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SHIFTING THE LITERACY PARADIGM IN
INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Isnarti Isnarti
March 2010

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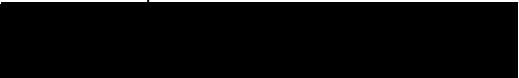
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I focus on postsecondary literacy education in Indonesia, and how it might be improved by borrowing and applying philosophies and pedagogical practices such as the role of the writing process in the education of basic writers, the importance of acquiring academic discourse, the benefits of teacher feedback, and the role that a writing center can play in helping basic writers to become proficient writers. I examine seven students' writing samples to illustrate the difference literacy levels and writing problems that result from the cultural, political and economic forces that have helped shape the current approach to literacy education at the Indonesia university level. I argue that by adopting these theories and pedagogical methods, Indonesia will become more effective in imparting literacy skills to both instructors and students, as many literacy instructors in Indonesia do not have the proper education to teach. I further argue that Indonesia can change the overall system with governmental help, since these approaches will help a new generation of college graduates and potential teachers see that the system can be better.

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CHAPTER ONE

HOW INDONESIA'S CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AFFECTS LANGUAGE EDUCATION

According to Global Monitoring Report, Indonesia's illiteracy rate ranks the 34th in the world, following its neighboring countries, China, India, and Bangladesh. In 2006, the data from the Indonesian Department of Education shows that, when literacy is defined as the ability to read and write simple sentences of Indonesian, 15.4 million Indonesians are illiterate. This figure represents 9 percent of Indonesia's total population; 66 percent of the total is women from poor families or who live in isolated areas (Subeno "Buta"). Considering that for the last six decades, the Indonesian government has claimed that it is fighting against illiteracy, these numbers raise many questions about what might have gone wrong in that fight. What are the particular problems that slow Indonesia's success? How has literacy education been conducted in Indonesia, at all levels, from pre-school through postsecondary institutions? What might be done better?

In my thesis, I will focus on one aspect of this problem, namely, postsecondary literacy education in

Indonesia and how it might be helped by some approaches used in U.S. composition studies. By focusing on postsecondary education, I believe we can change the overall system, since these approaches will help a new generation of college graduates and potential teachers see that the system can be better. Furthermore, finding adoptable theories and approaches can help Indonesia move from its emphasis on language education (as it is currently taught in Indonesia, through rote memorization and decontextualized grammar) to an emphasis that one finds in U.S. composition studies on literacy (or the awareness and ability to use language for specific purposes).

Before proposing solutions, however, one must better understand the problems. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will provide information on Indonesia's cultural, political and economic background in order to see how these might have affected the current situation.

Cultural Background

Indonesia, a third world country in southeast Asia, won over its independence in August 17, 1945 after fighting aggressively for over three centuries against Portuguese, Dutch, British, and, finally, Japanese occupation.

Indonesia is an archipelago, with 26 provinces spread over nearly 13,700 islands (MSN Encarta 1). Each of the islands has its own unique culture enriching Indonesia as a country. Its cultural diversity, however, also brings challenges that affect education in general and language education in particular; these challenges include a complex multi-ethnic structure and closed attachment to mysticism, patriarchy, and religion, especially as those elements intersect.

Like other nations, Indonesia has tried various programs to address its illiteracy problem; however, the results of those programs are still far from satisfactory. Yet unlike other nations, Indonesia is faced with massive of distinct languages and dialects --some 418 spoken by the country's different tribes--in addition to the country's official language, Bahasa Indonesia (Lowenberg 124).

Bahasa Indonesia is originally a Malay-Riau language, a local language in Sumatra, one of Indonesia's provinces. During the Second Indonesian Youth Congress in 1928, it was proclaimed as "Bahasa Indonesia" (language of Indonesia). As Joe Kissell writes:

By the 1920s, public sentiment in Indonesia was turning strongly toward gaining independence from

the Netherlands. In October 1928, the Sumpah Pemuda (Pledge of the Youth) proclaimed that in Indonesia, Malay was to be called "Bahasa Indonesia" and considered the national language. However, there being no nation as yet, this was more of a rallying cry than anything else.

("Bahasa" par. 8)

Linguistically, Bahasa Indonesia has similar characteristics as Melayu Riau, but its naming as the "language of unity" within the Sumpah Pemuda established it as a political language, one that could promote nationalism spirit to fight against colonialism.

The declaration of making Bahasa Indonesia as a national language is historical for Indonesia. Although it is only a second language for some Indonesians who still use their local languages in their daily life, the growth of Bahasa Indonesia has absolutely become a unifying force for the country. It is used both as an official and as a business language all over the country. In fact, its importance politically is reinforced every October, since "that month is Bulan Bahasa (Language Month), during which promotional activities for the use of good language take place." (Sneddon 102)

In Indonesia primary schools, from pre-school until third grade, instruction is done in the mother tongue (whichever of the 418 languages is native to the region), but Bahasa Indonesia must also be taught and practiced in teaching and learning process in class. After third grade, Bahasa Indonesia is the only language of instruction. Thus, the Indonesian government has had to devote its resources to an extensive system of bilingual education (minority languages and Bahasa Indonesia), especially in isolated areas. The commitment to bilingual education is perhaps a solution to provide fair educational opportunities to Indonesians due to the country's linguistic diversity.

The effort, of course, requires a huge amount of resources, in terms of budget, skills, and faculty. In recent years, the challenge has increased since the Indonesian government, as part of the world community, has to take active involvement in global issues. This requires learning and teaching yet a foreign language, as an international language communication - English.

Further complicating the situation (the melding of language and nationalism) is the Indonesian culture's attachment to mysticism, defined variously as the "belief that knowledge of divine truth or the soul's union with the

divine is attainable by spiritual insight or ecstatic contemplation without the medium of the senses or reason" ("Theological") or, as Ayn Rand and her followers believe:

Mysticism is the acceptance of allegations without evidence or proof, either apart from or against the evidence of one's senses and one's reason. Mysticism is the claim to some non-sensory, non-rational, non-definable, non-identifiable means of knowledge, such as "instinct," "intuition," "revelation," or any form of "just knowing. (62-3)

It is a social phenomenon characterized by unpredictable, contradictory, illogical, and paradoxically, sometimes violent patterns of behavior (indeed, as even Rand noted, mysticism "will always lead to the rule of brutality" [63]). Not to say that mysticism shapes rote memorization, but that individuals who believe in mysticism do not think critically or question things when necessary. In other words, they do not understand the importance of empirical evidence – a necessary characteristic of critical thought. Instead, they take things at face value. This is how their logic works. As a result, Indonesia's literacy education has not focused on teaching and developing critical

thinking skills such as learning to deconstruct a text for the author's main point.

Even more complicated are the intersections of nationalism, mysticism, and religion. Although 90 percent of Indonesia's populations are Muslim, Islam does not show its equality teaching influences as it is taught in its principle. Despite the teachings of equality in the Quran, the Hadith, and Sharia that insist on an equality and fair society, however, as in many Muslim majority communities, in Indonesia, women and men are not treated equally. This unfair practice takes the shape of quite concrete differences in educational opportunity; in some isolated areas, for instance, where access to school is very limited, young girls are forbidden to walk with boys. Therefore, when there is no adult accompanying them to or from school, they have to skip school (boys are allowed to walk without adult accompaniment).

In addition, strong traditions of patriarchy and religion hold that women's holy role is in the domestic area. Therefore, when there is a question about whether a family can afford to send a girl to school, it is not that difficult to argue that girls' education is low-priority. The differences in education levels, school participation

rates, and drop - out rates between men and women are subjected to poverty, the socio-cultural values and norms of Indonesian society. Unfortunately, being in disadvantage situation, the majority of women take their sacrifices as an honor. They believe that God will repay them by providing a good prospective husband as it is thought in *The Queen* (UNESCO). This is an old script written in the 17th century by Susuhunan Paku Buwono IV from Surakarta Hadiningrat. This book contains philosophical guidelines for Javanese individuals on how to live a holy and proper life (Harsono "Tafsir"). UNESCO quotes some of the advices from Surat Wulangreh:

This is my advice to my daughter. You have to obey your husband; do not disobey your husband even if you are the daughter of a king. (14)

Or, other advice would say:

Women should not make any mistakes. Women should obey and be loyal to their husbands. Women should not follow advice from other persons except their husbands. (14)

Those teachings are taught from generation to generation, and are deeply embraced in the community, especially among women. Therefore, women consider themselves inferior and

submissive in all fields of life, including the right to pursue education.

Political Background

In 1928, prior to independence, to strengthen national pride spirit, Indonesian adopted the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," or "Unity in Diversity." In fact, the administrative organization of government (both civilian and military components) reflects the spirit of this motto. The twenty six provinces, each is ruled by a governor who is responsible to the president, but who also has administrative links to the Department of Home Affairs and with the branch offices of his provincial administration in districts (Kabupaten, under the control of Bupati) and sub-districts (Kecamatan, under the control of Camat). At the bottom of the structure is village (Frederick and Worden xxxxiv).

Although officially the whole administrations, from bottom to top, obligated to commit improving the country's educational system, but the fact of the matter was, they could not engage with schools directly. Some challenges they faced were they did not have enough qualified individuals for the assignments, the officials failed to

encourage the villagers to have initiative toward education, and also the way the army's territorial management system was set up as William Liddle said the army's management system and its "dual function" doctrine--which justifies army intervention into government and politics in order to maintain unity--serves to stifle quite overtly any move toward true pluralism (98).

Over the years, even after decades of independence, the national slogan 'unity in diversity' does not seem to reflect Indonesia as it was originally envisioned. Indonesia does not have a concept of sharing political power; in fact, unlike in the United States, where pluralism is seen as a sign of America's democracy (Sievers 168), Indonesia diversity is so extreme that the country is closer to anarchy than to harmony. The debate over pluralism remains a heated one until today, as Muhamad Ali writes, "Although plurality is argued to have historical roots in Indonesia, pluralism has been condemned as a foreign, Western concept" ("Winning"). Ali further writes:

Pluralism suggests the absence of persecution and the right to be different or defiant. It also tends to recognize outsiders and underscores the

participation and responsibility of individuals and groups to form and implement society's agenda. In the political context, pluralism requires the state to give room to a variety of social customs, religious and moral beliefs, as well as groupings. Many leaders, however, tend to emphasize consensus, unity, solidarity but ignore the value of difference and disagreement in society. They attempt to make use of the public as a sphere for mainstream ideologies and ideas, while eliminating others. Individual and group interests are pursued under the guise of public interests. They warn that pluralism is a threat to consensus and social cohesion. ("Winning" par. 6)

Hence, the drive for consensus, unity and solidarity will provide a platform upon which Indonesia can create and develop an education system that is uniform in its pedagogical and methodological approaches to education and literacy skills in particular.

The rich plurality of cultures, religions, and races in Indonesia has had a major impact on the country's ability to govern itself. Since its early independence, in

Indonesia, there has been no peace power transformation; each transition has been marked by an often-violent mass acts fighting to enforce each party's ideology on others. What makes matter worst, the government, instead of educating and encouraging its people to practice democracy by respecting diversity, uses the situation to manipulate the people for its own political agenda. As evidence like what Liddle wrote "Indonesia was ruled for nearly forty years by two autocrats, national founding-father Sukarno and retired army general Suharto" (94).

The Sukarno regime failed to run a democratic system in terms not only of its practices but also of its repressive ideology. And Suharto, with his "New Order" regime, was forcibly removed from his presidency power with accusations of crime, corruption, and abuse of power in 1998 after 32 years of ruling. During Soeharto's enthronements, Indonesia's political and economic instabilities have erupted into widespread conflicts, resulting in some 1.2 million internally displaced people, almost 50 percent of whom are school-age children (Hartanto, "National").

Today, during a reformation era, there are still a lot of key politicians from the New Era who play roles in

now-day Indonesia's political circuit, so does the leading officers of the Armed Forces. Retired and active army generals from the old regime remain important players in Indonesia politics.

Economic Background

As in most other developing countries, in Indonesia, the gap between the rich and the very poor is clear and wide. As Liddle writes, "...[d]espite three decades of steady economic growth averaging more than 6 per cent per year, Indonesia is still a relatively poor country" (95). Poverty in the cities has grown because many people from rural areas have left their villages in search of work and the stimulation of urban life. The inequalities among the provinces, the rich and the poor, town and country, and the established middle-aged as well as the frustrated youth affect the education sector severely.

The political change of 1998 was supposed to give new hope to Indonesians and to better their future. However, because of Asia's economic crisis at the time, again they had to struggle with uncertainty. Jane Perlez writes in The New York Times:

Of the fast-growing "Asian tiger" economies of the 1990's Indonesia was hit hardest by the 1997 currency and financial crisis and has been slower to recover than, say, South Korea or Malaysia. Indonesia has had a tougher time than the others in winning back investor confidence and attracting new foreign capital. ("World" par. 2)

In view of what has happened in Indonesia, like other developing countries, a lack of money is not the only main challenge to solve some of the consistent and typical educational problems of the third world. As C.E. Beeby writes in his book, Assessment of Indonesian Education, "first is the grievous shortage of money and the material things that it will buy, and the second is a more subtle group of constraints that do not seem to be immediately responsive to rapid injections of finance" (39). If Indonesians had managed its national budget well and the education planners and practitioners had maintained to give priority to education, Indonesia could have been well off when it came to the education of its people.

Other challenges that exist in developing literacy in Indonesia are the continuing problems of unemployment, poverty, and a lack of political stability, all of which

are caused by corruption. Corruption exists at almost every educational level in Indonesia. "Corruption in education layers from the first to the fourth levels. The first is teacher, second, headmaster and school committee, third is education official, and the fourth is department of education" (Admin "ICW"). In other words, the teacher, administrators, parents and the department of education do not unify to fight against corruption. Instead, they contribute to it. For example, there is much corruption in the process of admitting students into the best schools. Many underachiever students with money are able to get into prestigious institution because the student's parents bribe the administrators and the teachers.

Indonesia is, after China and India, the third most populous developing country in the world, and yet unfortunately, tends to be regarded as a difficult country by modern economists. The main problems are: difficult personal living conditions, difficulty accessing information, bad data, cultural linguistic problems, and the relative lack of an indigenous scholarly community, through which one can build contacts with. These problems, of course, represent the general state of the economic and educational development of the country. For example,

Togizita is a city with a population of two thousands, located in remote Nias (South Sumatra). Although it is about 59 kilometers from Mountain Sitoli, it takes five hours to get there. This place is situated between two rivers, each is about 50 - 80 meter and have no bridges. It has 3 elementary schools, 1 junior high school, and one high school. Students come from villages around the area. (Tambunan "Social")

This decade of slow growth has had a dramatic effect on the standard of living and quality of life of the majority of the population. Although life remains difficult for a large portion of the population, on the contrary a small group of the population has become extremely rich and displays their wealth shamelessly. Because the gap between the rich and poor is huge, it causes widespread social unrest and violence.

To solve the disparity between the rich and the poor's economic resources, the government will have to plan and implement policies that will be considered beneficial by the majority of the population. If the government wishes to attain what they set out to do, the citizens of Indonesia must begin to fight for democratic principles such as the freedom of speech. In other words, both the government and

the citizens must establish a dialogue, so that educational projects to help the majority of the population will be selected and implemented.

In addition to the previously stated economic issues that have affected the Indonesian education system, the school facilities suffer the biggest impact from the inconsistent and catastrophic economic conditions of the country. For example, Media Indonesia reported that "[t]oday, 67% elementary schools building in Sukabumi, West Java, are too severely damaged to teach or learn in" (Admin "67%"). Due to budget constraints, no renovations have been made to these building. However, if the schools are in urban areas, such as the capital, then the likelihood of those building being renovated is good. However, isolated areas are more likely to suffer.

Yet another problem is that the school children do not have enough textbooks.

For example, a survey revealed that in the less developed provinces, an average of forty per cent of the sixth graders had no textbooks; in elementary schools, in some town and small cities, no students interviewed had books.

(Lowenberg 132)

In addition, because of the low salaries, teachers very often hold multiple jobs, teaching at two or more different schools to meet their basic survival needs. Hidayat Raharja wrote, "There is a teacher in West Java who goes from one dumpster to another to collect recycle stuff in the morning and teach at private Tsanawiyah in the evening" ("Guru"). These private and professional conflicts experienced by the majority of teachers in Indonesia are primary cause of the low quality education children receive because the teachers show no professional competency in teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising that according to UNDP research in 2001, Indonesia human development index ranked 102 among 162 countries (Muas "Menyambut").

Another factor is a bad educational management system and a general lack of teachers due to government low hiring. In an isolated area, teachers might have to teach a couple of different subjects, including those in which they have had no training, because there is a shortage of qualified teachers. All of these factors--not to mention the pedagogical emphasis on rote memorization, the "sit-down and shut-up" classroom pedagogies, and the mismatch between massive quantity of subject matters and the

teachers' own lack of competences in writing--contribute to making Indonesia's hope for education reform very bleak.

Although section 31, article 1 of Undang Undang Dasar 1945 (the 1945 Constitution) states that "Every citizen is entitled to get an education," and article 2 states that "Every citizen is obligated to have basic education and government is obligated to pay for it," the Indonesian government has never been able to keep those promises. This situation hits isolated areas and islands particularly hard, since in some schools, only half of the students come to school every day. The reasons are very disturbing. Most of them have to help their parents working in a farm or factory. Or, in some cases, it is because the parents have no choice but to delay a child's education until the child's older brother/sister graduates, so that the parents have enough money for the other children's educations. The sky rocketing expenses of education keep the unfortunate and poor citizens trapped in a perpetual cycle of poverty, ignorance and misery.

This story revealed during a dialog with financially disadvantage children in Jakarta promoted by Kelopak dan Kawan-Kawan institution. When asked, "Who is not in school?" About 20

percent of the children in the room raised their hands. All of them have the same reasons, they did not have any money and were demanded by their parents to work. In Yogyakarta, parents delay their children to go to school until their older kids graduate to ease their financial burden ("Increasing" 8).

Why is the Indonesian Illiteracy Rate Still High?

The three major elements, culture, economy, and politics, obviously influence the way literacy is viewed and taught in Indonesia. The combination of these factors results in discrepancies in literacy levels between urban and rural areas, between men and women, and between different provinces.

According to Fasli Jalal, a writer for UNESCO, the illiteracy rate in rural areas is higher than in urban areas. During 1995 to 2002, the data shows that in urban areas, the literacy rate of the poorest population was 78.8 percent and the literacy rate for the richest group was 95.0 percent. Then in 2002, the literacy rate increased to 83.7 percent amongst the poorest group and 97.2 percent

amongst the richest group ("Increasing"). It reveals that the literacy rate in the urban population is generally higher than that of the rural population among all income groups.

Another reason the illiteracy rate is still so high is because every year there are still school-age children who do not go to school because they are not permitted to enter primary grades in school. Furthermore, there are a growing number of literate citizens, who once joined the program against illiteracy, but failed to keep their learning activity ongoing. This situation was made even worse by the government's seeming lack of motivation in increasing the role of, and appreciation for, every community, social organization, and individual participant fighting in the war against illiteracy.

Gender presents another contributing factor in maintaining such a high illiteracy rate in Indonesia. For example, in 1995, when the literacy rate of the poorest male population was only 80 percent, the literacy rate of the richest male population had reached 96.2 percent. In 2002, the poorest group's literacy rate reached 86.6 percent, while the wealthiest group's literacy rate rose to 97.9 percent. At the same time, literacy rates of the

poorest female group increased from 64.2 percent to 75.7 percent, while the wealthiest group's literacy rate rose from 90.4 percent to 93.5 percent. Women in the poorest group have the lowest literacy rate (Jalal "Increasing").

Also, Indonesia's physical geography contributes to the literacy problem. For example, the literacy rate in urban areas for all provinces ranged between 80.3 percent and 99.4 percent and between 66.8 percent and 98.7 percent in rural areas (Jalal "Increasing"). In some of the rural areas with dense jungles and steep mountains, many villages are only accessible by airplane, canoe, or by hiking in. In those communities, teachers and learners are often only fluent in their local language as well as a regional language. However, a third language, standard bahasa Indonesia, is the language of classroom instruction; thus teachers teach and students are taught in a language that seems foreign to them. Because many Indonesians speak many different languages and because many of those languages do not have a developed system of writing, Bahasa Indonesia is used to teach literacy. Therefore, Indonesia uses this language to establish a standard by which literacy skills can be measured.

As I previously mentioned, textbook availability in Indonesia is another factor delaying educational success, more specifically, literacy education. It is because of Soeharto's 36 years suppression of free speech regime. The Indonesian government exerted tight control over every single aspect of what could be written or not written, published or not, read or not. This control over free speech by the government was the result of the government fearing that good books were only going to influence and educate Indonesians to attack and criticize their corrupt government. For example, in the late 1960s, Suharto sent two notorious Indonesian writers, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Tan Malaka, to prison for life. These authors' works were also destroyed. Later on, however, after Suharto's regime was over, both of the writers' works were translated into many different languages around the world. Still, there were a lot of other writers and publishers whose books have not been recovered (Purba "Wiji").

A new political wind in 1998, however, gave a lot of fresh promising opportunity. Since a new government replaced Suharto's regime, the book business started growing. Many new printing houses and distributors appeared, and there was a booming market in

translated works. Some of the most popular were classic and modern philosophies, economic theories, histories, and social politics.

Yet the Indonesian book trade is still far from ideal compared to the production and consumption of books in other parts of the world. Politics, culture, and economic factors have contributed to a general anti-intellectualism in Indonesia, and at the same time, books are very expensive. This is perhaps why the Indonesians are more interested in radio and television than in books. There is a general low interest in reading and writing. All of the factors that contribute to this low interest have made for a literacy crisis in Indonesia; one that needs direct intervention in terms of education and funding.

In order to understand the learning and teaching process in Indonesia, in the following chapter, I will discuss how writing is both taught and not taught in the Indonesian education system.

CHAPTER TWO
HOW WRITING IS (AND IS NOT) TAUGHT
IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Indonesian culture, politics, and economy play significant roles in the design, development, and implementation of educational policies at all education levels, including in particular language literacy. Indonesia's national language, bahasa Indonesia, is a mandatory subject from pre-school in urban areas. Unlike in urban areas, however, children in isolated areas begin learning the language in the third grade. All Indonesian students continue to learn in bahasa Indonesia until they graduate from a university. Theoretically, by the time they get to college, Indonesian students have accumulated 12 years in studying bahasa Indonesia, which is a sufficient amount of time for students to acquire effective language skills in both writing and speaking. Yet, Indonesian students, beginning from the time they enter school all the way through college, still have very poor language skills. For example, according to Bandung RoL, an Indonesian newspaper, "about 70 percents of

Indonesian graduate students have poor skill in bahasa Indonesia" (Abi "Sekitar").

To understand the problems center around bahasa Indonesia literacy education, I will discuss how writing is and is not taught in Indonesian universities. I will focus primarily on higher education; however, a small portion of discussion about lower education will be presented as well to provide a better picture of the situation. To illustrate these issues, seven writing examples from different writers will be used as a source of analytical study to support the thesis. These writing samples come from an Indonesian website that posts articles from those interested in educational topics and issues.

There are two major factors which contribute to the lack of literacy development of Indonesian students: poorly qualified literacy instructors and ineffective pedagogical methods. Moreover, these factors are interconnected, thus preventing simple solutions to solve the problems with literacy education. In order for literacy education to move forward and become successful, literacy instructors and education policy makers must implement the necessary changes. Commonly, Robert Arnove and Harvey Graff agree and write that, "literacy planners and political leaders are

aware of a number of factors that contribute to success--as well as limitation--of current and past campaigns"(615). In Indonesia, however, literacy workers and policymakers seem to fail to evaluate what works, and what does not, from the previous literacy programs which failed in the past.

Traditionally, in Indonesia, every time there is change in political leaders, literacy education policies transform as a result of the new governing bodies desire to implement "change." Often these government officials tend to focus on and promote the ideological aspects of literacy education reform without any actual method or procedure to implement and carry out literacy education reform. As an example, the implementation of competency based curriculum (KBK) in 2004. The system proposed does not explain the details of the in class practicality. As result, most teachers neither understand nor have the similar perception about how to carry the new curriculum in class setting (Muhroji 1). And the worse, in fact the material of the curriculum is not different compared to the old one being replaced. The only difference is in the length of the study, the previous one takes a quarter but the new one requires a semester.

Moreover, how can literacy educational reform take place when the literacy teachers themselves are poorly trained, and therefore, unqualified to carry out the new pedagogical methods dictated by the new government's literacy education policy? Therefore, even until today, decades after the country's independence, none of the numerous programs tried by Indonesia literacy planners and political leaders to improve Indonesian's language literacy skills have been really proven to work.

Since there is little or no support from the government to overcome the problems, the literacy instructors continue to struggle. This perpetual and detrimental problem prevents new literacy programs from being successful. Lisa Ede, a compositionist, rhetorician, a writer and a writing teacher, supports the assertion that literacy education will never be successful in a university until things change. She writes, "research on writing can have only a limited impact on the actual teaching of writing as long as current conditions persist" (119). In other words, regardless of how much research is done and how much approach changes on the process and instruction of writing, it will not matter; unless the Indonesian government and literacy policy makers also change their

attitude in providing supportive social, political and economical conditions to literacy education and education in general, Indonesians will continue to struggle with the current problems it faces.

Yet another problem that literacy instructors in Indonesia have to deal with is low wages. Many teachers are employed full time, while others are only employed part time. Most full-time teachers hold a position with the government and work about four days a week and are paid based on their seniority. The majority of these full time teachers do not have the desire or the incentive, as mentioned earlier, to pursue more education or get involved in research. Instead, they remain secure in their position, with little effort, until they retire.

There are also part time teachers in Indonesia, and they only earn ten dollars per month on the average. Most of them teach about forty-five hours per week, but the hourly pay rate depends on each school's financial ability. The smaller the school is, the smaller the wages are. What's worse is that part time teachers are not guaranteed job security because they can be fired at any time, for any reason, such as low enrollment.

Due to minimum financial security from the government, most teachers have to take extra jobs at different schools or learning centers to solve their financial struggles. Nationally, it is common that many teachers manage double professions. For example, some of them choose to be a teacher and a merchant in the city. Having more than one job affects many teachers' ability to teach effectively. Moreover, it prevents instructors from pursuing their own literacy education further.

Once again, as long as the government doesn't do anything to help these teachers become and maintain qualified literacy instructors, then their profession and prosperity will continue to be negatively affected. For example, bahasa Indonesia teachers have no choice but to continue to repetitively practice the old and ineffective pedagogical methods. It is because the poor literacy teaching skill that they have and government provides no proper literacy skill training for its literacy instructors. Therefore, even at a high level of education in Indonesia, it is not surprising that the same pedagogical methods and materials are continually reused and taught from previous literacy instruction.

In Indonesia, language teachers focus more on the language itself (form over function) by stressing the theory of grammar and structure. In class, the teacher treats writing as a way to drill the student to learn. For example, S. Sahala Tua Saragih in his article in Pikiran Rakyat: "Writing instructors repeatedly teach basic grammar and structure, public guideline of etymology and morphology" ("Mahasiswa"). In order to focus on form, teachers rely on implementing rote memorization, requiring students to memorize different morphemes and their function, the meaning of a word, word formation, speech sounds, the writing of punctuation marks as well as poetry and proverbs. In class, the students have to memorize the target form, making sentences using the words target then the teacher would ask them to recite the materials in front of the class in order to test them on their acquisition of it. During the whole learning process, teachers do not put any emphasis on critical thinking or explain the process of how, or the significance of why or what the students are learning the materials. Therefore, it can be argued that Indonesian teachers do not understand that writing is about practicing.

Because many Indonesian literacy instructors do not understand the concept behind literacy, they do not teach students that the only way to become a good writer is to practice writing all of the time. In other words, only by practicing what makes it perfect. As a result of their lack of literacy knowledge, none of the theories or materials being taught equips students with the necessary skills to exercise literacy competence. Therefore, Indonesian students really lack the ability to engage in rhetorically aware and appropriate language use.

To improve the literacy instructor's knowledge and methods for teaching reading and writing, teachers must better educate themselves about the conventions of this discipline. For example, as James Berlin suggests it is important for writing teachers to read the diverse and constantly growing body of research on the teaching of writing and thinking about the relationship of theory and practice (65). By doing so, Indonesian reading and writing instructors will be better able to educate students.

Another problem that prevents Indonesian's from acquiring sufficient literacy skills is the standard writing assignments. In writing classes, language literacy teachers assign students to write an essay without

providing any detailed instructions about how to do it and what the instructor expects from the writing. When the students finally finish the assignment and turn in the work, they will either get a score without any comments, or they will not get their papers back at all. Hence, there is no feedback from the instructor, so the students are left guessing how they did.

Because students almost get no feedback at all from the literacy instructors regarding their writings, it is difficult for them to determine what mistakes they made, where and why. Therefore, it is crucial that Indonesian literacy instructors provide this feedback as this is what helps students learn from their mistakes and learning is what education is all about. If students are to ever become literate, they must understand and value the purpose of an education. Bowen writes, "Education ... is directed to the whole person, to the cultivation of the individual's intellectual and practical competence—and moral, religious, emotional, social, and esthetic growth (or maturity)" (Bowen, xiii). However, in Indonesia these goals are not implemented. Again, students do not receive the necessary or appropriate literacy instruction during the learning process. Instead, Indonesian teachers treat reading and

writing only as subjects that need to be taught, not as a medium for communicative and expressive purposes.

Reciprocal dialog between teachers and students in class does not really exist. This is due to the characteristics of Indonesian culture, where people do not question authority or challenge their elders because they are the source of knowledge and truth. In a classroom setting, the teacher is the authority figure; therefore, it would be wrong for any students to challenge the instructor's authority.

Early Literacy Education in Indonesia

In the first year of elementary school, students focus on memorizing the alphabet, words, and sentences clearly and correctly. Not only this is a flawed approach to teaching literacy, most of the content in the texts presented are illogical. One example is a dialogue in I Love Bahasa Indonesia textbook published by Tiga Serangkai Solo (2002):

Article 1:

Cica Mencuci Cangkir dan Piring

"Cuci tanganmu sebelum makan, Cica!" kata
ibu

"Ya, bu", jawab Cica

"Coba cari adikmu! Cica mencari adiknya.

Adik Cica sedang membaca

"Badanmu kotor, Yun. Bersihkan dulu badanmu!"

"Ya, kak," kata Yuyun.

Mereka biasa hidup bersih. Bersih itu sehat.

(Suryani "Apa" par. 1)

Article 1: (Translation)

Cica Washes the Dishes

"Wash your hands before you eat, Cica!"

Cica's mother said.

"Yes, mother", she answered.

"Please look for your sister." Cica looks for her sister. Her sister is reading.

"Your body is dirty, Yun. Clean yourself first!"

"Ok, sis", Yuyun responded.

They always live clean. Cleanliness is healthy.

(Suryani "Apa" par. 1, translated by Isnarti)

For the first grader, the title is clear and contains simple activities, such as washing one's hands, kids of that age are familiar with as they perform these activities in everyday life. Yet, when it comes to the content of the passage, much of it is not connected and therefore lacks coherency. It also prevents the reader from understanding the meaning of the passage. For example, there is no evidence that shows a connection between the title and the activities occurring in the dialog. Therefore, the order in which the activities are presented causes trouble, especially for beginners, as there is no logical order to the information given.

Another example appears in the fifth-grade text Bina Bahasa Indonesia published by Erlangga Bandung (2003):

Article 2:

Wajib Belajar; Desa kelahiran orang tua Indri tergolong tandus. Penduduk hanya panen setahun sekali. Itupun kalau ada air hujan. Hasil pertanian penduduk umumnya singkong dan ubi jalar. Keadaan seperti itu bukan menandakan penduduknya miskin. Justru penduduknya tergolong makmur. Banyak hal yang mereka kerjakan. Kaum ibu membentuk Home Industry atau Industri Rumah

Tangga. Jika kita masuk ke toko suvenir, hampir semua suvenir disana adalah karya ibu-ibu. Begitu pula kalau kita berbelanja kue-kue traditional. Semua itu hasil dari desa kelahiran ibunya Indri. Bagaimana dengan aktivitas bapak-bapak dan para remajanya? Disana tidak kita jumpai remaja yang duduk di pojok gang atau di warung kopi. Konon sebagian besar remaja bekerja di kota lain. Mereka mengirimkan sebagian gaji ke desa untuk membeli sawah dan menyekolahkan adik-adik mereka. Jika ada anak usia sekolah berkeliaran pada waktu tersebut, setiap orang wajib menegur. Jika ternyata orang tua atau kakaknya yang menyuruh, pasti mendapat sanksi. (Suryani "Apa" par. 3)

Article 2: (Translation)

The Obligation to Study

In the village where Indri's parents were born, the land was infertile. The farmers could only harvest their crops once a year. The crops are mostly cassava and sweet potatoes. The situation does not make the people poor, but prosperous. There are a lot of things they could

do. Most of the women in this village have a small home-business. If we go to a souvenir store, almost all of the crafts in the souvenir store are their creation. Also when we shop for traditional cake, all of these are also made in Indri's mother's hometown. What about the man and the youth activities? In the village, we would not find the villagers hanging out on the streets or in a coffee shop. The youth work in other cities, and some send their families a portion of their salary to buy land in the village or to send their sibling to school. If there are school-age children who are wandering around during school hours, everybody must warn them. If they find out that parents or older siblings instructed the children to wander around, the parents or siblings could be fined.

(Suryani "Apa" par. 3, translated by Isnarti)

The text is part of a chapter entitled "Understanding Reading." This chapter is designed to train the students to comprehend a passage. To test the student's reading comprehension, students are expected to answer some questions like: what do the women do? What do the youth do?

Why are the villagers prosperous? Finally, the students are asked to provide a summary of the overall main point of the story.

The fact that students are able to answer all of the questions correctly does not guarantee that they actually understand the text, especially since the content of the text itself is highly confusing. First, there is a disconnection between the text's title *The Obligation to Study* and its content, which is mostly a discussion about the small home-businesses that many of the village women run.

Furthermore, there are many illogical contradictions in terms of the content itself. For example, at the end of the last paragraph it says, "They send part of their salary to buy land." This statement contradicts the description given in the first paragraph, where it is written that the land is very infertile and could only be planted with cassava or sweet potatoes, so why would one want to buy infertile land? One can't help but ask what the message of the text is.

In addition to illogical contradictions found in the content, there is no cohesiveness to the text as a whole. Originally, the text must be intended to support the

government's propaganda, which mandates that all school aged children must attend school.

There are a lot of bad texts in bahasa Indonesia textbooks. Some examples include: a text without a title, a title that does not represent the text, paragraphs with no clear main topic, too many contradictory main topics, and disconnected ideas. Most Indonesian texts are categorized by their grade level. The first- to third-grade texts focus on cleanliness and health (i.e. taking a bath, brushing teeth, mopping, throwing trash, gardening, community work in the village, exterminating mosquitoes, and eating vegetables). The third - to sixth-grade texts focus on government programs and other complex topics that are too complicated for students of that level to understand (i.e. urbanization and de-urbanization, transmigration, economic cooperation, monetary crisis, and employee protections). What's even more problematic is that most of the teachers themselves have very limited knowledge about the subject matter. These problems continue to be an issue through middle school, high school, and college.

Literacy Education at High Education

To get into college, Indonesian students have to pass the Evaluasi Belajar Tahap Akhir Nasional, the national final exam. Students must also pass the Ujian Masuk Perguruan Tinggi, the university entrance exam. Bahasa Indonesia includes one of many subjects that students are tested in.

While studying in the university, all students are required to study bahasa Indonesia for a semester. At the university level, literacy instructors teach bahasa Indonesia grammar and structure which is based on the official guidelines of the revised spelling and morphological systems of bahasa Indonesia. Since there is almost nothing new about the materials, most students are very unenthusiastic about taking the class. For the most part, they only sign up for the class to meet the requirement of the program.

Because the university literacy instructors are required to only teach about the spelling and morphological aspects of bahasa Indonesia, there is no instruction or focus on the writing process itself. Therefore, college students never progress in their writing abilities, so they remain at the same literacy level, which is poor.

Even at the university level, it still shows that language literacy education still follows the banking system, using rote memorization to educate. For tests, students are required to memorize everything as there is no opportunity to apply critical thinking because students are taught to memorize facts.

Furthermore, Indonesian language teachers do not realize that composition studies view writing as a process, which involves critical thinking to convey what the writer is attempting to say. Writing is not just a regurgitation of facts.

To understand more about the Indonesian university students' writing level, it is useful to examine some examples from student editorials.

Article 3:

Padatnya Kurikulum

(Penulis): Sri Harnanik

Topik: Pusingnya Sekolah

Menurut saya kurikulum siswa-siswi SMP SMU terlalu padat, dan terlalu banyak mempelajari hal-hal yang tidak perlu. Sebaiknya kurikulum atau sekolah sebelum tingkat perguruan tinggi hanya membahas hal-hal yang perlu dipahami oleh

anak seumur tersebut. Misalnya tentang DNA, menurut saya belum perlu dikenalkan pada anak SMU, misalnya sampai transkripsi dan translasi tingkat sel, karena anak masih sulit menerima teori yang tidak terindra oleh mereka, atau pelajaran fisika tentang radioisotop, karena anak-anak tidak memperoleh gambaran jelas mengenai hal ini, akibatnya hanya menambah pusing saja.

Akhirnya dengan sekolah bukan tambah pintar, tapi pikirannya bertambah berat. Seyogyanya negara menciptakan kurikulum seperlunya untuk siswa sltp-smu, seperti kalo yang muslim diajarkan kemantapan akidah dan ilmu-ilmu islam lainnya yang hukumnya fardlu ain, dan beberapa jenis ketrampilan yang berubah-ubah sesuai kebutuhan masyarakat, sedangkan pelajaran yang rumit diberikan diperguruan tinggi, sesuai bakat dan minatnya. Disinilah siswa akan mendalami suatu ilmu tertentu yang sesuai minat. Juga hendaknya pemerintah hanya membuka perguruan-perguruan tinggi dengan jurusan yang diperlukan oleh dunia kerja, sehingga tidak ada lulusan

perguruan tinggi yang menganggur. Jadi siswa tidak perlu mempelajari hal-hal yang tidak dapat dipraktekkan. Dengan kata lain sudah banyak biaya, tenaga, serta waktu untuk belajar, tapi tak ada gunanya. (The whole text is quoted from Harnanik "Padatnya")

Article 3: (Translation)

Condensed Curriculum

Writer, Sri Harnanik

Topic: The Confusion of School

I think junior high and high school's curriculum are too packed and focus too much on unimportant subjects. Curriculum or school prior to university level better only covers subject that could be understood by children of that age level. As an example about DNA, I think it is not an important subject to introduce to high school students, like until transcription and translation of cell level, because it is still difficult for children to understand theory that they cannot sense it, or physic subject about radiostop, because children do not get any clear

description about it, as a result it would only add confusion.

Finally by going to school does not make cleverer, but their minds are getting complicated. It is better that the government creates simple curriculum for junior high and high school students, like for Muslim are taught about basic Islam's law and other Islam's obligation, and couple of different skills relate to the community's need, while complicated lesson are given at the university based on their talents and interests. Here student is going to study more about certain knowledge based on what they are interested in. Also it is better that the government only opens universities based on the majors that are needed by job demand, so there is no jobless university graduate. Therefore, students do not need to study something that they could not practice. In other words, they waste the cost, energy, and time to study, but the knowledge is useless.

(The whole text is quoted from Harnanik "Padatnya", translated by Isnarti)

This article does not reflect the ideas of a university level student because the writer expresses his thought in an informal way. In an Indonesian's cultural context, this passage's tone makes the passage read more like a conversation. For example, the content is underdeveloped because the writer doesn't follow the conventions of the writing process. Besides, it is clear that the writer has no knowledge about what she is proposing. Also, she is unable to determine what information is relevant and what information is not. This causes the reader to become confused, as the ideas are not interconnected or presented in a logical format.

Article 4:

Masalah Pendidikan di Indonesia

(Penulis): Rena Istri Wangi

Topik: Masalah Pendidikan

Kurang optimalnya pelaksanaan sistem pendidikan (yg sebenarnya sudah cukup baik) di Indonesia yang disebabkan sulitnya menyediakan guru-guru berkompetensi untuk mengajar di daerah-daerah. Sebenarnya kurikulum Indonesia tidak kalah dari kurikulum di negara maju, tetapi pelaksanaannya yang masih jauh dari optimal.

Kurang sadarnya masyarakat mengenai betapa pentingnya pendidik dalam membentuk generasi mendatang sehingga profesi ini tidak begitu dihargai.

Sistem pendidikan yang sering berganti-ganti, bukanlah masalah utama, yang menjadi masalah utama adalah pelaksanaan di lapangan, kurang optimal. Terbatasnya fasilitas untuk pembelajaran baik bagi pengajar dan yang belajar. Hal ini terkait terbatasnya dana pendidikan yang disediakan pemerintah.

Banyak sekali kegiatan yang dilakukan depdiknas untuk meningkatkan kompetensi guru, tetapi tindak lanjut yang tidak membuahkan hasil dari kegiatan semacam penataran, sosialisasi. Jadi terkesan yang penting kegiatan itu terlaksana selanjutnya, tanpa memperhatikan manfaat yang dapat diperoleh.

Jika kondisi semacam itu tidak diubah untuk dibenahi kecil harapan pendidikan bisa lebih maju/baik. Maka pendidikan Indonesia sulit untuk maju. Selama ini kesan kuat bahwa pendidikan yg berkualitas mesti bermodal/berbiaya besar. Tapi

oleh pemerintah itu tidak ditanggapi, kita lihat saja anggaran pendidikan dalam APBN itu. Padahal semua tahu bahwa pendidikan akan membaik jika gurunya berkompetensi dan cukup dana untuk memfasilitasi kegiatan pembelajaran.

Adanya biaya pendidikan yang mahal, menyulitkan sebagian masyarakat Indonesia yang kurang mampu. Hal ini dapat mengakibatkan banyaknya anak-anak Indonesia yang terancam putus sekolah. Oleh karena itu, sangat lah di perlukan peningkatan dana pendidikan di Indonesia agar dapat membantu masyarakat Indonesia yang kurang mampu melalui program beasiswa, orang tua asuh, dan dapat juga dengan pembebasan biaya pendidikan. (The whole text is quoted from Wangi "Masalah")

Article 4: (Translation)

The Education Problem in Indonesia

Writer: Rena Istri Wangi

Indonesians do not perform to the best of their abilities. Lack the ability to implement education system to its best (which actually is

good enough already) in Indonesia is caused by the difficulties to provide competent teachers to teach in suburban areas. Actually Indonesian's curriculum is not worse compared to modern countries, but the implementation of education is still away from optimal. The lack of realization in the community about the importance of teachers in shaping future generation so that the profession is not being appreciated.

The education system that always change, are not the main problem, what cause a problem is the implementation in the field, lack of optimal. They are not enough facilities for teaching for neither teacher nor student. It is the result of the education's small budget that the government provides.

There are a lot of activities that have been done by the education department to improve teacher competency, but the follow up does not bring any result from activities like symposiums, socialization. Therefore there is an impression that what is important is the activity being done

then, without paying attention to the benefit received.

If such conditions are not fixed there is little hope that education could progress/ be better. Therefore, it is difficult for the Indonesian education system to progress. So far there is an impression that good education requires much money. But this issue has never been responded to by the government, we could see from the National Budget for education. As a matter of fact, we all know that education will get better if the teacher is competent and there is enough money to facilitate the teaching.

The high educational cost makes it difficult for the financially less fortunate Indonesians. This could cause plenty of students to drop out. Therefore, it is important to increase the education budget in Indonesia to help the financially less fortunate through scholarship programs, foster parents, and also through free education programs. (The whole text is quoted from Wangi "Masalah", translated by Isnarti)

This essay attempts to discuss the reasons why Indonesia's education system is failing students. Unlike many of the previous examples, this writer seems to stay focused on the subject, but the details she uses to support her argument are logically contradictory. For example, in the first paragraph she claims that one of the reasons why Indonesian students are not performing to their ability is due to the Government's inability to implement an education system that provides competent teachers. However, after she gets finished stating that the education system is flawed, she states that the system is "good enough."

Another issue with this writing sample is seen in the first paragraph. After the writer attempts to provide the reader with a thesis statement, claiming that the education system is flawed because there are no competent teachers, she then strays from the main point she was attempting to make. For example, she writes: "Lack the ability to implement education system to its best in Indonesia is caused by the difficulties to provide competent teachers to teach in suburban areas." Then she goes off topic by mention something about the curriculum.

Article 5:

Mahalnya Biaya Pendidikan Sekarang ini

(Penulis): Putri Sandra N

Topik: Biaya Pendidikan

Pendidikan merupakan faktor kebutuhan yang paling utama dalam kehidupan. Biaya pendidikan sekarang ini tidak murah lagi karena dilihat dari penghasilan rakyat Indonesia setiap harinya. Mahalnya biaya pendidikan tidak hanya pendidikan di perguruan tinggi melainkan juga biaya pendidikan di sekolah dasar sampai sekolah menengah keatas walaupun sekarang ini sekolah sudah mendapat Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (BOS) semuanya masih belum mencukupi biaya pendidikan bagi masyarakat yang kurang mampu.

Pendidikan di Indonesia masih merupakan investasi yang mahal sehingga diperlukan perencanaan keuangan serta disiapkan dana pendidikan sejak dini. Setiap keluarga harus memiliki perencanaan terhadap keluarganya sehingga dengan adanya perencanaan keuangan sejak awal maka pendidikan yang diberikan pada anak akan terus sehingga anak tidak akan

putus sekolah. Tanggung jawab orang tua sangatlah berat karena harus membiayai anak sejak dia lahir sampai ke jenjang yang lebih tinggi.

Mahalnya biaya pendidikan sekarang ini dan banyaknya masyarakat yang berada dibawah garis kemiskinan sehingga tidak begitu peduli atau memperhatikan pentingnya pendidikan bagi sang buah hatinya, sehingga membuat anak putus sekolah, anak tersebut hanya mendapat pendidikan sampai pada jenjang sekolah menengah pertama atau sekolah menengah keatas. Padahal pemerintah ingin menuntaskan wajib belajar sembilan tahun. Jika masalah ini tidak mendapat perhatian maka program tersebut tidak akan terealisasi. Banyak anak yang putus sekolah karena orang tua tidak mampu untuk menyekolahkan anaknya.

Sehingga kami berharap pada pemerintah untuk memberikan kebijakan dan peduli terhadap pendidikan dan masyarakat Indonesia, karena sekarang ini bangsa Indonesia banyak mengalami problema khususnya problema bencana alam yang mengakibatkan rusaknya lembaga pendidikan.

(The whole text is quoted from N "Mahalnya")

Article 5: (Translation)

The Pricey Cost of Education Today

Writer: Putri Sandra N

Topic: The Cost of Education

Education is the most needed thing in life.

The cost of education today is not cheap anymore judging from the daily income of Indonesians. The high cost of education is not only present at the university level but also at the elementary school and high school levels although now schools get subsidy from School Subsidy Operation (BOS), it is not enough to cover the education cost for the less financially fortunate community.

Education in Indonesia is still considered an expensive investment, therefore financial planning and preparedness are needed from the beginning. Every family has to have a plan for their family, so with early financial planning, the education given to the child will continue so the child is not going to drop out from school. The parents have an overwhelming responsibility

because they have to financially take care of the kid from birth to the highest education level.

The high cost of education now and the amount of people who live under poverty line make them ignore or pay attention of the importance of education for their kids, therefore kids drop out of school, they could only finish their study until junior high school or high school. As a matter of fact, the government wants to mandate that children attend school for nine years. If this problem is not resolved, the program will never be achieved. A lot of children drop out because the parents cannot afford to send them to school.

Therefore we hope the government will create policy and care for education and the Indonesian community, because now Indonesia faces a lot of problems, especially natural disaster that cause damages to education institution.

(The whole text is quoted from N "Mahalnya", translated by Isnarti)

The writer proposes a couple different ideas from the first paragraph to the end. Throughout the entire text, she

fails to concentrate on a single topic and develop it. For example, the writer begins with the topic of the cost of education and the parents' huge responsibility for a child from the time he is born to adulthood. Then writer jumps to the topic of the effect of natural disasters and how they damage educational institutions. All of the three topics are underdeveloped because the writer failed to inform and explain the relevance of these topics. In other word, because the writer fails to commit to one subject as well as not inform the reader about the topics, the content becomes unclear.

Article 6:

Bahasa Mandarin, Perlu atau Tidak?

(Penulis): Fransisca Freddy

Topik: bahasa mandarin

Semua orang tentu setuju dengan pembelajaran berbagai macam bahasa yang digunakan di dunia selain bahasa negri kita sendiri.

Salah satu bahasa universal yang sudah marak disosialisasikan di kehidupan kita adalah Bahasa Inggris. Bahasa ini diakui sebagai bahasa internasional yang menjadi penghubung komunikasi antar negara.

Dalam pendidikan di Indonesia, khususnya di Jakarta, Bahasa Inggris sudah menjadi mata pelajaran yang wajib. Tidak hanya dipelajari sebagai bidang bahasa, namun di beberapa sekolah bertaraf nasional plus dan internasional, semua mata pelajaran disampaikan melalui Bahasa Inggris. v Selain Bahasa Inggris, bahasa asing lain yang sedang marak dipelajari adalah Bahasa Mandarin. Awalnya, Bahasa Mandarin hanya dapat dipelajari melalui kursus atau les tambahan diluar sekolah. Namun dewasa ini, Bahasa Mandarin sudah banyak dicantumkan sebagai mata pelajaran wajib di sekolah-sekolah dari tingkat TK hingga SMA. v Seberapa perlu kita mempelajari Bahasa Mandarin?

Guru native di kursus Bahasa Inggris saya mengatakan bahwa di Eropa dan Amerika, bahasa universal kedua yang digunakan setelah Bahasa Inggris adalah Bahasa Perancis.

Selain itu, sebuah artikel mengenai universitas jurusan perhotelan juga mengatakan bahwa 3 bahasa penting yang akan dipelajari

adalah Bahasa Inggris, Bahasa Jepang, dan Bahasa Perancis.

Lalu bagaimana dengan Bahasa Mandarin?

Ketika saya tanyakan pada salah seorang teman saya yang kursus Bahasa Mandarin di luar jam sekolah, ia mengemukakan bahwa Cina merupakan negara dengan penduduk terbanyak di dunia. Cina merupakan salah satu negara paling maju dan berpengaruh di dunia. Hampir di seluruh belahan bumi, kita akan menemukan orang Cina.

Di Indonesia sendiri?

Saya melihat Bahasa Mandarin belum sepenuhnya diperlukan. Saya sendiri jarang melihat ilmu bahasa mandarin dapat digunakan sepenuhnya di Indonesia. Bahkan bahasa Mandarin masih setara dengan bahasa Jepang.

Saya sendiri tidak tertarik dengan Bahasa Mandarin, jauh dibawah ketertarikan saya terhadap Bahasa Inggris.

Namun melihat anak-anak TK sekarang yang sudah mempelajari 2 bahasa asing sekaligus disekolah, saya yakin Bahasa Mandarin juga akan menjadi salah satu bahasa asing terkemuka

di Indonesia. Hanya mungkin, Bahasa Inggris masih diutamakan. (The whole text is from Freddy "Bahasa")

Article 6: (Translation)

Chinese Language, Yes or No?

Writer: Fransisca Freddy

Everybody must agree to study other languages used in the world beside our own language.

One of the universal languages that has been a major influence in our lives is the English language. This language is proclaimed to be the international language and is used as a communication tool among countries.

In the Indonesian education system, especially in Jakarta, the English language has been a required subject. It is not only studied as a subject in school, but it is also being studied in both nationally and internationally accredited institutions, all of the lessons are given in English. Beside the English language, another foreign language that is most often

studied is the Chinese language. At first, the Chinese language could only be learned at private schools or from extra courses taught outside of school. But lately, the Chinese language has been listed as mandatory from kindergarten to high school. How important is it for us to learn mandarin?

An English native speaker in my private English class said that in Europe and the USA, the second universal language used after English is French.

In addition, in an article about a university that offers a major in tourism said that there are three important languages that should be studied, English, Japanese, and French.

Then what about Chinese?

When I asked one of my friend who took private Chinese's lesson, he said that China is the most populated country. China is one of the most modern countries, and very influential in the world. Almost everywhere in the world we would find Chinese.

What about in Indonesia?

I think the Chinese language is not needed yet. I myself rarely see that the Chinese language knowledge could be used in Indonesia. The Chinese language has the same level of Japanese.

I myself am not interested in Mandarin, as much as I am interested in English.

But seeing children at kindergarten now who study two languages already at school, I believe Chinese language would be one of the prominent languages in Indonesia. Perhaps, the English language is still the priority.

(The whole text is from Freddy "Bahasa", translated by Isnarti)

Unlike the many of the other writers exemplified in this paper, this writer seems to understand the need to include resources to help support her ideas. As a writer, she understands what it takes to make a more compelling argument. For example, knowing that everything Western is a big thing in Indonesia, she supports her claim by quoting what her English 'native speaker' thinks about the most important language in the world, and also her friend who happens to study Mandarin. Although these are not valid

resources, as the information she uses to support her argument are not considered credible because they come from non authoritative sources, still her efforts show her understanding about what good writing is. However, when it comes to her context, she seems to lose focus in developing a meaningful discussion. For example, when it comes to the most important language, at first she said it is not important to study Mandarin because it is not needed yet in Indonesia, but then at the conclusion she believes that Mandarin would be prominent language in Indonesia.

Article 7:

*KEPEDULIAN MASYARAKAT DALAM MENGEMBANGKAN WIRASWASTA
DALAM BENTUK KARYA-KARYANYA*

(Penulis): Bhinuka Warih Danardono

Topik: MENGEMBANGKAN USAHA GUNA MEMPEROLEH HASIL YANG
DIDAPAT

Pada awalnya bahwa wiraswasta memang mengalami peningkatan yang sangat signifikan sekali karena didasari oleh niat dan semangat kerja keras agar supaya usahanya itu berjalan dengan lancar. Hal inilah yang perlu kita kaji ulang tentang mengapa usaha usaha yang berkarya sendiri lebih berkembang daripada mengikuti

pekerjaan orang lain. Apa sebenarnya yang menjadi topik penyebab ini, apakah ini merupakan keharusan dari atas dasar niat ataupun hanya iseng belaka. Perkembangan jaman semakin maju banyak import asing yang masing ke negara kita yaitu Indonesia sehingga saking banyaknya produk-produk keluaran dari asing malah menang yang menjadi pertanyaannya adalah kenapa kita kalah terhadap kemajuan jaman dari luar negeri sedangkan kita hanya ketergantungan terus. Mana jiwa pemimpin kita dan mana rasa nasional dan patriotisme kita terhadap kemajuan jaman ini.

Dalam pandangan menurut tingkat kemajuan jaman ini sebenarnya kita bisa untuk melakukannya hanya terang saja orang-orang kita sedikit punya sifat malas-malasan sehingga pikiran kita hanya tertuju pada datangnya import terus. Nah inilah justru yang kita sayangkan sebagai bangsa Indonesia. Bangsa kita kan besar yang mempunyai potensi apa saja mulai dari wisata kekayaan alam seni dan budaya dan lain-lain mengapa tidak mempergunakan ini malah jika kita mau untuk mempromosikan kekayaan kita ini kepada pihak

asing maka yang kita akan senang dan bangga karena inilah sifat dari manusia bangsa Indonesia yang sebenarnya dan yang mau mencintai dan mempergunakan produk buatan negeri kita sendiri. Pada dasarnya hasil dari kekayaan kita ini nanti untuk siapa ya untuk kita kita ini mulai dari fasilitas yang memadai sampai yang lainnya.

Kita punya lambang negara yaitu Burung Garuda Pancasila yang artinya burung ini mampu mempersatukan memperjuangkan dan menarik simpati bangsa lain untuk datang dan berkunjung ke negeri kita guna tujuan memberikan kesan yang baik sehingga kita bisa bertukar kebudayaan pikiran bahasa dan lain sebagainya. Apapun yang terjadi bangsa Indonesia tetap bangsa yang dulu yaitu bangsa yang mau menghargai jasa-jasa para pahlawan mulai dari jaman kerajaan pancawati dari seorang raja yang bernama prabu puntadewa sampai kerajaan yang sekarang sudah berdiri. Maka dari itu kita jangan melupakan sejarah. Sejarah bukan asal-asalan tapi sejarah merupakan tolak ukur dari keberhasilan hidup kita sebagai

rakyat Indonesia. Kita mengenal patih Gajah mada yang mampu mempersatukan nusantara beserta bentuk kekayaan leluhurnya mulai dari Sabang sampai Merauke.

Nah dari hasil beliau ini kita bisa gali kembali semuanya tanpa terkecuali. Apa dibalik latar belakang bahwa negara Indonesia punya segala-galanya yaitu mengenai niat yang tulus dan mau memberikan sebuah hasil yang didapatnya untuk nantinya dapat di budidayakan kembali. (The whole text is quoted from Danardono "Kepedulian")

Article 6: (Translation)

The Society's Awareness in developing Business in Their Works

The Topic: Developing Business to Gain the Result Achieved

Writer: Bhinuko Warih Danardono

At the beginning it is true that business experiences a very significant increased because it is based on determination and spirit to work hard so that the business could run well. This is what we need to reinvestigate about why the

business that create by oneself more develops compared to one that follows other people's work. What causes this problem, is it because an obligation based on determination or only unintentional. The growth of the century there are a lot of foreign imports coming to our country that is Indonesia so that too many products from foreign win more the question is why we lost from modernity of foreign countries while we only always depend. Where is our leadership character and where is our national and patriotism toward this modernity.

In the view according to the level of this modernity we could do it but only our people of course has a little lazy character so that our mind only focus at the coming of the import only. That is what we regret as Indonesian. Our country is big with all of the potential starting from tourism natural resources art and culture and others why do not use this even if we want to promote our own assets to foreigners so that we could be happy and proud because this is the original character of Indonesians and who want to

love and use products made in by our own country. Basically whom the result of all of our wealth later for it is for us starting from the reasonable facility and others.

We have the country's symbol that is Burung Garuda Pancasila meaning this bird could unite fight and attract other country's sympathy to come and visit to our country with the intention to give good impression so that we could exchange culture ideas language and others. Whatever happen Indonesian remain the country before that is Indonesian who are willing to appreciate the sacrifice of their heroes from Pancawati Kingdom era from a king name King Puntadewa until aristocracy that has been found now. Therefore we should not forget history. History is not something artificial but history is a barometer of our success as Indonesian. We know Patih Gajah Mada was able to unite archipelagos with the shape of the ancestor's wealth from Sabang to Merauke.

From him we could dig in all without an exception. What is behind the background that

Indonesian has everything that is an honest desire and willing to give a result that he achieved to be cultivated later on.

(The whole text is quoted from Danardono
"Kepedulian", translated by Isnarti)

The last article is the most lost among all seven articles. From the title, the multiple main ideas, the unclear word choices, and complex sentences, it is obvious that the writer does not have any understanding about the very basic knowledge about writing. For example the title of the essay, instead of saying 'Kepedulian Masyarakat Dalam Mengembangkan Wiraswasta Dalam Bentuk Karya-Karyanya', he could simply say, 'Kepedulian Masyarakat Dalam Mengembangkan Wiraswasta. The addition of ...'Dalam Bentuk Karya-Karyanya is a redundance element in the sentence because the meaning of the sentence is already clarified by saying 'Kepedulian Masyarakat Dalam Mengembangkan Wiraswasta Dalam Bentuk Karya-Karyanya'.

Also, from the multiple subjects presented, the writer doesn't possess the ability to understand and present these ideas in a coherent manner. Therefore, the meaning that the writer is trying to convey is not understandable to the readers. For example, this writer jumps from topic to

topic, at both the paragraph level as well as at the discourse level.

Moreover, the writer doesn't actually have the knowledge or skill to develop the entire text into something coherent and meaningful. For example, the writer introduces the topic of Indonesians' great ancient Kingdom, famous heroes, and national symbols, but he never takes the time to develop these topics and therefore the text comes across as incoherent and illogical—two characteristics of poor writing or low level literacy skills.

Yet another factor that is a reflection of poor writing and low level literacy skills is the fact that the writer uses incorrect words in an incorrect context to convey his meaning. However, the meaning cannot be determined by the reader if the words don't actually convey what the speaker is attempting to say.

From the writing examples, they show that Indonesian high education institutions, by and large, have failed to effectively teach basic writing skills from the current pedagogical methods that Indonesia currently ascribes to. The absence of basic writing knowledge is reflected in the students' texts that they send to the publication used in this thesis. From their writings skills, way to express

thought and set up arguments, they do not show that they are members of an academic community who have been learning how to read and write for twelve years prior to their entrance to the university. Part of the problem is caused by the fact that much of the written work students do is through test taking which requires that students provide the answers verbatim. This leaves no room for critical thinking.

What make the challenge worse is that most of the instructors, as the product of Indonesia's broken academic enterprise, do not have sufficient basic literacy skills to teach the students how to identify and produce the many different kinds of discourse. Nor do the teachers stress the importance of audience, and how knowing the audience changes the discourse the writer chooses to engage in. Therefore, in the next chapter, I would like to offer some language education methods that Indonesia might be able to adopt from U.S. composition studies in order to improve Indonesian language teaching, teacher skills, and student achievement in literacy.

CHAPTER THREE

ADOPTING THE BEST PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES FROM UNITED STATES COMPOSITION STUDIES

As discussed in the previous chapters, Indonesian's low literacy skills at all educational levels derive from two major elements: the country's multi-ethnic characteristics as well as the problems of literacy instructors and policy makers. The complex situation, despite all of the Indonesian effort to improve the country's literacy level, still demands endless work and resources to achieve that goal. For that, Indonesia's educational policy makers, instructors, and political leaders need to focus on the historical context of the country's educational system, and learn about the changes and trends that contribute to success, as well as those that do not.

In order for Indonesia's literacy education to be effective, the policy makers and instructors also need to look to other countries whose literacy levels are high and determine what these countries are doing in order to effectively teach literacy skills. In other words, the basic idea is to try to implement only those policies and

pedagogical philosophies and methods that could be applied to an Indonesian system.

By doing so, Indonesia can then adopt and implement these effective pedagogical methods and educational policies. For example, the U.S. higher education system has a way of educating students who enter the university but whose basic writing skills are insufficient for the discourse community in which they must write.

In this chapter, I will discuss composition theories and practices that Indonesia might be able to adopt from the field of U.S. composition studies to improve literacy education at all levels. I will explore and discuss the following topics: the importance of the writing process in the instruction of basic writing; the importance of acquiring and writing in academic discourse in the university discourse community; the importance of teacher feedback; and the role of the writing center. Adopting these theories and practices will tap into the potential for change in literacy skills within Indonesian higher education, especially if the government takes an active role.

In order to understand the following discussion on the four topics I plan to talk about, some background knowledge of basic writing in general must be introduced first.

Developed in the 1970s, basic writing courses in the U.S were introduced at the college level to innovate the study and teaching of formal written English (Horner 199). U.S basic writing students, like many of the university students of Indonesia who struggle with the writing in bahasa Indonesia, are often characterized by not understanding the rules of formal written English which manifest itself in the use of non-traditional syntax, grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage, mechanics, organization, and clarity. Mina Shaughnessy, an expert in the field of basic writing, defines basic writers as

...those that has been so far behind the others in their formal education that they appear to have little chance of catching up, students whose difficulty with the written language seemed of a different order from those of the other groups, as they have come, you might say, from a different country, or at least through different

schools, where even modest standard of high school literacy had not been met. (388)

Similarly, because many Indonesian students come from various multilingual backgrounds and have had poor literacy education, it can be argued that many of these students could fall under Shaughnessy's definition of American basic writers.

Teaching Basic Writing

The traditional methods used to teach literacy in Indonesia, where literacy instruction only focuses on elements at the sentence level, must be reevaluated. Writing is not just about repeating memorized information or displaying grammatical correctness. Instead, writing means being able to present ideas in a clear and interesting manner in addition to using the correct linguistic forms. To do that, students need to understand how to think critically. To gain these abilities, students need to understand and engage in the recursive writing process that is emphasized in U.S. writing instruction: invention, drafting, and revision. Writing is the externalization and remaking of thinking (Lavelle and Zuercher 373). Engaging in these practices helps student

generate new ideas and become aware of language and knowledge as social processes.

However, Indonesia's literacy system has never paid specific attention to shaping writing instruction. To achieve better writing skills, Indonesian basic writing educators must pay attention to several steps that comprise the writing process: prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading. However, it is important to note that the writing process is not a linear and tidy process (373).

In this model the first stage in the writing process is called prewriting. D. Gordon Rohman defines prewriting as the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his "subject" to himself (106). The purpose of this stage is to generate as many ideas as possible. The advantage of having a lot of ideas about a topic from different angles is that it enables the students to develop their ideas in many possible directions that they might not have thought of before. There are many different exercises used in the prewriting stage. In *The Basics: A Rhetoric and Hand Book*, Santi V. Buscemi, Albert H. Nicolai, and Richards proposes, " Prewriting can take three forms: recording what you already know, interviewing,

and researching (6). This exercise requires that students write as much as possible for a limited amount of time. The point is to just generate ideas; so stopping to correct mistakes is discouraged since an idea can easily flee one's mind from the distraction.

Students need to understand that they need to be cautious working in this phase because careful planning--or lack of it-- will always show in the final draft. Therefore, it is always good to pre-write and plan early. If the student has a project that involves research or outside reading, students are encouraged to do these things early to give them time to develop all of the ideas before they begin to actually write. In other words, writing is easier if the student plans ahead. Once a student has completed these two stages, then they are ready to compose a working draft.

Once a student has a working rough draft, they need to proofread and revise it. However, revising is hard because it is difficult to see one's own work through the eyes of a reader. Writers often see what they meant to say rather than what they really said. Sometimes they take for granted the background knowledge that the reader may not have. To overcome these difficulties, the teacher has to ask

students to put their draft aside for a day or so before trying to revise it. Therefore, it is beneficial for the students to perform a peer review since this exercise provides feedback in order to develop a well organized and coherent essay. For example, when students review each other's work, they look for things such as a well-developed thesis statement and logical support or evidence to prove the main ideas of the essay. They also look at connections, making sure ideas flow smoothly from one sentence to the next. So, by engaging in peer reviews, students can learn how to become self-editors and thus better writers. Having this skill enables the student to be more successful in their other academic classes--not just English-- since they have acquired a sense of agency and realize the importance of feedback in the revising process. All of these stages of the writing process then provide a schema or formula for basic writers to follow. I suggest that Indonesia educators adopt and implement this focus on the writing process so as to provide students with a concrete method of instruction that fosters critical thinking. Therefore it is important that literacy instructors focus and emphasize those aspects of the writing process, not only the linguistic forms, in order to solve Indonesia's literacy issues.

Inventing the University

One way to solve Indonesia's literacy issues is to initiate students into academic discourse. Academic discourse can be defined as "...epistemic...it provides not simply access to knowledge but knowledge itself, which is to say, academic ways of thinking (Bizzell 230).

In Indonesia, as discussed in Chapter 1, unlike in the United States, writing instruction focuses on the traditional aspects of grammar, morphology and phonetics. In other words, Indonesian literacy instruction does not focus on anything above the sentence level. However, in order to teach literacy, writing has to happen at the discursive level, that is, at the level of knowledge and content. According to J.R. Martin and David Rose, authors of *Working With Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*, discourse should be viewed as more than a sequence of clauses. Instead, the focus should be on meaning and those social processes involved in creating it (1). This idea is supported by David Bartholomae, an expert in basic writing instruction. He argues that academic discourse is a social process that helps student's to create meaning. He writes:

What our beginning students need to learn is to extend themselves into the commonplaces, set

phrases, rituals, gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions, and necessary connections that determine "what might be said" and constitute knowledge within the various branches of our academic community. (600)

Based upon Bartholomae's assertion, it can be argued that having the capability to write and comprehend academic discourse is a way of thinking. Because neither Indonesian students nor teachers have been taught to focus on language that is above the sentence level, it is understandable why both the instructor and student have the inability to write well. Again, this inability exists because they have been taught to focus on form rather than on the logical methods that underlie the writing process, which can be represented by employing academic discourse. In other words, many Indonesian university students are not able to read and write in academic discourse due to the ineffective teaching methods and poorly trained instructors, who themselves lack an understanding of discourse.

Hence, as a result of only focusing on form, the majority of the university community in Indonesia is what U.S. compositionist Mina Shaughnessy labels "beginning adult writers." These are students, (and in Indonesia,

teachers as well), who "...do not know the rituals and ways of winning arguments in academia" (Bizzell 353). In other words, because of the multilingual environment, combined with the lack of functional writing skills on both the instructor's and student's part, it will be difficult for many Indonesian university students to effectively employ academic discourse to persuade their audience or win an argument.

How might Indonesia effectively address this problem? Again, to start with, Indonesian higher education needs to introduce its faculty members and students to Bartholomae's theory of "inventing the university" In his article "Inventing the University," Bartholomae writes that all students, upon entering higher education, must learn to acquire academic discourse but do not have the capability to do so, since they do not have the knowledge it takes to do it (606).

To make pedagogical use of this theory, Indonesian literacy instructors could teach students how to write in different discourse conventions, since each discipline has its own jargon, genres, and styles. Therefore, each text has a different purpose and audience. This abundance of rhetorical situations requires the instructors to teach

students *how* to employ the different academic discourse conventions depending on the discipline for which the student writes for. One way to teach students how to acquire academic discourse is by to teach them the rhetorical moves of particular genres (Birkenstein and Graff 1). If the Indonesian literacy instructors and policy makers would adopt this strategy, students would learn to and think critically, which all of the above discourse conventions demand, as "...academic discourse is not only a way to access knowledge, but it is the knowledge itself..." (Bizzell 230). Thus by adopting a writing system that incorporates knowledge of academic discourse, students are taught not only what to think, but how to think, both within their discipline as well as across the curriculum. Therefore by learning to the strategies of academic discourse, students become part of this community's ways of knowing, speaking, and writing; in short, they argue those social conventions associated with the academic discourse community.

Further, reinforcing the idea that the university is a discourse community will automatically position the Indonesian students as members of it. To help students to become a full member of the discourse community, the

university must articulate clear expectations of written discourse, which can be used as a barometer to measure students' writing skills as I exemplified in Chapter Two.

Of course, the potential success of applying Bartholomae and Shaughnessy's theories about basic writing and the acquisition of academic discourse depends on the universities and the educational policy-makers in the government. Because many of Indonesia's university level writing instructors do not write in academic discourse, the government should provide financial support to teachers so they may study abroad and acquire those academic discourse conventions taught in U.S. universities. For example, Indonesian literacy instructors could attend writing seminars in order to discuss and learn about *what* and *how* those academic discourse conventions are taught in U.S. universities. That way, they bring back valuable input that might improve writing instruction in Indonesian universities. Moreover, if Indonesian literacy instructors went abroad, and learn to teach in the U.S system, they could be well-trained writing instructors who were versed in academic discourse conventions and could contribute to solving the problems present in Indonesian higher literacy education.

Another advantage to implementing academic discourse in Indonesian universities is that the instructors and students open up and enter into a "conversation" about ideas with other members of the academic discourse community. Birkenstein and Graff, authors of *They Say/I Say* write: "Academic writing in particular calls upon writers not simply to express their own ideas, but to do so as a response to what others have said" (ix). This conversation becomes a forum in which for both instructors and students can talk about language, pedagogies, theories and philosophies associated with their particular discipline. Therefore, if Indonesian literacy instructors can incorporate ways of teaching students how to write appropriate academic discourse, then there is a better chance that the students will also learn how to emulate and employ academic discourse. In other words, both instructor and student are "inventing the university" via the acquisition and implementation of academic discourse in the Indonesian university.

Teacher Evaluation

As mentioned in Chapter Two, a lack of teacher evaluation is one of the problems that surfaces in

Indonesia's battle to improve its literacy rate. Because of their own poor literacy knowledge, Indonesian teachers often do not realize that evaluation or feedback is a helpful tool used to teach students to become better writers. Even though teacher feedback is a beneficial tool for teaching a student to become a better writer, these concepts do not exist in Indonesian education. As a result, students are not able to identify their mistakes or the disconnection of logical ideas present in their texts. According to Dana R. Ferris, a leading researcher in second language pedagogical practices, there is evidence from research that supports the idea that teacher feedback is beneficial. She writes, "Beason (1993) notes that feedback and revision are valuable pedagogical tools. ... the research typically indicates that high school and college students improve their draft upon receiving feedback" (Ferris 316). Students value this feedback as "...help them to make substantial, effective revision" (330).

In order to be able to influence student's paper improvement, teacher should therefore provide encouraging thoughtful feedback for students. According to Ferris the effective way to do it is:

One technique for encouraging thoughtful responses to feedback is to require a revise-and-resubmit letter, analogous to what scholars produce when they submit a revised manuscript to journal after receiving reviews. In such letters, writers systematically review the feedback they have received, explaining how they have addressed the reader's comments and why they may have disregarded some of them. (Ferris 331)

Furthermore, university faculty must take the initiative to eliminate the old school practices in which students are not taught to identify nor correct mistakes in their writing. Instead, literacy instructors should provide students with constructive feedback so students could learn the ways of academic discourse from their teachers, who have already acquired the academic discourse conventions. Therefore it can be argued that Indonesian literacy instructors should learn to provide useful feedback to ensure that students improve their writing.

Writing Centers

Having a writing center, a place where students can go to receive one-on-one help during the different stages of

the writing process, is beneficial and crucial if students are to acquire the strategies of academic discourse and develop their overall writing skills. Barbara Beaupre writes:

... if the challenge for college English
Instructors is to help students from diverse
backgrounds cross the bridge from social
communication to academic discourse, then today's
college writing centers can make important
contributions in helping students succeed. (3)

The writing center is a place of learning and enrichment for the student; however, it is not a repair shop, but rather a place where students and tutors work collaboratively. This idea is supported by Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood in *The Tutoring Process: Exploring Paradigms and Practices*. They believe that the writing center conference should be "...contextual, collaborative, interpersonal and individualized" (1). In other words, in this session student and tutor work together towards a common goal, and they collaborate to create a supportive working relationship to meet the needs of individual writers, so they can learn to become more fluent in expressing ideas.

Oftentimes, writing centers are staffed with current students who act as writing tutors. The role of the writing tutor is to help students with all the basic components of the writing process, since many of the students who visit the writing center are basic writers and require extra help. To be eligible as a tutor, students have to take writing center tutoring class before eligible to tutor at the writing center.

To improve the skills and academic discourse of these basic writers, writing center tutors assess and determine what each students' needs are and provide valuable modeling for the students "...by presenting the language to interpret the direction of assignments..." as well as "...model recognized terminology to help a student understand more complex concepts..." (Beaupre 1). A consequence of tutors modeling the language for their students is that "tutors continually provide the language of academic discourse for the student to begin using to identify what they have already been doing" (6). Thus, the writing center can be beneficial in helping students, especially basic writers, learn to develop and sharpen their writing skills as well as acquire the academic discourse of their discipline.

However, if Indonesian universities were to adopt and implement the concept and create a writing center, many problems would immediately arise, as many teachers are not trained or literate enough to be able to actually help a student.

Moreover, due to diverse cultural and religious values, Indonesia would have problems designing a writing center where all would feel comfortable. According to Hayward, "cultural expectations have everything to do with the success or failure of any tutoring session" (Bruce 1). Because the writing center concept is built upon the Western rhetorical tradition, which emphasizes objective analytical thinking, the Indonesian version of a writing center would have to be different as this approach to perception and thinking would be much different than the thought patterns of Western cultures; each rhetorical tradition grew from different cultural values which influenced that culture's way of thinking.

Nevertheless, Indonesian universities need to establish writing centers because it is in this space that students can get the one-on-one help they need to develop and improve their writing by learning about and practicing the different stages of the writing process. The existence

of the writing center in Indonesian universities may find many challenges, but there is always a chance to start over and continue to discover what best suits Indonesian literacy education.

Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two, Indonesian politics, linguistic and cultural diversity and economics have all been factors which have contributed to Indonesia's low literacy skills and ineffective pedagogical philosophies and methods upon which Indonesian literacy education is based. I argued that it is urgent for the Indonesian government, education policy makers, and teachers to work fervently to improve its literacy education system. Furthermore, I argued that Indonesia can improve their literacy rate by adopting effective Western approaches to literacy education at the college level.

I also attempted to illustrate the poor literacy skills of Indonesian elementary and college level writers by analyzing seven writing examples. I was able to show the effects of how political, cultural, and economic forces affected the literacy level of these particular individuals. More specifically, I argued that in addition

to the political, cultural, and economical factors, there were two other major factors which contributed to the lack of literacy development of Indonesian students: poorly qualified literacy instructors and ineffective pedagogical methods. Moreover, I argued that these factors are interconnected, thus preventing reasonable solutions to solve the problems with literacy education.

In order to solve the problems with Indonesia's literacy educational practices and policies, Indonesia must adopt and emulate literacy theories and practices from the United States. It must stress the importance of the writing process in the instruction of basic writing, the importance of acquiring and writing in academic discourse in the university discourse community, the importance of teacher feedback, and the role of the writing center. Adopting these theories and practices has the potential to change the literacy skills of Indonesian university students, especially if the government were to take an active role. For example, the government could get more involved from a financial standpoint. Because money is one crucial factor among many components in implementing a successful literacy education system, the Indonesian government needs to provide more monetary assistance than it currently does.

The major funding challenge is not just supporting students in school, but also funding opportunities to increase teacher skills. Moreover, the government should provide instructors with financial and career security by implementing policies that would ensure these.

Again if Indonesia is to solve the problems it has with literacy education, the government should also provide every incentive possible to literacy instructors who show a desire to better educate themselves. This will ensure that instructors are qualified to teach literacy, a necessary set of skills to have if students are to actually become active members of a new global economy. For example, if instructors were to pursue a higher education, attend writing seminars, writing conferences, or become involved with research and writing academic articles, teachers would acquire widely broad of literary knowledge to transform to students, especially at the university level.

It is my sincerest hope that the potential solutions I have proposed might enable Indonesia to improve its literacy instruction and thus help solving the problem of the country's high illiteracy rate. Finally, since little study has been done about Indonesian literacy, I hope this

thesis would increase knowledge of Indonesia in general and its language education in particular.

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