of the final draft. According to Murray (1980), the final draft signals the termination of the exploration process in drafting and the final product shows that ideas have been clarified. Murray graphically describes this process of writing in a chart (see Figure 3).

Rehearsing Drafting Revising	Exploration	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft
Rehearsing Drafting Revising		2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft
Rehearsing Drafting Revising		3 <sup>rd</sup> Draft
Rehearsing Drafting Revising		4 <sup>th</sup> Draft
Rehearsing Drafting Revising	Clarification	Final Draft

**Figure 3. Murray’s (1980: 6) Diagram Illustrating When To End the Writing Process**

**Writing as Social Activity**

The writing as social activity model views writing as “an act of communication between writer and reader within an external context” (Miller, 1998: 343). This model is based on the belief that there is shared knowledge (also norms and expectations) in the discourse community which affects text construction. Accordingly, an act of writing results in the production of texts which conform to the types of texts shared in the community. The notion of text types, also called genres, may be best understood through the genre-based approach to teaching writing.

Genre-based approach is an alternative approach to teaching writing which developed from Michael Halliday’s functional linguistics. Genre is used as a way of classifying texts into kinds or types on the basis of perceived characteristics shared in certain texts (Widiati, 1997). Proponents of genre theory (e.g., Martin, 1989) argue that language is a social construct and that it is necessary that teachers teach students how to produce texts such as those shared in the community. For example, narrative and expository genres have generic structure and lexico-grammatical features which are socially shared.

It is important to note that the emergence of genre-based approach has a connection in some way to the writing as product and writing as process models. In its earlier application, genre-based

writing activity is directed to the production (or replication) of texts similar to those used in the society such as ‘reports’ and ‘procedures’. With the influence of the writing as process model, genres become a means to think through describing (reports) and explaining (procedures) (Caudery, 1995b).

Briefly stated, the writing as product model focuses on the analysis of written texts as the final product of writing activity. Areas of research include analysis of the qualities of writing from various perspectives such as the linguistic and grammatical, rhetorical, stylistic, and discursal features. The writing-as-process model views writing as a recursive activity which consists of various stages such as planning, writing, reading, and revising. Areas of investigation include various strategies in generating ideas and aspects of intervention during the stages in the process of writing. Writing as social activity emphasizes the production of texts according to the characteristics of genres shared in the society. Writing activities within this model may be oriented to the end product or the process of writing, or the combination of both.

**EFL WRITING IN THE CONTEXT OF INDO-NESIAN EDUCATION**

At present, the teaching of English in the Indonesian lower and upper secondary schools seems to constitute one stage of instruction (Huda, 1999). The English teaching at university level, in many cases, is outside the whole system, and English instruction in the primary schools is not clearly seen as part of the overall plan of instruction.

As a foreign language, English in Indonesia is only taught in schools as a subject of instruction; it is not used in social as well as official communication. Very limited school time is devoted to teaching this subject, either as a required or optional subject. Time thus becomes one of the most precious resources and a constraint at the same time, for both teachers and students. As this is the case in English teaching, many secondary teachers are tempted to see writing as one of the first things to be cut back, or relegated to the end of the teaching unit or to homework. This tendency was particularly true prior to the implementation of the 2004 English curriculum. In short, the time allocated for writing was considerably inadequate; writing received insufficient attention in secondary education. Very often students were just given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or to manipulate grammatically. Such practice in teaching writing, according to Raimes (1983), is sequential. The

teaching philosophy growing directly out of the ALM did not offer students opportunity to try free composition unless they reached a high intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency.

With the introduction of the 2004 English curriculum, writing seems to gain its momentum to be taught more intensively in secondary schools. The new curriculum is essentially literacy-based (Agustien, 2004) and oriented to the production of various text types or genres (Agustien et al, 2004). These include anecdote, descriptive, narrative, procedure, recount, report, and spoof texts for junior high schools (Depdiknas, 2003). Commentary, discussion, explanation, exposition (both analytical and hortatory), news items, and review texts add the teaching of those types of texts in senior high schools (Depdiknas, 2004). This new curriculum offers students explicit and systematic explanation of the ways language functions in social contexts, thus seeing writing as social activity as well. Meanings are socially constructed (Hyland, 2003: 18); writing is therefore ultimately shaped by the forces outside the individual. However, due to the recent introduction of the new curriculum, there has been little information regarding the implementation or the results of the teaching of these types of texts at the secondary school level.

At tertiary institutions, the teaching of English is different from that at secondary education. In some universities, writing has become an important aspect of the teaching of English for non-English departments (e.g., Alwasilah, 2003; Ihsan, 2003). However, as far as instructional objectives are concerned, most universities require non English-department students to be able to read textbooks to support their study programs. The kind of English taught, as Dardjowidjojo (2000) describes, is thus English for Specific Purposes. Developing writing skills in this particular context is surely far from the real practice.

In departments of English (i.e., Departments of English Education, English Linguistics, and English Literature), in particular, writing means expressing ideas in acceptable written English for a particular purpose, such as explaining events or phenomena, telling a story, describing an object/a process, and arguing over a particular issue, and persuading other people. A series of writing courses is taught to develop students' ability in constructing paragraphs and in writing various types of essays (for instance, see Widayati & Anugerahwati, 2005). The practice of teaching writing in departments of English varies across writing lecturers and universities. Enjoying the autonomy that universities offer,

writing lecturers decide themselves how to teach writing courses. As a matter of fact, the approaches they adopt are likely to be influenced by their background of education, their personal beliefs and principles about writing, and their personal experiences in learning and teaching writing. This is reflected in the types of studies on writing as reported in the next section. Additionally, the objectives and contents of writing courses are shaped by the needs of the students in the institutions.

It should also be mentioned that, following the establishment of national policy regarding the teaching of English as a local content that can be taught in primary schools in the early 1990s, primary school students may start to learn English, with writing being taught through basic tasks such as copying and forming simple sentences (e.g., Tedjasuksmana, 2004).

In a nutshell, based on the national English language policy, EFL writing has been introduced or taught in various depths in the Indonesian context depending on the levels of educational institutions. Whilst EFL writing at primary and tertiary school levels are taught according to the needs of the students in each educational institution, EFL writing is likely to be taught more uniformly in secondary schools due to the implementation of the 2004 English curriculum. Predictably, this literacy-based curriculum will provide insights for development of pedagogy and research on EFL writing particularly at the secondary school level in the years to come.

## RESEARCH ON EFL WRITING IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

In order to describe the trends of the pedagogy and research on EFL writing in Indonesia, we examined current publications such as journal articles, conference papers, and book chapters published within the last ten years. The examination was limited to publications which reported practices on the teaching or research of EFL writing involving Indonesian learners of EFL, leaving those which discuss theoretical developments (e.g., Cahyono, 1996, 2001; Sugiharto, 2003) or review general practices (e.g., Furaidah & Widiati, 1996; Lestari, 1997; Refnaldi, 2003) in ESL/EFL writing. The examination resulted in two main strands of publications: those focusing on writing process and those focusing on writing products, with the exception for Rozimela's (2004) study which used the genre-based approach. This section highlights these strands of research studies on EFL writing in the Indonesian context, added at the end a brief des-

cription of all those studies regarding the target learner.

### **Research Focusing on Writing Process**

When examined further, this strand of research falls into two major categories: studies based on the model of writing-as-process and those referring to writing pedagogy. The former category refers to studies reporting teaching activities which centre on providing opportunities for students to go through any of the stages (i.e., either planning, drafting, revising, or editing) or through the combination of some or all of these stages in the process. The latter, however, emphasizes the importance of pedagogical methodology in enabling students to improve their overall proficiency in writing as well as write with respect to the components of writing (i.e., content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics; see Hartfiel et al, 1985), or with respect to particular teaching strategies.

Reports of research based on the model of writing as process include those which examined the effectiveness of the process approach and, more particularly, various intervention strategies such as conferencing, peer feedback provision, and collaborative work. For example, based on their teaching experience, Antoni and Gunawan (2004) suggested the process-oriented approach was effective as it could empower students to revise their writing through multiple drafts before they eventually produce their final product. Munandar (2004) reported that students of a higher level could be invited to beginners' class to help in peer editing. During peer editing, these students serve as chaperons for small-group discussions. In addition, Widiati and Widayati (1997) reported their informal observation concerning the implementation of the process approach in their writing class. One of the features of the approach, that is 'the conference', was reported to create an atmosphere where students were encouraged to speak in English.

In an attempt to describe the strategies of EFL students to attack their writers' blocks, Soedjatmiko and Widiati's (2002) study analyzed qualitatively the flow of thoughts of the students while writing in English. They wanted to find out whether or not students think in their first language (Indonesian or *Bahasa Indonesia*) and translate it into English. Of the writing process they observed, Soedjatmiko and Widiati indicated that most of the subjects in their study, not limited to less skilled writers, used their mother tongue in the beginning stage of the process.

Laksmi (2003), adopting the principles developed by constructivism theorists, introduced "scaffolding" as a means to help students build up their writing skill. In class, she gave comments on wrong agreement, improper use of articles, pluralization, and syntactic forms. Vague messages of students' writings are the initial feedback. Students use this initial feedback to revise their writings and so they do this rewrite-revise process for two or three times before they finally submit their final writings. So, it is the process from working on drafts until publication of writings that counts. Laksmi suggested that this approach encouraged students to write more confidently; they are not worried about their writings being judged as right or wrong.

Aridah's (2004) study provided feedback on students' papers as an attempt to raise students' awareness to perform effectively in the writing classroom. It aimed to identify types of feedback students prefer to have and to figure out their reactions to the feedback. The study involved 67 students who were taking a writing subject focusing on essay writing. The students were required to submit 4 essays to the teacher and received their essays with comments varying from content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, to mechanics. At the end of the semester, a questionnaire was distributed to gain data about the students' reactions to teacher's comments and about types of feedback they prefer to receive. The results show that all students liked to have feedback and found feedback helpful in promoting their writing ability. Most students paid attention to the comments. Furthermore, most students who did not understand the teacher's comments asked the teacher for an explanation, whereas the remaining students sometimes ignored them. Overall, students prefer to receive feedback in the following rank: grammar, content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Another topic of research interest with regard to process writing is the effective use of collaborative work (e.g., Alwasilah, 2004; Budirahardjo, 2004; Sukyadi, 2005; Wijaya, 2000). Based on her experience in assigning students to work collaboratively in the prewriting stage (i.e., through brainstorming, word mapping, peer interview, and information gathering activities), Wijaya (2000) found that collaborative work facilitated students to get more ideas which are interesting to write and develop them into a better written work. Tutyandari (2004) found that pair or group work in a writing class is useful to encourage relatively passive students to be involved more actively. Alwasilah (2004) found that through collaborative practice, students

were empowered to develop confidence, authorship, and enjoyment of being part of the writer community. Alwasilah also contended that to develop EFL writing skills, process should be given more emphasis rather than product, quantity rather than quality, and fluency rather than accuracy. Based on his research on the use of a collaborative writing assignment technique for class publication, Budirahardjo (2004) found that collaborative work enabled the students to develop their skills in writing for publication. More recently, Sukyadi (2005) found that the use of collaborative writing, where students proofread/edit peers' writings for revision, could minimize their syntactical errors.

A greater number of studies focusing on writing process have been concerned with pedagogical methodology in developing students' writing skill. Rhetoric is one of the aspects of writing skills which have been dealt with. In his research aiming at improving students' English rhetorical strategies, for example, Sulistyono (1996) found that students could be helped write in a more linear pattern, reflecting the Western rhetorical style, through the application of the Topic-Based Analysis-Synthesis (TBAS) approach. The effectiveness of this approach lies in the effort in making the students conscious of the presence of linear pattern in English academic writing, a pattern which Kaplan (1966) considered to be a culturally stereotyped.

Cahyono's (1997) study tried to improve students' overall proficiency in writing with the use of dialogue-journals. After the treatment, however, the writing scores of the experimental group were not significantly different from those of the control group, suggesting that dialogue-journals did not improve overall proficiency in writing. Nonetheless, the students responded positively to the application of journal writing as it provided an opportunity for them to write more. Cahyono's (1998) later research, which examined the effect of providing specified themes on the application of dialogue-journal writing, showed that when provided with theme students could be helped develop ideas adequately and write with a sense of purpose.

Another attempt was made to minimize students' grammatical errors in English compositions by employing Structure-Based Writing Assignments-SBWA (Cahyono & Mukminatien, 2002). Including grammar consciousness-raising tasks through self-editing and peer-editing exercises, SBWA was found to be an effective remedial program in a writing class. Later, Kweldju (2003) carried out a one-cycle action research to help reluctant students to improve their own writing skills. Developing a

possible model of lexically-based instruction for college writing, she deliberately taught diction to improve students' stylistic skills in writing. She reported that at the end of the study, students' writing style improved, and so did other relevant skills and attitudes toward writing, such as the love of books, students' general knowledge, logic, and other aspects of language skills.

Included in the category of studies which stress the importance of teaching methodology of EFL writing are those investigating the effectiveness of the use of certain instructional materials. For instance, Rachmajanti (1997) used literary work, *Oliver Twist's* descriptive features of discourses, to enrich students' knowledge of topics when writing. She found that the use of this type of material in her writing classroom developed students' skills in writing descriptive texts and enhanced their appreciation of arts work. Mukminatien (2004) reported that authentic writing tasks could be used to provide opportunities for students to use English for written communicative purposes. Authentic writing tasks refer to materials which are actually used in communication such as personal letters, greeting cards, and postcards. She pointed out that the authentic writing tasks were found to have engaged English department students in real-life and meaningful tasks to promote their acquisition of communicative competence, especially in writing.

Research on EFL writing has also taken into account the development of information technology, especially the Internet, and how it affects the way students write. For example, Soedjatmiko and Taloko (2003) examined the effectiveness of electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) in teaching descriptive writing. As the study was under the view that the key success in writing lies in much reading and abundant practice of writing, the study showed that e-portfolio could provide a great amount of writing tasks. E-portfolio could further contribute to a positive habit of daily writing. In her study on the teaching of expository writing using a mailing list (e-writing2@yahoogroups.com), Soedjatmiko (2004) found that the mailing list enabled the students to read "the structural works" and learn how to revise their own. She stated that through the mailing list, students' postings reached nearly 1000 entries and found improvements on the written works of 6 (27%) upper level and 6 (27%) lower level students.

### **Research Focusing on Writing Products**

Studies on writing as product have been focusing on either analyzing students' writing pieces, assessing students' writing performance, or being

directed towards both of them. Ihsan's (1999) study, for example, described the kinds of errors in students' "controlled" term paper. Based on the errors found, this study concluded that the students' writing was of "minimum professional performance". In some way, Ihsan's study was similar to Latief's findings. In his study comparing second, third, and fourth year English department students' skills in writing descriptive and argumentative essays, Latief (1996) found that in terms of rhetorical and coherence qualities, students of a higher level wrote better argumentative essays than the lower levels of students. Yet, they did not differ in their skills in writing persuasive essays in terms of the two qualities. Furthermore, similar to what Ihsan (1999) revealed, all students did not write with greater syntactical complexity of sentences and their frequency of grammatical and mechanical errors did not decrease either as they took more writing courses.

More recent investigations seem to show different pictures of English department students' skills in writing. In 2000, Cahyono reported that there was a difference between the first- and fourth-year students in terms of rhetorical strategies used in their English persuasive essays (2000a) and overall proficiency in English composition (2000b). Instructional programs, in general, and writing courses, in particular, were assumed to have a role in developing such students' performance in EFL writing. In their study on the effectiveness of structure-based writing assignments (SBWA) given to English department students who took a writing course emphasizing argumentative essays, Cahyono and Mukminatien (2002) found that the SBWA was effective in reducing students' grammatical errors. Unlike the results of Latief's (1996) study, these three studies (Cahyono, 2000a, 2000b; Cahyono & Mukminatien, 2002) suggest that instruction makes a difference in improving students' overall performance in writing and thus current instructional approaches were likely to be more effective than the years prior to Latief's data collection.

Another study examined whether the variables of syntactic knowledge, analytic skill, and paraphrasing skill contributed to the syntactical errors found in university students' compositions (Sukyadi, 2005). The study which employed *ex post facto* and experimental designs and involved 70 students found that the syntactical errors were not related to students' syntactical knowledge, but these errors were caused by lack of proofreading activities. Syntactical errors could be minimized by the use of collaborative writing, where students edited peers' compositions for revision.

Tedjasuksmana (2004) reported a study investigating the types of syntactic constructions of primary school children. This study involved 72 fourth graders and 82 sixth graders. These children were given a picture of a family's activities in a living room and asked to write about what they looked in 45 minutes. Tedjasuksmana found that the children were able to describe the activities of each member of the family in the picture although their written descriptions did not differ greatly across school grades. The two groups of students wrote simple, compound and complex sentences, although the last two types of sentences were not of greater complexity.

### **Research Based on Genre-Based Approach**

Rozimela (2004) explored the role of explicit teaching in improving students' writing in an EFL context. Inspired by the application of the 2004 English curriculum, she investigated the effects of the genre-based approach to teaching writing on the students' writing development. Prior to data collection, the students were taught to write argumentative essays in several stages of teaching which involved modelling of text, joint construction, and independent construction. At the first stage, two model texts of argumentative essays were introduced in order that students learned the features of the argumentative genre. At the second stage, the students, with teacher guidance, developed their ideas and organized them as a basis to write them in a complete essay. At the final stage, the students were required to write their own text. Students with limited linguistic control were still provided with guidance regarding the general characteristics (e.g., purpose and generic structure) of the argumentative genre. The results of the study showed that, through explicit teaching, students were enabled to improve their understanding and skills in using aspects of language needed to develop argumentative essays. The study also showed that practice in using language in context enabled the students to activate their knowledge about the language and to use it effectively for communicative purposes.

Of the research studies on EFL writing based on the three major approaches cited above, most of them dealt with university level students majoring in English (e.g., Aridah, 2004; Cahyono, 1997; Cahyono & Mukminatien, 2002; Ihsan, 1999; Kweldju, 2003; Laksmi, 2003; Sukyadi, 2005), which implies that writing has a place in the curriculum of English departments. The writing courses offered in the departments seem to have encouraged the



writing lecturers to search for better practice. They then try implementing other new approaches than the one they have been using (e.g., Widiati & Widiyati, 1997), using certain instructional materials or tasks (e.g., Mukminatien, 2004; Rachmajanti, 1997), or utilizing certain classroom techniques or procedures (e.g., Kweldju, 2003). Basically, in spite of the different efforts they make, they all go to the same direction, that is, enabling their students to write in acceptable English for a particular purpose and audience. Very few studies of writing in the other levels of education have been shared (e.g., Tedjasuksmana, 2004), suggesting that concerns about writing in the Indonesian context are lacking.

### **TOWARDS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PEDAGOGY AND RESEARCH**

Several of the theoretical models underlying second language writing instruction have been reviewed. The practice of teaching in all levels of Indonesian system of education and studies on writing have been presented, providing a sketch of how writing is viewed in the context. This section examines directions for future practice and research in teaching writing by considering the introduction of the English Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) 2004 to be the milestone.

Prior to the implementation of the CBC, the practice of teaching writing in the Indonesian context was influenced by models of writing as product or writing as process. The teaching of writing focused mostly on arranging, or fitting, sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns, and later empowered students as the teaching put more emphasis on writing as a communicative ability. Studies on writing dealt with either analysis of writing components and/or overall writing performance, or implementation of certain pedagogical strategies and/or process-oriented pedagogies. Very little attention was given to writing as social activity.

The analysis of existing practices of teaching writing and studies on writing as outlined above indicates directions for future trends. In terms of teaching practice, it can be predicted that the CBC marks the importance of developing writing skills in the secondary education. Attention may be given to helping students see the social purpose of language. Under the CBC, a set of genres or text types is explicitly taught in a three-phase pedagogy involving modelling, joint negotiation (or joint construction), and independent construction (Wyatt-mith, 1997 cited in Oliver, 1999). Meanwhile, as what goes on currently, the practice of teaching

writing in higher institutions remains the same, reflecting autonomy that individual institutions and writing lecturers enjoy. They are free to decide what to teach as well as how to teach writing.

At present, the existing studies appear to be unable to contribute significantly to the body of knowledge in the field. As they have been carried out separately, there seems to be little comparability across studies. Future studies should focus on this matter so that potentials for generalizability could be increased. Yet, while many of the research studies were based on ex-post facto research, classroom action research, or case studies, untouched is the use of ethnography to increase our understanding of writing processes. Future researchers might consider ethnography as a research method to be used to investigate EFL writing because, according to Krapels (1990: 52), “ethnography can produce increased insight into second language composing”. This research method requires the kind of in-depth inquiry that is lacking in some other research designs. In addition, very little research has yet involved primary – or secondary – school students. Accordingly, more research is needed with these beginning language learners, focusing on either their composing competence or composing process.

Besides, future studies might address the issue of combining models of writing or approaches to teach writing in enabling students to develop their writing skills. This is because the studies that have been examined in this article dealt with the matters discretely. For example, a question that may be raised is “Does combination of models of writing or that of approaches to teaching writing have any impact on writing competence?” Within this area of investigation, a researcher might want to examine whether or not a particular type of text, such as narration or description, that is taught using a process approach results in the production of better final drafts of narrative or descriptive texts.

### **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of the CBC in the secondary education is expected to offer more intensive writing teaching in secondary schools. Students are helped to see a variety of uses of written English, which will in turn contribute to the development of their writing skills. Such skills are needed to enable them to function socially outside the classroom context.

However, it seems that the practice of teaching writing in the Indonesian context needs to be based on a more comprehensive view of what sec-

ond/foreign language writing involves, as represented by the models of writing featured in this article. The choice of approaches to teaching writing should be guided by adequate theories and convincing research. This implies the need for better understanding of ESL/EFL writing and conducting studies with the best and most appropriate designs of prior studies so that findings can be compared. As comparability across studies might lead to generalizable conclusions, writing researchers are in a position leading the way in considering the universals of writing, at least in the Indonesian context.

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