TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARD INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Local wisdom has been a national agenda today. Local genius in the teaching of language is urged to be integrated in the teaching and learning. Since teachers' perception may interfer the success of the teaching and learning, an investigation to their beliefs was applied in this paper. Writing teachers from English Department Lambung Mangkurat University were the subjects of this research. A modified questionnaire was given to the research participants. The answers from them were extracted and analyzed to picture their perception in integrating local wisdom in the teaching of writing. Based on the result of the study, it was found that there are several aspects of teachers' perception in teaching writing; namely the teaching materials, teaching techniques, the instructional media, teaching assessment and local wisdom internalization. There are some factors which influence the teachers' perception in teaching writing; the teachers experience in learning and in professional coursework by attending in-service training or workshops and sharing ideas with colleagues, the contextual factors, and self-evaluation or reflection on classroom practices.

Keywords: local wisdom, teaching of writing, perception

1. INTRODUCTION

Local wisdom has become the most discussed topic in education nowdays. It is also correlated to character building to rebuild the society. According to Sartini (quoted from Adilah, 2016), the local wisdom can be understood as local ideas that are thoughtful, full of wisdom, good value, embedded, and followed by the people. Thus, local wisdom is a genuine thing people have to live their lives in the society.

Geertz cited in Kurnianto and Lestarini (2016) states: *"Local wisdom is part of culture. Local wisdom is traditional culture element that deeply rooted in human life and community that related with human resources, source of culture, economic, security and laws. Local wisdom can be viewed as a tradition that related with farming activities, livestock, build house etc".* Regarding its relation to education, anthropologists and social scientists see education as an attempt to

civilize and socialize people. Education aims are to form a human being in order to socialize in the community and adjust to the environment in an effort to maintain the viability, both personal and group or society. In the disciplines of anthropology, the term local wisdom has known as local genius. Further, Moendardjito argues that cultural elements as a potential area for local genius has proven its ability to survive to the present (in Ayatrohaedi, 1986: 40-41).

The agenda of local wisdom is also in line with the Indonesia law of national education system number 20 year 2003 act 36 about curriculum. It is stated that education in Indonesia has to be correlated to local potention and nation character. The teaching and learning in Indonesia has to emerge the local identity. However, it is sometimes a hard job for the teachers to emerge the ideas of local wisdom in their teaching.

Further, the education system for higher education is also required cultural identity from the students as one of their competence (Indonesia law Number 12 year 2012). Local wisdom is the knowledge that appropriate to be used in the development of countries to ensure national development to be more efficiently.

Naritoom as quoted Wagiran (2010) define Local wisdom as the knowledge that discovered or acquired by local people through the accumulation of experiences in trials and integrated with the understanding of surrounding nature and culture. Local wisdom is dynamic by function of created local wisdom and connected to the global situation.

In English language teaching, the challenge for teachers is how to deliver the knowledge of target language and integrated it with the local wisdom. Sukandi (2014) pictures language teaching nowadays has been placed in the form of localized approach which means that Indonesian EFL learners learn how to use English to communicate with other speakers of English globally without losing their identity as Indonesians who have diversity in terms of their local cultures,wisdoms, religions, and histories.

Despite of the urgencies of local wisdom in language teaching, it is then teachers' factor in shaping the success of this agenda. Li (1998) argued that teachers' perception of the feasibility of an innovation is "a crucial factor in the

ultimate success or failure of that innovation". Understanding teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of local wisdom in English language teaching is important because teachers' perceptions are crucial in determining the ultimate success of those reforms. However, understanding perceptions only is not enough because teachers' perceptions are contingent upon their beliefs. According to Borg (2001), beliefs are mental states that have their content of proposition which are accepted as true by the person holding it. In other words, they refer to unobservable behavior and function as evaluative judgments and the truths. Further, teacher beliefs are defined as what teachers make sense of the world around them, particularly regarding the views about education and how these views themselves come to be shaped (Williams & Burdern, 1997: 53).

Teachers have a set of beliefs that they bring once they walk into the classroom (Williams & Burdern, 1997: 56) and these beliefs have important roles in affecting instructional preferences and practices (Johnson, 1992; Borg, 2001; Borg, 2003, 2009; Tanja, 2011; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Larenas, 2014). In other words, beliefs function to filter and perceive new information and serve as a guide to preferences and practices (Borg, 2001; Fives & Buehl, 2012). Various beliefs may exist among teachers since beliefs are shaped in the process of teachers' self-construction. Personal experiences as learners, activities in professional development, past classroom practices, and contextual factors affect teachers' beliefs (Williams & Burden, 1997: 63; Borg, 2003; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Mellati, Khademi & Shirzadeh, 2014).

Due to those background of the studies on the local wisdom and language teaching. The research questions are formulated as follows:

- What perception do the EFL teachers hold about the teaching of writing?
- What are the factors that affect the EFL teacher's perception in the teaching of writing?

2. METHODS

To picture the perception of the teachers, a modified quetionaire is delivered to the target writing teachers. The subject of this study were writing teachers from English department Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin. There were

four teachers who participated in this study. Lambung Mangkurat University was chosen since English department in this campus has become a pioner for English Learning curriculum and the eldest English department in Kalimantan. The English Department in this University is also accreditated "A" (very good) from National Acreditation Instititution (BAN PT).

This study uses qualitative approach. This design allows reseachers to provide rich description aimed at understanding phenomenon, a process, or particular point of views from those involved (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010: 453) that suit the purpose of the study to present a detailed description of the teachers' perception (as well as beliefs) and practices in the teaching of writing. Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problem inquiring into the meaning individuals or group ascribe to social or human problem (Creswell, 2007: 37).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the study, it was found that there are several aspects of teachers' perception in teaching writing; namely the teaching materials, teaching techniques, the instructional media, teaching assessment and local wisdom internalization.

Dealing with the teaching materials, teachers believe that an adapted book and a textbook made by them are the most appropriate source for teaching. It is believed for the handouts used by the teachers are currently adapted from many books and they also can use any other sources to complete the materials. The teachers also believed that every teacher should provide supplementary materials besides textbooks for the students in teaching writing. They think the authentic material for teaching writing is also essential to provide some interesting topics.This is on contrary with research finding from Floris (2013) who reveals a study showing that the majority of Indonesian teachers tended to prefer English-speaking published textbooks because they believed that the materials were original and the quality was better compared to the local ones.

There are three teaching approaches widely known in teaching writing; product approach, process approach and genre-based approach. The teachers tend to choose the process approach instead of the other two for two reasons. First, it is the easiest approach to apply and it can be combined with written feedback in every step of the writing process. Second, the process approach consists of several steps in which each step is an important one to be conducted in order to produce a good writing. The teachers also mentioned about the techniques they usually use in teaching writing such as read-then-write, think about the reader, set up-confrontation-resolution, follow the footsteps, etc. The reason of implementing the techniques is that it helps the students to follow the writing steps easily to compose a writing product. During the teaching writing, the teachers usually have not only individual activity, but also pair and group work. This is believed as a way to improve the students' writing by giving peer feedback, which gives significant effect toward the students' writing ability.

In the application of the instructional media, the teachers agree that the traditional one is still applicable to teaching writing for it is difficult to leave whiteboard, paper and pen to compose a writing product. However, it should be integrated to ICT since it helps the students to make the learning more effective and interesting.

According to the data, teacher feedback, peer feedback and self-directed feedback are needed to improve the students' writing skill. This is because each kind of feedback has its strength and weakness. For example, peer feedback and self-directed feedback is appropriate to be conducted for high achievers while the teacher feedback is working for the low ones, and not vice versa. In evaluating the students' writing ability at the end of instructional unit, the teachers prefer in-class-writing and out-of class writing. Both of the assessments is useful to help the teachers to evaluate the students ability. The in-class-writing is important to observe the students' work in limited time given, while the out-of-class writing can be used for a supplementary task.

Implementing local wisdom to teaching writing has been conducted by the teachers. According to the teachers, local wisdom is all forms of knowledge,

beliefs, and understanding of customs and ethics in a certain community. They believe that it is essential to internalize the local wisdom to the writing class for bringing something familiar to the students will light up their interest toward the teaching and learning process. Regarding this teacher's belief, the same idea was also stated by Nation (2009: 93) who asserted that writing would be successful if students are well prepared for what they will write. It implies that building the students' schemata and ensuring that the topics are familiar to students are important. It also provides moral values for the students since they are not only learning about some material, but they also learning the values which are exist in the society.

Teachers internalize the local wisdom in writing class by asking the students to write about certain topics which is related to local wisdom. For example, to teach descriptive text, the teachers ask the students to write about their customs such as *batamat, bamuludan*, or *baayun*. The teaching and learning process using local wisdom is easier for the same background of the students. It is also well-responded because the students are easier to understand the moral values inserted in the local wisdom. The result of the data states that internalizing local wisdom helps the conservation of the society's belief which is in line with Arini (2016) who states internalizing local wisdom in teaching English is not only useful for the students to improve their writing skill, but it is also useful for the society since the young generation will preserve their culture by learning it at school. It also develops good human resources and nurtures the culture. Moreover, implementing local wisdom in teaching writing also conveys good values and ethics for the students. Therefore, it is hoped that local wisdom internalization is not only done in teaching writing, but also in teaching other English skills since the local wisdom relies on the society without being fear that English will eradicate the identity of the community as Sukardi (2014) states Indonesian EFL learners learn how to use English to communicate with other speakers of English globally without losing their identity as Indonesians who have diversity in terms of their local cultures,wisdoms, religions, and histories.

To answer the second research question, the data has shown that there are some factors which influence the teachers' perception in teaching writing. They

are the teachers experience in learning and in professional coursework by attending in-service training or workshops and sharing ideas with colleagues, the contextual factors, and self-evaluation or reflection on classroom practices.

Learning and professional coursework experience play an important role for the teachers since the data showed that they have learned to write in English for long time. Moreover, attending in-service training or workshop related to EFL writing helps them to improve their skill in writing and to teach writing. Thus, any regular activities that allow them to share their ideas with colleagues or other writing teachers are needed and it is helpful to improve the teaching quality.

The characteristics of the students in writing class are basically similar. Some of the students have good motivation to write and be successful, and some of them are not. Mostly, the students experiences difficulty in expanding the topic and developing the ideas of the topic. This may be because they are lack of reading --based on the teachers' assumption. The lack of contextual background can cause the teachers to have difficulties in accomplishing the instructional goal of the teaching writing class. Fortunately, none of the teachers in this research has experienced it.

The reflection on classroom practices has always been conducted by the teachers after the class. There are many techniques such as giving quizzes, and asking the students to give feedback to reflect the teaching process. By reflecting, the teachers may improve their quality of teaching, for example being expert in material arrangement, providing various media, and implementing ICT in teaching writing.

4.   CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded that the EFL teachers' perception toward teaching writing, is closely related to the teaching materials used, the teaching techniques implementation, the instructional media available, the teaching assessment process and the local wisdom internalization. The factors affecting the EFL teachers' perception in teaching writing are the teachers experience in learning and in professional coursework, the contextual factors, and self-evaluation or reflection on classroom practices. It is suggested that the EFL teacher will

maintain the internalization of the local wisdom toward the teaching of writing for there are many advantages that are given for not only the students but also the society.

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