

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the writer introduces his study. This chapter deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objectives of the study, theoretical frameworks, the definition of key terms, assumption, scope and limitation, and the significance of the study.

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

English has become the global language which is used in all fields of life. We should have good communication in English especially writing, instead of other life active language skills such speaking, listening and reading. “Command of good writing skills is a vital tool for anybody to succeed in their career”, states Boonpattanaporn (2008: 76). In other word, writing is one of the necessary skills used to communicate. This skill is very important for somebody to master in order to participate competitively in global interactions and business in general. As English is a global, international language, writing in English is an essential part to be taught to students. By writing, students in all grade levels can be fostered to enhance their other life active language skills such speaking, reading, listening and components mastery such vocabulary, grammar, mechanics. Writing also helps students express their thoughts and make their own reports, essays, notes or messages.

Writing is one of the important skills in English. However, in Indonesia, English is learnt as a foreign language that must be mastered by the students though mastering the skill of writing is not easy for most of them. Myles (2002: 1) states that academic writing requires conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Even so,

whenever there is a test especially a writing test, they still get confused of how to write properly, because the difficulty is relative and it depends on their skills and their capabilities and vocabularies. One of the reasons to be a good writer is that students need to learn writing in English for occupational or academic purposes. To write well, students must not only have good capabilities in writing, but also broad knowledge of vocabularies too. They must be able to organize the idea, to construct the sentences, to use punctuation and spelling well since they have important roles in effective written communication. Besides, they must be able to arrange their ideas in a paragraph or in a text cohesively and coherently.

According to Byrne (1991: 4-5), there are three problems caused by writing. The first is psychological problems that regard writing as an essentially solitary activity and the fact that students are required to write on their own, without the possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback. The second is linguistic problems that require students to keep the channel of communication open through their own efforts and to ensure, both through their choice of sentence structure and by the way their sentences are linked together and sequenced, that the text they produce can be interpreted on its own. The last is cognitive problems that show writing is learnt through a process of instruction. The difficulty of writing is also caused by the students themselves (Clouse 1983: 6). It is because they are less in vocabulary, knowledge and in practice which makes them have writing and composing process strategy.

Students usually make two serious mistakes when they are faced with a writing assignment. First, the students believe they are better off if they try to figure out what the instructor wants to hear and then try to deliver the ideas. In fact, teachers are not the least bit interested in reading what the students think they want, but the teachers are most anxious to learn

what the students' ideas are. The second mistakes, the students believe that they do not have anything worthwhile to say. Actually, teachers like to read students' work because they are exposed to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of many different interesting people.

To be successful in writing, there should be a special strategy in the process of writing. The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learnt or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practiced and learnt through experience. Writing also involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. In other words, each student has different process in writing, depending on their capability, vocabularies and their writing styles. Those combinations determine the levels and distinguish between skilled and less skilled student-writers also.

The teaching of writing in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in Surabaya is already good. The students learn many kinds of text genre and this Department also has many references from the writing journals provided in the reading and writing laboratory. The facilities are provided in order to help students develop their writing skill. However, problems are still there. Some students faced difficulty and it can be seen from the percentage of the students who pass or failed. Some other students pass since they can do the task very well. The writer also consider that writing especially writing explanation is needed to be mastered since it has important contribution to the thesis writing as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree. More explanations in thesis are required and students are needed to be able and success in doing it. In fact, some students who are taking thesis face

stagnancy in doing it. Here by, the writer intends to analyze the composing process of writing used by the skilled student-writers only, to make more specific, in the Writing III course, because the writer considers that the students, which are taking Writing III courses, have already learnt some basic writing genre includes explanation genre which is in the syllabus. Then, their writing skills will be implemented in their composing process. The composing process itself plays important roles in the process of doing thesis which leads the students to finish the thesis and the students have their own composing process that comfort them, surely.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

In line with the topic and the background of the study, related research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is the composing process of the skilled student-writers of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?
2. How is the quality of the skilled student-writers' compositions of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

In accordance with the research questions, this study aims at:

1. Describing the composing process of the skilled student-writers of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.
2. Describing the quality of the skilled student-writers' compositions of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Frameworks**

To support this study, the writer applied some theories as reviewed in Chapter 2. The first is the theory of writing since this study focuses on the process of composing and the quality of the skilled student-writers' compositions; the process and the product approach of writing are also reviewed. Linear and non-linear are also explained in the composing process to support the cognitive process theory of writing.

Secondly, theory of second language learning and teaching, EFL writing especially, is also used since the writer considers it necessary to be discussed as the supporting one. This theory involves in this study since learning and teaching process has contribution in students writing process, mainly focus on the composing process.

Thirdly, Metacognitive theory is included in this study since the theory studies about memory-monitoring and regulation aspect.

#### **1.5 Definition of Key-Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, some of the key-terms used in this study are defined as follow and also considered as the key-words of this study.

- **Composition**

It is a writing product with written linking ideas or notes about anything which are arranged into sentences then developed into paragraphs and written on a piece of paper or pages even. A composition is built by a series of paragraphs about one subject, Reid (1993:46).

- **Composing Process**

It is a series of thinking and action in order to produce a composition which takes time and efforts. Every writer has ever had the pleasure of speaking with on the craft has had a different method of working on their



writing, linear or non-linear writing, which each has different advantages and disadvantages, Blain (2011:2).

- Skilled Student Writer

Skilled means having the abilities needed and more or even better than the other. Skilled writer is a person with high capability to write well with or without frequent writing practice. *The skilled writers* were able to focus most of their attention on high order concerns, more concerned about how to make their texts impressive to readers, and more flexible, self-conscious and effective in strategy use (Tsai 2010). And *student-writers* are students who study writing and produce a writing product. Parallel to the field's interest in the writing context during the entire 1980s, philosophical and theoretical discussions of positioning have also popularized the term "student-writers," which, together with "teacher-writers," were eclectically used and generally understood as participants of writing workshops (English 1988).

- Quality

Quality is a standard of how good or bad a characteristic or feature of someone or something is and plays an important role in determining and convincing that someone or something is of the intended standard.

## **1.6 Assumption**

This study is based on an assumption that the fourth semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya who take Writing III have their own composing process in writing which differ from each student. Therefore, their composing process can be analyzed by the writer in order to find out the best composing process that can be applied and used to help the students who have difficulty to write

better and properly later on and influences the quality of the compositions also.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation**

This research focuses only on the composing process of explanation text type which is written by the skilled student-writers of the fourth semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya which are taking Writing III courses. But unfortunately the writer did not test the questionnaires at first and also scored the students' compositions only by the writer himself.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study are expected to help the students who have difficulty in writing some references of good and useful strategy of the composing process so that the quality of students' writing will improve. The writer also hopes that the result of this study will give the students of English Department a better understanding about the composing process of writing and wise example about how to write properly.

The other significance related to the learning to write for other student-writers, the teaching of writing course for other level or place of education, and better of further study which the researchers who are interested in conducted a study on writing skill development with better design, authentic data and more time management in order to finish the thesis in time as the writer explain in the last chapter of this study, Chapter 5.