

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background**

Recently, the development of English language learning has shown a greater shift. The focus of language learning shifts from teachers and teaching method to learners and learning methods. As Riazi (2007: 433) stated that there has been a gradual but significant shift among language educators from "teacher-centered to more learner-centered approaches" during this past decades. As the result, the classroom activities are developed to support and assist the learners to experience the learning processes by themselves. Moreover, it leads the role of learning strategies in language learning developed as means to facilitate their learning activities.

Related to the language learning, writing is one of the most important skills in teaching English as a foreign language (Liu, 2015: Al Asmari, 2013; Arifin, 2017) . Learning writing also includes the learning of writing skills, rules and conventions. Writing skills have main functions as productive and academic activity. It is related to the position of writing as a process of discovering and formulating ideas to convey meaning. As a productive skill, writing is usually used as a reflection to measure students' overall proficiency in English. It demands students to develop the knowledge and cognitive aspects in writing to produce English texts. While as an academic activity, writing involves different kinds of mental processes. The process of writing takes more time to think, prepare, rehearse, make mistake, and find alternative and better solutions (Hyland,

2008). Through written forms, the students are expected to be able to deliver their ideas to the audiences using a standardized and proper language. The writing objective is to enable students to produce an accurate and appropriate English written text. Thus, writing usually involves complex activities.

The complexities in writing is also related to the purpose of writing as “writing-for-learning” and “writing-for-writing”. In writing for learning, writing is used as a practice tool to help students practice and work with a language they have been studying, in this case writing in English. Writing-for-learning activities usually deal with the language as the main focus of attention, whereas in writing-for-writing the whole text is the main focus. The covered area includes not just appropriate language use, but also the text construction, layout, style, and effectiveness (Harmer, 2004 : 31). Writing-for-writing, on the other hand, is directed at developing the students’ skills *as writers*. In other words, the main purpose of activities in this type of writing is getting students to write such things as emails, letters and reports (pp. 34).

The importance of writing process as an academic activity and the complexities in writing affect the way of teachers in teaching writing. They have to arrange the learning activities to fulfill the principles of writing. Related to this, teachers usually apply some methods and strategies in helping the students to achieve their writing goals. However, students are still struggle with the lack knowledge of writing strategies, do little or no planning in their writing, and less in revising their works (Bai, Hu, & Gu, 2014). Therefore, the selection of proper strategies needs to be considered in order to minimize the problems related to the

teaching and learning activities in writing class. Both teacher and students can apply more than one strategy during the instruction. Moreover, since the students are prepared to be an English teachers, it is important for them to experience the use of writing strategies as well as knowing well the appropriate strategies for them. Therefore, finding out the writing strategies employed in writing activities aid the students to be more familiar with the use of strategies in their learning process.

## **B. Identification of the Problems**

Students of EFL find that writing as the most difficult area in a language learning. While for teachers, they find some problems to assist the students in producing a good academic writing or text. Factors such as the complexity of writing skill, the lack of students' background knowledge, and inadequate feedback are determined as the cause of those situation (Okasha & Hamdi, 2014). Therefore, learning to use writing strategies effectively is essential to enable students to write effectively and to overcome writing difficulties as well as to reduce the students' anxiety toward writing complexities.

Regarding the importance of writing strategies, students are still less conscious with the use of writing strategies. It is related to the complexity that should be faced by the learners in learning writing. De Silva (2015) claims that writing is important for academic success of students in higher education. The task of writing becomes extremely challenging to the writer when the medium of writing is in a second language (L2). Therefore, it is important for students to explore their learning strategies.

A line of research was initiated recently to investigate the significance of writing strategy. For example Maarof and Murat (2013), they find out that the while-writing strategies were most frequently used whereas the revising strategies were least used.. Da Silva (2015) concluded that the writing strategies and writing performance increased significantly after strategy instruction. While Chen (2011) find out that pre-writing strategies and revising strategies positively correlate with students' writing achievements. Moreover, many students are still in poor performance related to writing skill which affects their English writing achievement . Moreover, they feel nervous when they are asked to write and they spend more time only on questioning what they want to write or how they will write it. They also have problem related with the process of writing, such as in organizing their ideas, combining the sentences into a good paragraph, and problems with cohesion. These difficulties might be attributed to the students' lack of knowledge of the appropriate writing strategies to use when writing. Therefore, knowing the most frequently use and the usefulness of those strategies help the students in motivating themselves in learning writing. Moreover, writing strategies help teachers find appropriate learning activities for their students in order to encourage them to write and like writing.

### **C. Limitation of the Problems**

Based on the identification of problems above, this study was limited to writing strategies used by students at every stage of writing process. Therefore, this study focused on the preferred writing strategies of male and female students, as well as the high and low proficiency students. In advance, the study also tried

to elaborate the students' perception related to the useful writing strategies in their writing activities.

#### **D. Formulation of the Problems**

According to the limitation of the problems, the formulation of problems were detailed as follow:

1. How are the writing strategies employed by students in every writing stage?
2. What are the differences in writing strategies employed by male and female students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari ?
3. What are the differences in writing strategies employed by high and low proficiency students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari ?
4. How do students perceive the writing strategies usefulness in every writing stage?
5. What are the differences of writing strategies usefulness perceived by male and female students of Muhammadiyah of Kendari?
6. What are the differences of writing strategies usefulness perceived by high and low proficiency students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari ?

#### **E. Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the formulation of the problems above, the objectives of this research were as follows.

1. To describe the students' writing strategies preference in every

writing stage.

2. To identify the differences in writing strategies employed by male and female students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari.
3. To identify the differences of writing strategies employed by high and low proficiency students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari.
4. To find out the students' perception on the usefulness of writing strategies in every writing stage.
5. To describe the differences of writing strategies usefulness perceived by male and female students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari.
6. To describe the differences of writing strategies usefulness perceived by high and low proficiency students of Muhammadiyah University of Kendari.

#### **F. Significance of the Study**

The finding of this study is expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically:

##### **1. Theoretically Significance**

This study is expected to provide contribution in developing knowledge which related with teaching and learning writing as a language skill. It is also expected to provide information related to writing strategies preference by students in higher education.

## 2. Practically Significance

### a. For teachers

Knowing the students' learning strategies is important. Therefore, this research is expected to become source of information for the teacher to help them in preparing the appropriate learning materials, classroom activities as well as teaching techniques based on their students' need, styles and the preference strategies.

### b. For students

Training students to employ more learning strategies benefit in improving their language comprehension and knowledge. Thus, through this research, hopefully the students can train their ability in employing and implementing the appropriate strategies and to be more familiar with learning strategies.

### c. For researcher

Through this research, the researcher can get the knowledge of implementing appropriate learning strategies in writing activities. While for further researchers, this study can be a source of information to help them in conducting the research under writing field. Thus, this study is expected to be beneficial for the next research that related with same problem with more complex and various aspects of language learning.