CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter orderly presents background of the study, research problems, objective of the study, significance of study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms. Each section is presented as follows:

A. Background of the Study

Writing is one of skills in learning language that considered as the most difficult skill. Hammad said in his journal that mastering writing is most difficult for first and foreign language learners. It is a complicated process since it involve a series of forward and backward movements between the writer's ideas and the written text.¹

In writing, it is important to remember about the grammatical and the message written in the text. Writing is not only about stating the ideas into written form but also about arranging the words to be a good sentence by regarding the grammatical features. There are some requirements that have to be fulfilled to create a high quality text. Yanti states that writing is complex and difficult to teach and to learn, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements. It can be concluded that to compose a good English essay, the mastery of language also a well

understanding of grammar and its organization is needed. Some factors of writing make this language competence to be difficult.

Dealing with this case, EFL lecturers and students face certain problems in teaching and learning writing. As many teachers of English have noted, acquiring writing skill seems to be more laborious and demanding rather than acquiring the other language skills. Therefore writing is the last skill that mastered by students who are learning the language.

Writing as a fundamental aspect of academic literacy and communicative competence in the current educated world, said Behizadeh and Engelhard. In education, writing is one of language skills that must be mastered by the student it is stated by. Each examination in an institution or school given to measure students' abilities at the end of studying usually is in the form of a written test. If student is not able to master writing skill, then it will be hard for them to write a grammatically correct answer. In learning language, writing and speaking is crucial to measure the ability of a student or as an assessment.

---

Dealing with assessing, writing assessment is the students’ creativity in writing evaluation which gives by the teacher to measure students’ ability.\textsuperscript{6} If speaking tends to be spontaneity, as opposed to writing that takes more time. Teacher is given assessment often in written form, since writing activities can develop students' writing ability, because from writing activities the student can write their ideas and also train the ability to make correct sentences. Assignment in the form of writing is usually in the form of essay topics and text types are determined by the teacher.

When the teachers give assessment to students, teachers have the certain criteria. In writing assignment, there are usually two aspects used as an assessment, there are; grammatical accuracy and communicative effectiveness. Grammatical accuracy is used to measure students' ability applying grammar used in writings. While communicative effectiveness is used to measure how proper the language used to convey students’ ideas into written form.

In addition, two aspects are critical to ensure reliability and validity assessments made by teacher, the teacher also should have to pay attention to the ability of students that determine the level of language proficiency and knowledge which is affected by the way of learning through a course or not. Bachman and Savigon, Fulcer, and Matthews makes some criteria for reliability and validity, one of the criteria of reliability is standards for grading shift as students improve.

\textsuperscript{6} Graham and Harris, 1993. Paragraph-Academic writing to essay. Macmillan. 
http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Yang-writing.html accessed on 19 May 2016
during a course. The teacher unconsciously raises standards as the level of student ability increases. In most cases, a teacher in a higher grade will give the same average rating to her class as a teacher at a lower grade who uses the same rating scale. From these factors, teachers should make an assessment rubric that is valid and reliable. Rubric can represent criteria in the assessment of teachers.

Usually, the teachers make some criteria to score students’ work, but without making a rating scale descriptor. The teacher assumes that rating student with rating scale descriptor is difficult, that is why teacher rates student without rating scale descriptor. Upshur and Turner makes some procedures for the development of rating scales can help address the issue of reliability and validity.

Rating scale is so useful to help teacher describing student ability for each level in the same grade. Teacher using rating scale in rating student that develop based on student’s level is a fair rating, because the rating scale descriptor developed based on the student’s ability. When teacher makes a rating scale, teacher needs to know student’s ability and level in a class. Skehan explain that criteria for evaluating performance more relevant to language development and use are needed. Tasks and scoring procedures need to be designed to

---


Rating given by teacher is a reflection of teachers’ perception to student’s attitude, and student’s ability in the class. Teacher does not give more attention to some factors that influence students’ rate, such as; student’s condition, ability, proficiency level, and other factors. In modern text books on language testing provide many examples of rating scales. These take the form of;

“... a series of short descriptions of different levels of language ability. The purpose of the scale is to describe briefly what the typical learner at each level can do, so that it is easier for the assessor to decide what level or score to give each learner in a test. The rating scale therefore offers the assessor a series of prepared descriptions, and she then picks the one which best fits each learner (Underhill 1987: 98).”\footnote{John A. Upshur and Carolyn E. Turner, “Constructing rating scales for second language tests”… p. 4.}

Empirically deriverd, Binary-choice, Boundary-definition scale called EBB scale is a rating scale descriptor for productive skills. EBB scale helps teacher to construct rating scales especially in speaking and writing skill. This scoring method focused on communicative effectiveness and grammatical accuracy that construct with storytelling activity. Rating scale that adopted in speaking or writing rated task in story telling activity also can use in other speaking or writing assessment that has same purpose.
In EBB scale development it is essential to have samples of language (writing or speaking) generated from specific language tasks, and a set of expert judges who will make decisions about the comparative merit of sets of samples.\textsuperscript{11} According to Hamid, writing is the most challenging skill among students and teachers.\textsuperscript{12} In words, teachers should teach how to arrange the words into a good sentence using appropriate tenses. After all, the teacher teach how to write correctly, starting from constructing words into sentence and compiling sentences into paragraphs. Writing is not as easy as the other language skills, as it requires a lot of ideas to develop. According to that reason, the researcher choose writing assessment for constructing EBB scale.

There are procedure for develop rating scale descriptor; first, eight student performances were selected from the set to be rated. These should represent approximately the full range of ability in the total set. Second, each of the six members of the research team individually divided the set of eight performances into the four better and four poorer. This was done impressionistically. Third, the team discussed their dichotomous rankings and reconciled any differences. They then formulated the simplest criterial question that would allow them to classify performances as ‘upper-half’ or ‘lowerhalf’ according to the attribute that they were rating. Then, working with the four upper-half performances, the team

\textsuperscript{11} Glenn Fulcher, \textit{Practical language testing} (London: Hodder Education, 2010), p. 211.
members individually rated each of them as ‘6’, ‘5’, or ‘4’. The procedure requires that at least one sample should be rated as ‘6’; at least two numerical ratings must be used. Therefore, at least two of the four samples receive the same rating. This scoring was also done impressionistically. Next, rankings were discussed and reconciled. Simple criterial questions were formulated, first to distinguish level 6 performances from level 4 and 5 performances, and then level 5 performances from level 4 performances. Last, steps 4 and 5 were repeated for the lower-half performances.¹³

Rubric in assessment is very useful but there is very rarely used in schools. A teacher always has its own criteria in assessing his students. Majority of the raters in this study believed that native scales have to be appropriated in the context before application. In their ideas, unmediated application of native rating scales would surface a hidden conflict between the assumptions behind these scales on the one hand and the realities of the local context on the other hand.¹⁴ Oftenly, the rubric used by teachers do not represent all the existing level of the class because teachers do not make their own rubric that includes all of abilities in one class. Rubric used for assessment that inappropriate is not valid. The appropriate rubric created by teachers for the student's ability is going to be more objective assessment.

SMAN 1 Wringinanom is the one and only public school that exists in this region, but the assessment of foreign language subject is less valid and reliable. Assessment for foreign language subject often use a rubric that does not appropriate to the ability of the students in the classroom, so the students rarely get a perfect score in multiple object in the language. Doing assessments without using a rubric could lead to less objective assessment for students. From that reasons, the researcher makes this place to be an object of research.

B. Research Question

1. How is the development of empirically-derived, binary-choice, boundary-definition (EBB) scale for rating scale descriptor constructed for writing assessment?

2. How is the implementation of empirically derived, binary-choice, boundary definition (EBB) scale as a rating scale descriptor for writing assessment?

C. Objective of the Study

This research intended to;

1. Illustrate the development of empirically-derived, binary-choice, boundary-definition (EBB) scale for rating scale descriptor constructed for writing assessment.

2. Illustrate the implementation of empirically derived, binary-choice, boundary definition (EBB) scale as a rating scale descriptor for writing assessment.
D. Significant of the Study

The results of the study are hoped to give benefits for teachers, the researcher, and the other researchers:

1. For English Teacher
   
   The teacher is able to make a rubric for the class based on student’s level and ability. The student for each level in same grade will be described in rating scale descriptor. The teacher also can provide an assessment to students more objective. EBB scale using is more valid and detail for assessment.

2. For the School
   
   The school will get more objective and valid assessment. The students in the school do not have to worry that the teacher will assess subjectively, because teachers use a rubric that includes all level of the class and the rubric is more detail.

E. Scope and Limitation

The researcher focuses on the development of rating scale and implementation of empirically derived, binary-choice, boundary definition (EBB) scale as a rating scale descriptor for writing assessment in SMAN 1 Wringinanom. The construct of EBB scale limit in five aspect was constructed by Uphsur and Turner and developed by the teacher, those are; content, grammatical and vocabulary, communicative effectiveness, and mechanics. The research is focused on first grade in X IPA 4 class of SMAN 1 Wringinanom.
On contrary, this study does not cover how the student improve the writing skill and environment aspect to improve the writing skill such as media, class atmosphere, and any other antecedent that may influence students’ ability to write at the time.

F. Definition of Key Term

Several important keywords are used in this research in which the researcher needs to define to provide clearer understanding of the concept.

1. Empirically derived, Binary-choice, Boundary definition (EBB) scale

EBB scales are rating scale descriptor for productive skills that focused on grammatical accuracy and communicative effectiveness. EBB scale constructing with storytelling and developing to be rating scale descriptors. Fulcher said in his book, that EBB development it is essential to have samples of language (writing or speaking) generated from specific language tasks, and a set of expert judges who will make decisions about the comparative merit of sets of samples. An EBB has to be developed for each task type in a speaking or writing test.\(^\text{15}\)

2. Writing assessment

Writing assessment is the students’ creativity in writing evaluation which gives by the teacher to measure students’ ability.\(^\text{16}\) Writing assessment as a goal of the teacher that illustrated in a criteria used to assessing the writing


product. Writing assessment is a teacher way to examine the teacher’s goal, it must successful or not student apply the lesson. Writing assessment in this research is as a media to implementation EBB scale.

This key term are useful while read this paper because the key term help the readers to understand contain of this paper.