

## Foreign Language Writing and Translation

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**Abstract:** In L1 writing, every writer is said to have experienced writer's block. To overcome this writers are suggested that they continue writing without stopping to edit typing mistakes or find appropriate words. Using 14 fourth-semester students of the English Department whose L1 is Indonesian as subjects, and consulting experts' findings and experience in writing, this study attempts to qualitatively describe the flow of thoughts of the subjects while writing in English, i.e., whether or not they think in bahasa Indonesia and translate it into English. Three steps are employed. The first is by evaluating the subjects first writing draft to see whether or not they choose appropriate words, compose sentences, and put them in coherent paragraphs. Some guiding assumptions are drawn from their work on the strategies utilized to overcome writer's block. The second step is checking through open interviews. The last step sees whether or not the strategies are related to the writer's language competence as shown by the average of subjects grades in dictation, reading, writing and structure from Semester 1 to Semester 4. The findings show that strategies used whether or not translation is used are not affected by the subjects' language competence. Almost all subjects think in bahasa Indonesia and translate their thoughts into English. From the four subjects who claim to always write directly in English, only two write clearly and well-organized writing, and one of them the best of all even says that she does not hesitate to consult dictionary if necessary. This study then suggests the teaching of EFL writing in class encourage students to think in Indonesian. In writing the first draft, students should be allowed or advised to write the Indonesian expressions to maintain the flow of their writing.

**Key words:** writer's block, writing block, EFL writing, first draft

There is seldom, if any, mention of "writer's block" in the teaching of writing in English as a foreign language (EFL). It is either out of the discussion on teaching writing or the goal of EFL writing is much more structure oriented.<sup>a</sup> Teachers, while walking around to see students progress, are often surprised to find a student who, after ten or fifteen minutes, could not write even a single sentence. They push students to start writing without realizing that they do not know where to start or what to write.

Based on the perspective of the current-traditional rhetoric, experts describe writing as 'a matter of arrangement, of fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns'.<sup>b</sup> When a student is learning to write he is learning to be skillful in identifying, internalizing, and executing these prescribed patterns. In a writing class, a writing teacher helps students to develop appropriate strategies by focusing on the four stages of writing: getting started to compose, drafting, revising and editing. Getting started to compose is the stage when students find topics, generate ideas and information, focus, and plan structure and procedure. In the second stage, students are encouraged to make multiple drafts. Then, in the next stage, i.e.: revising, students may add, delete, modify, and rearrange ideas. The last stage in the process of writing, editing, is a stage when students attend to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics.

In EFL writing, students who face writing block may have multiple problems in getting ideas, choosing the correct words and sentences to express the ideas, and develop them into well-structured paragraphs. This means that they find difficulties even at the beginning stage of writing, i.e. getting started to compose.

To minimize students' problems, teachers could apply various techniques that can make learning to write easier. There are several techniques to teaching writing, controlled writing, which is structure and vocabulary oriented; semi-controlled; team-writing; the reading-to-write approach in which after reading a text, students are asked to write on a similar topic; free writing and portfolio writing. Students could also pick up the paragraph development of a reading text or use other ways of paragraph development to write their essays.

Realizing that the process of writing is not a simple one, teachers should pay attention not only to the end product of the writing, but also to



the four stages of writing experienced by the students to see what is happening in these stages. The importance of considering the process of composing students' essays has drawn the attention of experts' who then suggests the application of the process approach in a writing class.<sup>c</sup> By considering the draft resulted from each stage, teachers will be able to reveal the strategies used by the students when they face difficulties.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Being curious to know the strategies used by the students in the process of composing essays, the questions raised for this study are:

1. What strategies do subjects use to attack their writing blocks?

This question is specified further into:

- 1.1 Do they write directly in English even though they face difficulties in finding the appropriate expressions?
- 1.2 Do they use translation of their Indonesian thoughts into English in writing the draft?
2. Does their language competence differentiate the strategies used?

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The findings are useful for the teaching of writing in EFL class. If it is proved that students really need an interstage using translation in the process of writing, it might be useful to embed translation into the learning of writing in EFL class.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is conducted based on theories on teaching writing, writing strategies, and writing process in the writing class.

#### The Teaching of Writing

Teachers of EFL are not in agreement in terms of the learning process of writing. Some persist that the product (the text students produce as a task) should be minimally error free, and others say that writing is beyond sentential mistakes. The first group believe that without

being corrected, the mistakes become errors that might stay until they graduate. The second group state that writing teachers must leave the grammatical correction to grammar teachers. They worry that students will concentrate on the grammatical errors only and the writing class becomes a structure class.

Writing as a process of composing essays, based on the perspective of the current-traditional rhetoric, is defined as 'a matter of arranging, of fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns'.<sup>d</sup> Learning to write means learning to be skillful in identifying, internalizing, and executing these prescribed patterns. The process of writing consists of four stages, i.e. (1) strategies for getting started to compose, (2) drafting, (3) revising and (4) editing. The first stage getting started to compose is a stage when students find topics, generate ideas and information, focus, and plan structure and procedure. In the second stage: drafting, students are encouraged to make multiple drafts. Then, in the next stage, i.e. revising, students may add, delete, modify, and rearrange ideas. The last stage in the process of writing, i.e. editing is a stage when students attend to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics.

At the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, writing starts in the second semester and is scheduled for four semesters in a row, starting from the second semester, where students learn to write narratives and simple personal letters. Writing B, which is given in the third semester, covers the descriptive writing and paragraph development. In Writing C, in semester 4, students learn to write expository essays; while in Writing D, in semester 5, students deal with writing argumentative essays. Apart from these successive writing classes, in semester 6, students have to take Paper Writing class which requires them to write academic papers. Except paper writing, the writing class meetings are doubled, i.e., the 2 units are translated into 2 x 100 minutes a week.

Starting from the beginning of these writing classes, students are trained to make full compositions consisting of several paragraphs. Of course, at the beginning level, i.e. Writing A, students are given model texts and guidance in composing cohesive and coherent paragraphs. Controlled composition activities are also given to the students in the form of writing essays based on a theme and some guiding questions representing the topics of the paragraphs that should be written.<sup>e</sup> As they



proceed to the advanced level, students are given less guidance but more freedom to develop their own ideas. However, writing teachers pay attention more to the product or the final draft submitted to the teachers. Although teachers also apply the process approach of writing class as they also correct and give comments on the draft and return it to the student to be revised, the corrections are more on the grammatical errors, inappropriate choice of words, and mechanism, not on the paragraphing let alone the flow of ideas.

### Strategies of Writing

Almost every writer believes that the first draft is a "child's draft" meaning that it is embarrassing for the writer if other people read it. However, first drafts normally do not come out to other people and writers are encouraged to just write however silly it sounds to avoid "the writer's block" that might occur if they often stop to find the exact words or expressions.

In contrast to "real" writers, EFL students, given a topic, they are pushed to write a story or an essay in 100 minutes and submit their work afterwards. Therefore, it can be expected that the work they submit is no more than their first drafts and that without realizing it, they have overcome their "writer's block" using individual strategies.

There are advice and suggestions on overcoming writer's block. Western Campus Writing Center<sup>e</sup> and Purdue University Online Writing Lab<sup>h</sup> (abbreviated as OWL) suggest that students start wherever they are convenient to write. If they find the middle is easy to write they can skip the beginning for a moment and go back later. They say that if the draft is finished the teacher will not know that the text is written backwards. It is also advised that stopping for the "right" word may hinder the flow of writing.

### Writing Process in the Writing Class

Experts in language teaching have been long interested in investigating the two sides of writing classes in which L2 students' writing can be both evaluated and taught.<sup>i</sup> The investigation is based the concept of writing which is defined as a process whereby the writer

"discover meaning," instead of only finding appropriate structures to package already developed ideas. At one side, it is argued that the writer's composing processes necessarily depend on adequate analysis of the written products and that a product analysis can aid learners in their development of writing processes.

Disagreement to this opinion comes from Zamel<sup>j</sup> who argues that the basic concept of writing process includes the notion of the writer as discoverer/creator. It is explained further learners of the composing process must be given optimum opportunities to develop their ideas and engage in interaction with potential readers.

The exploration on the underlying processes of composing tries to elaborate the multiplicity of constraints that writers must juggle and orchestrate to produce a text. Rose as quoted by Zamel<sup>k</sup> found out that students who experienced writer's block had learnt the rules and strategies that they used from textbooks and from teachers who based their instruction on these texts. Other studies concerning "blocks" and "nonblockers" also proved that writers' anxiety and ineffective strategies of the monitor over-user are linked to their limited writing experience throughout school and to their belief that teachers expected perfect papers and the result of being taught by a method that emphasized the "conscious memorization" of rules and that tested the students explicit knowledge of these rules. On the other hand, the monitor under-user had been exposed to instruction that focussed on communication.

A warning concerning the over use of textbooks assures that textbooks reveals the "static and insular" ways in which they approach the "dynamic and highly context oriented process" of writing. It is also argued that restrictive, arbitrary, and reductionism rules and formulas atomize and dismantle process, transforming composition into a kind of "decomposition".

To answer the question of the form of a sound writing process that can aid students in composing, experts have found out through their researches that the nondirective and encouraging stance of the teacher, the supportive and comfortable atmosphere of this particular writing classroom, the one which functions as a community of writers, helps students establish a trusting relationship with their teacher. This in turn will encourage the students to take the risks needed for the development



of writing and help make them more confident about their own intuitions about writing. It seems that this will not be an easy task to do for the teacher of a writing class. However, it is suggested further that the best effort made by the writing teacher would deserve the best result: i.e. the development of authorship in the students.

It is clear that students who are encouraged to take the risk and have confidence in composing will feel free to use their individual strategies to develop their ideas in an essays. In the exploration on the strategies used by EFL students, Zamel in Nunan<sup>1</sup> also discovered one student composed in her first language and then translated into English. If this strategy can aid these students in developing their ideas, then they should not be discouraged to compose in this way. As Indonesian students learning English may feel at ease when speaking to their friend in their mother tongue and at least think in their mother tongue, it is worth to explore whether translation is also used by these student in composing.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

This study, which intends to describe the strategies of EFL students to attack their writers' blocks, employs 14 fourth semester students having a range of GPA from 2.18 to 3.91 as subjects. They are asked to write freely about the English Day, the top activity done to sum up the co-curricular English Practicum program of the first year students' of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

Three steps are employed to answer the questions stated. The first is by evaluating the subjects first writing draft to see whether or not they choose the appropriate words, compose the sentences, and put them in coherent paragraphs. Some guiding assumptions are drawn from their work on the strategies utilized to overcome the writer's block. This is then checked through open interviews.

The last step is to see whether or not the strategies are related to the writer's language competence as shown by the average of subjects grades in dictation, reading, writing and structure from Semester 1 to Semester 4. Data are taken from writing of three subjects having the highest language competence, i.e., P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>14</sub> and P<sub>13</sub> and three subjects with the lowest language competence, i.e. P<sub>11</sub>, P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>8</sub> where language competence (LC) is represented by their grades in Dictation (D), Writing A, B, and C;

Structure A, B and C; and Writing A, B, and C.

**Table 1. Subjects and their Language Competence**

No.	LC		No.	LC
P <sub>11</sub>	1.88		P <sub>12</sub>	4
P <sub>1</sub>	2.35		P <sub>14</sub>	3.9
P <sub>8</sub>	2.45		P <sub>13</sub>	3.9
P <sub>10</sub>	2.45		P <sub>5</sub>	3.6
P <sub>4</sub>	2.55		P <sub>2</sub>	3.35
P <sub>3</sub>	2.75		P <sub>9</sub>	2.95
P <sub>7</sub>	2.85		P <sub>6</sub>	2.9
P <sub>6</sub>	2.9		P <sub>7</sub>	2.85
P <sub>9</sub>	2.95		P <sub>3</sub>	2.75
P <sub>2</sub>	3.35		P <sub>4</sub>	2.55
P <sub>5</sub>	3.6		P <sub>10</sub>	2.45
P <sub>13</sub>	3.9		P <sub>8</sub>	2.45
P <sub>14</sub>	3.9		P <sub>1</sub>	2.35
P <sub>12</sub>	4		P <sub>11</sub>	1.88

#### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The first analysis applies to all subjects writing papers to see whether or not they choose the appropriate words, compose the sentences, and put them in coherent paragraphs. Interviews are also done to all subjects of the study. This is to answer the first two questions in the statement of the problem.

To see whether their language competence differentiate the strategies used in writing the first draft, six writing papers are taken to be analyzed. Having ranked all the subjects in terms of their language competence (LC), three from the top best and the three from the lowest rank are chosen. The three highest are P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>14</sub>, P<sub>13</sub>, and the three from the lowest in the group are P<sub>11</sub>, P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>.

#### The Strategies Used

There are 14 subjects taking part in this study. They write their essays based on a given theme, i.e. the English Day – a program held by



the subjects for the subjects in which they present various performances in English. Their essays are the data sources, which are then analyzed. The analysis is done by finding expressions which do not sound English – or in other words seem to be influenced by subjects' mother tongues.

From the 14 subjects only four write an outline before writing. They are P<sub>2</sub> Placement Test (PT) (PT 50, LC 3.60 and GPA 2.80), P<sub>12</sub> (PT 80, LC 4.00 and GPA 3.91), P<sub>13</sub> (PT 74, LC 3.90 and GPA 3.72), and P<sub>14</sub> (PT 87, LC 3.90 and GPA 3.41). Although the four subjects belong to those having high language competence and GPA, it could not be inferred that language competence differentiate the habit of preparing an outline before writing since P<sub>5</sub> (PT 61, LC 3.60 and GPA 3.42) who is also a high achiever does not use an outline. On the other hand, P<sub>2</sub> who writes an outline writes ambiguously using unclear and improper expressions.

Concerning the first stage of writing, i.e., to get ideas, P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>13</sub>, and P<sub>14</sub> write directly in English. The difference between them lies in whether or not they look up unknown expressions in the dictionary. P<sub>5</sub> does not check dictionary at all and lets her ideas flow without any interruption. P<sub>13</sub> says that thinking and writing in English makes things easier. P<sub>12</sub> avoids translation, but she does not reject consulting the dictionary. P<sub>14</sub> says that he never experiences any writer's block while writing. P<sub>12</sub> the highest of all, thinks in English, writes directly in English, but does not hesitate to check the dictionary when necessary. It might be a proof that the very high achiever uses various strategies to grab success.

The other nine subjects think in Indonesian, use translation or ask friends and teacher for information and English equivalents. P<sub>11</sub> the lowest in rank says that thinking in English is difficult. (see also quoted text # 6)

As a recheck of the analysis, an interview with each subject is conducted. The questions addressed to them concern the process of their writing, i.e. whether they make outline, how they get the ideas, and how they formulate the sentences. To help the subjects to retrieve the way they get the ideas, they are also asked to explain the meaning of certain expressions which look ambiguous, ungrammatical, or do not sound English.

The responses justify that subjects use strategies varying from thinking in Indonesian and asking friends in Indonesian before formulating the equivalent English sentences to thinking and writing

directly in English.

P<sub>7</sub> for example, writes several sentences in Indonesian before asking his friend about more information on the prescribed topic. As he speaks Indonesian to his friend, he formulates more Indonesian sentences in his mind. This fact shows that he finds writing blocks in the stage of getting started to write in his writing process, particularly in generating ideas and information. Thus, this subject tends to use his mother tongue when he gets writing blocks even in the beginning stage of the writing process.

It is interesting to realize that those who belong to low achievers (P<sub>10</sub> and P<sub>11</sub> with the sense placement test grades, 42 and LCs of 2.45 and 1.88 respectively, and their GPAs of 2.53 and 2.18 respectively) admit that they write directly in English. However, they also admit that they firstly think in Indonesian, trying to get ideas concerning the topic given, and ask friends questions also in Indonesian to their friends (one of them also asks the teacher) before they write English sentences.

In fact only three subjects (P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>13</sub>, and P<sub>14</sub>) from the four who admit that they always think directly in English in composing essays proved it in their work. P<sub>12</sub> avoids getting ideas in Indonesian, or uses translation strategy, because to her it allows her to maintain the flow of her ideas. P<sub>13</sub> writes directly in English starting from the beginning stage of composing as it is easier for him to formulate ideas in English he only has to give one effort for one particular idea and to formulate it into an appropriate English sentence. Moreover, he says he saves time as he likes to spend more time in preparing the outline and do the proofreading. P<sub>14</sub> whose mother tongue is Hokkian says that he seldom gets stuck in collecting ideas in English. However, if he finds difficulties in finding appropriate English words to formulate good English sentences, he asks his friends in English, too. He never uses any translation in the process of writing. P<sub>5</sub> fails to prove it since her writing such as in, "... Every students of our faculty are allowed to enjoy English Day freely if the one who wants to be one of the subjects of English Day bring his or her identity with showing his or her student card" does not sound English at all.



Table 2: Subjects' Data and the Result of the Interview

Code	PT 0-100	LC	GPA 0-4	Strategies used
P <sub>1</sub>	46	2.35	2.68	Find Indonesian words or phrases, then translate them into English
P <sub>2</sub>	64	3.35	3.52	Think in Indonesian first, get the ideas in Indonesian, then write in English
P <sub>3</sub>	52	2.75	2.86	Think in Indonesian in finding ideas, sentences, and then ask friends when finding difficulties in formulating ideas in English.
P <sub>4</sub>	35	2.55	2.82	Write in English all ideas in mind, resulting in long sentences to avoid missing ideas in mind. Ask friends in Bahasa. Indonesia if she cannot find the English expression for what she wants to write
P <sub>5</sub>	61	3.60	3.42	Write in English directly all ideas in mind, just let out what is in mind. Didn't consult dictionary.
P <sub>6</sub>	50	2.90	2.80	Having Indonesian sentences first in mind and then translate them into English and write.
P <sub>7</sub>	54	2.85	2.73	Write a part of the first draft in Indonesian, getting more information about the topic from friends in Indonesian and then write in English directly to save time.
P <sub>8</sub>	46	2.45	2.83	Ask friends in Indonesian, consult Grammar book.
P <sub>9</sub>	57	2.95	3.01	Find ideas in Indonesian and write directly in English.
P <sub>10</sub>	42	2.45	2.53	Get ideas in Indonesian and try to formulate them in English sentences even if finding difficulties in grammar.
P <sub>11</sub>	42	1.88	2.18	Get ideas in Indonesian and transfer them into English; consider thinking in bahasa. Indonesia is easy but transferring in English is difficult.
P <sub>12</sub>	80	4.00	3.91	Write in English directly. When finding difficult words, consult dictionary. Avoid translation, think directly in English to maintain the flow of ideas

P <sub>13</sub>	74	3.90	3.72	Write directly in English because the time is limited, even if the time is longer, I will write directly in English as it will make it easier to formulate ideas in English. Proofread. Spend more time in preparing outline
P <sub>14</sub>	87	3.9	3.41	Mother tongue is Hokkian Seldom get stuck in getting ideas / collecting ideas. Ask friends if I don't know a word. Never do any translation

Notes:

P<sub>1...14</sub> = subjects number 1 to number 14

PT = placement test given to know the subjects' entry behavior before they begin their first semester

LC = Language Competence

#### Language competence and strategies used

Subjects' paper work are quoted to see the writing skills or the paragraph developments of the three highest (P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>14</sub>, P<sub>13</sub>), and the three of the lowest in the group (P<sub>11</sub>, P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>8</sub>).

#### Subject # 12 (P<sub>12</sub>)

This subject (PT 80, LC 4.00, and GPA 3.91) develops her paragraph neatly as shown by her topic sentence (1) for her first paragraph and (2) for the second paragraph. Her thoughts flow from one sentence to another showing her clear and skillful way of writing.

1. From all the programs held by the English Department of Widya Mandala University, Teachers Training Faculty, English Days is one of the special ones beside the English Practicum. (1) It is an annual event in June for the first year students. The specialty can be seen from its definition, its similarities and differences with other English Department/University's English programs, and the activities during the day. English Day is held to be the end of the English Practicum for the first year students of the English Department of Widya



Mandala University's Teacher Training Faculty. (2) It is the day when the students are given a chance to perform what they've got during the three month English Practicum, the three month of practicing singing, drama, storytelling and public speaking. The day is for them to have fun and be free from tiring daily routine with all the lectures.

*Subject # 14 (P<sub>14</sub>)*

This subject (PT 87, LC 3.90, and GPA 3.41) does not translate some Indonesian terms such as, Unika Widya Mandala Surabaya (Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University), Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan (English Department Student Organization). It might be his preference not to get stuck. He uses in appropriate terms such as "dramatic skills" instead of Drama and "show off" instead of show. In spite of these things, he writes clearly and develops his one topic sentence into a well-organized paragraph.

2. In our university, Unika Widya Mandala Surabaya, there is a special occasion held by the Teacher Training Faculty every year called English Day which we can hardly find in any other universities in Surabaya. This is a program of HMJ (Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan) which is itself aimed at the new students of the faculty. The English Day is meant to bring the old students and the new comers closer relationship one to the others. They will have a special time together and a chance to know their new friends from the same faculty. In this event, the new will have to show their creativity by performing some dramatic skill, fashion show or playing musical instruments and singing. The old students may as well show off their skills to make this event more memorable and meaningful.

*Subject # 13 (P<sub>13</sub>)*

The first paragraph of this quoted text has three unrelated sentences. The first is about what students might think about the English Day, the second is the right definition that should be made to counter the students' false perception but the reason (they can not make a comparison) is

confusing. Then the third sentence states that he is going to give his suggestion, but does not mention what his suggestion is.

Similar comments go to the second paragraph. Two things discussed here are (1) the use of English during the English day and (2) the performance and the English Practicum.

Concerning expressions used, P<sub>13</sub> (PT 74, LC 3.90, and GPA 3.72) comes out with ambiguous ones such as, "definition to be established to students," and "since they can not make a comparison to other universities."

3. Some students might think that English Day is the day of performances of the students' capability in using English as their major study in the English department of Widya Mandala University. (1) The right definition should be established to the students then since they can not make a comparison to other universities. I would like to give my opinion and suggestion to English Day as a "treasure" of the English Department of Widya Mandala University. (2) Actually, English Day is the English language using day. (3) All students from the English department are hoped to use English throughout this day; in speaking or writing especially. It is one of the HMJ programs to give a chance to students to practice and perform their English. It is held at the end of a semester before the final test. The students who are chosen to lead the activities must have participated in the English Practicum, (4) a kind of the English department program to develop students' English skill in Storytelling, Story writing, Drama, Public Speaking and Singing. The students who haven't taken the English Practicum may not joined as performer, but only as an audience.

*Subject # 8 (P<sub>8</sub>)*

This subject (PT 46, LC 2.45, and GPA 2.83) writes recklessly. Her wrong spelling such as, "commetle" (committee), "hellowen" (Halloween), and "every body" (everybody) is disturbing. Her uses of wrong expressions such as, "Western Life" (=American culture), "prom night" (=prom) and also mentioning Halloween do not belong to the



English Day as the topic of writing.

Besides, the information she conveys is not accurate she writes that English Day is the department's not the university's program and it is not a party either. Her paragraphs are also poorly developed with many things discussed in one paragraph.

4. English day is one of the university program, and it is held every year. (1) The commette of the party is the organizer of Widya Mandala University. Actually English day is a part of the English Week, it is the main event and held on the last day of the English Week. The theme of the party is taken from the Western life (2) such as , Halloween, or prome night and every body have to dressed based to the theme. For example if the theme is Halloween so every body on the party have to dressed in black and their faces are covered by scary make-up. On that party they can listen to Widya Mandala music band and they also have some games or quiz to play. The commette also provides snack and soft drink during the party. On the last session they will have disco time and every body including teachers and students is allowed to dance together on the dance floor. Actually the concept of this event is to make the student can be able to speaking in English so while the party is held every students have to speaks english.(3)

#### Subject # 1 (P<sub>1</sub>)

The subject has a problem more on her structure and word choice. Having a PT of 46, GPA of 2.68 and LC of 2.35, she sometimes misses the "to be," chooses the improper words and uses wrong punctuation. Although she uses "we" and "you" inconsistently, her writing is still understandable (for speakers of bahasa Indonesia) and her paragraphs are not bad as shown below.

5. When I in third semester, I celebrate English Days. English day is a special day in my faculty, (1) because we have to used English language in our conversation, and there is a lot of activities to celebrate it. There is story telling, dancing, fashion show, singing, magic, etc.  
In Widya Mandala, only English department who celebrate

English day. (2) But before that, there is English Practicum for us. In English Practicum, you can choose a lot of activities (3) such as public speaking, storytelling, singing, poetry. In each activity, you will learn how to be a good English man, for example how to speak, how to write, how to pronoun English word very well. So finally, we can celebrate English day as if we are in abroad.

In the interview, she admits that what she wants to say by "celebrate" is *menyelenggarakan* (organize), and by "how to be a good English man" she means ... *penutur asli* (native speaker). P<sub>1</sub> surely thinks in bahasa Indonesia and tries to translate her thoughts into English.

#### Subject # 11 (P<sub>11</sub>)

This subject (PT 42, LC 1.88, and GPA 2.18) does not have grammatical problems. As she mentions in her interview that she gets her ideas in Indonesian, and she has difficulties in transferring them into English, her writing is grammatical but confusing. How can a faculty program be in the department (sentence 1). Sentence 2 uses an anaphora "they" not referring to any aforementioned mentioned subject. Her paragraphs seem to stay undeveloped (paragraphs 1 and 3) or poorly developed (paragraph 2).

6. English day is one of the faculty programs in English department.

In English department they must speak english and not the other languages, so they can practice their speaking. Besides that the faculty has a program and called english practicum, such as, singing, storytelling, public speaking and drama. The students who joined in english practicum also participate in english day.

In other universities there is such a program like english day, but they have different activity.

My opinion about the event English day is really interesting because it can increase the students' creativities. According to me, it is a good program especially for students.



## INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Four subjects who participate in this study claim they do not think in Indonesian nor use translation while writing their first drafts; only P<sub>12</sub> and P<sub>14</sub> submit a clear and organized writing, and P<sub>12</sub> who is the best of all does not hesitate to consult the dictionary.

This shows that most subjects participating in this study still think in Indonesian and uses translation to convert their Indonesian ideas into English. In other words, only the outstanding subjects do not use translation to attack "writer's block."

Outlining helps students to write systematically, but there are other things to consider a student to excel. From the four subjects who use outline before writing, only two succeed to write systematically. They are P<sub>12</sub> and P<sub>14</sub>.

Another finding shows that excellent subjects like P<sub>13</sub>, P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>5</sub> still have problems in writing their first drafts. They either use ambiguous expressions, poor paragraph development, and even make grammatical mistakes.

Language competence does affect subjects' writing clarity. However, P<sub>1</sub> the second lowest in the group, despite his grammatical shortage, writes better than P<sub>13</sub> the third from top. She surely thinks in Indonesian and translates her unwritten Indonesian sentence into English.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings shows that most of the subjects, 12 out of 14 subjects, use their mother tongue in the beginning stage of the writing process. They get the ideas in Indonesian before they formulate English sentences. They also ask friends in Indonesian. The questions that often are often addressed to their friends concern how to say certain expressions in English and the English words of certain ideas.

As it is said by Robert Protherough<sup>m</sup>, talking to friends can aid students develop their writing skills. Therefore while the students ask questions to their friends, they also experience the process of developing their writing skill. It seems that the three high achievers (P<sub>12</sub>, P<sub>13</sub>, and P<sub>14</sub>) also ask questions to their friends although they speak English to their friends. It can be concluded that their English competence determines the

strategies of asking for clarification from friends. It can also be concluded further that as they speak English to their friends, they might face fewer difficulties at the word level. They admit that they ask for confirmation about the use of certain expressions; thus, something higher than the word level.

The result of the analysis also proves that thinking bilingual is not limited to the less skilled writers. Although the lesser their language competence the more they tend to focus on the mechanics of writing and grammatical features, strategies used in attacking writer's block does not differ. Any time students fail to find English expressions, either they think in Indonesian, ask friends, or consult the bilingual dictionary.

### Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Structure oriented could be sentential (grammatical and vocabulary) or textual (paragraph) oriented.
- <sup>b</sup> Available at <http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/>
- <sup>c</sup> Available at <http://www.kyoto.su.ac.jp/information/teasl-ej/ej04/a3.html>
- <sup>d</sup> Available at <http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/>
- <sup>e</sup> Buku Pedoman FKIP Unika Widya Mandala, 1998. Unika Widya Mandala, Surabaya
- <sup>f</sup> Anne Lamott in Janet Burrow. 2000. *Writing Fiction*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Longman
- <sup>g</sup> Available at <http://www.Tri-c.cc.oh.us/west/faculty/Write/docs/draft.htm>
- <sup>h</sup> Available at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl\\_plan2.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_plan2.html)
- <sup>i</sup> Chaudron, Craig. 1987. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol 21. No 4.
- <sup>j</sup> Zamel, Vivian. 1987. *TESOL Quarterly* Vol 21. No 4. 1987
- <sup>k</sup> Zamel, Vivian. 1987. Recent Research on Writing Pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 21. No 4.
- <sup>l</sup> Nunan, David. 1995. *Language Teaching Methodology: a textbook for teachers*. London: Prentice Hall Macmillan.
- <sup>m</sup> Robert Protherough. 1988. *Encouraging Writing*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

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**Appendix #1**

	D	R <sub>A</sub>	R <sub>B</sub>	R <sub>C</sub>	S <sub>A</sub>	S <sub>B</sub>	S <sub>C</sub>	W <sub>A</sub>	W <sub>B</sub>	W <sub>C</sub>	LC	PT 0-100	GPA
P <sub>1</sub>	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.35	46	2.68
P <sub>2</sub>	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.35	64	3.52
P <sub>3</sub>	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.75	52	2.86
P <sub>4</sub>	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.55	35	2.82
P <sub>5</sub>	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.60	61	3.42
P <sub>6</sub>	3.0	3.5	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.5	2.5	2.90	50	2.80
P <sub>7</sub>	4.0	3.0	2.5	3.5	2.0	2.5	2.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.85	54	2.73
P <sub>8</sub>	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.45	46	2.83
P <sub>9</sub>	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.95	57	3.01
P <sub>10</sub>	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.45	42	2.53
P <sub>11</sub>	2.0	2.5	0	-	2.0	1.0	-	2.0	2.5	3.0	1.88	42	2.18
P <sub>12</sub>	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.00	80	3.91
P <sub>13</sub>	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.90	74	3.72
P <sub>14</sub>	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.90	87	3.41

**Notes:**

P<sub>1</sub> ... P<sub>14</sub> are subjects number 1 to 14

D = Dictation

R<sub>A</sub> = Reading A, R<sub>B</sub> = Reading B, R<sub>C</sub> = Reading C

S<sub>A</sub> = Structure A, S<sub>B</sub> = Structure B, S<sub>C</sub> = Structure C

W<sub>A</sub> = Writing A, W<sub>B</sub> = Writing B, W<sub>C</sub> = Writing C

PT = Placement Test

D + R<sub>A</sub> + R<sub>B</sub> + R<sub>C</sub> + S<sub>A</sub> + S<sub>B</sub> + S<sub>C</sub> + W<sub>A</sub> + W<sub>B</sub> + W<sub>C</sub>

LC = Language Competence = -----

**Appendix # 2**

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW**

P<sub>1</sub>

Question: What do you mean by sentence 1, 2, 3, etc?

1) I mean just by the English Department not the Economic Department or Chemical Department who celebrate it because this is a special celebration in English.

“ karena menurut saya itu hanya fakultas Inggris yang menyelenggarakan English Day”

Yang dimaksud dengan “celebrate” adalah “menyelenggarakan”..

2) Dengan memasuki English Department, kita belajar seolah-olah seperti orang barat, kita bisa berbicara seperti orang barat, bisa mengetahui grammar yang benar, pronunciation yang benar seperti orang barat.

“ a good English Man” maksudnya: penutur asli, concerning the language.

3) Karena kita juga merayakan English Day seperti di luar negeri, conversationnya, bahasanya saja.

4) Mam Retno (my teacher’s singing) .....

Saya memilih singing, Mam Retno punya ide seolah-olah ada kelas TK dan saya sebagai gurunya.

5) Mam Retno said that there is a class and I am the teacher and my friends are the students.

6) “She remained me ....”

Ma’am Retno mengingatkan saya bahwa saya adalah seorang guru TK jadi harus menarik.

7) “So I bring a bag ... waktu itu saya bawa ... tetapi tidak mau memakainya karena kurang PD.

8) “In BBQ ... Firm of flesh” = daging ayam

Question: What did you do to find the correct word?

“Find the Indonesia word and then translate it into English”

P<sub>2</sub>

1) “English Department area” means only in the English Department area not in teknik or other --- only in B and D (building) and also in cafeteria but only



students of the English Department.

It means: di daerah Jurusan Bahasa. Inggris

- 2) "Because English Day is a greatly program". The word "greatly" means good.

P<sub>3</sub>

- 1) Ya itu banyak programnya seperti sebelum English Day kan ada English Week seperti perlombaan-perlombaan karaoke, King and Queen, write love letter competition.
- 2) Pada waktu pelaksanaan English Day biasanya ada waktu pembagian hadiah untuk yang memenangkan perlombaan pada English Week.
- 3) Universitas lain kemungkinan juga mengadakan program seperti yang diadakan di Universitas kita seperti acara Natal, Natal bersama, biasanya itu Valentine, kalau mengadakan acara biasanya di rumah makan bekerjasama dengan yang lain.
- 4) Pada waktu English Day kalau mengisi acara minta bantuan mhs. Fakultas lain, bandnya pakai bandnya teknik, jadi mereka ikut berpartisipasi dalam penyelenggaraan.

Question: What difficulties did you find when you wrote this composition?

Answer: tidak menemukan inspirasi, kata-katanya.

Question: Caranya bagaimana?

Answer: tanya teman, kalau tidak bisa mengartikan kalimat seperti apa dari bahasa. Ind. ke Inggris.

Question: Apakah membuat draftnya dalam bahasa Indonesia?

Answer: tidak. Kalimat apa begitu tanya teman bahasa. Inggrisnya apa. Bertanyanya dalam bahasa. Indonesia.

P<sub>4</sub>

- 1) Di acara English Day yang mendekorasi anak-anak yang berkaitan yg mengikuti acara English Day jadi kalau yg mengikuti English Day anak-anak semester II yg mendekorasi anak-anak semester II dengan imajinasi mereka.
- 2) Question: Did you make a draft and find difficulties?  
Answer: *I didn't make a draft but I find difficulties, the sentences are long and the use of certain word is also difficult. Usually I find*

*another way to write the idea, to find the easier one, may be in my mind there are three sentences so I make short and clear so the reader will know what I mean.*

- 3) Question: The sentence is too long, how did you write it?
- 4) Answer: I have ideas in my mind and I'm afraid I will loose it so I just write it all.

P<sub>5</sub>

- 1) additional courses = pelajaran tambahan
- 2) Salah satu dari universitas Kristen (Christ)
- 3) I mean the actor and the actress, the drama are very good they really can show or express peran mereka.
- 4) Menulis langsung dalam bahasa Inggris ---- cuma keluar begitu saja
- 5) "openly" = the students want to join the celebration from their heart, they are willing not because it is a compulsory.
- 6) I don't consult a dictionary

P<sub>6</sub>

- 1) In my mind I have Indonesian sentences, I translate and write directly in English but usually in writing sentences I write in Indonesia and translate it in English, that is easier
- 2) In the English Day, students which attend the party should be talk in English even all
- 3) The program should be used English too, I mean the dance should use English songs.

P<sub>7</sub>

- 1) I mean in the day we have to speak English so it will develop our skills if they want to request songs etc
- 2) .....the program outside WM, they may have the same program with the same objective.
- 3) Question: Is it difficult to write this? It is quite long  
Answer: If we can make it shorter it will be more easy. After I ask for the information about the program from my friends then I write it directly in English, if I write in bahasa. Indonesia first, it will take longer

P<sub>8</sub>

- 1) I don't think it is difficult to write this sentence, but I like to write all of my ideas. Sometimes in my mind it is an idea but I don't know how to combine. Writing in English is more difficult than writing in



bahasa. Ind. Sometimes I look at the structure book. If I know my structure is wrong I open and read my book, at school I ask my friends. I read my sentence in English but the question in bahasa. Ind. e.g.: Dian, ini benar ndak kalimatnya.

- 2) Question: You tend to write long sentences, isn't it more difficult?  
Answer: They are the same, sometimes I have mistakes in prepositions and grammar, sentences and using of vocabulary. I write in English directly.

P<sub>9</sub>

- 1) Sebelum ada English Day kan ada English Week, singing dsb. Lomba-lombanya.  
2) Waktunya berdekatan dengan Halloween, acaranya dibuat seperti Halloween di audit, dirancang seperti Halloween, seram-seram.  
3) Waktu acara itu ada band tetapi lagu-lagunya hanya bahasa. Inggris terus disitu disediakan snack sama minuman buat yang datang.  
4) Waktu acara itu persyaratannya kalau mau datang pakai kostum atau kalau ndak kostum ya baju hitam-hitam atau pakai mask. Kalau yang pakai kostum ya maksudnya yang setan-setan begitu kan Halloween.  
5) Maksudnya kok setiap acara diadakan di sekolah kan bosan, sekali-kali mestinya diadakan di luar kota, restoran, supaya tahu situasi diluar ("new situation").  
6) Question: Is it difficult to write it? Answer: The second part ---- soalnya tidak tahu yang diluar.

P<sub>10</sub>

- 1) That after they have English Practicum class the students must be able to show their ability what they get from the English Practicum class.  
2) HMJ, BPM, and Senat arrange the program, there are many programs in the English Department.  
3) Question: Did you ask directly in English? Answer: Yes, dikira-kira terus ditulis. Usually I write the sentence like what I think, and I don't know about the grammar. I think in bahasa. Indonesia first.

P<sub>11</sub>

- 1) Maksudnya: Dalam English Day yang ditampilkan adalah hal-hal yang sudah dipelajari dalam English Practicum.

- 2) Question: Is it difficult to write this?

Answer: Kalau menulis dadakan begini blank. Dalam ujian tidak. Kalau ada kesulitan waktu ujian, mikir dalam bahasa. Indonesia dulu lalu ditransfer ke dalam bahasa. Inggris. Mikirnya dalam bahasa. Indonesia gampang tetapi mentransfernya dalam bahasa. Inggris sulit.

P<sub>12</sub>

- 1) Write in English directly.
- 2) Making outline, starting with the controlling idea, topic sentence for each paragraph, outline sometimes in phrases or complete sentences.
- 3) If topic is familiar, the whole writing takes around 45 minutes.
- 4) When finding difficult words, consult dictionary.
- 5) Avoid translation, think directly in English to maintain the flow of ideas.

P<sub>13</sub>

- 1) Write directly in English because the time is limited, even if the time is longer, I will write directly in English as it will make it easier to formulate ideas in English.
- 2) When finding difficulties on grammar and vocabularies, consult dictionary
- 3) Doing proofreading.
- 4) Spending more time in preparing outline.

P<sub>14</sub>

- 1) Mother tongue is Hokkian.
- 2) Seldom make outline.
- 3) The first paragraph is the most important, so I use sophisticated words to impress the readers. This par. Contains the controlling idea, the main idea.
- 4) Seldom get stuck in getting ideas / collecting ideas.
- 5) Ask friends if I don't know a word.
- 6) Never do any translation.