

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Hynd et al (1992:1) states that both reading and writing in English are ways of thinking and learning and of communicating that thinking and learning to others. As such, reading English texts helps the students learn to think in English, improve their writing in English, get information from the English written texts, and enlarge the students' English vocabulary. On the other hand, Chastain (1970:363) as quoted by Yuliatin (1998: 1) claims that the ability to write in English is recognized in society and in the schools as an important objective of English language study. Through writing in English, the students can express their thoughts and the information that they got from reading any texts including English texts and other sources in that language. Because of this, both *reading* and *writing* (for all discussion in this thesis, these words are meant "*reading in English*" and "*writing in English*") are taught to the English Department students.

Nevertheless, to the writer's knowledge, many students often complain about their confusion in writing a composition in English although both the reading and the writing subjects are taught to the students for six semesters. This is also supported by Tukan (2005), who points that many lecturers, especially those who teach writing and guide their students writing their PPL reports and theses, complain that quite a number of students do not

write grammatically correct and acceptable English sentences, do not write coherent and cohesive paragraphs and longer compositions in English as well. They feel that the students' reading and writing abilities are very poor. Being aware of this condition, in 2005, the management (the Dean and the Head of the English Department) decided to establish a Reading and Writing Laboratory to help students who need more practice in reading and writing in English. Tukan (2005) was asked to write a proposal, make plans, and promoted to be the head of this laboratory which is called ED-R2 Lab. shorts for English Department Reading and Writing Laboratory, which provides practice and guidance for the reading and writing students who need special guidance in reading and writing in English.

As a new laboratory, the ED-R2 Lab. also has its own objectives. The grand objective stated in the establishment proposal is “to provide practice, guidance, consultation and workshop for the writing students in general and those who are recommended by their lecturers, in particular”. This grand objective has been spelled out into the following sub objectives. First, to provide means through which students may improve their reading and writing skills on their own pace and time. Second, to provide training on writing and reading for students and teachers of high schools. Third, to run seminars and workshops on reading and writing issues. Forth, to run competitions on reading and writing for students of high schools and universities. Fifth, to edit and publish writing students' “best” essays each semester.

At this time, one is forced to be asked whether the objectives of this laboratory, as mentioned above, have been fulfilled or not. So far, there has not been any survey to see whether all these objectives have been fulfilled or not. Facing this reality, the writer became interested in carrying out the study under report entitled Students' Perception of the Existence of "the English Department Reading and Writing Laboratory", of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. Hopefully, the findings presented here will be useful for developing and improving the English Department Reading and Writing Laboratory based on the perception of the Widya Mandala English Students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

Related to the above background, the major research problem was formulated as bellow: "What is the students' perception of the existence of the English Department Reading and Writing Laboratory of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University (hence forth ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU)?"

In order to come to the answer to the major research problem, five minor research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What is the students' perception of the functions of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU?

2. What is the students' perception of the materials of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU?
3. What is the students' perception of the programs of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU?
4. What is the students' perception of the facilities of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU?
5. What is the students' perception of the staff of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU?

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

#### **Major Objective:**

This study is intended to find out the English Department students' perception of the existence of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.

#### **Minor Objectives:**

1. To find out the students' perception of the functions of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.
2. To find out the students' perception of the materials of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.
3. To find out the students' perception of the programs of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.
4. To find out the students' perception of the facilities of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.

5. To find out the students' perception of the staff of the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The results of this study are expected to be used by the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU to maintain what is already good and to improve the shortcomings perceived by the students.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this thesis is a survey research. It is also impossible to have data and observe all people in a long time. Therefore, the writer chose the English Department Students of academic year of 2005, 2006, and 2007 as the respondents of this study because the students of those academic years are still active in the campus and have participated in several programs of the ED-R2 Lab. The writer also chose the ED-R2 Lab. not other laboratories because so far there has not been any survey about this new laboratory and no one asked whether its objectives have been fulfilled or not. This study also focused on functions, materials, programs, facilities, and staff of the ED-R2 Lab. to answer the research questions.

There are also several limitations of this research. First, the questionnaires cannot be distributed to all of the target respondents because they have many different classes. Second, the interviews do not reach the

students who have responded to it. Consequently, the crosschecks are quite possible not related to the persons who have answered the questionnaires.

## **1.6 Definition of the Key Terms**

The Key Terms used in this research are:

### **1.6.1 Perception**

In this thesis, the word “perception” is meant as someone’s view, judgment, or opinion about something.

### **1.6.2 Reading and Writing Center**

<http://www.cecil.edu/current-students/student-services/academic-labs/writing-lab.asp>, retrieved on April, 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 defines Reading and Writing Center as a center which has free service to all students during a variety of day and evening hours to assist students with reading and writing assignments in any subject.

### **1.6.3 The ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU**

The ED-R2 Lab. is a place/center providing facilities for the students of the English Education Study Program to enhance their reading and writing skills under guidance or by themselves with the help from competent lecturers and tutors.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into a simple organization consisting of five chapters. The first chapter is “Introduction” describing the background of the study, statements of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, the definition of the key terms, and organization of the thesis. The second chapter concerns with “Review of related Literature” including supporting theories about perception, Reading Center, the Writing Center, the Reading and Writing Center, and the ED-R2 Lab. of the TTEF of WMSCU. Chapter three deals with the research methodology. Chapter four concerns with findings and discussions of the findings. The last, chapter five, deals with conclusions and suggestions.