

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the study

Learning strategy is the way people achieve their learning goals. According to O'melay & Chamot (1990:1), learning strategies are the thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information. The learning strategies focus on the use of learning strategies by students in learning English, especially in essay writing.

Essay writing is kind of writing that should be expressed in some paragraph consisting of introduction, body, and conclusion. Writing an essay can be challenging, since in writing process the students need more time rather than speaking, reading and listening. Besides that, students in producing good essay also need lengthy revisions. The more they read and revise, the better it will be.

In essay writing, common problems that students encounter are firstly, getting started is believed as the first difficult part of writing an essay. It is very hard to start writing. Sometimes students do not know where and how to start writing an introduction, besides that the students are asked to complete an introduction by making a thesis statement. 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 easy as we thought. It is important how the students put all idea together in a logic way. The students should pay much attention in gathering the information by keeping a topic in a track, in other words the information that is expressed doesn't go out of the topic. For example, if you do not organize the information well, everything will fail. Therefore, the organization has to be clear and well planned.

The last is vocabulary choices. Sometimes, the students' vocabulary is not enough for the writing or they cannot find the appropriate words that can express their ideas, so that they may lose for words while writing.

From the explanation above, the students need to practice more and more to improve their writing skill. Besides the practice, they also need a certain learning strategy to overcome their difficulties. Allwright (in Oxford, 2003:9) state that learning strategies enable students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners. Another statement comes from Nyikos & Oxford (In Oxford, 2003: 9) that learning strategies make learning quicker and more effective. In this case, the use variety of learning strategies in essay writing maximally will help students in writing a good essay.

Considering the importance of the learning strategies in essay writing, the researcher wants to find out what the strategies that are used by the fourth semester students. Therefore, the researcher decides to present the research by the title "A Study of Students' Learning Strategies in Essay Writing" (A Descriptive Study at the fourth semester students of English Education Department in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in academic year 2016/2017).

## **B. Reason for Choosing the topic**

Based on the condition above, the writer has some reason why the writer choose a title “ A Study of Students’ Learning Strategies in Essay Writing at Fourth Semester Students of English Education Department in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in academic year 2016/2017”, because essay writing is one of compulsory subjects that should be learned by students. Essay writing is still considered as a difficult subject for students to master. In order to overcome their difficulties, they need strategies as a trick or special way in their own learning in order to help them comprehend and to achieve success in their writing activity. Furthermore, the writer interested to do this research.

## **C. Problem of the Research**

The problems of this research stated by the question below:

1. What kinds of learning strategies are used in Essay writing by the fourth semester students of English Education Department in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in academic year 2016/2017?
2. What is the most learning strategy used in Essay Writing by the fourth semester students of English Education Department in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in academic year 2016/2017?

## **D. The Objective of the Research**

The aims of this research are:

1. Knowing the kinds of learning strategies used by the fourth semester students of essay writing at English Education Department in University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto in Academic Year 2016/2017.

2. Knowing the most used learning strategy by the fourth semester students of essay writing at English Education Department in University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto in Academic Year 2016/2017.

### **E. Contribution of the Research**

The writer expects that the result of the study will give some contributions for researcher, teachers, and students.

1. The researcher

For the researcher, this study will give information about strategies employed by the fourth semester students in University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto in essay writing. Hopefully, the finding of this research can be used as reference for further research if they want to conduct the research related to this study.

2. The teacher

Hopefully the teachers can teach the students with appropriate strategies after knowing the students' learning strategies in essay writing. So, it can be used to support the students to produce a good essay. Besides that, the teacher can give solution for the students who have problems in learning English especially in learning essay writing.

3. The students

The students are expected to understand kinds of learning strategies that can be used in essay writing. So they can choose their own ways to improve their competencies in writing.