

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I of this thesis, that is the introduction cover the following sub-titles namely : the background of the study, the statements of the problem, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, the methodology, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

1.1. Background of the Thesis

As a means of communication, writing in the students' mother tongue (L1) or/ and in another language (L2) is taught together with the skills of listening, reading and speaking. Listening and reading are called receptive skills, while speaking and writing are called productive skills. The order of teaching these skills depends on who does the teaching to whom, where, when and why.

Nida (1950: 6) says that :

Listening, speaking, reading then writing constitute the fundamental order in language learning. The scientifically valid procedure in language learning involves listening first ,to be followed by speaking. Then comes reading and finally, the writing of the language.

From the quotation above and from our daily observation, it is clear that the first skill a person learns and/or requires in his native language is the listening skill. By repeatedly listening to the speeches of other people around him, the child internalizes and tries to imitate what he has heard. At around the age of four or five, he goes to school. At school he learns to read and write. This is the natural process of acquiring one's native language. What about the process of learning a second language in a first language environment such as English in Indonesia ?

In the Garis-garis Besar Program Pengajaran (GBPP) of English curriculum of 1994, it is said that :

"Pada dasarnya bahasa adalah alat untuk menyampaikan gagasan, pikiran, pendapat dan perasaan. Bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa asing pertama di Indonesia yang dianggap penting untuk tujuan penyerapan dan pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi dan seni budaya, dan pembinaan hubungan dengan bangsa-bangsa lain."

From the quotation above, it is clear that English as a second language is considered as an important language in Indonesia for some purposes. The process of learning English in Indonesia covers the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides those four language skills, structure, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling are also taught together with them. This is quite in line with the GBPP of the 1994 curriculum of English which says that,

" Pelajaran bahasa Inggris sekolah menengah umum mencakup keterampilan membaca, menyimak, berbicara dan menulis dalam bahasa Inggris..... . Unsur-unsur bahasa seperti tata bahasa, kosa kata, lafal dan ejaan dapat diajarkan untuk menunjang pengembangan keempat keterampilan berbahasa tersebut,"

Walters (1983;17) states that writing is the last and perhaps the most difficult skill students learn. Graham (1976;9) says that many students think that writing is a mysterious process which only a few people who are in touch with the mystery can learn. Since writing is a productive skill, it is more difficult for us to learn. Sometimes it is hard for us to get suitable ideas. Even if we have got the ideas, it is still difficult for us to develop those ideas into a coherent paragraph. Angelo (1980:19) says that writing does not occur in a vacuum. It is the teachers' task to provide something known and interesting to the students to enable them to get ideas to write. It is difficult to write about something we do not like and it is impossible to write about something we do not know.

At the English Department of Unika Widya Mandala, writing is also an important skill. Writing is one of the skill subjects to be taken by students in five semesters. In those semesters, they would get writing I, II, III, IV and V. The materials discussed in Writing I until Writing V deal with Narrative, Descriptive, Expository and

Argumentative writing. After the students pass Writing I until Writing V, usually, in the sixth semester, they could get the Paper Writing subject as a requirement for the Thesis Writing subject. In Paper Writing, the students begin to make a proposal as the first step to write a thesis. In the seventh semester, they will take Thesis Writing as the last requirement for the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree in English Language Teaching.

Studying at the English Department of Widya Mandala University for ten semesters, the writer finds that when the students are asked to write a composition in the classroom, most of them have difficulties in developing a topic or a subject matter into a whole piece of composition. Anang Tjahjono (1989;2) also says that students usually spend most of their time staring over the window or looking at the ceiling without having anything to write about. The writer herself, as a student of the English Department of Widya Mandala University, has experienced this kind of situation. Furthermore, the teaching techniques of some teachers made it difficult for many students to find ideas about what to write and express their ideas logically etc. Cooper (1984;v) said that writing in another language has its own way of organizing ideas- what is acceptable in English may not be acceptable in other languages, and vice versa. He continued saying that many foreign students can write

grammatically correct sentences but fail to progress in English because they are unable to organize their ideas in a manner acceptable to an English reader.

From Norris (1971:6) statement that hearing comes before speaking, speaking comes before reading, reading comes before writing, we can see that although the four language skills are interrelated, one can not deny the natural order such as reading comes before writing. This means that by reading, one gets new ideas, imagination, knowledge and information which he can develop into a piece of writing. It is by now obvious that reading is one source of getting ideas to write and to support the development of one's writing proficiency.

This thesis is about teaching writing through reading comprehension. It is assumed that reading passages may arouse the students' interest upon a certain topic and enable them to develop it more easily. Lona (1980: 4) claims that writing a composition in a foreign language should begin with passages as starting point. Dobson (1973;3) states that reading can bring exciting dimensions into classes where English is taught as a foreign or second language i.e.:(1) It gives students access to information written in English (2) It combines with and reinforces other English language learning activities, providing fruitful practice of these activities.

From what experts have said above, it is known that reading can increase someone's knowledge, ideas and information. Those knowledge, ideas and information are something in his mind to develop into writing skill. These explanations bring the writer to the idea that students can study writing through reading comprehension, because they would get wide imagination, various ideas and broad knowledge when they are reading. Through this thesis, the writer proposes a technique in teaching writing, that is through reading comprehension passages. Prior to this, however, she would discuss the advantages of teaching writing through teaching Reading comprehension.

1.2. The Statements of the Problem

As stated in the background, writing in the native language and especially in a foreign language like English is a problem to most students. The English Department students find it difficult to get ideas to develop a topic into a composition. One way to overcome this problem is helping student get ideas through reading comprehension passages and use the ideas to develop a composition. Under this consideration, the problem to be solved in this thesis was formulated as follow :

- a. What is the nature of teaching writing through reading comprehension ?

- b. What are the advantages of teaching writing through reading comprehension ?
- c. How is it applied in the classroom ?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

In line with the statements of the problem given above, this thesis intended to :

- a. Present the nature of teaching writing through reading comprehension passages.
- b. Present some advantages of teaching writing through reading comprehension passages.
- c. Present some techniques of teaching writing through reading comprehension passages to intermediate/ advanced students.

1.4. The Significance of the Thesis

Hopefully, the ideas presented in this thesis would help overcome the students' writing problems especially those concerned with gaining ideas to develop topics into unified and meaningful compositions. Furthermore, hopefully more and more teachers realize the close relationship between reading and writing and begin to teach writing through reading comprehension passages.

1.5. The Limitation of the Thesis

This thesis is limited to the discussion of the nature of teaching writing through reading comprehension, the advantages of teaching writing through reading

comprehension passages, and its application in the classroom. Kinds of writing discussed here is about narrative and descriptive writing. For descriptive writing, the writer only discusses about describing places and objects. There is no discussion about types of reading comprehension materials, how to select them, etc. Furthermore this technique is suggested only for intermediate and advanced students of Senior High School.

1.6. The Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and/ or misinterpretation, it is important to define the following key terms.

a. Teaching

According to Hornby (1974:886) teaching means giving instruction or giving lessons to somebody.

b. Writing

In the Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986:261) writing is defined as the act or practice of literary, journalistic, or other composition in words. Lawrence (1974:13) refers writing to a form of communication. Crimmon (1975:3) states that writing is the skill of arranging words to form sentences and paragraphs in larger unit so that those ideas, facts, or impressions may be communicated to other. Based on several experts' opinion, according to the writer,

writing is defined as the act of organizing and developing ideas, imaginations and facts in the form of paragraphs and unify those paragraphs into a whole piece of composition.

c. Reading

According to Riley (1979;12) reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game which can be seen to apply to listening to extended discourse, viewing motion pictures and participating in conversations and dialogue at all level. Blake (1989;1) defines that reading is understanding messages in written or printed materials. According to Troyka (1978;2) reading is receiving and sorting out information from the words. According to the writer, reading is an action of someone to receive and understand written words context.

d. Reading Comprehension

Smith and Robinson (1963:205) define reading comprehension as the understanding, evaluation, and utilization of informations and ideas gained through an interaction between reader and author. According to Mark A.C. and Sandra Silberstein (1979:6) reading for thorough comprehension is reading in order to master the total message of the writer, both the main points and the supporting details. The writer agrees with the statement of Smith and Robinson with the reason that

when someone is reading something, he makes an interaction with the author and he tries to understand and evaluate the message of the author to gain the ideas.

e. Reading Passage

According to Finnociaro and Bonomo (1973;87) a reading passages is a short article which is organized in such away to convey certain information. According to the writer, reading passage is a short extract that is content an information to the reader in the form of reading materials.

1.7. The Methodology

This thesis is the results of a library research. Consequently, its contents are not based on any experimental study carried out at a formal school. To obtain the necessary information, the writer has read several books, and journals dealing with the writing skills, the theories of writing, the techniques of teaching writing, and other related theories. Since this thesis is concerned with teaching writing through reading comprehension passages the writer has borrowed ideas especially books about how to teach writing skill. The reader can find the titles of those books listed in the bibliography section.

1.8. The Organization of the Thesis

There are five chapters presented in this thesis with the following organization : Chapter I is The Introduction contains background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, research methodology, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter II concerns with A Brief Discussion about Writing. Chapter III deals with The Teaching of Writing Through Reading Comprehension. Chapter IV deals with The Application of The Teaching Writing Through Reading Comprehension In The Classroom. Chapter V, the last chapter deals with The Conclusion and Suggestion.