

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of this research based on the data obtained from interviewing the participants. There are three major discussions of the findings regarding the objectives of the research. The first is the students' perception on the use essay as assessment to evaluate learning process. The second is the benefits of essay-based assessment. The third is the problems of essay-based assessment.

Students' Perception on the Use Essay as Assessment to evaluate Learning Process

The researcher analyzes the participants' opinion regarding the students' perception on the use of essay as a tool to evaluate learning process. Based on the data obtained, there were three opinion based on the students' perception of it. The findings are discussed below.

Challenging. The students' perception on the use of essay as assessment to evaluate learning process is challenging. It was mentioned by one participant out of four participants. That is Participant 1. Participant 1 stated "in my opinion, essay is challenging because we can know our writing skill and how to make academic writing well also we can identify our grammatical. So that, we can minimize our problems on essay (P1.2)". From that statement, it can be seen that the students felt that they found challenge when they write an essay. But overall, essay helped them to identify their writing skill. In line with this, Nyasimi (2009) said that writing skill is difficult and it is a challenging skill for native and non-native learners.

Effective to evaluate writing skill. The students' perception on the use essay is assessment to evaluate learning process is effective to evaluate students' writing skill. It was mentioned by participant 4. Participant 4 stated that "essay is very effective to improve our writing skill (P4.1)". From that statement, it can be seen that essay is one of the tool to see knowledge and skills especially in writing skill. In the other words, essay is one of the tool to practice for students in deepening their writing skill. In making a good essay, the students should really be careful on the grammar to make the reader easier to understand what the students convey. The impact on writing an essay makes students can evaluate their own skill and knowledge and also they can improve and deepen their writing skill. In line with this, Tabatabaei and Assefi (2012) said that essay makes students learn on increasing their writing skill.

Effective to evaluate students' understanding on the subject. The students' perception on the use essay as assessment to evaluate learning process is effective to evaluate students' understanding on the subject. It was mentioned by three participants out of four participants. They are Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant3. Participant 1 stated:

Essay is effective because it makes us understand the material and influence critical thinking and it also helps developing material. I evaluate myself from the feedback of essay to improve my writing skill such as structure and grammar. (P1.4)

Based on the statement above, essay assessment involved students on reading many references which is related to the topic of essay. The students should read a lot references or material that has been taught by the teacher. That makes the students'

understanding improve. Participant 2 also stated that “I think essay is quite effective because we must master the material well (P2.4)”. In the other words, essay helped students to master the material.

Further, Participant 3 also stated:

I think essay is effective because the students are asked to read any references in order to be able to develop the material. It happened in a course called education and teaching practice. It makes us master the material and also improve our vocabulary mastery. (P3.2)

Essay is used by the teacher to help students improves their understanding of the material. Essay involves students on developing material in order to make them bring out their knowledge in to written form. In conclusion, based on the students’ statements above, essay is challenging but it is effective to evaluate learning process. According to Guskey (2003), writing assessment must reflect what the teachers have taught, because the teacher should teach a knowledge if it is important to assess. Therefore, essay-based assessment is an effective tool to evaluate learning process, because it assesses what they have learned.

In conclusion, based on findings above, the researcher found that there were three perceptions on essay as assessment to evaluate learning process. They were challenging, effective to evaluate writing skill and effective to evaluate students’ understanding on the subject. Although essay was challenging but it could be effective to measure the students’ understanding.

The Benefits of Essay as Assessment

The researcher analyzed the participants' opinion regarding the benefits of essay-based assessment. Based on the data obtained, there were eight benefits of essay-based assessment. The findings are discussed below.

Improving vocabulary. Essay can help the students to improve their vocabulary mastery. Two out of four participants mentioned that improving vocabulary was one of the benefits of essay. Two stated, "there are lot of benefits from essay, one of them is I can improve my vocabulary" (P2.6). At least, the students needed to look for for new vocabulary in order to make them easier to deliver their idea into text. Participant 3 also stated "the benefit of essay-based assessment is improving students' vocabulary (P3.4)". From the two statements, it indicates that essay improves the students' vocabulary. In line with this, Karakoc and Kose (2017) found that writing has good impact to vocabulary mastery. It could be concluded that that writing can increase vocabulary mastery.

Improving grammatical skill. Another benefit of essay is improving grammatical skill. It was mentioned by three participants. Participant 1, participant 2, and participant 4 mentioned it. Both Participant 2 and Participant 4 agreed that the benefit of essay is improving grammatical skill. Participant 2 stated "the benefit that I got from essay is a lot, I can improve my grammar (P2.7)". Participant 4 also stated "the benefit of essay is improving grammatical skill (P4.4)". From the two statements, it can be concluded that the students felt that essay improves their grammatical knowledge. Further, Participant 1 stated:

The benefit of essay is the structure. When we make essay-based assessment, we must use the structure carefully. The structure what I mean here is grammar because it will make the readers interested in reading our essay and the writing is clear. (P1.5)

Based on the statement above, we can imply that the use of grammar is very important to make reader understand the text. The students should really be careful of the use of grammatical features to make the text clear. In the other words, the grammatical on writing an essay should be clear. Based on the all statements above, making an essay helps the students to improve their grammatical skill. Since essay as assessment is an academic writing, it helps the students to learn more about grammar. It relates with Rokni and Seifi (2013) who explained that academic writing improves students' writing skill in grammatical and the use of lexical terms.

Improving writing skill. Improving writing skill also became the benefits of essay which mentioned by participant 1, participant 2, and participant 4. Participant 1 said “essay makes us know our writing skill. I also know the right way to write academically (P1.1)”. Based on the statement, essay informed the students their writing skill. The students can indentify by self their skill on writing whether their writing skill is improved or not. Essay made them recognize their skill on writing.

Further, Participant 2 stated “essay does not only train our writing skill, but it also makes us read many references (P2.1)”. Based on the statement from Participant 2, it could be concluded that the students are often write essay. That is why they can train their writing skill. In making an essay, the students should read the material in

order to make good essay. Therefore, essay is help students in training their writing skill and makes them reading.

Participant 4 mentioned that “essay improves the students’ writing skill” (P4.2). Based on the statement from Participant 4, essay improves writing skill. Making essay as often as possible can help them in improving their writing skill. In line with this, Tabatabaei and Assefi (2012) argued that by giving an essay-based assessment, the students learn how to increase their writing skills. Ali as cited in Tabatabaei and Assefi (2012) mentioned that essay-based assessment can improve the students’ writing skills and performance.

Increasing critical thinking. Increasing critical thinking as the benefit of essay was mentioned by three participants out of four participants. They were participant 1, participant 2, and participant 4. Participant 2 stated “essay improves our understanding in analyzing the information that can be used as references (P2.2)”. Looking for information by reading many references helps the students to improve their understanding. By reading many references, the students’ critical thinking also improve, because they need to think whether the information in the references can be used in their essay or not.

During the interview, participant 1 said “then, essay increases our thinking on how to make good academic paper (P1.6)”. Based on the two statements above, the students’ critical thinking increases when doing essay-based assessment. It influences their way of thinking to produce good essay-based assessment and also their speed of thinking. Participant 4 also mentioned “the benefit of essay is it trains us to think

quickly (P4.3)”. Writing essay in some subject makes students’ get used to think more critical. In other words, essay-based assessment improves and trains the students’ critical thinking. According to Tabatabaei and Assefi (2012), essay-based assessment helps students to increase their critical thinking.

Improving knowledge. During the interview session, participant 3 mentioned that essay-based assessment helps to improve knowledge. Since in creating essay-based assessment the students need to learn many theories and read many references. Participant 3 stated “the benefit of essay is we know new theories which related to the topic (P3.3)”. Based on statement, knowing many theories means that the knowledge will be improved. When the students make essay-based assessment, they should read the material again or many references in order to be able to make good essay-based assessment. Therefore, essay-based assessment improves the students’ knowledge. In line with this, Booth, Colomb, and Williams as cited in Derntl (2014), stated that writing can help students to memorize the subject. Rereading the material does not only help the students to know the theories better, but it also helps them to memorize the material.

Getting students’ accustomed to read. Two participants mentioned that one of the benefits of essay was getting students’ accustomed to read. Both Participant 2 and Participant 3 mentioned it. Participant 2 stated “I can get used to read article and it eases me to understand the article (P2.8)”. In addition, Participant 3 also stated “The benefit of essay is we can get used to read journals or books (P3.4)”. From the two statements, it could be concluded that for the students who are read journal article

for the first time is confusing. After read a lot journal article, they can get used to read and easily understand the content of journal.

Becoming more motivated to learn. Becoming more motivated to learn was one of the benefits of essay which mentioned by one participant in this research. Participant 2 mentioned “the benefit that I got from making essay is motivated me to learn and it encourages me to make my essay the best (P2.9)”. The statement shows that the process of writing essay encourages them to learn more in order to be able to make a good essay. The students learn to gain the information needed for essay. Based on Borthwick and Brown as cited in Wagner (1998), essay can also be a motivator for the students to learn.

In conclusion, based on the findings above, the researcher found that there are seven benefits of essay. The benefits are improving vocabulary, improving grammatical skill, improving writing skill, increasing critical thinking, improving knowledge, getting students’ accustomed to read, and becoming more motivated to learn. Those ease them to make other writing assessment and they are able to make good essay. Moreover, they also know their writing ability, get new theories related to the topic of essay, ease them to understand the material, make them interested in reading, motivate them to learn and increase their speed of thinking.

The Problems of Essay as an Assessment Tool

The researcher analyzed the participants’ opinion regarding the problems of essay-based assessment. There are seven problems of essay-based assessment. The findings are discussed below.

Vocabulary problems. There were two kinds of vocabulary problem. The vocabulary problems were not enough vocabulary and word choices problem. The findings are discussed below.

Not enough vocabulary. Three out of four participants mentioned that their vocabulary is not enough to writing an essay. They are Participant 1, Participant 2 and Participant 3. Participant 1 stated “then, the problem of essay was there wasno improvement of vocabulary because the words I use are just the same (P1.8)”. Based on the statement, the student feels that there is no improvement of their vocabulary mastery. The cause is the students often use same word to write an essay.

Participant 2 also stated “in addition, my problem in creating essay is because I do not have enough vocabulary, so I should think on how to make my essay good and interesting to read (P2.11)”. Based on the statement from Participant 2, lack of vocabulary made students really need to think more critic to deliver their idea clearly in order for the reader understand what is conveyed by the students. The students are lack of vocabulary mastery which made them get problem in creating essay.

Participant 3 is also stated “I do not like writing, but I like to read encyclopedia. That is why I do not know what the proper words I should use in writing an academic essay (P3.5)”. Based on the statement from Participant 3, the students’ interest in reading is lack. It causes their problem on writing. Especially their vocabulary mastery is lack. Lack of word mastery makes students difficult to process their ideas. According to Glende (2013), unfamiliar with the vocabulary causes the students difficult to think the concept and idea critically. Especially, the students should

process the idea of some reference and combine the reference to discuss the same idea.

Word choices problem. Participant 1 mentioned that word choices became their problems in creating essay-based assessment. Participant 1 stated: The challenge that I faced in creating essay is word choices. As we know that in writing an academic paper, the language used is formal language, so I need to find the words which commonly used in academic essay or discover the synonym. (P1.3)

From the statement above, it could be concluded that the vocabulary in English is rich. Sometimes, the students feel confused in using the word. The words used in essay is formal, it makes them should be careful of using the words. Based on the statement, the students use commonly use word to discovered synonym in essay. Further, Participant 1 added “after that, the essay is word choices problem because there are some words which are impossible to be used in academic essay (P1.7)”. It can implied that the use of informal English language is cannot use in academic writing such as essay. In line with this problem, Alfaki (2015) stated that the problem faced by the students is the use of right words and related each other. According to Martin (2014), the challenge of students’ writing is word choice and it makes them do a little research to clarify the word.

Limitation of words. Two participants mentioned that under-pressure is one of their problems of essay-based assessment. They were participant 1 and participant 3. Participant 1 mentioned “sometimes, it is hard to minimize the words, for example

there are many things discussed in introduction (P1.9)”. Based on the statement, it was often difficult for the students to control the idea which must be written in introduction. They often wrote the discussion on the introduction section.

Participant 3 also mentioned “and then the problem of essay is I feel under pressure because of the limitation of the words which can be used in the essay (P3.6)”. Based on the statements, limitation of words makes the students feel under pressure when they make essay-based assessment. There are some rules given by the lecturer in creating essay-based assessment. One of them is the limitation of words. The limitation of words in essay-based assessment makes the students feel under pressure. In line with this, Soule, Whiteley, and McIntosh (2007) concluded that when people try to express their thought in the limitation of words, they become worry with the words.

Difficulty to find references. Hard to find the reference became the problem of essay-based assessment which mentioned by participant 2. Participant 2 said “my problem when I make essay is hard to find the appropriate references (P2.10)”. Based on the statement, the difficulty to find the appropriate reference with the topic on essay is the problem perceived by participant 2. In line with this, Antonioua and Moriarty (2008) argued that the problem of writers when they are writing is they not often about the intelligence.

Demand to master materials. In order to be able to make good essay, the students have to understand the material well. In the interview session, Participant 3 said that one of the problems in making essay-based assessment was demand to

master material. Participant 3 said “the challenge of essay is we must master the material (P3.1)”. Based on the statement, the problem in writing an essay is the students are demand to master material which must be wrote on their essay. Students feel that there is coercion on wiring essay. It made them feel mastering material was one of the problems of writing an essay. In line with this, Fadda (2012) found that the problem of students’ academic writing is about lack of knowledge which needed to write in academic writing. Because of it, the lecturers asked them to master the material.

Challenge to make a good quality essay. Participant 2 mentioned that one of the problems in creating essay was to make the essay full of knowledge. It becomes a problem, because sometimes the students are lack of knowledge. According to Antonioua and Moriarty (2008), many of writers faced the problem in writing such as anxiety and worry about writing and lack of knowledge. Participant 2 stated “the challenge of essay is how to make the essay is full of knowledge (P2.3)”. Further, Participant 2 also added “because the aim of making essay is to bring up the knowledge based on result of the research (P2.5)”. It could be concluded from the two statements from Participant 2 that essay must be useful to improve knowledge. It means that a good essay contains of knowledge.

Creating an essay which full of knowledge becomes one of the problems faced by the students. In line with this, Hunter (2017) stated that the role of essay is construct students’ knowledge because it increases the understanding of the topic. Because of that, the students need to make clear essay-based assessment to make the

teacher give judgment about their understanding. Therefore, the students at English Language Education Department in a private university in Yogyakarta said that making essay which full of knowledge is one of their problems when they make a essay-based assessment.

From the problems above, it can be concluded that there are five problem faced by students. The problems are vocabulary problem including not enough vocabulary and word choices problem, limitation of words, hard to find reference, demanding to master material, and challenge to make a good quality essay. It is caused because they are lack of knowledge and mastery vocabulary, there are rules on making essay-based assessment, the related references is hard to find, there are demanded to master the subject, the essay must be rich of knowledge.