

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This beginning chapter is divided into four subchapters, they are background, research problems, objective of the study, and significance of the research. How the problem occurs in this research is informed in the background and it is supported by some data of the previous research results or the theories related to the problems with the sources. Research problems state the problems investigated in this research. Then objective of the study shows the objectives attempted to meet in this research to answer the research problems. The last, significance of the research, shows the benefits of this research that can be taken by some people or institution related to the research.

A. Background

The benefit of portfolio assessment has been found by two researchers, Demirel and Duman (2015: 2639) who studied English portfolio on Grade VIII students in foreign language learning. They conclude that portfolio implementation has positive effects on reading, writing and listening skills, but not on the speaking skills. This research tries to prove the two researchers' theories by applying portfolio assessment in writing skill.

Portfolio assessment itself is a collection of students' works to monitor their English enhancement (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996 in Rukmini & Saputri, 2017: 264). This definition is in line with the definition of portfolio as a collection of

students' works that represent their efforts, English capability progress and achievements (Lam, 2018: 1). It is clear from the two statements that portfolio assessment is useful for students and it is a collection of students' works that show their attempts in doing English tasks and show their English skills enhancement.

One element that supports portfolio as a useful program is feedback. Some previous researches imply that corrective feedback is advantageous to attain more knowledge about writing and its elements (AbuSeileek *et al.* 2014; Dippold, 2009; Recep & Aysel, 2010 in Saeedi & Meihami, 2015: 93). The idea of corrective feedback proposed in the statement was applied in this research in portfolio assessment, but with more effective implementation: the corrective feedback was more detailed (per word) and was repeated in every portfolio assessment the students did.

Despite the advantage of portfolio assessment above, it needs teacher's hard work to give motivation to students, to give detail explanation about the portfolio assessment going to do by students, to be organized in arranging students' works, and to evaluate them periodically (Dudley, 2000; Kim, 2004 in Caldwell, 2007). The portfolio assessment done by students are not for only once, but for routine, e.g. once a month, twice a month, once every six weeks, etc. A successful teacher could make his/her students willingly and happily do portfolio tasks and even perform them before other people. Beside that students should ideally get improvement every time their work is assessed. The hard work done by teacher in this case is related to the term of *teacher perseverance*.

On the other hand, another research concludes that the dominant work of portfolio is to manage students' work in a folder that it is called binder

management (Rukmini & Saputri, 2017: 269). In this study in fact the students' artefact collection needed an extra work from the research.

The concept of portfolio assessment itself was formulated in a symposium hosted by the Swiss authorities in Rüslikon in 1991 (Ibid, 1991:40 in Kühn & Cavana, 2012) that conceptualizes portfolio by making a standard of ELP (European Language Portfolio). It consists of three: (1) there should be formal qualifications based on a common European scale, (2) the learner expresses his/her personal language learning experiences, and (3) it should keep the learner's work collection.

From the statement about ELP's purpose above, it can be said that from the standard of the ELP (European Language Portfolio), the concept of portfolio assessment refers to a record of learner's language experiences and examples of learner's work. Language experiences refer to learner's language ability, learning process, and doing tasks of language. Examples of learner's work means learner's artefact record.

Furthermore, to conduct a portfolio assessment program, a portfolio assessment procedure should be applied. The system of portfolio assessment was studied in a research carried on by Srikaew, Tangdhanakanond, and Kanjanawasee (2015: 768). They conclude that portfolio assessment has a procedure which consists of seven steps; they are planning, preparation for students, evidence collecting, progress monitoring, improvement of performance, reflection and displaying the works. They also propose that the tasks given to students should be appropriate with their age. These steps proposed by the three researchers later will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Beside the steps above, the variables of this research are determined to be three; they are students' writing proficiency, portfolio assessment, and the improvement of students' English writing performance after the portfolio assessment. The research held pre-test and post-test to know and to measure the students' English writing performance before and after portfolio assessment. All the results of portfolio assessment were documented as well along the program to know the progress of students beside the pre- and post- tests.

The benefits of portfolio assessment, the problems faced by students, and the solutions to solve the problems became the main issues in this research. The research itself applies qualitative study supported with quantitative and qualitative data gained from the pre-test and post-test, documentation, and observation in the portfolio assessment program.

The classes that became the treatment classes were chosen by the research and they were two of the six classes of Grade VIII at a Public Junior High School. The two classes had writing portfolio assessment program as this research program implementation. The program itself was held in five weeks including pre-test and post-test. All the results of the tests and portfolio assessments were noted, filed, compared, and analysed with the data support from observation as well based on qualitative method. Beside that, the analysis considered the students' writing proficiency level.

B. Research Problems

Considering the topic and the problems of this research, the research questions were formulated as follow:

1. How can portfolio assessment improve students' writing at different writing proficiency levels?
2. What problems do students at different writing proficiency levels encounter during portfolio assessment implementation?
3. What solution can be implemented by teacher to solve the problems encountered by students during portfolio assessment program?

C. Objective of the Study

Referring to the questions in the research problems above, thus the objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate how portfolio assessment can improve students' writing at different writing proficiency levels
2. To find the problems students encounter at different writing proficiency levels during portfolio assessment implementation
3. To search for the solution can be implemented by teacher to solve the problems encountered by students during portfolio assessment program

D. Significance of the Research

This research is expected to give a theoretical benefit, that is to enhance students' understanding about the material of English lesson of Grade VIII Semester 1 with an alternative assessment application (portfolio assessment) they

have practiced. This benefit can be felt by the students during and after the program.

Beside the theoretical benefit, this research is also expected to give benefits to English teachers. For the first benefit, English teachers of Grade VIII can learn more how to apply portfolio assessment intensively and see the benefit for their students. For the second benefit, this research can help teachers to assess students' writing ability with a motivating alternative assessment (motivating to students). For the third benefit, this research can help teachers to motivate students to apply their writing skill on the portfolio assessment and to be more interested in English writing. At last, for the fourth benefit, this research can be a learning model of English writing through an alternative writing assessment which is portfolio assessment.

Beside teachers, students can take advantages from this research as well. For the first advantage, this research can motivate students to do English writing better through the assessment. For the second advantage, this research can motivate students to learn more about their mistakes on writing and to fix it for the next similar English writing. For the third advantage, this research can motivate students to be more interested in English writing and by then they are interested to produce more works of English writing.

After the benefits for theoretical view, teachers, and students above, at the end, the school as an educational institution can take benefit from this research. It is to enhance the quality of English learning in the school, especially for Grade VIII, and therefore can eventually enhance the education quality of the school.