

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are four skills in every language, including English, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. As one of the four skills, writing traditionally has occupied a place in most English language syllabuses. Even so, arguments are sometimes put forward for not teaching students to write because it is felt that a command of the spoken language and of reading is more important. For many students, this may be true, but today, given the importance of English as an international language, more and more people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes. Thus, in terms of student needs, writing may be seen to occupy an equal role with the other language skills (White, 1981:1).

Leki (1991:8) agrees that in reality, however, among the skills, writing has been traditionally considered the least important skill to be taught in teaching a language. It was the most ignored of the language skills many years ago. Now, attitudes towards the role of writing have changed in teaching a second language. Writing has now become much more important in

the second language curriculum.

It is true that nowadays writing plays an essential role in the language teaching learning activities. Leki (1991:8) states that writing is the natural outlet for the students' reflections on their speaking, listening and reading experiences in their second language. She also says that writing is a means of inventing, of exploring ideas, and of gathering information. D'Angelo (1980:5) points out that writing is valuable in education, because it facilitates thought.

Writing also has played very important roles in society. We can store important histories, news, files, or even our thoughts, get our jobs, do our occupational or academic tasks, communicate with other people in million miles away through writing. Besides, it gives students time to shape what they want to say. In this case, students have an opportunity to be adventurous with the language, to take risks, to go beyond what has been taught. When the students write, they become involved with the language, with themselves, and with their audience.

Having studied for eleven semester at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, and having observed and interviewed some of her friends informally, the writer has come to the conclusion that

the teachers of writing usually use text book and picture when they teach descriptive writing. Sometimes, students are asked to describe the situation around them. Therefore, the students get bored easily because there is no development of material. Actually, students need something new that can interest them in descriptive writing class.

Considering that other materials outside the textbook are important to promote the students' interest and motivation in teaching descriptive writing, the writer decided to write this thesis entitled "Using Magazine Articles to Teach Descriptive Writing to the Third Semester English Department Students of Widya Mandala Catholic University". Ahellal (1990:37) says that magazine articles play a positive role in motivating the learners. By being exposed to magazine articles, the learners will be prepared to process language in real situation. In addition, magazine articles can stimulate the students to develop their idea in composing writing tasks. Besides, students can gather a lot of new information and knowledge. Moreover, the routine of writing lesson in the classroom will be broken, the boredom of the students will be avoided, and the important thing is the students will enjoy the writing lesson more if magazine articles are used skillfully

(Finnochiaro, 1974:7).

Development of material is needed in the process of language teaching and learning since boredom is one of the factors that can decrease the students' motivation in learning. This idea is confirmed by Celcemurcia (1984:5) who says that introducing a new material into learning activities will arouse external form of motivation. If the teacher can develop material that make the class more enjoyable and less routine, the students will be motivated to learn. From this statement, it can be concluded that material is really important factor to motivate the students to learn and practice the target language. Therefore, the writer of this study is interested to introduce magazine articles as teaching materials to teach descriptive writing. Magazine articles are hoped to be able to raise the interest and motivation of the students to write descriptive writing as well as any other types of writing.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study described above the statement of the problem of this thesis is:

"How can magazine articles be presented in descriptive writing class?"

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem given, the objective of this study is intended to describe the way to present magazine articles in descriptive writing class.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is meant to motivate students to learn or read magazine articles more willingly in a new, fresh, and interesting atmosphere of a descriptive writing class. Furthermore, this study is also to help in forming broad-minded and well-informed students since magazine articles contain more knowledge and information. Hopefully, magazine articles will be exceptionally beneficial for students in their descriptive writing class.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Realizing that there are many kinds of materials used in teaching learning activities, the writer thinks that it is necessary to limit the scope of this study by choosing only one, that is magazine articles. The magazines chosen are Freeway, Horizon, Life, National

Geographic and Newsweek. The writer consider those magazines are suitable for the third semester students of English department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in their descriptive writing class because they contain easy-to comprehend language for the students and more interesting and up to date articles.

This study is also limited to the topics about animal, object, place and people. This is meant to ease the teacher to find the articles and to facilitate the students to do the descriptive writing tasks.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

This thesis is a library research. At the beginning, the writer collects the data from the library. She studies all different views and aspects of writing and magazine articles which can be applied in the descriptive writing class. Based on the available literature, she tries to develop her own point of view and ideas to show the usage of magazine articles in teaching descriptive writing.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation about the terms used in this thesis, the writer finds it necessary to define the following key terms so that the

discussion about this thesis will be easily understood by the readers

1.7.1 Writing

Writing is thinking on paper. Thinking is mind at work-finding facts, seeing relationship, testing the truth of them, reaching conclusion and forming opinions. The mind produce a huge variety of ideas, and the facts (Dagher, 1976:3).

1.7.2 Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing is one kind of writing types that presents a picture, shows the reader how something looks, feels, tastes, or what it sounds like to describe (Martin and Kroitor, 1979:9).

1.7.3 Magazine

Magazine is a periodical containing special material directed at a group having a particular hobby, interest, or profession as education (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1986:1357).

1.7.4 Article

An article is a factual piece of writing on a specific topic (random House Dictionary, 1981:21).

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis consist of five chapter. The first chapter is introduction; it contains background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, significance, limitation and methodology of the study, the definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II discusses the review of related literature, while chapter III deals with some considerations of using magazine articles in teaching descriptive writing. The application of using magazine articles in teaching descriptive writing will discussed in chapter IV. While the conclusion and suggestions of the whole thesis will be in the last chapter, that is chapter V.