

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

There have been some empirical data showing that learning English is hard for Indonesian students. One of the problems is students struggle to understand printed textbooks in English and cannot communicate orally or in writing in the language (Prihatmi, 2017). Moreover, most Indonesian students entering university have little English proficiency, which is likely to limit their potential to learn more in their studies (Alisjahbana, 1990). In fact, before entering the university, students have to learn English at their junior and senior high school levels (Anugerahwati, 2019). However, they still face some problems such as having a lack of ability to write related to vocabulary and grammar mastery. Moreover, they also find it difficult to connect sentences in writing English (Suryanto & Sari, 2021)

To cope with the problems mentioned above, teachers need to choose and employ a variety of educational components and methods. One of the methods is facilitating students' learning strategies. According to Nunan (1991), learning strategies are mental processes that students utilize to learn and use the target language. Meanwhile, Setiyadi (2016) suggests three perspectives that are considered to be able to improve language learning. They are cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, and social strategy. Based on the mentioned explanation

above, adhering to the language learning strategy might also help students develop greater independence (Oxford, 2003). According to the definition above, learning strategies are mental activities or specific approaches students utilize to successfully learn the target language.

The importance of understanding how to use language learning strategies is essential for increasing students' confidence in their learning abilities and arming them with specific methods for learning English, including writing skills for greater confidence and capacity for independent learning. Writing is a very challenging task requiring students to control various problems (Fareed et al., 2016). Students must use critical thinking to develop written texts. However, certain students usually show difficulties in syntax, coherence, concept extension, content choice, topic sentences, rhetorical conventions, mechanics, organization, vocabulary, lack of vocabulary, and incorrect use of words. According to Alfaki (2015), students' writing difficulties can be caused by various problems, including psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems. Each student has a unique writing style. To apply the dominant approach correctly in the learning process, the teacher is expected to know the writing technique used by the students. This serves as information for teachers as they choose the best writing approach for the course.

Regarding the importance of knowing students' learning strategies, there have been many studies on learning strategies in Indonesia, but mostly on

students' difficulties in learning English in general. One of the many studies about teaching strategies in writing English is performed by Fauziyyah (2019) who states that research on learning strategies is usually general and includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Considering this issue, this research is intended to investigate language learning strategies in writing to see a more specific result. The researcher was interested in knowing language learning strategies in writing employed by high achiever students in a senior high school. High achiever is a class specially created for students who stand out from other classes in terms of skills, talents, originality, and intelligence. These students receive special instruction to further develop their excellence in line with the developed curriculum. According to the explanation of the English teacher at the senior high school, the majority of students in this class have better English writing skills than students in other classes shown by their writing performance in completing writing assignments. Therefore the researcher chose this class.

Regarding this issue, the researcher wants to know the language learning strategies by high achiever students in a senior high school, especially in writing.

1.2. Reasons of Topic Selection

Learning activities in schools currently apply a curriculum based on student-centered learning. One aspect of student-centered learning is being able to understand the character of student learning. By knowing student learning

strategies, the learning process will be facilitated properly by the teacher and the learning process will be successful in achieving learning objectives. That way, their learning strategies can help them achieve curriculum targets.

1.3. Research Questions

What language learning strategies are employed by high achiever students for developing writing skills?

1.4. Aims of the Research

Based on the research questions in the previous section, the aims of this research are to find out language learning strategies are employed by high achiever students for developing writing skills in a senior high school.

1.5. Contributions of the Research

It is hoped that this research will provide an important contribution to the learning process. The followings are some of the important contributions :

1. Practically, the results of this study are expected to help teachers find out strategies for learning to write that can be used during classroom learning activities to improve student English writing skills.
2. Theoretically, the final results of this study are expected to provide a source of pedagogic studies in the field of English language education to provide additional references for future researchers.

1.6. Clarifications of Relevant Terms

To understand the concepts clearly, the term of the study are clarified as follows :

a. Language Learning Strategy

Language learning strategies used in this research are adapted from Oxford (1990) which covers six aspects, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. In this research, the researcher investigates the language learning strategies performed in writing English during school.

b. High Achiever Students

High achiever students involved in this research are those who are in the first grade at a senior high school and who have an average grade that is superior compared to the other classes, especially in writing English.