CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research focused on learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. This chapter concentrated on the research background, the research question, the objective of the research, the hypothesis, the significance of the research, the scope and limitation of the research, and the definition of key terms.

A. Research Background

Learning strategies is the way of people to achieve their learning goals. According O'melay and Chamot learning strategies is the behavior that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information. The learning strategies focus on the application of learning strategies to second language acquisition by students in learning English especially in essay writing.

In essay writing, strategy is the key good producing good writing. Pipin states, that strategy can develop students' skill in writing.² It indicates that learning strategy is important for developing and overcoming the

¹ J. Michael O'Mallay and Anna Uhl Chamot, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 1.

² Pipin Rizky Pindowati, *The Effectiveness of Diagram of Ideas Strategy to Enhance Students' Writing Achievement for Eleventh Grades at SMAN I Mojosari, Mojokerto.* (Surabaya: Unpublished Thesis. English Education Department of Undergraduate Program, State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2013), p. 3.

students' difficulties in essay writing. Chamot states that learning strategy are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal.³ One of the learning objectives is high score so that the student should practice and use language-learning strategy. The election of learning strategy is important because it influences in students' score and level in essay writing.⁴

In Academic essays, there are many difficulties in coherence, unity, organization, word choice, grammar and style. Masrul states that the students problem lies in the how the student generate and organize the ideas to write the topic.⁵ In addition, Susanto states that many students got difficulties in essay writing especially in grammar, vocabulary choice, punctuation, and spelling.⁶

For many students in English Education Department, academic essay is present great challenge. There are some students who weak in English Language especially in writing skills.

³ Anna Uhl Chamot, *Issues in Language Learning Strategy Research and Teaching* (Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 2004), p. 14.

⁴ Behnaz Ashraf Ganjooei and Ali Rahimi, *Language Learning Strategy Use for EFL E-Learners and Traditional Learners: A Comparative Study* (The Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, 2004), p. 11.

⁵ Masrul Huda, *Mind Mapping Strategy to Develop Students' ability in writing descriptive text grade VII-9 at SMPN 14 Malang* (Malang: Unpublished thesis. English Education Department of Undergraduate Program, State University Malang, 2012).

⁶ Heru Susanto, Students' Difficulties of Writing Thesis (Linguistic Aspect)" A Case Study The Eight Semester Students at English Department of Muhamadiyah University of Malang In Academic Years 2001 – 2002 (Malang: Unpublished thesis. English Department of Muhamadiyah University of Malang, 2012), p. 98.

Firstly, the most difficult part of writing an essay is the start. It is very hard to come up with a good thesis statement. Sometimes the students do not know where and how to start writing an introduction. The thesis statement is very important because it shapes the body paragraph and determines what students are going to write. The students need to have a good opening so that the others part will be easier.

Secondly, organizing is not an easy task. It is important how the students put all the information together in a logic way. The students have to keep track with the topic and do not go off track. For example, if you do not organize the information well, everything will become a mess and fail. Therefore, the organization has to be clear and well planned.

In essay writing, the students need to use a large amount of technical and academic words accurately. Consequently, the students' problem is the academic language. Sometimes, the students' vocabulary is not enough for the writing; the students cannot find the exact technical words that can express the meaning. The students may lose for word while writing essay. To improve this, students have to learn more academic words and practice more regularly.

Although there are many hardships writing academic essays, the students need to practice more and more to improve our writing skill. Besides the practice, the students need strategy to overcome their difficulties. Therefore, practice and strategy is interplay in essay writing. There are several strategies can be used by students in essay writing. They are metacognitive

strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies.⁷ However, Oxford give sever strategies in essay writing are, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, memory strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.⁸

In this research, the researcher uses metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies (organizing and evaluating learning): e.g. I think about my progress in learning English. Cognitive strategies (using all your mental processes): e.g. I find the patterns in English. Social/affective strategies (learning with others/managing emotions): e.g. I ask for help from English speaker / I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistake. The reason the researcher uses those strategies to indicate the students' because the strategy often used in earlier research. In addition, the strategy is simple and easy understands by students. Besides that, the researcher wants to show that those strategies be able to be applied in this research.

The researcher uses those strategies for Argumentative class at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The reason the researcher takes in this class because not all of department in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya study about argumentative essay.

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⁷ O'Mallay and Chamot, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*, p. 13.

⁸ Hafiza Saima Akbar et al., *Learning Strategies used by Pakistani ESL Students in University of Sargodha* (Global Journals Inc. (USA), 2013), p. 41.

Argumentative essay is the third step in writing at English Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. In this step, the students learn and develop their idea, opinion or argument to make good essay. Before the students take thesis proposal seminar class (the last step in writing), the students should learn argumentative essay. Argumentative essay helps student developing their ideas to make proposal. In addition, the students should make thesis for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd) in Teaching English. After the students graduate from university, the students will become the teacher. As the teacher, the students should master in writing. Therefore, the students should learn Argumentative essay as one-step to achieve like good writer.

There have been some studies, which examined the learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing. The first study by *Dian Aprita Widiarti* entitled The Use of Self-Assessment as Feedback strategy to improve student writing ability at MAN SIDOARJO by Dian Aprita Widiarti. This previous study focuses on the implementation of self-feedback in MAN Sidoarjo. The problem of this study is the teacher and student when using self-feedback and the student improvement after using self-back. The result of this study is the most students did not make improvement after using self-assessment as feedback. To overcome this condition, the teacher should give self-assessment regularly to make his or her student accustomed and well trained to use self-assessment as feedback.

Second, a study by Pipin Risky Pindowati entitled The Effectiveness of Diagram of Ideas Strategy to Enhance Student Writing Achievement for Eleventh Grades at SMAN 1 Mojosari, Mojokerto. This previous studies examine the effectiveness of diagram of ideas strategy to enhance student-writing achievement for the eleventh grade of SMAN 1 Mojosari, Mojokerto. The result of this study shows that diagram of ideas strategy was effectively improving students' writing skill. The recommendation for the English research and future research is for the teachers suggesting to use diagram of ideas strategy as a way to assess teaching and learning process. Moreover, for the future research, they are expected to conduct the research on other skill.

Third, a study by Masrul Huda entitled Mind Mapping Strategy to Develop Student Ability in Writing Descriptive Text Grade VII-9 at SMPN 14. This study was focusing on solve the problem related to how the student generate and organize the ideas to write the topic. This study proposes mind mapping with the propose mind mapping with proper model to develop the seventh year student ability in writing descriptive text. The design of this study is collaborative classroom action research. The researcher and the teacher worked together in cyclic activities-planning, implementation, observing, and reflecting on the data gained from the teaching and learning process with run into cycles. The recommendation for the future research is to conduct the research by implementing Mind Mapping strategy in other

language skills. It is done to know whether or not Mind mapping strategy can be used to improve listening, speaking and reading skill.

Fourth, a study by Ema Aji S entitled Employing Response Journal Writing Strategy to Improve Writing Skills at First Year of SMPN 8 Malang. The study focused on designing to improve students' writing skill through employing response journal strategy. This study was a classroom action research, which consisted two cycles. The result of this study showed that the response journal strategy was able to improve student-writing skill in term of fluency. There were some procedures followed in employing response journal writing.

From the previous study, the question has not answered is, the correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing. Therefore, the researcher answer those question in those research.

Considering the importance the learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing, the researcher wants find out whether there is a significant correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing. Therefore, the researcher decides to present the researcher by the title: LEARNING STRATEGIES AND PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN ESSAY WRITING AT ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT UIN SUNAN AMPEL SURABAYA.

B. Research Question

The research attempted to identify the correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the strategies preferences used by students in Essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?
- 2. What are the student levels of proficiency in essay writing at English

 Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?
- 3. What are the strategies that tends to give high proficiency in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?
- 4. Is there any the correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?

C. Objective of the Research

According the statement of the problem, the purpose of this research was:

- To know the students' preference strategy used in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
- To know the student proficiency level in essay writing at English
 Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

- To know the best strategy that tend to give high proficiency in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
- To know the correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

D. Hypothesis

In accordance with the exploratory notion adopted by this research, it aims to test the following set of hypotheses:

- 1. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is there is significant correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.
- The Null hypothesis (Ho) is there is not significant correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya.

E. Significance of the Research

By conducting this research, we recognize the correlation between learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing. The result of the research is useful for the student and teacher.

1. For the students of English Teacher Education Department

It would gather helpful information to assist student to be aware of the strategies they use to develop their writing skill; improve writing performance and they know that their efficiency in using strategy related with their proficiency level.

2. For the lectures of English Teacher Education Department

The teacher can teach learning strategies to those below average with hope to upgrade their common of English.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Research

The researcher conducts this research by choosing English Teacher Education Department Surabaya UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. The reason researcher choose this place because it has learning program such essay writing, which essay writing focus on argumentative essay. The subject of the study is the student on writing III of English Teacher Education Department. In writing III, the students get learning about argumentative essay.

The 'argumentative essay' is the most common genre that undergraduate student have to write (Wu), particularly in the arts, humanities and social sciences (Hewings). Although the nature of the essay varies considerably across and even within disciplines, the development of an argument regarded as a key feature of successful writing by academics across disciplines (Lea & Street). Nesi and Gardner found in their survey of assessed

writing in 20 disciplines that a commonly recognized value of the essay is its 'ability to display critical thinking and development of an argument within the context of the curriculum'.

The researcher limits discussion was correlation learning strategies and proficiency level in essay writing.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To prevent misunderstanding of the meaning of the terms in the research, the researcher provides the terms as follows:

1. Essay writing

Essays writing are shorter pieces of writing that often require the student to improve their skills such as close reading, analysis, comparison and contrast, persuasion, conciseness, clarity, and exposition. In essay writing, there are three elements introduction, body of the essay and conclusion. ¹⁰ In this research, the meaning of essay writing as document that has defined structure an introduction, body and conclusion. Essay writing has three main types are, Descriptive, Expository and Argumentative. In this research only discuss one types is Argumentative essay.

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⁹ Ursula wingate, "Argument!" Helping Students What Essay Writing is About (Journal of English for Academic Purpose, 2012), p. 1.

¹⁰ Gail Craswell, ASLC Research Essay Writing (London: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 23.

2. Learning strategies

Learning strategies is the way of people to achieve their learning goals. In this research, learning strategies is the specific method or special trick used by English Teacher Education Department students in essay writing. Learning strategies classified into metacognitive strategies (use to plan, monitor and evaluate students' own learning process and consider most effective in their learning.), cognitive strategies (manipulate incoming information in the form of summarizing, deduction, inference, note taking, induction and translation to make learning effective), and social/affective strategies (combining and organized as cognitive and learning with others/managing emotions).

3. Proficiency level

Proficiency level is the individuals' ability or capacity use language for specific purposes in essay writing. ¹¹ In this research, proficiency level is the students' score in essay writing. In this research, proficiency level is the student rank in essay writing. Brown and Bailey states that designed analytical scoring scale that specified five major categories and description of five different level in each category, ranging from excellent

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¹¹ Proficiency Level Descriptors for English Language Proficiency Standards (CCSSO, 2013), p. 7, www.k12.wa.us/migrantbilingual/.../WAProficiencyLevelDescriptors.pd, accessed 23 Apr 2015.

until college – level in each categorize. 12 For all of categorize Jacob stated that designed analytical scoring scale that specified four major categories and description of five different levels in each category from excellent until unacceptable. 13



H. Dougla. Brown, *Language Assessment Principle* (Longman, 2003), pp. 244–245.
 Jacobs, S, *Composing and Coherence: A Process Study* (Paper presented at the 16th annual TESOL convention, Honolulu, 1982), p. 26.