

Adding a Different Taste: EFL Teachers' Experiences with Collaborative Writing

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Abstract

In the middle of writing pedagogy mainstream which places writing as solitary activity, collaborative writing has been emerged as a promising activity. This study reveals EFL teachers' experiences in teaching using collaborative writing. Giving them space to share their experiences becomes an academic effort to make their voice to be heard by other EFL writing practitioners. The study is approach through narrative inquiry which primarily focuses on EFL university teachers' experiences in firstly engaging with collaborative writing, and in managing collaborative writing. Three EFL writing teachers who have had process pedagogy and have intensively applied collaborative writing for some years, were asked to write their experiences in the narrative frame and interviewed to gain deeper information about their experiences. The findings reveal about the teachers' main reasons of applying collaborative writing, the teachers' dynamic feelings on teaching using collaborative writing, and teachers' way in managing the collaboration. Recollecting those important experiences becomes intellectual resources for better collaborative writing class. Further exploration on effective patterns of collaborative writing will be worth investigating.

Keywords: collaborative EFL writing, teachers' experiences

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative writing has been considered as a promising second language learning activity. In this study, collaborative writing is defined as activity of joint writing in pairs or small group starting from planning to writing final draft that can potentially develop students' writing performance (Storch, 2011; Mulligan & Garafalo, 2011). The richness of collaborative writing, then, invites ELT practitioners to intensively investigate. Some studies reveal that collaborative writing contribute to students' writing performance, social skills, self-confidence, and creativity (Storch, 2005; Fung, 2010; Mulligan & Garafalo, 2011; Shehadeh, 2011; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013; Trajtemberg & Yiakoumetti,

2011; Chaoa & Lob, 2011; Houat, 2012; Lee & Wang, 2013; Cullen, Kullman, & Wild, 2013; Lin & Maarof, 2013; Dobao & Blum, 2013).

The common practice of ELT writing pedagogy holds that writing is seen as individual activity in which the main practice in EFL writing formal setting was teachers of writing assign the students to find a topic to develop individually and hand it to the teacher after finishing the draft (Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013; Storch, 2013). And, teachers go directly checking the draft and giving mark to each individual work. While writing class is commonly recognized writing as solitary activity, in some EFL writing classes, collaborative writing is usual practice. The practice is accomodate students' hard and soft skills as mandated in higher education curriculum (Febriyanti, 2013). As a result, EFL writing gradually shifts its pedagogical practice by adding collaborative writing activities (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). This practice has been justified by the theoretical bases of the process writing theory, CLT, and sociocultural theory (Rahimi, 2013:68).

Therefore, having open and deep look on collaborative writing is the way to gain better and deeper understanding about collaborative writing. Instead of having well-documented statistical findings on the effects of collaborative writing, investigating collaborative writing from other dimensions is also worth doing. A case study to extend investigation on collaborative writing reveals that EFL students' motives could influence students' participation in group peer feedback activities, engagement with the peer feedback and their subsequent revisions (Yu & Lee, 2014). Specific studies on collaborative writers' stories confirmed that they experienced the tensions during a decade of writing collaboratively that gives useful insights for other writers and collaborators and those who seek caring, responsive, nurturing writing relationship, autonomy, and sense of classroom community (Douglas & Carless, 2014; Houat 2012).

At the students' side, the collaborative writing has been intensively investigated, meanwhile, at the teacher's side, it still has many dimensions to reveal. Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) state that research on collaborative writing in ESL/EFL context is still in its infancy, hence, there is much more to be done. This study aims at filling the gap on the lack of exploring teachers' experiences in teaching using collaborative writing. Using collaborative writing is a fairly novel strategy (Storch, 2005). When teachers of EFL writing decided to use collaborative writing, it means that they are adding different taste to the mainstream pedagogical practice of EFL writing. It has been important to give space to share their experiences to provide pointers with regard to the design features of a "good collaborative task" and to see their reflection on their experience that represents their growth mindset to make collaborative writing more interactive and resourceful on linguistic aspects (Bremmer, et al, 2014:165).

Issues such as how to build sense of students' participation, how to grade collaborative work, and how to form the group have been conflicting situation for teachers. Exploring teachers' experiences thoroughly describes the potency and the complexities, the challenges, and the success and unsuccess of collaborative writing faced by EFL writing teachers. The contribution of the research is to add knowledge about collaborative in EFL context, specifically, in writing classes. Based on the above description and explanation,

the present research is going to probe the following one major research question: "*What teaching experiences using collaborative EFL writing have been important to teachers?*". The important experiences were focused on the first time decided to apply collaborative writing and the way teachers managed collaborative writing.

The present study focuses on teachers' important experiences in teaching using through collaborative writing. The important experiences were taken from three teachers of writing who intensively applied collaborative writing in their writing class. They had full collaboration that facilitated students to write together from planning, drafting, revising, editing, and writing final draft. The important experiences referred to any narratives which were fruitful to them. They were welcome to share both ups and downs of experiencing collaborative writing. The exploration contributes to gain better understanding and to add theoretical bases about collaborative writing in EFL context, and to extend pedagogical bases of collaborative writing.

Collaborative Writing Functions for Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

L2 acquisition happens in both formal and informal learning situation. Classroom is one of rich formal situation for stimulating the success of L2 acquisition. According to Troike (2006) the classroom setting represents the scope of SLA which includes the linguistics of SLA, the psychology of SLA, and social contexts of SLA (Troike, 2006) which then are elaborated into the following part. The inclusion of collaborative activities in the L2 classroom has been justified through reference to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT). From a sociocultural perspective, learning a socially situated activity where social interaction and peer collaboration are an integral component of in L2 development (Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2013; Lin & Maarof, 2013).

In the EFL writing context, at the technical level, collaborative or joint writing is not very different from individual writing. They both serve similar sub-tasks such as planning, drafting, editing, and revising. But, in collaborative writing, students must share their thoughts with other friends by discussing, negotiating, and building knowledge leads to a completed document (Limbu & Markauskaite, 2015; Lin & Maarof, 2013). Successful collaborative writing is influenced by the nature of collaborative sub-writing tasks such as collaborative pre-writing and editing (Storch, 2007; Nuemann & Mc Donough, 2015) or at the prolonged writing activity (Shehadeh, 2011). The nature of collaborative task can be manifested in face-to-face collaboration (Storch, 2005; Reynolds & Anderson, 2015) or online or computer-mediated communication collaboration using wiki or blog as media of instruction (Chaoa & Lob, 2011; Houat, 2012).

The second point to be great influence to the success of collaborative writing is the language proficiency of team members as confirmed that L2 proficiency in peer review significantly predicted the number of suggestions made, moreover, equality and mutuality also another point that contribute to the success (Allen & Mills, 2014). The interaction patterns also become contributing factor leading to meaningful collaborative writing. The interaction will provide rich Language-Related Episodes (LREs) to construct the text (Nuemann & Mc Donough, 2015:89). Instead of knowing the LREs, interaction

also indicates the students' talk during the collaboration which is classified into social talk, planning talk, and language talk (Cullen, et al, 2013:428).

The main goal of language classroom is to promote the students' communicative competence. Writing classroom is one of potential media to promote improvement on students' writing competence. Hyland (2003:51) referring to Canale and Swain's (1980) framework states that "to write successfully in English, a writer needs at least grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Collaborative writing resulted students' grammatical competence in terms of grammar accuracy and vocabulary (Storch, 2005; Shehadeh, 2011; Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011; Dobao, 2012).

The improvement on student's discourse competence was represented on students' well-organized essays, and good quality of content (Nuemann and Mc Donough, 2015; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013). This study also clearly elaborates sociocultural theory in collaborative writing resulted students' sociocultural competence that is producing a reader-friendly discourse. The study from Trajtemberg and Yiakoumetti (2011) is relevant to sociocultural competence in which by interacting to real-life communication during collaboration, the students gained knowledge to convey message which is suitable for social and cultural context.

Several studies inform the investigation on the merits of collaborative writing. It boosts students social skills development, sense of collaboration, autonomy, classroom community (Fung, 2010; Houat, 2012). Collaborative writing build students' confidence to engage with moves (Storch, 2007). It also plays as stress reduction and time-saving, and motivational effects (Mulligan and Garafalo, 2011). The aforementioned points can be highlighted that collaborative writing serves for both instructional and nurturing effects.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Narrative inquiry is used in this study as 'interpretative device' to understand teachers' experiences by collecting of experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual (Lawler, 2002; Creswell, 2012). Using narrative inquiry into teaching has significant implications for classroom pedagogy as it invites teachers to see their classroom experiences from diverse point of view (Latta & Kim, 2010:139). Teachers' experiences were built in past (introduction to collaborative writing), present (current experiences with collaborative writing), and future (future goals and aspirations on collaborative writing).

The capacity of narrative inquiry has shown its ability to holistically understand those day-to-day experiences. Narrative inquiry tells how teachers' experiences shape and inform their teaching practices. Bringing teachers' personal knowledge into professional knowledge can be achieved through systematic procedures as suggested by Creswell (2012:514). Firstly, we identified collaborative writing by referring to 3 out of 10 teachers who had orientation on process approach. Hyland's summary of the principal

orientations to L2 teaching (2003) presents that “orientation on process has following main pedagogic techniques brain-storming, planning, multiple drafting, peer collaboration, delayed editing, and portfolio assessment” (p. 23). After having intensive personal communication through sharing in writing consortium and weekly discussion forum, it has been identified that the three teachers who regularly and intensively applied collaborative writing were considered as ‘information rich’ (Patton, 1990 in Creswell, 2012:206). Then, they were contacted to have further interaction.

To collect the experiences, we used two research instruments namely narrative frame and interview guide. Narrative frame is a written story template consisting of a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths (Barkhuizen et al, 2014:45). The frame should reflect the chronology of the experiences, therefore, Creswell (2012:511) suggests that the frame must have the three-dimensional space narrative structure consisting interaction (information how they feel, hope, react, and think), continuity (now and then), and situation (context, time and space). Narrative frame can help the researcher catches the expected experiences to be written since it provides insightful and fuller picture of the teachers experiences (Hiratsuka, 2014: 170) and provide teachers with guidance and support in both the structure and content of narrative (Xu, 2014:245).

We asked teachers to complete narrative frames with statement starters which was intended to guide teachers in recollecting their experiences. To anticipate the limitation of narrative frame such as restricting teachers’ stories (who wants to write more) and researcher’s accessible data, the researcher included an empty box with appropriate prompts at the beginning and end of the actual sentence-starter frame for participants to write freely any additional information they wanted to share (Barkhuizen, et al, 2014:49). After the semesters finished, teachers were given narrative frames and narrative empty box to be filled at teachers’ any preference of time and place.

Combining narrative frame with another data collection instrument made it more advantageous. Soon after finishing narrative frame and empty box, teachers were invited to have one individual semi-structured interview, each lasting around 60 minutes. The first part of the interview covered about life history about involving in EFL writing class, the contemporary experiences, and the reflection on the collaborative writing class as well as their aspirations. Move to second part, we mainly focused on making some clarification on unclear stories written the narrative frames. The interview was conducted in English, however, they were allowed to use Indonesian just in case they faced difficulty to express some feelings, emotions, and others.

The following step was restructuring. We examined the narrative data from narrative frame and narrative empty box, and the non-narrative data from interview transcription. Then, we identified elements of a story, and organized the elements into logically ordered narrative based on literary elements of setting, characters, actions, problem, and resolution. They were also invited to provide further information or make alternations of their stories. When all participants agreed with our version, we moved to data analysis. Because narrative inquiry is one of forms of qualitative research, it often employs

qualitative data analysis. Then, we were in interpretive process when we read the teachers' narrative subjectively with repeated reading for determining the themes.

Determining themes was next important step. The themes were based on theoretical bases and pedagogical aspect. It means that to have the themes, we did review of literature on collaborative writing and review on empirical relevant findings. The themes had significant role in this narrative study. A thematic analysis is the major way to analyze the data (Bremner, et al, 2014). Thematic analysis is a largely a matter of categorization and classification. The restoried version of the narratives were coded and categorized based on the themes. The coding was focused on the key meaning of the participants' narratives in which we had to pay attention on making understandable sign to represent every single experience. This was the way to keep the continuity of the experience. To make it visible in our restorying process, we used those three dimensions to determine the themes.

RESULTS

Based on the RQ *"What teaching experiences using collaborative EFL writing have been important to teachers?"*, this study organized the experiences into the two themes. First theme is *'Adding A Different Taste: Solidarity in Writing'* that refers to the first time applying collaborative writing as supplementary activity in the middle of mainstream individual writing. Second theme is *'Managing Collaborative Writing'* which represents teachers's ways in applying collaborative.

Adding A Different Taste: Solidarity in Writing

Teachers had diverse reasons when the first time applying collaborative writing. T1 identified that students had linguistic problems to be solved, as stated that While T2 recognized that at individual writing cannot facilitate students to learn from others. T3 used collaborative writing as the weapon to solve students' sleepy period for having mid-day class session

'Many of the students had big problems with English grammar, appropriate tense, and well-ordered sentence' 2.1-2.3 (T1Re.1).

'Individual writing seemed to be ineffective because it does not give any chance for the students to learn from their friends' 2.1 (T2Re.2)

'I felt that it was sleepy period... I needed something new which was not done individually' 4.1 (T3Re.1).

Moreover, all teachers concerned much on students' need to learn and interact with friends during writing process. T1 shared that some students hesitate to share with her when they were into trouble. It was also stated by T2 that both shy and brave students needed to talk with friends. T3 was at the same idea about this, T3 thought that students needed to learn from others

'The feeling was different from when they were discussing their problems with their friends. There were fewer gaps when they were talking to a friend' 3.2 (T1Re.2)

'When they write individually, for brave students, they never hesitate to come and see for consultation, but for shy students, they felt doubt to see me having face-to-face interaction' 2.2 (T2Re.2).

'From free writing, they have various competence, writing skill or proficiency, so very hard to develop their skill individually' 4.2 (T3Re.2).

Meanwhile, instead of those mentioned reasons, T2 used her personal learning experience as important reason to apply collaborative writing. As a learner, T2 experienced 6 months academic training program where the learning process was mostly done in group.

'I did my pre-departure training, collaborative work was the major activity, I could learn new things or the missing lesson which had been taught by the instructor in the class. From this experience, I thought that 'Oh, I should do like this' 4.5-8 (T2Re.4).

Under this theme, teachers' experiences represented the situation that when the first time the teachers employed collaborative writing was inseparable from any ups and downs side. It was clearly seen that teaching using collaborative writing activity provided both opportunities and treads. Teachers' reasons to use collaborative writing can be categorized into pedagogical and practical reasons. From the narratives, collaborative writing was seen by teachers as alternative activity to give students opportunity to learn from other students which later it was considered as potential and promising activity to improve students' writing skill.

Managing Collaborative Writing

The theme tells about how teachers manage collaborative activities. It covers the stories of grouping system, checking member involvement, designing pattern of collaboration, and assessing collaborative work. As essential part of collaboration, grouping system becomes the main concern that teachers cannot neglect. From the stories, it was found that T1, T2 and T3 relied on students' level of writing proficiency in deciding who will work with whom. T1 had 2 formations. At the beginning of applying collaborative writing, T1 formed a group of 3 students as what T2 and T3 did. Then, it was changed into a group of 5 students. Even, the number of students was different, the basis to form a group was totally similar. In line with T1's way of grouping, T2 shared similar way when deciding the group. T2 combined between high and low students. T3 also did the same way to group the students.

'Get them into a group must be carefully done, I started from their score on the essay written at the first session. Clever students with not clever students' 4.8 (T1Gr.1).

'I grouped them based on the result of pre-test writing then combining high and low students' 4.3 (T2Gr.1).

'...later I decided based on their progress in writing at first composition. I mix different level' 4.11 (T3Gr.1).

Another crucial consideration used by T1 to form a group was about students' relationship. It was expected that students felt enjoy with whom s/he worked with. T1 stated that:

'And, I concerned much with the relationship among students indicated by students' statement 'It's not okay mom because he prefers to work individually, and I don't really comfortable working with him' 4.9 (T1Gr.2).

But, it was different from T3's grouping system, allowing students to work with different personality was something important. This also happened in T3's grouping system in which students were allowed to have self-selected group. Then, T3 also facilitated students to have partners with similar topic of interest

'I swop the group, Ss can learn how to interact with various person with different personality and gender' 4.25 (T3Gr.2).

'In task 1, cause and effect writing, students choose partner by themselves' 4.10 (T3Gr.3).

'Various topics from them was my effective way to group them' 4.2 (T3Gr.4).

When collaborative writing was done, there was conflicting situation faced by teachers. Member involvement was very difficult to check. Ideally, all members should actively participate during the collaboration, but, it sometime was hard to find. The issue of dominant and non-dominat students, and passive and active students challenged teachers to ensure fair distribution of responsibility. Based on the narratives, some strategies of checking member involement were employed by T1, T2, and T3. It was found that T1 met the students to check how they work collaboratively especially when there was a sign from a student to see T1 personally. Then, T1 tried to understand the situation by asking relieving question. It was the time to speak from heart to heart to find solution whether the student switch the partner or let him/her work alone. Meet with student personally was also in line with T2's strategy.

'When it's time one of them said "Mam, I need to see you personally'. 'Are you still comfortable work with this person?' 7.6 (T1Ch.1).

Instead of having face-to-face meeting, T1 also used social media, What's up Application (WA) to check the group work. Still in line with that way, T2 also kept contacting with secret student namely a spy. Even it sounded strange to check through this way, but when the spy can give objective information, it was helpful for teacher. T2 shared that invited one student from each group.

'Communicating through WA group and with group leader to check any progress and problem was my way' 7.11 (T1Ch.2).

'To monitor the collaboration (responsibility sharing), I invite them (the most responsible from one of each group) secretly to be a spy to tell honestly about the team' 6.12 (T2Ch.1).

Comparing to T1 and T2 who told that kept contacting with one of members, T3's way was similar in term of using face-to-face interaction. However, T3 invited all member to be in 'one on one session'. The session was used to see each other involvement in every collaborative writing stages. T3 can have comprehensively look at each member contribution in the collaboration. T3 can infer different types of students from the questions they raised.

'They have one on one session, time to check whether they have written in accordance to their group outline. From the interaction, I can see one is dominant or passive'. 'High students usually dominate the interaction and develop question 'Is it about the ideas mam?. Is transition ok, mam?. Low student tend to be passive and ask difficulty, general concept, the length' 6.12 (T3Ch.1).

What teachers expected toward the collaboration was different from what students did. Ideally, students write together for all writing processes. But, they took the easiest way to finish the writing by dividing each part. This was just like untold commitment runned by group. T1, T2, and T3 T1's narratives revealed that:

'In fact, most of the students divided the essay into three parts and wrote their part individually...the result of the essay was not as good as I expected' 4.4 (T1Ds.2)

'In fact, it did not work as my pan. The member did some part of paragraphs, while the rest of paragraphs were done by other members' 5.3 (T2Ds.2).

'They feel that they can cut the job by dividing, there is significant different not solid, not compitible in introduction and body paragraphs' 5.4 (T3Ds.2).

With that pattern, teachers sometimes easily recognized the quality of the part which was written by high and low students. And, ironically, students commonly just put them all together into the full essay format without any effort to harmonize the parts. When the three teachers faced this situation, of course they cannot treat the score differently because they were in a team. This became one of challenges in applying collaborative writing.

T2 and T3 clearly told their way in assessing students' works. T2 placed teamwork as one of criteria to decide students' writing final score. Moreover, in the following narrative, T2 clearly stated about the indicator. T3 also had strict rule about this.

'I applied assessment for this by giving 5% for total score, and all members were given the same score' 6.11 (T2As.1). 'To assess, I use individual portfolio, 30% process assessment.

'They must show me the copy by attaching collaborative outline indicating that they came and involved in group discussion' 4.6 (T3As.1).

DISCUSSION

Bringing collaborative writing obviously was uneasy. By nature, writing is solitary activity, hence, in language learning context collaborative writing is unusual (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013; Storch, 2013). It sensitively raised some tensions to the three teachers, particularly, when the teachers synergized individual and total collaborative writing. In this research context, total collaborative writing was writing together both in pairs or in small group from planning, drafting, editing, revising up to finalizing stages to produce an essay. So far, EFL writing class has involved pairwork or groupwork but in a small portion such as peer-editing or peer-assessment. The huge portion from planning to writing final draft has been for individual writing.

Referring to the curriculum and syllabuses of writing courses, improvement on students' individual writing proficiency has been the main objective. It led the teachers to design the course outline which was primarily emphasized on individual writing activity. One of the indicators was the evaluation criteria which all percentage were from individual writing ranging from individual portfolio to individual final test. On the contrary, they had freedom to apply any teaching strategies which sometimes tempted them to try a novel strategy like collaborative writing. The collision between the policy and teachers' freedom made the tensions was unavoidable which then followed by the issue about the accountability of collaborative writing in the middle of mainstream EFL writing context. However, the involvement of sociocultural perspective in language learning has justified the practice of collaborative writing.

Teachers' decision to use collaborative writing in EFL writing class has been theoretically and pedagogically legitimized. Eventhough they faced many struggles and had no idea about what they brought in the classroom, they have made significant changes in EFL writing class. They tried to think out of the box when bringing collaborative writing in the class. It was believed that all writing teachers were in agreement about placing individual performance as priority in writing skill. However, the shifting of writing pedagogy influenced teachers' mind to have transformation on their way of teaching writing.

The shifting of writing pedagogy that was described by Pierre (2014:375) has clear pathway about how collaborative writing existed in EFL writing context. It was exposed from the side of the focuses. At the beginning of writing pedagogy, known as *current traditional* approach in composition theory, the focus was on the text itself, the product, which means writing was a mechanic and linear activity. The second writing pedagogy, known as *expressivist composition theories*, placed the writer as the focus. The writers had space to express themselves. As stated by Pierre (2014:375) "In this approach, freedom, individuality, experimentation, discovery, and personal growth are privileged over correctness and polished form" which encouraged students to write more on personal domain. Later, writing as a process started to gain its popularity to be used in writing class. The focus is on *the composing process* that is portrayed as a social and collaborative activity (p.375).

Based on the findings, it was found that the main rationale of applying collaborative writing was to fulfill students' need to interact with and learn from others. Teachers wanted them to share meaningful ideas for better writing. It deals with social activity in which students were situated to work together in producing a text. The underlying principle of the teachers' rationale is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Storch, 2013; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013; Neumann & McDonough, 2014; Pierre, 2014). Based on sociocultural theory, language learning as one of cognitive development process is socially situated (Vygotsky, 1981 in Storch, 2013).

With the universality of sociocultural theory, it has been adapted in any fields of study including ELT which is considered as pedagogical support for doing collaborative writing. Storch (2013) clearly suggests two aspects involving in pedagogical support, those are *approach to language teaching* and *approach to writing instruction*. For approach to language teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become fundamental premise and guiding principal to show how collaborative writing is closely related to students' communicative competence, while the process approach supports the nature of circularity in writing which means that collaborative writing indicates strong features of the process approach.

Based on the findings, teachers' collaborative writing highly encouraged students to be in "interaction and communicative situation" (Celce-Murcia, 1995: 23). When the teachers assigned students to write collaboratively, they had a space to discuss the topic to write, the outline to develop, the sentence to construct the meaning, and the way to fix the final draft. These activities allowed students to express ideas in particular social context, that is among group members. Teachers gave students chance to gain rich resource of idea from others. The use of group and pair work by T1, T2, and T3 significantly represents main dimension of CLT (Storch, 2013).

The interaction between and among students facilitates students to develop their communicative competences. Following the updated model of communicative competence proposed by Celce-Murcia, collaborative writing invited possibility to gain every dimension of CLT. Along with the shift from the teacher-centered classroom to the student-centered acquisition of communicative competence, communicative approaches encourage the language students to learn the second language through contextualized and meaningful communication (Biria & Jafari, 2013).

The second pedagogical support for applying collaborative writing deals with approach to writing instruction. Qian (2010) defines that writing is seen as communicative act (p. 14). With this sense, writing activity requires students to be aware of audience and its purpose to communicate meaningful ideas. Meaning-making process is commonly accommodated in the writing class which oriented to process approach. All participating teachers' classes were identified as classes which applied process approach by facilitating prewriting, writing, editing, revising, and publishing stages. One of key features of process approach, 'collaborative environment', proposed by Widiati (2004) strengthens the pedagogical support for the practice of collaborative writing. Along with sociocultural point of view, writing has been viewed as a socially constructed act as well as a cognitive

one (p. 7). It implied that teachers of writing were encouraged to create peer collaboration in discovering meaning.

Both theoretical and pedagogical supports showed that collaborative writing is academically accepted in the teaching of EFL writing class. Moreover, teachers also shared practical rationale for having collaborative writing, and later this rationale became their joy of applying collaborative writing. Another teacher also used her experiences as a learner who was exposed by collaborative work to confidently apply it into her writing class. Reflecting our experience as a learner helped us to have a picture of what makes collaborative writing works well or not. Douglas and Carless (2014:304) suggest that "writing process has caused tensions, disagreement, or conflicts", therefore, a teacher who ever experienced collaborative writing is able to see any potential challenges. Also, teachers gained important views for a collaboration, those are, "the need to work harder, stay focused on the task, pay attention to management, and value productivity" (p. 309).

Teachers experienced that there was students' resistancy in working in group. The resistance was from established existence of traditional practice and also from understanding that writing should be done individually. The characteristics of traditional classroom stated by Barkley, et al (2005) strengthen why collaborative writing practice made teachers experienced difficulty. In traditional classroom, responsibility was purely referred to learning independently and oriented that teachers and materials as the main sources of knowledge. Meanwhile, collaborative classroom promotes that responsibility comes from learning interdependently and views that peers, self, and class members are important source of knowledge (p. 30).

In managing collaborative writing, one essential part of applying collaborative writing was grouping system that should be done carefully. Teachers accommodated both teacher-assigned and student-selected pairs. Both formations brought its own contributions. Teacher-assigned pairs was formed based on students' pre-writing scores which resulted the group composition consisting of high and low students. When the teachers assigned different level of students to write, there will be rich resources coming from different angels. Mozaffari (2016) conducted a research to compare between student-selected and teacher-assigned pairs, and, it reveals that teacher-assigned pairs provided more language related episodes which influenced in producing better texts in terms of fluency, accuracy, organization, grammar, and vocabulary (p. 16).

Teachers also used proficiency pairing to form a team. Three different compositions was commonly found in collaborative writing, those are, high and high, low and low, high and low. Based on the narratives, teachers composed high and low group for the purpose of optimalizing high students in helping low students. Having a look to a research finding that high and high produced huge number of language-related episodes, followed by high and low, and low and low (Lesser, 2004 in Mozaffari 2015), collaborative pairing could be formed in that way.

To some extent, teachers' decision to form high and low group was still in line with a research conducted Mirzaei & Eslami (2013). Comparing between ZPD-free and ZPD-activated collaborative writing proved that a group consisting of high, medium, and low students benefited most. In ZPD-activated group, students were conditioned differently based on proficiency seen from TOEFL and pre-test writing scores. While ZPD-free group was randomly formed without considering students' initial proficiency. ZPD-activated group created the most facilitative learning space to solve linguistic problems and mediated students' idea generation (p.15). It was confirmed that students can overcome their negative feelings and improve L2 writing, metadiscourse, even grammar and vocabulary (p.17).

Meanwhile, student-selected pairs which was mostly based on students' personal relationship or friendship served its own strengths. It was justified by a study conducted by Russel (2010) that gave evidence on the good side of students-selected pairs. It provided encouraging situation to easily open the channel of communication. Russel takes important note from the participants that the collaboration worked well because they were friends, and felt confident to share ideas (p. 217).

For checking member involvement, all teachers were still relied much on meeting and asking one of students as resource person personally. Involving students to check the collaboration was quick and efficient, but, the issue of subjectivity cannot be avoided. Teachers can manage monitoring system by firstly setting up group learning contract and group roles (Barkley et al, 2005). The group learning contract assigned students' commitments and consequences (p. 37). The group roles tightens individual responsibility in a group. Role as facilitator, recorder, reporter, timekeeper, folder monitor, and wildcard (p. 52) should be matched with group situation.

In designing collaborative writing, it was assumed that 'face-to-face collaboration' was the major pattern. With this pattern, teachers wanted group members meet in person to plan, draft, edit, revise the writing in order to give enough space to share ideas quickly and efficiently (Alexander, 2012:184). But, in fact, all teachers narrated that students tended to share the parts of the essay to each member. The 'divided or horizontal collaboration' benefited in terms of getting started and completed but it raised minimal collaboration and caused no group vision (p. 184).

Grading collaborative writing posed difficult and conflicting situation for teachers. Teachers should be able to see thoroughly to have one single score for all members. It raised unfairness if the group score was bad. Some students felt being penalized to the badness because they were confident to their individual performance (Barkley et al, 2005). Some criteria could be set to achieve better grading system. Bacabac (2012:169) proposed 25 percent for students' contribution, 25 percent for peer evaluation, and 50 percent for the quality of the project.

CONCLUSION

Recollecting teachers' experiences provides very rich pedagogical information about the complexities of collaborative writing. This also allows us to critically reflect how teachers reflect on their collaborative writing class. Therefore, it is the best time to give them space to share their voice to be heard by other ELT practitioners. Their voices would be meaningful intellectual resources for better collaborative writing practices.

The findings of the study reveal that the teachers' major reason for applying collaborative writing was facilitating students to learn from other students. Learning from others was considered as great place to improve students' writing skills. The reasons, then, was well-supported by sociocultural theory and process writing pedagogy. Meanwhile, teachers' experience in managing collaborative writing informed that they have accommodated different formation of grouping. It could be concluded that teachers still need more effective strategies to check the collaboration and to grade collaborative work.

This study is not free from limitations. First, relocating teachers' experiences challenged me to take a balanced position in representing them. It was easy for me to be trapped to place them as a superhero who can solve the problems in collaborative writing. Second, teachers might give more detailed and potentially interesting narratives and expressions if they had written and spoken in their first language, Indonesian. This narrative study is still far from perfection as it cannot catch all important experiences that reflect day-to-day experiences of teachers.

The study results in two contributions. A number of theoretical and pedagogical implications are derived from the findings of the study. The main theoretical implication is to incorporate previous efforts to confirm the sociocultural theory as strong support for applying collaborative writing. It also strengthens how process approach pedagogy closely relates to collaborative writing. Another theoretical implication of the study is the findings that collaborative writing goes beyond microskills of writing. The findings shows that teachers share narrative about how collaborative writing helps to improve macroskills.

From a pedagogical point of view, the findings of the study provide supplementary empirical evidence of the advantages of collaborative writing in EFL writing classroom. The social context in collaborative writing facilitated the students to learn from others. The interaction during collaboration provided rich Language-Related Episodes for better grammatical and lexical accuracy. Moreover, equal and mutual relationships gave the students stimulating space to sharpen their other writing skills.

Point worth noting about the study is that educational needs and approaches are changing, and teacher-educators need to explore various approaches, methods and pedagogies to address these changing needs in their teaching and learning. Implementing a collaborative environment in the writing classroom is not without its challenges. Factor such as class size, time constraints, students' attitudes and teachers' ability to facilitate and guide students the process of collaborative writing are some important issues to be concerned. Although collaborative writing may not give immediate results and transform students into great writers, teachers' decision to add in EFL writing class is a potential

alternative to the traditional method of teaching writing. This study is also one of attempts to give better horizon for teachers who will have collaborative writing. For future studies, issue worth considering is involving students from all levels of proficiency to share the narratives will be essential area to do. Patterns of relationship existing during collaborative writing will be also worth investigating.

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