

# EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARD TEACHING WRITING IN EFL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN TANGERANG

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers unconsciously neglect writing as a must-have skill in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, they do not aware of designing classroom which enhance students to explore writing as a process and product. Starting from primary to tertiary level, students feel difficult to arrange their own writing even they are too focus on grammatical accuracy and afraid of accepting teachers' feedback on their text. Some problems encountered in this research, during the process of obtaining data through questionnaire as follows: L1 interference and cultural background, low internal and external motivation, reading habits and insufficient facilities. Contrary to this belief, this research tries to highlight: how is teachers' perception toward teaching writing for senior high school students? Are teachers aware of applying principles of teaching which are arranged by Brown (2004)?

**Keywords:** EFL classroom; teachers' perception; teaching writing; senior high school

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a process of figuring out of someone's mind (Hacker and Sommers, 2007). Differ from spoken language which requires a speaker could deliver what is on his mind to the audience without making and revising it into several drafts before finishing his speech, writing is a complicated journey that every writer has to deal with. The language in it will affect readers' opinion or grasp the information from the text which they made. Unfortunately, reality does not state so.

In English as a foreign language classroom, teachers are unconsciously neglect writing as a must have skill in 21<sup>st</sup> century. They tend to introduce various genres of the text only by focusing on grammatical accuracy overtly. It makes both teachers and students having a deep gap between stakeholder requirements and students circumstances. Based on respondents and writer's teaching experience of English teaching in Tangerang, several facts encounter in this issue: 1) reading habit; 2) geographical issue; 3) lack of vocabulary; 4) low motivation goes by inner and outer motivation.

These facts lead the researcher to explore about teachers perception toward teaching writing in senior high schools in Tangerang. Perception of teachers leads the classroom practice of how they design the process and implement their pedagogical knowledge (Moloi, cited in Euis, 2015). In relation to this issue, the framework of this study based on six categories of principles of teaching writing: incorporate of good writers, balance process and product, account for culturally/literary backgrounds, connect reading and writing, provide authentic writing, frame the stages of writing: prewriting, drafting, and revising which will be explained in further explanation and seeing the process of teaching writing as a process and a product stated by Brown (2007) and Harmer (2004).

The first principle of teaching writing is *incorporate practice of good writers*. It helps teachers to design what are their learning goals and provide different stages of writing preparation such as decide who is the audience of students writing, choosing the first sentence of written text, planning what to write and how to organize it, giving feedback and revise students' work in the end before the final touch of a readable text.

The second principle is *balancing process and product*. This part is really challenging for teachers and students. In certain time allocation of learning in the classroom, teachers have to provide the effective way to introduce, serve, and give an example to students. The text should be clear and avoid ambiguity because learners does not have chance to do a language exposure and get familiar with the word choices in the text. Besides grammatical accuracy, teachers have to show and guide them to organize the text: what language features they should use, how many parts should include in students writing, and what are the differences features if the text is similar to any other genres.

Learners in this case has no different to face such difficulties, they are afraid of making mistakes by starting to compose their idea. They keep finding what to write in limited time. In relation to inner motivation, they have low willingness to keep find or ask to their teacher how they should organize and write a new one. Only some cases, teachers gave them a clear instruction then they will understand the notion of they are going to make.

The third principle is *considering to learners cultural or literary background*. As English foreign language classroom especially in Indonesian context, students have different language use. They may have Bahasa as their L1, others may have Sundanese, Javanese, or the language that their parents capable of. Language teachers have to realize these aspects that their students may have different signs or symbols to tell their idea both spoken and written, the letters or the pattern. Both teachers and students have to adapt to their target language especially English.

Different society will affect to them, the way they think, make decision, and communicate each other. People could not be generalized once aspect only. The diversity of students' tribes and values are interesting to give insight the topic of their writing. In addition, literary background plays important role in making a text. The issue of low reading habits becomes a concern of teachers, students and government in this country. By giving a reading corner facility which contains different genre of books is expected to increase their reading habit. In 15 minutes each day, students have to read before starting the classroom process. Then, they can discuss with their teacher.

The fourth principle is *connecting reading and writing skills*. People say that by reading more books, literatures and other sources will help a writer to sharpen his or her idea. It helps students to know what to write and what should be discussed in their writing. Familiarity is a crucial point of speaking or writing. It will help them to understand and to use proper word choices in their communication. If they so, it will attract audience to listen or read to their topic.

The fifth principle is *providing authentic writing*. It includes about how authentic the classroom writing exercises that teachers want to achieve. The process of fulfilling this principle teachers have to be careful because it leads students to comprehend their writing process. It is impossible to give students scientific text if they do not familiar with this text. They will not do any better or find the idea because it is too difficult for them to comprehend the language use and the text organization itself.

The last principle is *framing writing stages: prewriting, drafting and revising*. Experienced writers always prepare what they are going to write. Some of them will read a lot of sources about a topic and write the pointers and some of them will make a mind map to make them easier what should be in the first paragraph, second paragraph, third paragraph up to the last paragraph. They made the details by choosing topic sentence and supporting sentences in each paragraph.

They should set the purpose, the audience and content structure of their writing. Remember that the first draft will not be satisfied to read. Perhaps the order of the information in students work is not clear. Perhaps teachers found some part of the text are ambiguous. So, teachers have to give appropriate comments and suggestions on students writing. It will help them to revise better. Before paying attention to word choices and grammatical accuracy, skilled writers mostly focus on the discourse level of the text which includes the intended issue and the whole composition of the text. It needs several times to

revise the idea before making the final text. In order to understand this study, researchers will write in findings and discussions section below.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study tries to explore teachers' perception of teaching writing in EFL classroom especially in senior high schools in Tangerang. There are four roles of teachers in the classroom: controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor (Harmer, 2007). In relation to perception, teachers will have the authority to design and apply their pedagogical knowledge to teach in the classroom. The reasons of taking this study is researchers want to find out what is behind teaching writing difficulties and how teachers perceive their process to guide students to be a good writer.

The design of this research use qualitative study. The researchers take case study form of qualitative research that endeavors to discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insight into and in - depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation (Lodico et al., 2010). To find out the phenomena and teachers perception, researchers chose to use questionnaire which is given to 15 of 369 respondents of English teachers senior high schools in Tangerang. Researchers try to reveal further analyses in this formulation:

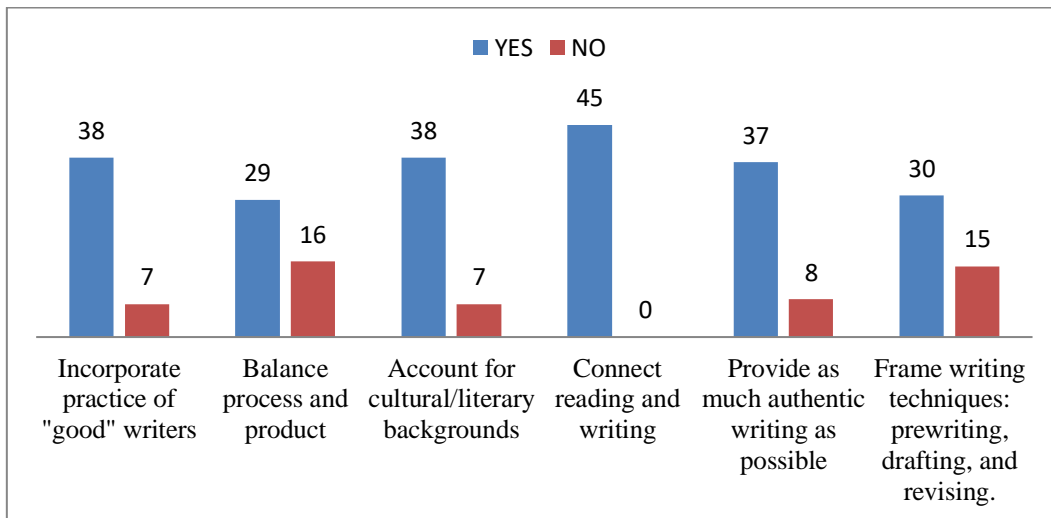
1. How is teachers' perception toward teaching writing for senior high school students?
2. Are teachers aware of applying principles of teaching?

## **FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

Raimes (2011) states that our writing represents two things, knowledge and experience while gathering information from reading before starting to write. Indeed, experienced writer begin their journey to find their purpose of writing by collecting information that useful for their writing. They are careful to decide and look into the issue and its meaning in order to avoid ambiguity. A good writing will stay on readers mind. When writers write, they play different role on their mind. They have to be reader, writer and proofreader to their own writing. It is complicated to pursue toward formal language in a text.

The way teachers perceive his theoretical and practical knowledge to design how their classroom should be addressed will define classroom performance especially in writing skill. They could not deny that they play important role to this belief. Though teaching writing is not easy task for them in English as a foreign language classroom, they should provide the easiest yet meaningful process of guiding students to organize their text.

**Table 1: Teachers' Perception toward Teaching Writing in Tangerang**



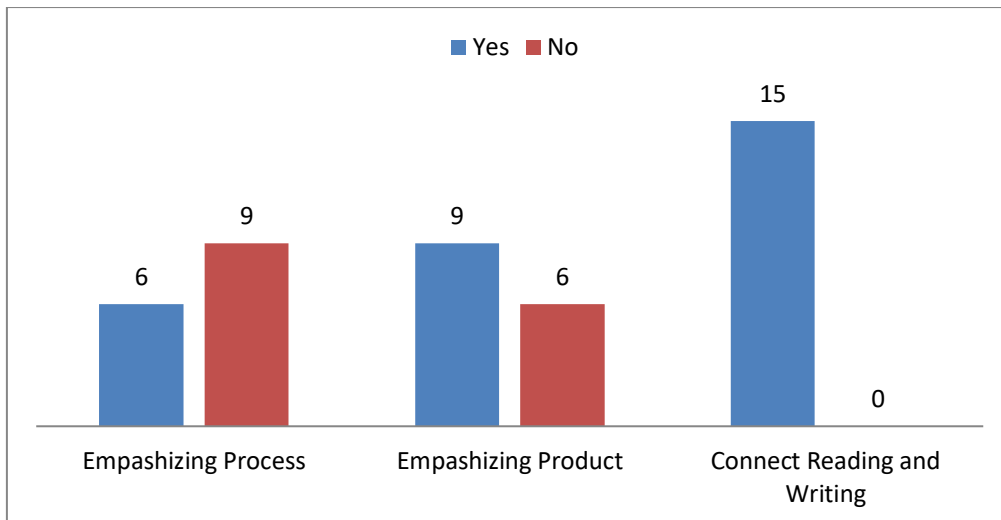
The bar chart reveals the numbers of positive response and negative response per 45 responses of Teachers' Perception toward teaching writing at all Senior High Schools in Tangerang District in 2018.

Overall, "Connect Reading and Writing" experienced the highest number of positive response compared with others as well as the lowest number of negative response compared with others in relation with teachers' perception.

Regarding the bar diagrams, the most majority of positive responses were accounted for "Connect reading and writing" at 45 compared with "Balance process and product" which only experienced 29 of 45 responses granting it in the lowest place in term of positive responses. Having been accounted for being the highest number of negative responses, "Balance process and product" got 16 responses in contrast with "Connect Reading and Writing" having 0 responses of all.

Being equal in numbers, both "Incorporate practice of "good" writer" and "account for cultural /literary backgrounds" got 38 of 45 positive responses. Meanwhile, "Incorporate practice of "good" writer" was also in equality with "account for cultural /literary backgrounds" in term of negative responses where both accumulated 7 of all.

**Table 2: Writing as a 'process' and 'product' relate to reading and writing connection**



The diagram elucidates the detail positive and negative response of writing as a process and product in relation with reading and writing connection of 45 responses of teachers' perception toward teaching writing at all Senior High Schools in Tangerang District in 2018.

It can be seen clearly that the highest number of positive response was accounted to "connect reading and writing" in contrast with the other terms of teachers' perception as well as being the lowest in number for negative response.

According to the bar diagram, "connect reading and writing" obtained all 45 positive responses. In addition, it also got 0 negative responses compared with others. However, as each being one point in the diagram of 15 responses, "emphasizing process" and "emphasizing product" both received 9 for positive responses and 6 for negative responses of all.

In relation with the equality, there was a gap where both the "emphasizing process" and "emphasizing product" should receive 15 for positive responses as the teachers answered "connect reading and writing" all in positive responses because "connect reading and writing" means a correlation between process and product therefore teachers should emphasize process and product. While in reality, there were no consistent answers of the point "connect reading and writing" in connection with "emphasizing process" and "emphasizing product" answered by the teachers.

As the results of two tables above, this study has aims to find out the answer of teacher's awareness of applying the principles of teaching writing. Researchers found the data is unique. In Table 1, all respondents agree to connect teaching reading and writing in the classroom. On the contrary in Table 2, teachers neglect how to make their teaching

writing is balance on both product and process. They are not guiding their students to face writing techniques considered as the process.

Though they are often taught separately, reading and writing are inherently linked. Additionally, reading and writing are reciprocal processes that strengthen each other. In relation with it, success in learning relies heavily on literacy and, specifically, on the ability to communicate clearly through writing. Hence, the easiest way to improve students' writing skill is to encourage them to read. Once the reading is under control, it is important to help students to bridge the gap between reading and writing. In addition, it is impossible to produce a good writing product without practice even for experienced writers. They need to decide the topic and to organize their ideas in order to be well written. Through explanation above, it is clear that both process and product has a deep correlation where one cannot stand without another. It means that a good process will lead into a good writing product therefore teachers have to be consistent in connecting both aspects.

In Tangerang district, a teacher did a correspondence email with researchers that he faces challenges during teaching writing in the classroom. He stated that his students could not compose a text because the students are incapable of choosing the right words into sentences. Students' ability to use English in the classroom is also inadequate. Furthermore, emphasizing reading habits by using English stories is difficult to be implemented in his school even though he really wants his students to start their writing journey even just making a simple text.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, teachers' perception toward teaching writing in Tangerang district is adequate. It can be seen from the previous section that teachers are aware of applying six principles of teaching writing. They know what refers to 'good' writer by giving various ways to attract students' attention of mapping out their ideas. Also, they know that every piece of writing has its own purpose and audience which cultural and literary background embodied in one writing. They should support them to compose a good written text.

Challenges in teaching writing are undeniable in this study. It is especially related to students' ability in learning language of reading and writing. Students are incapable of learning by themselves, hence they need abundant supports and guidance from teachers. Regarding these matters, the teachers are still doing their best in teaching reading and writing for their students. In addition, teaching reading and writing are close in relation because they boost the successful learning both in conducting the process and producing the product. In

relation with it, teaching reading and writing needs a careful consideration and persistence in teaching and learning language at Senior High School.

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