

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the Odd Semester (August-December) of the 2018-2019 academic year, I was invited to take an apprenticeship with the lecturer in charge of the *English-124 course* at the Faculty of Entrepreneurship of Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. The English-124 course is the only English language learning course offered by the Faculty of Entrepreneurship. In that semester, there were two groups of nineteen students each. Each group had 100-minute meetings once a week. The students were required to write an English learning journal entry every week. What the students were expected to write was their experience learning English by using an App developed by the British Council.

The following is a description of the English learning journals written by the English-124 course students. A total number of approximately 494 journal entries were collected because there were thirty eight students, and each one had to write thirteen journal entries. The number of journal entries is an approximation because some students did not write some journal entries. The journal entries were analyzed based on the R2L rubric (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 282) for assessing writing, which is based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. It consists of four main categories: Context, Discourse, Grammar, and Graphic Features. After the analysis, three writing proficiency level groups were identified: high, medium, and low English writing proficiency levels. The high level group had much difficulty in terms of Context. The other two level groups had difficulty in all aspects: Context, Discourse, Grammar, and Graphic Features. The difference between the medium and low groups was that the medium group did slightly better than the low group in terms of Discourse, Grammar, and Graphic Features.

Based on the description of the English-124 course students' journal entries, it could be concluded that they needed support to improve their writing skills. Because of that, I reviewed the English as a Second Language writing instruction literature, and came across Hyland (2003) who mentions that from the different approaches to writing instruction, genre-based is probably the most beneficial approach for students. There are several genre-based approaches to writing instruction, one of which is the Reading to Learn (hence, abbreviated R2L) Pedagogy. Rose and Martin (2014) reports a study carried out in Western New South Wales in which a sample of approximately 10,000 students from kindergarten all the way to junior secondary received R2L instruction during three school terms. Because the purpose of

this study was to close the gap between faster and slower achieving students, the participants belonged to three groups: low, middle, and high achieving groups. This study compared literacy scores before and after applying the R2L Pedagogy. After receiving R2L instruction, the kindergarten average score growth was 70%, and the gap between high and low achieving kindergarten students was reduced from 16% to 8%. Regarding the other year levels, the average score growth was 30-40%, and the gap was reduced from 50% to 25%. Based on this study, I decided that the R2L Pedagogy could help improve the writing skills of the English-124 course students. Moreover, the R2L Pedagogy has been made convenient to learn and implement after the R2L Teacher Training Books and DVDs (Rose, 2015d) were developed.

It must be considered that the R2L Pedagogy was initially used to teach English as a first language in Australia. In this study, R2L is used to teach English as a foreign language. Moreover, in this study I decided to focus especially on the teaching of Context (Purpose, Staging, and Phases), and Attitude to the students. That means that from all the levels of the model of Language in Social Context (see Figure 1), I decided to focus on Genre and Discourse. Purpose, Staging, and Phases belong to the level of Genre. Attitude belongs to Appraisal which is one of the Discourse systems. Appraisal does not only consist of Attitude, but also of Engagement and Graduation. Nevertheless, I decided to focus only on Attitude because I considered that the English proficiency level of the students was not enough for them to learn all the three components of Appraisal.

The R2L Pedagogy has been used in Indonesia, and has also been the object of research of a few studies. One of these studies is Listyani (2018) who implemented the R2L Pedagogy in the English Department of Satia Wacana Christian University. Her research was quantitative, and the design was one-group pretest-posttest. She compared the students writing before and after implementing the R2L Pedagogy. She did a paired-sample test, and found a 0.048 p-value, which meant that students performed better in their post-test than in their pre-test. Another study is Samanhudi and Sugiarti (2013) who implemented the R2L Pedagogy in the Sampoerna School of Education. They did a qualitative research with a case study design. Twelve of the participants were EFL-Teaching Department students, and the other eight were Math-Teaching Department students. Their instruments were texts written by the participants, class observations, interviews, and journals written at the end of every class. They concluded that the participants' writing improved after the implantation of the R2L Pedagogy. There have also been studies conducted in the Indonesian high school context like Kartika-Ningsih (2015), and Damayanti (2017).

The present study aims at contributing to the research of the R2L Pedagogy implementation in the Indonesian context, in which English is a foreign language. While previous studies report the implementation of the R2L Pedagogy in Indonesian high schools (Damayanti, 2017; Kartika-Ningsih, 2015), and Teaching Departments (Listyani, 2018; Samanhudi and Sugiarti, 2013), this study reports the implementation of the R2L Pedagogy in the Faculty of Entrepreneurship of Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya (see Chapter 3: the Participants). From the age point of view, these Entrepreneurship students are similar to the Teaching Department students reported in previous studies, but their field of study is different. Also, this research focuses on the exposition genre, whereas Listyani (2018) taught academic writing, and Samanhudi and Sugiarti (2013) taught the discussion genre. This present research also has a different research design from those two studies; this is a Classroom Action Research (CAR).

Statement of the Problem

This research tries to determine whether the R2L Pedagogy can help the *English-124 course* students improve their English exposition writing. This study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. How do students who learn writing with the use of the R2L Pedagogy improve their expositions in terms of Context¹?
2. How do students who learn writing with the use of the R2L Pedagogy improve their expositions in terms of Attitude?

The Purpose of the Study

This study aims at testing the R2L Pedagogy as a way to improve the writing skills of the entrepreneurship students from Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. For this purpose, an R2L treatment was designed so that the students could receive R2L instruction. The genre selected as the focus of this research was exposition, which purpose is to claim for one's point of view. To determine whether the R2L Pedagogy helps increase the writing skills of the students, the participants had to write a pre-test before the treatment, and a post-test afterwards. The two tests were analyzed and compared in terms of Context (Purpose, Staging, and Phases), and Attitude.

¹ "Context" is the term used by the R2L Pedagogy to refer to the purpose and structure of the text genre.

Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical framework of this study is the R2L Pedagogy developed by Jim Martin, and David Rose. This pedagogy is the latest development of the Sydney School genre-based approach to writing instruction, which is based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Rose (2011) defines genre as "staged, goal oriented social processes." It is "staged" because every text consists of stages that make up the text's structure. It is "goal oriented" because every genre has its own purpose. A writer chooses a genre over another because of his/her intention. It is a "social process" because a text must be written based on its Social Context. Kartika-Ningsih (2015) gives an example that helps understand the concept of genre. She states that a genre is meant to address a specific audience (e.g., scientists), to use a specific mode of communication (e.g., monologue or dialogue), and to have a specific field (e.g., science).

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the R2L literature, and specifically it provides further evidence on the results of the implementation of the R2L Pedagogy in Indonesia, where it has been little implemented. By reporting its implementation, hopefully more Indonesian teachers might get to know about it, and consider trying it out in their own classrooms, beginning with the *English-124 course* offered by the Faculty of Entrepreneurship of Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. This study might also encourage researchers to further investigate the implementation of R2L to teach English in EFL countries like Indonesia.

In the Indonesian undergraduate context, English writing skills are very important, especially for students taking certain undergraduate degrees which require the final assignment to be written in English like English Literature, English Teaching, and International Business Management (IBM). In addition, more and more universities are offering double-degrees, which also require the final assignment to be written in English. The number of double degrees offered in Indonesia is increasing rapidly. For example, just in Surabaya, the following universities offer double degrees: Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya, Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, and Universitas Airlangga to name a few.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is the implementation of the R2L Pedagogy in the Faculty of Entrepreneurship of Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya. Therefore, the implementation of R2L in other faculties, and in other levels of education like high school is beyond the scope of this research. Also, this study reports the implementation of R2L to teach

EFL writing skills. That is why, the results cannot be generalized to the implementation of R2L to teach first or second language writing skills. Moreover, the genre taught in this study was exposition, which means that the results might have been different had other genres like narrative or descriptive report taught.

In addition, this research reports how the participants improved in terms of Context (Purpose, Staging, and Phases), and Attitude. This study is focused on Context because of the importance of the concept of genre for the R2L Pedagogy, which is a genre-based writing instruction approach. This study also focused on Attitude because they are very relevant to exposition texts. Therefore, improvement in terms of Register (field, tenor, and mode), Discourse (Ideation, Conjunction, and Identification), Grammar, and Graphic Features is beyond the scope of this research.

One of the limitations of this study is the number of participants, which is three. The Faculty of Entrepreneurship only offers one English language learning course in its curriculum; that is the *English-124 course*. Therefore, the researcher did not have any more chances to implement the R2L Pedagogy in another English course at the Faculty of Entrepreneurship. The only chance to carry this research out was by inviting the students to participate in an extracurricular class (the treatment). At the beginning, seven students registered to participate. After I communicated the program requirements to them, three of them concluded that they could not participate due to time constraints (see Chapter 3: the Participants). Then, one of the volunteers did not regularly attend the meetings, so I decided it was better not to take his texts into account because they could confound the data, and likewise the results. Thus, the treatment was conducted for three students. Another closely related limitation of this study is the fact that the three participants had the same English proficiency level at that time. As a result, this study cannot provide any evidence on the effectiveness of R2L to close the gap between faster and slower achieving students.

Another limitation was the nine-week length of the treatment. A longer treatment would have yielded more objective results. It should be considered that the R2L treatment was an addition to the twenty-one course credits they had to take in the even semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. One course credit is equivalent to fifty-minutes of lecture time, plus the time needed to study the subject, and complete any required assignments. Moreover, the students had to take their final exams one week after the last R2L session. The last R2L meeting was on May 13, 2019 and their final exams started on May 20, 2019.

Definition of Key Terms

This study uses a number of key terms which are defined as follows:

a. Genre:

“The global social purpose of a text” (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 20)

b. Genre-based writing instruction:

“(…) teaching learners how to use language patterns to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose. The central belief here is that we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purpose: it is a way of getting something done.” (Hyland, 2003, p. 18)

c. Reading to Learn (R2L) Pedagogy:

“One of the world’s most powerful literacy programs. It is designed to enable all learners at all levels of education to read and write successfully, at levels appropriate to their age, grade and area of study. The strategies have been independently evaluated to consistently accelerate the learning of all students at twice to more than four times expected rates, across all schools and classes, and among students from all backgrounds and ability ranges” (<https://www.readingtolearn.com.au/>)

d. Exposition Genre:

Genre which purpose is “arguing for one point of view” and which stages are “thesis, arguments, and reiteration” (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 112)

e. Curriculum Genre:

“A classroom genre for guiding students to write these genres (knowledge genres) successfully.” (Rose, 2015b, p. 4)

f. English-124 course:

English language learning course offered by the Faculty of Entrepreneurship of Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya.