

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter presents background of study, research problems, and objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the study.

Background of the Study

Writing is one of the English skills that must be enhanced by English learner especially by university students. It is a productive skill of English which enables the students to convey thought and perception to other people. Similar to speaking, writing is written communication to express ideas in mind and to transfer knowledge or to provide information from author to reader through text. Weigle (2002) believes that writing functions primarily to support and reinforce patterns of oral language use, grammar, and vocabulary. Further, it is also utilized in communication among people in order to achieve the personal goal. This contrasts listening and reading which belong to receptive skills.

Writing is also a way of knowing, a method of discovery and analysis. Through writing, learners discover new aspects

of certain topic and its discourse; therefore, it is a task which is partially dependent on the individuals, their creativity and the way they approach each topic. Moreover, students in university level must obtain the capability in writing skill academically. It is one of crucial skills and basic requirement that must be owned by university students for academic purpose. The students are demanded to write thought and concept in form of papers or research. The students' writing skills distinguish the quality of their written thought about how to generate their words in an academic form. Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in non-academic purpose in various fields; such as social and economy. Further, some academic requirements, such as applying scholarship or job, need written format form to convince the tester.

In order to get higher level of writing skill or achieve high score of writing, the learner may use various strategies in learning that the language learner can simply use to assist in writing academically. Strategies are the conscious steps of behavior used by language learner to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall and one of new information (Oxford, 1990). The strategy used by the learner may be various since

the learners tend to use the same behavior or action in learning the language. O'Malley & Chamot (1990) present three main categories of learning strategies; including meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. In addition, Oxford (1990) classifies the categories more comprehensively. She made a distinction between direct and indirect strategies which are generated into small classification each. Direct strategies cover memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. The indirect strategies include meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies.

In the present study, the researcher intended to investigate the learning strategies used by the English education department students in writing an essay in what paces the students generate and elaborate the knowledge and schema in written form. The investigation of the students' learning strategy obtains students' awareness on the strengths and weaknesses in getting higher level of writing skill. In this study, the students who are called as high achievers attain high competences in English proficiency skills. They are able to accomplish and complete the writing task and the subject with high score through various strategies. The strategies used by the students are especially important for language

learning because they are tools for active, self-directed environment, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Irmawati, 2014). Moreover, the English department students will discover advantages when the English writing skill reaches higher level to fulfill academic requirements. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved and greater self-confidence (Oxford, 1990). Considering all advantageous of investigating the learning strategies, the researcher means to conduct a research on learning strategies in writing. This present study is entitled “English Education Department High Achievers’ Learning Strategies and Their Impacts in Writing Descriptive Composition.”

Research Problems

In connection with the title and the background of the study, two research questions are formulated as follow:

1. What learning strategies are used by the English education department high achievers in writing descriptive compositions?
2. What are the impacts of learning strategies for the high achievers in writing descriptive compositions?

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to find out what types of learning strategies and how often learning strategies are reported being used by the English Education Department students. It also aimed to explore how the strategies contribute to significant improvement in writing descriptive composition. Based on the research questions are:

1. To find out the learning strategies of English education department high achievers in writing descriptive composition.
2. To find out the impacts of the learning strategies for high achievers in writing descriptive composition.

Significance of the Study

The results of the study give some contributions to students, teachers, and future researchers. It is crucial and functional for both teachers and learners in English intensive program and the language center of the university to acquire higher level of writing skill. The result of this study can be reflection and measurement of English Education department or program in having language learners' improvement.

Moreover, the students can identify the strength and weakness more about the learning strategy they use. This

stimulates the students' awareness and willingness in learning to write English essays. Further, they can improve their writing skills to communicate well in written English professionally and write text academically; such as articles, summaries and even thesis.

The research findings are also expected to encourage the teacher to be able to comprehend, recognize and stimulate their learning strategies for the students to improve their writing skills. Having investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies, the teacher may have more opportunities to improve accurately the students English writing skills.

At last, this research gives information about strategies used by the first year high achievers of English Education program in essays. Expectantly, the finding can help the next researcher to develop or continue the topic of the research. The result of the investigation can be used as a reference for developing future research about learning strategies in writing skill.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is language learning strategies employed in writing. In this present studies, the researcher will limit the definition of learning strategies on some experts; such as Oxford and O'Malley. Nevertheless, the researcher will not

use the other definition. There are only certain strategies selected to investigate and study the learning strategies employed.

In the meantime, the limitation of the study is the researcher does not analyze the writing strategy of all English education department students in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The study will concern more on and discuss learning strategies in writing descriptive composition. Further, the high achievers will be chosen based on certain criteria.

Definitions of Key Terms

The working definitions used throughout the present investigation are as follows:

High Achiever

The term ‘High Achiever’ refers to the qualified English education students who get high score (grade A+ till A) in Academic Writing subject in English Education Department.

Learning Strategies

The term ‘learning strategies’ refers to the students’ students in learning to write descriptive composition.

Descriptive Composition

The term ‘writing descriptive composition’ refers to students’ the writing task which is academically assigned by the lecture as assessment of students’ writing skill which included identification and description.

Organization of the Thesis

The present study contains of five chapters. The (particulars) chapters are described as follows:

Chapter 1 is introduction. It presents background of the study, research problems, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 is review of related literature. This chapter discusses three parts. The first deals with learning strategies, the second deals with narrative text, and the last part deals with previous studies.

Chapter 3 is research methodology. It presents research design, subject of the study, data and data sources, data collection method and instrument, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the data.

Chapter 4 is research findings and discussions. It presents the data presentation of the research and the research findings itself as the result of collecting data by some methods. This part

presents the result of analyzing data by looking at and comparing the theory that is used related to English learning strategies.

Chapter 5 is conclusion and suggestion. It resumes the whole previous chapters. This part primarily deals with the summary of the discussion the data presented as research findings. On the basic of the finding, some suggestions are made.