

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an explanation about the reason why the topic of the study was chosen. The chapter is categorized into several subtitles as follows: background of the study, statement of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research question, the purpose of study, significance of the study and organization of the chapter.

#### **Background of the Study**

In learning English, there are four basic skills that must be mastered by people. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. Harmer (2007) states, English language skills are often divided into two types: receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills include listening and reading, whereas productive skills consist of speaking and writing (p.265). In this research, the researcher will focus on writing skill. According Langan (2009, p.10) “writing is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking, and like any skill”. Further, Gelb (1952, p.12) wrote “writing is ways of communicating ideas, thoughts and feelings by means of visible marks”. Writing can be defined as the ability to express people minds through visible words.

Writing is very important in everyday human life. “It provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations and theories”(Carroll, 1990, p.1). It can be said that writing allows

people to share their ideas or communication not only with their friends but also with their future generations.

The purpose of writing is to make the readers understand what the writing is about. Just like what Rozakis (1997) said, “Writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose” (p.4). Moreover, Pincas (1998, p.3) also mention “the purposes of writing are to state individual identity, to provide information for the reader, to persuade the reader, and to construct a literary work”. For the students, writing skill is a needed for instance to make a research as requirements to fulfill the undergraduate program and complete the other task given by the teacher in form of writing.

There are many types of writing that students should know. Brown (2004, p. 219) said “there are three types of writing; academic writing, job-related writing and personal writing”. The examples of academic writing are essay, *skripsi*, thesis and dissertation. Moreover, job-related writing consists of letter or email, contract, advertisements. Meanwhile, personal writing consists of shopping lists, diaries, reminders, greeting cards, invitations, messages, and notes. All of the types of writing that the researcher mentions can be written by students in the class and out of class.

Writing is an activity that is frequently conducted by the students especially in English Language Education Department. They have many tasks in form of writing such as: writing essays, teaching practicum report, weekly journal, research proposal, summaries, writing annotated bibliographies, textbooks,

writing *skripsi*, and others. In learning English, the students have more assignment in form of writing than reading, speaking and listening. Therefore, the students are expected to understand writing well. Huy (2015) suggest “if the students have good writing ability, they can speak and read the text more effectively” (p.53). It can be concluded that if the students master the writing skill, they also master English language.

Despite of writing skills as one of the four basic skills which have important role in language learning, writing is difficult skills for the students to acquire especially for the second language learners. According to Ahmad (2016), “writing is complicated activity as it requires students comprehensive abilities such as mastering grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation” (p.4). It is harder for the second language learner because they are expected to create written product that demonstrate s the mastery of all the elements language in a new language such as; vocabulary, grammar purpose, sentence, punctuation and spelling.

Some researchers have investigated the cases of writing difficulties in various countries. A study in Jordanian, Ibnian (2017, p.197) stated that the students faced many difficulties in writing such as lack of idea, grammar difficulties, vocabulary restriction, and incorrect use of mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, quotation and capitalization). A research conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that most problems in the students’ writing were on grammatical problems, punctuation problems, and spelling problems (Younes & Albalawi, 2015, p.7). Furthermore, another study also revealed that grammatical weakness, lack of practice, lack of knowledge and understanding of the English

language become the difficulty in writing skills by students in Medina (Al-Khasawneh & Huwari, 2013, p.1). In Vietnam, Huy (2015, p.65) found the most serious problem that students often have are the lack of vocabularies, grammar difficulties and lack of ideas. Further a study in Indonesia by Maysuroh, Maryadi and Supiani (2017, p.1) clarified “the students have various problems in their writing; mostly grammatical problems, mechanical problems (likes spelling, capitalization, punctuation), lack of practice and low of motivation”. Another research in Malaysia, Al-Khasawneh (2010) revealed that the students faced problems in writing likes: vocabulary register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing (p.1). In addition, Keong and Mussa (2015) found “the students writing had both language and organization problems. The former was a lack of vocabulary, grammatical mistakes and poor referencing, weak organization and weak expression of ideas”. From those researches there many problems that students faced in writing skills. Therefore, this situation can happen to English language education students in anywhere and in any semester.

The researcher also found early theories related with the strategies in improving writing skills. For instance according to Al- Mansour and Al-Shorman (2014, p.258) and Mermelstein (2015, p. 182) extensive reading can enhance and improving students writing. King and Herder’s (2012, p.128) findings stated that extensive writing can be used to improve students writing. Al-khairy (2013, p.1) also mention the strategies in improving students writing likes: “using audio-visual aids, introduces group/pair work, peer correction and use dictionaries frequently”. Some other strategies are also presented by Abdulkareem (2013)

namely brainstorming and asking for feedback in order to overcome students' problems in writing. Further, Akdağ and Özkan (2017) propose "students can use blog to enhance the writing skills. It is supported by Thaha (2013) who said that web 2.0 technologies such as "Facebook, Blogs and Wikis will develop students writing skills" (p.1). Marsden and Piggot-Irvine (2012) also presented that the students can use blogs and computer to increase their writing skills (p.30). Moreover, AbuSeileek and Abualsha'r (2014, p.76) agree that using computer-mediated corrective feedback (Microsoft Word) to can improve student writing ability.

As explained previously, there are difficulties encountered by students in writing skills that have been proposed from the existing theories and how their learning strategies in improving writing skills are. At this point, the researcher is interested to find the biggest problems that students faced in writing English and also what are the strategies in increasing their writing at English language education department of a private university in Yogyakarta

### **Statement of the Problem**

Writing is part of human life that cannot be separated. Students who want to learn English cannot be separated with writing activity. Consequently, they have to be able to write properly. The students have many tasks in form of writing such as writing essay, teaching practicum report, weekly journals, research proposal, summaries, annotated bibliographies, textbooks, *skripsi*, and others. However, writing is hard to do for some students. It is difficult because students

are needed to blend their thoughts and their knowledge together to create a paragraph.

The issues that are still related to students in writing are about their problems in writing and the strategies to improve their writing skills. Based on the literature mentioned in background of the study, students faced at least eleven problems in writing as follows: grammar difficulties, lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, punctuation problems, spelling problems, quotation problems, and capitalization problems, less of practice, low of motivation, poor referencing and organization problems. In addition, the literature in background of the study also mentioned the strategies to solve those problems are extensive reading, extensive writing, using audio-visual aids, introduces group/pair work, peer correction or asking for feedback, use dictionaries frequently, using brainstorming, using web.20 like Facebook, blogs, and wikis and using computer (Microsoft word).

### **Delimitation of the Problem**

This research focuses on the problems faced by students in writing. Moreover, the researcher wants to find out the way of the students to solve the problems when they write. The research is conducted at English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta.

### **Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the statement of the problems and the limitation of the problems, there are two research questions. First, what are the difficulties of English Language Education Department students' in writing skills?

Second, what are the strategies of English Language Education Department students to improve their writing skill?

### **The Purpose of Study**

In relation to the research questions above, the purpose of the research are as follows: first, to explore the difficulties of English Language Education Department students' in writing skills, and second, to investigate the strategies that English Language Education Department students' use in improving writing skills.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to give some benefits to several groups of people. They are the researcher, students, English teachers, and other researchers.

**The researcher.** After conducting this study, the researcher is expected get deep understanding related to learning problems and strategies in improving writing. Moreover, as a prospective English teacher, the researcher can implement and apply the various strategies in teaching-learning English writing. The researcher also has more information about theories from the experts that have done research related to writing problems.

**The students.** This study is hoped to improve student's awareness of their problem in writing skills. Therefore, they can apply and find the best strategies to solve their own problems in learning English writing skill. So, the students can easily and motivated to do their own writing.

**English teachers.** One of the benefits of this study is to explore the problems of students in writing skills so that the teachers become more aware of their students' problems. Moreover, this study also investigates information about kinds of strategies that appropriate to solve the students' problems in writing, so that the teachers may choose the best strategies that can improve the English students writing skills. It also encourages the teachers to develop their creativity in improving teaching - learning process especially in English writing. Finally, the activity of teaching and learning can run well and success.

**Other researchers.** The result of this study hopefully may help further researchers who want to study similar topic. This result can be a source of information and improve their reference. It can be used as literature review or reference for the other researchers to solve the same problem of learning and gain to the next researchers especially in writing skill.

### **Organization of the Chapter**

This *skripsi* is divided into five chapters. In chapter one, the researcher gives an introduction to the study being conducted. Chapter two contains some theories from related literature and previous studies which support this study as a theoretical basis. Chapter three presents research methodology, in which discusses about how this study is conducted. In chapter four, the researcher presents the finding of the study inferred from the data and discusses it. The last chapter is about conclusion inferred from the finding this study and some recommendations in which the result of this study can be applicable.