

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents several points to reveal an accurate discussion of the main problem of the research. Thoroughly, this chapter elaborates the background of the study, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the research, and the outline of the research.

#### **A. Background**

People use language as an effective way to communicate each other. As an international language, English has become one of the important subjects in Indonesian educational curriculum. Hence, teaching English becomes one of the government's focuses to support their society in order to be successfully skilled by improving their English language skills.

The language skills of English consist of reading, listening, writing and speaking. They are divided into two categories such as receptive skills and productive skills (Brown, 2001). Reading and listening are considered as receptive skills which are stated by Harmer (2001) as the ways in which people obtain meaning from the discourse they see or hear. On the other hand, writing and speaking are known as productive skills which are simply considered as the way people produce the discourse which will be read or heard. As one of the four basic skills, writing plays an important role in both our educational achievement and

workforce that follows. Thus, according to Massi (2001), it has become one of the essential components of English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula in university.

However, writing is still regarded as the most difficult and complex skill in language learning. According to the *Writing Framework for the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*, as cited in Nation's Report Card: Writing (2011: 4), "Writing is a complex, multifaceted, and purposeful act of communication that is accomplished in a variety of environments, under various constraints of time, and with a variety of language resources and technological tools". Besides, Braine & Yorozu (1998) support the complexity of writing by stating that writing requires a well-structured way in which the thoughts are presented in an organized and planned way. The implication is that writing involves several processes that need to be undergone and includes some organizations that require careful consideration. Furthermore, not everyone is a naturally gifted writer. However, they can learn and practice to be a good writer. As suggested by Blanchard & Root (2004), people have to do some efforts to be a good writer because writing is a skill that can be practiced and mastered.

There are several ways that can be conducted to improve the writing skills. The researcher is interested in examining reading as one of the ways to improve students' writing skills. The followings are reasons why reading can assist students in improving their writing skills. To begin with, through reading activities, a reader can be a good and critical thinker. This idea is supported by Brookfield (2007) who states that critical thinking describes the process we use to

discover and check our assumptions. Furthermore, Brookfield explains that reading a book, watching videos or having a new experience may help us become aware of our assumptions. Besides, according to Palani (2012: 92), "Reading is a process of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving". It means that while reading, readers develop their critical thinking to understand what they read. This understanding of new information is considered as the idea obtained to be exposed in writing form. Therefore, the researcher is interested in promoting reading habits as an effective way to develop ideas while writing so that this condition will prevent students from doing such a plagiarism.

Since reading and writing play an important role in English language learning for students, PBI UMY conducts both skills as the compulsory courses in the first semester. The related subjects which are conducted by PBI UMY consist of Basic Reading and Writing; and Academic Reading and Writing. The problem arises whether or not PBI's students reading habits are correlated to their writing skill. Thus, this study entitled "*The Relation between Reading Habits and Students' Writing Ability at PBI UMY*" focuses on the relation between reading habits and students' writing ability by firstly investigating the students' reading habits.

## **B. Statement of the Problem**

Readers and writers are engaged in corresponding activities. Readers discover meaning for groups of words built upon their knowledge and experiences. Writers take ideas and thoughts to be transferred onto paper using

their knowledge of language principles and the writing process to produce meaningful text (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). These activities are attached in all aspects of the curriculum.

Over the past 30 years, many researchers have remarked on the relation between reading and writing. Stotsky (1983) who studied the review of correlational and experimental studies on reading and writing relationship posits that, "Better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers". It means that students who read more than the others are potentially good in writing activities.

As mentioned previously, the complexity of writing skills in English becomes a challenge faced by the Indonesian students. Writing is considered as the most difficult skill in learning English (NAEP, 2011). Since writing is a skill that can be mastered and practiced, reading activity can be used as a way to improve writing ability. This idea emerges as reading has several benefits in improving students' writing ability. Unfortunately, most of Indonesian has a low level of reading awareness. As stated by Astuti (2013), according to the data of the World Bank Number 16369-IND and the study of IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement) the reading awareness of the Indonesian is in the lowest place with 51.7 point. This low awareness of reading also happens even among students. Many students only read educational book if their teachers or lecturers ask them to do so. This situation makes the

researcher curious of whether the difficulty in writing faced by the students is also caused by their lack of reading activity. As a new department, PBI UMY needs an investigation in regard to the relation between students' reading habits and students' writing ability which has not been conducted yet. Therefore, this research intends to first discover the reading habits of the students in terms of the types of reading materials, the frequency of reading and the techniques of reading. This research also tries to analyze the relation between students' reading habits and their writing ability.

### **C. Limitation of the Problem**

This research is limited to students' reading habits in terms of the type of *reading materials, frequency of reading* and *techniques of reading* that usually the students use while reading. The type of reading materials is divided based on two main types of reading namely *reading for reference materials* and *reading for general interest articles*. Reading materials of reading for reference materials include textbook, essay, e-book, journal and many kinds of text related to the study. On the other hand, the reading materials of reading for general interest articles consist of magazine, short stories, novel, newspaper, online article about entertainment and some others. The frequency of reading is related to the number of *time allocation for reading*. Meanwhile, the techniques of reading consist of *quick reading* and *slow reading* techniques. The quick reading refers to prediction, guessing meaning from context, skimming, and scanning. While the

slow reading includes open the dictionary, using finger as a pacer, take some notes and move lips and/or head while reading.

Realizing the significance of reading habits toward the improvement of writing ability, this research aims at investigating the relation between students' reading habits and their writing ability. The research is conducted among the students of English Education Department (PBI), UMY. The respondents of the research are taken from the academic year 2013/2014 students. These respondents have taken the Academic Reading and Writing subject in the first semester. For conducting the research, the researcher focuses on quantitative approach with correlation as its methodology.

#### **D. Research Questions**

This research is conducted to examine the relation between reading habit and students' writing ability. Thus, there are two main questions that are addressed in this research.

1. How are the students' reading habits?
2. What is the students' writing ability?
3. What is the relation between reading habit and students' writing ability?

#### **E. Purpose of the Study**

Based on the previous explanation, this study aims at investigating the students' reading habits in terms of types of reading material, frequency of reading and types of reading techniques. This research also intends to reveal the

students' writing ability. Finally, the purpose of this research is to reveal the relation between reading habits and students' writing ability.

#### **F. Significance of the Study**

This research is hoped to give benefits for the following parties, namely *the researcher, students, teachers, and the institution*. The researcher chooses reading habits as the activity that is considered beneficial for the researcher to be a good reader in order to be a good writer or researcher. As a prospective teacher, the researcher will also conduct the teaching activities which enable her to implement the teaching reading and writing strategies.

This research is also important to help the students gaining good score of their writing task. It is intended to help the students realizing the benefits of reading activity towards the writing skill. The result of the research is intended to develop students' motivation in language learning especially for conducting reading activities as a way to improve writing ability.

Moreover, this study is also intended to give benefit for the teachers who will conduct the teaching writing in the class to use reading activity as one of the important ways in assisting their students to improve the writing ability. Besides, teachers can also propose a new teaching technique in delivering the subject of reading and writing skills.

The last, the results of this study are expected to become an input for the institution, especially English Education Department of UMY, in supporting the teaching and learning process. It is important for the institution to provide more

facilities in teaching and learning process. The institution can provide various English text books in the library and other learning sources to ease the students to access any information.

### **G. Outline of the Research**

The structure of the research is organized as follows. In the first chapter, the researcher delivers the introduction of the research. The researcher also presents the problem statement of the study and the limitation of the problem. Besides, the researcher proposes the research questions and the purpose of the study to answer those questions. This chapter also provides several research benefits for some intended parties. The next chapter of this study presents a review of literature on reading habits and writing ability and the relation between them in English language learning. The third chapter focuses on the research methodology in collecting the data which includes research design, nature of data, research setting and respondents, data collection instruments, data collecting procedure and data analysis. In the fourth chapter, the findings of the research questions on students' reading habits and the relation between reading habits and students' writing ability are discussed broadly. The last chapter presents the conclusions and suggestions for several parties.