CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the area of the study that involves (1) background of the study (2) Research question (3) objective of the study (4) scope and limitation (5) significance of the study, and (6) definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

There are four skills that must be improved by English students especially by the candidate of English teacher, in which they are called listening, reading, speaking and writing. However, as English teacher we also aware that writing skill is the most important and needs to be separated and special attention because writing is considered as the most difficult and the biggest challenge for many students.¹ Moreover writing skill also is considered as the skill that has close relationship with higher education.²

The reasons of writing as the most important skill that should be learned by students are; firstly, because writing has been considered as the most difficult and the biggest challenge for many students. It happens because obviously writing needs long process or much time, needs deep thought, expression, and

¹ Dana-Ayda,"Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities". Vol. 3 No.9. May 2013.

² Sara Cushing Weigle, Assessing Writing (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4.

understanding to create many interesting ideas. Furthemore, for foreign language learners, the biggest challenge in writing well is the students have to master the aspects of writing e.g. spelling, capitalization, punctuation, vocabulary, and grammar or sentence structure.³

Secondly, writing skill also is considered as the skill that has close relationship with higher education. As we probably know that most exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge. It seems that writing well is needed in getting good value in facing exams specially for college students because by students' writing the teacher or the lecturer can measure the students' understanding about the knowledge that they get during learning process in the past. Moreover, as we probably know that every tudent in college must complete the final task in the last semester by producing a thesis. Fundamentally, writing cannot be separated from education system or the teaching learning process.

Essay writing is the best way for students in learning process and to increas their ability in writing. The best reasons are because in writing essay students are forced to express their feeling, thought, idea, and opinion or argument about their subject that they got in the class in writing form

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³ Dana-Ayda."Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities". Vol. 3 No.9. May 2013.

⁴ Jeremy Harmer. "How to teach english" (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 3.

confidently and by essay writing the lecturer can know how well the students mastered their subject or material from their lecturer. Like Greetham states that essay writing is a valuable opportunity for learnig because essay writing can force you to organise your thinking and develop your ideas on the issues and by students essay, you will know clearly how well you understood the subject, how well you communicate the subject that you get and you can know where your strengths and weakness are. It can be concluded that writing an essay can help the teacher or the lecturers and the students in teaching and learning process spesially in writing class to know how well the students understanding in studying and to increase the students' ability in writing.

There are some kinds of text or writen form that will be gotten by students during learn to write especially learn to write essay in every college. They are narrative, descriptive, explanation, recount, exposition, and argumentation or essay.⁶ In this study, the researcher refers to argumentative essay as a subject to research because argumentative essay is an essay that make the authors to force themselves to think critically and to pour great ideas or opinion in order to persuade the reader and make the readers to change their belief.⁷ It means that by writing argumentative essay the students will practice to communicate or convey

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⁵ Brian Greetham." How to Write Better Essay" (New York: Palgrave Study Guides, 2001), 1.

⁶ Jack Baker – Allen Brizee, Elizabeth Angeli, "Essay writing" (https://owl.english.purdue.edu, accessed on march 10, 2013)

Oya Ozagac. "Argumentative Essay" (www.buowl.boun.edu.tr, accessed on September 2004)

what they think confidently because in writing argumentative essay the students are required to write by collecting some important information, generating, and evaluate evidence, then establish a position on the topic in a consice manner.⁸

The second reason of the researcher to choose the argumentative essay as a subject to research is because every college student is required to produce a thesis in the final of semester. As we probably know that in making thesis, students have to choose interesting problems in the field to be a good research and to produce good thesis students need strong evidences to courage their statements in their research. It means that by practicing to write argumentative essay, it will help the students in making thesis in the final of semester because argumentative essay is an essay that force the students to get good arguments with strong evidence in order to persuade the reader.

This researcher conducted this research at the State Islamic University (SIU) of Sunan ampel Surabaya. The researcher chooses this university because this university has English Teacher Education Department and in the English teacher education department there is argumentative essay class. Therefore the researcher chooses this class to conduct this research.

The reason of the researcher chooses the argumentative essay class are because the researcher found the problems that the students got in writing

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⁸ Jack Baker – Allen Brizee, Elizabeth Angeli. "Essay writing" (https://owl.english.purdue.edu, accessed on march 10, 2013)

⁹ State Islamic University (UIN), Jl. Ahmad Yani, Numb. 117 Surabaya, Jawa Timur

argumentative essay. The researcher done interview about the difficulties in writing argumentative essay that is held on Thrusday, 27 April, 2015 in State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya and some students said that they feel difficult in arranging and emplaced the thesis statement correctly. As we probably know that there are aspects of writing that should be noticed by students in writing. Probably by interviewing, the researcher found that the students feel difficult in arranging and emplace the thesis statement, but the researcher still doesn't know whether the students master all of the aspects of writing or not. Therefore, the researcher conducts this research to know what aspects of writing that students master and what aspects of writing that students don't master.

The second reason of the researcher to choose the argumentative essay class is because there is previous study that related with this study, but the previous study focused on the cohesion and the coherence of the students' essay. The previous study was conducted at University of Bengkulu and the study was descriptive research that used quantitative approach to analyze the data. The previous study was conducted to know the students' ability in writing argumentative essay and the researcher of the previous study found that the students have difficulties in cohesion and coherence, while by preliminary

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¹⁰ Ziah."An Analysis of Students' Ability in Building Cohesion and Coherence in Argumentative Essays Written by the Fourth Year Students of English Department at University of Bengkulu". Vol. 1 No. 3, November 2013.

research or interviewing the researcher of this study found that the students have difficulties in arranging and emplacing the thesis statement. According the differences of the final finding of the previous study and the preliminary finding of this study, therefore the researcher is interested to conduct this study to know other abilities or difficulties of the students in writing argumentative essay by concerning other aspects of writing besides the cohesion and the coherence of the students' essay.

The third reason to choose the argumentative essay class is because of the experience of the researcher herself. According to the researcher experience, writing argumentative is not simple because it needs much time to choose interesting idea or topic and good thesis statement, and needs to master the aspects of writing essay.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in discussing about students' ability in writing argumentative essay at State Islamic University (SIU) of Sunan Ampel Surabaya in order to know how well they arrange their argumentative essay and to know the problems in writing argumentative essay by focusing on the aspects of writing essay and the structure of argumentative essay such as the introduction, supporting paragraphs or body paragraph, conclusion, mechanics and style (grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) and vocabulary.

B. Research Question

According to the background of the study above, the research questions for the current study is "How is the students' ability in writing argumentative essay at English Teacher Education Department of the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya?".

C. Objective of the study

Considering the statement of the problem questioned on this study, this study intends to find "The students' ability in writing argumentative essay at English Teacher Education Department of the State Islamic University of Sunan ampel Surabaya".

D. Scope and limitation of the study

The scope of this study is the students' ability in writing argumentative essay in argumentative essay class of the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The researcher analyzes the students' ability in writing argumentative essay by focusing on the aspects of writing essay or the structure of argumentative essay such as the introduction, supporting paragraphs or body paragraph, conclusion, mechanics and style (grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, capitalization) and vocabulary.

In this study the researcher limits the class on argumentative essay class (class A and class B) of English Teacher Education Department at State Islamic University (SIU) of Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The researcher conducted this study

in two classes that have the same lecturer in order to make the data which are gathered by the researcher is more valid.

E. Significances of the study

There are two significances of this study:

1. For students:

This study is expected to give awareness to the students especially students of English Education Department about how important in increasing their writing skill by writing argumentative essay. For students this study will give them knowledge about a good argumentative essay and how to make argumentative essays that have high quality and argumentative essays that can persuade the reader to change their belief.

2. For lecturer:

For lecturer this study is expected to become references in teaching argumentative essay effectively for students in English class especially in argumentative essay class by focusing on the students' weakness in writing argumentative essay and the lecturer can make appropriate strategies to improve the students weakness in writing argumentative essay.

F. Definition of Key Terms

In order to make students easy to understand about this study, some definitions of key terms are provided;

1. Ability

The ability can be defined as a skill or power to do something.¹¹ It means that where the students do their best to do something with maximal performance. Explicitly, when individuals were administered intelligence, aptitude, or achievement tests, they were exhorted to "do your best.¹² In this study students' ability is focused on students' ability in writing argumentative essay and how well they can produce good argumentative essay or how well they understand to arrange good argumentative essay that will persuade the reader to believe the author's opinion or argument.

2. Writing skill

Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message. ¹³ In this study writing skill is the skill in which the students show their ability to write argumentative essay by focusing in the aspects of writing argumentative essay such as the introduction, body paragraphs

¹¹ Victoria Bull (Eds.). *Oxford Grammar's Pocket Dictoionary fourth edition* (china: Oxford University press, 2011), 1.

Robert J. - Stenberg. Elena L. (Ed.). *The Psychology of Abilities, Competencies, and Expertise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

¹³ Buyung. "The Definition of Writing" (creationbrain.blogspot.com, accessed on November 11, 2012)

(supporting paragraph), conclusion, mechanics and style (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure).

3. Argumentative essay;

In this kind of essay, we give not only information but also present an argument with the PROS (supporting ideas) and CONS (opposing ideas) of an argumentative issue in order to make the essay to be strong by having supporting ideas and opposing ideas.¹⁴ It means that the students' argument has to have good supporting ideas and opposing ideas by showing an evedince to make the reader believe about the students' argument because in writing argumentative essay the essay should be writen as if we are trying to persuade an opposing audience to approve new beliefs or behavior.

¹⁴ Oya Ozagac. "Argumentative Essay" (<u>www.buowl.boun.edu,tr</u>, accessed on Sesptember 2004)