

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a brief explanation of the introduction to the area of research. It covers the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the papers.

1.1 Background

Writing is one of the ways we can use to communicate to each other. Fairbairn & Winch (1991) stated that writing is about “transferring meaning by selecting words and putting them together in a written or printed form.” Thus, the writing product has to be easily understood by the readers, in order to convey the message and to make a good communication.

In foreign language mastery, writing is known as a complex task that needs enormous time and skill to master. According to Harmer (2004), different from the other language skills, writing tends to be a well-formed and pre-organized one. Furthermore, Brown (2001) argued that writing is a culturally specific and learned behavior. It means that writing skills are needed to be learnt (or taught) and depends on the cultural context of the learner. For that reason, most of the foreign language teachers think that teaching writing is difficult.

Reid’s study (2009) found that one of the problems of teachers teaching writing is that the teacher himself has a problem with writing. Quoting Brookfield

(1995), Reid also stated that “the best teachers are probably those who have achieved their skill mastery, knowledge, and intellectual fluidity only after periods of struggle and anxiety” (p. 201). It means that writing teachers have to go through a long period of time, and have a considerable amount of experience, to furnish their mastery of writing and teaching writing, and to perfect their techniques both in writing and in teaching it.

The previous study found that the difficulties faced by writing teachers may come from internal problems (the teachers themselves) and the external factors (the environment of the teaching). The internal difficulties may stem from the teachers' qualification (including their mastery of writing and their preferences to teach writing). The external factors may include the problems posed by the government (school policy, curricula), the school (the lack of support and resources to allow a good teaching), the students (the lack of motivation and ability), the language gap (the difference between English language and Bahasa Indonesia that often confuse the students), and the society (the lack of support and understanding of how to help teachers improve the students' ability) (Reid, 2009; Supriatna, 2012; Wang, 2010).

These difficulties are what the teacher face when teaching English writing to their students. This study will investigate about the difficulties encountered by the teachers in teaching English writing to 10th grade students, especially in teaching writing descriptive texts.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to analyze the difficulties that the teachers face in teaching writing descriptive texts to 10th graders.

1. What are the difficulties faced by the 10th grade teachers in teaching writing descriptive texts?
2. What are the strategies used by the teachers to overcome the difficulties in teaching writing descriptive texts?

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study is aimed to:

1. Identify teachers' difficulties in teaching writing descriptive texts.
2. Find out some strategies that have been done to overcome, or minimize, the difficulties in teaching writing descriptive texts.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to give the information concerning the difficulties faced by 10th grade English teachers of teaching writing descriptive texts at a Senior High School in Bangka. This information is critical for teachers to help them to minimize the difficulties of teaching writing descriptive texts and to improve their mastery in teaching writing descriptive texts. Besides for the teachers, the

findings of the study are expected to give contributions for the students in learning writing descriptive texts.

1.5 Research Methodology

In this research, descriptive case study is used as the research design. Yin (2003:13) defined case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” This research discussed one case of teachers’ difficulties in teaching writing descriptive text and displayed a brief description of the phenomenon based on the data collected.

The data for this study are collected using two techniques, observation and interview. After collecting all data from the observation and interview, the data will be analyzed using some following steps adapted from Miles and Huberman (1984) which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification. This study will also use triangulation. To triangulate the data in this research, the writer will crosscheck the data with the theory of teaching strategies as outlined in the theoretical framework.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

Some terms in need to be clarified in purpose of avoiding misunderstanding of the problem investigated. The terms are as follows:

1. **Teachers' difficulties.** It is defined as the difficulties or challenges that the teachers face in the process of teaching writing descriptive texts.
2. **Teachers' Strategy.** It can be defined as the methods to approach the problem used by the teacher. It can also be defined as specific effort, initiative, or plan used by the teacher to achieve expected learning objectives in a skillful way (Mintzberg, 1994). In this case, the problem is teaching writing to students.
3. **Descriptive text.** It can be defined as a text that describes and lists something about its characteristics, parts, qualities, and any other which is interesting to explore (Anderson & Anderson, 2003).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper will be presented in five chapters. The chapters will be divided into subtopics to elaborate the issue given.

Chapter 1 Introduction, this chapter provides the background of the research and other aspects in conducting the research, including research questions, aims of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundation. In this chapter, the theoretical framework will be presented to support and explain the study.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology. This chapter provides methodology and procedures in conducting the research.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion. In this chapter, the collected data will be presented systematically in order to make it easier to discuss the findings.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Suggestions. Some conclusion will be drawn in this chapter based on the data analysis. This chapter will also provide suggestions for further research.

