

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the basic problems of the research. It covers the background of the problem, the research problems, the objectives, the uses, and the scope of the research. All of the subtopics describe mainly about learning strategies in composing narrative text.

A. Background of the Problem

In learning English, learners of senior high-school (SMA) are expected to master the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Haycraft states (1978:8) that there are two broad skills in mastering a language: *receptive skill*, i.e. listening (understanding the spoken language) and reading (understanding the written language); and *productive skills*, i.e. speaking and writing.

As a productive skill, writing tends to push the learners to create a kind of language product. The language products itself can be a narrative text, descriptive text, news item text, exposition text, etc. Based on the guideline of School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) (Depdiknas, 2006: 313), the objectives of teaching and learning process in writing skill for the first year of SMA are:

1. Learners are able to arrange sentences into narrative, news item, and descriptive paragraphs in the context of daily activities;
2. Learners are able to produce short functional text;
3. Learners are able to use grammar, punctuation, and vocabularies correctly in the text;
4. Learners are able to write the main idea of the text;
5. Learners are able to elaborate the main idea;
6. Learners are able to produce a simple narrative, news item, and descriptive paragraphs.

From these objectives, it is clear that the learners of the first year of SMA are expected to be able to write in some kinds of text, such as narrative, news item, and descriptive.

Narrative, news item, and descriptive are three different kinds of text, with each having its own characteristics that make it different from the rest. For example, a narrative text contains a conflict and a resolution but a descriptive text and a news item text do not contain those elements.

In this study, learner's composition of narrative text was selected as the material under the assumption that the composition is the result of learners' product that can be identified clearly. Sofyan (1999:86) stated that narrative is a story which is connected with events based on the plot. Teachers commonly use narrative text because the narrative is a story of human experience, so that the learners could

arrange a narrative composition easily. Keraf (1991:136) also suggests that narrative is a story that tells or describes an action in the past time clearly, so narrative tries to answer the question: what happened? As a story, narrative should have an element that can make the story interesting to the reader, such as a conflict and the conclusion of the story.

But in this case the learners of the first year of SMA still have difficulties in composing a narrative text, particularly in terms of diction, getting idea, and ordering the words. Therefore, the learners must be aware of some strategies in composing a narrative text such as: making outline, using picture, using dictionary, sharing with friends, using the tools (audio and/or audio-visual) or learning's aids (a guide). Brown (2000: 113) defines strategies as specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. Therefore, learners should choose an appropriate strategy to compose a narrative text.

The strategies the learners use in learning process will significantly determine how they can achieve the objective. Hamalik (1983) as quoted by Asrori (2000) said that the use of proper (good) strategies is believed to bring the satisfying learning outcomes for the learners. On the other hand, improper strategies will lead into failure. It means that by having good language learning strategies, learners can make good progress.

As noted in the previous paragraphs, learners need strategy in order to become a competent language learner especially in composing a narrative. Using different strategy will characterize their competence. Poor learners commonly notice that better learners often have the right answers in an examination but they never discover why the better learners had the right answers. Rubin (1975) in Chamot observed that poor learners only admired the success of the successful learners but they did not see what successful learners had done in learning.

Conversely, successful strategies can be used by less effective learners (Hosenfield, 1970) in Wenden (1987). Thus, there is a tendency to inform what the good learners do (the strategies used in learning) and the impact of the strategies to less successful ones.

In this case English teacher should have responsibility to help the learners cope with the problem. Even though human being is blessed with the language acquisition device (LAD), some people are most successful than others in learning a language. It is also possible to occur in the classroom that some learners are better than others in learning English. In the attempt to help the learners, it will be very important and useful if the teacher knows more about what the successful learners do. Being aware of this, the teacher can teach poorer learners the strategies of language learning, especially in writing a narrative, employed by the good ones.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, human being is blessed with the language acquisition device. It is consistent with what Rubin (1975:41) suggests, that everyone learns his first language with a fair degree of success; the reason is that everyone has been born with the ability to learn a language. It is asserted that everyone has the same inner talent and competence in acquiring a language, but the fact shows that some people are more successful than others in learning a language. The success depends on the learner's learning strategies, because by employing a good learning strategy she or he can make good progress.

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that each learner has certain tendency and capability in using certain learning strategies. Therefore, the use of various learning strategies is influenced by the learner's family background, experience, and character. In brief, the strategy that is useful to one learner might not be useful to others. Since learners have their own characteristics, they will exploit different learning strategies that are useful and comfortable to them. This study, therefore, would investigate the learning strategies applied by SMA learners when they compose a narrative text.

Learning strategies are supposed to be used to attain goals or to solve a problem (Park, 2010). In other way it can be said that learning strategies can be used to solve students' problem in writing. In brief, there must be a correlation between students learning strategies and their writing competence.

The previous discussion has led this study to deal with “the learners’ strategies in composing narrative text and its correlation with students’ writing competence.”

The research was conducted to the first graders of SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung.

B. Research Problems

Dealing with the background above, the problems were formulated as follows:

- 1) What learning strategies are mostly applied by the first-year learners of SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung in writing narrative text?
- 2) What strategies do the good and poor learners employ in composing narrative text?
- 3) Is there any significant correlation between students learning strategies and students writing competence?

C. Objectives of the Research

The formulation of the problems led to the following objectives:

- 1) To find out the learning strategies mostly applied by the learners at the first year of SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung in writing narrative text.
- 2) To describe the good and poor learners’ learning strategies in composing narrative text.
- 3) To determine whether there is significant correlation between learning strategies and students’ writing competence.

D. Uses of the Research

- 1) Theoretically, as a reference for other researchers who are interested in investigating learning strategies in writing a narrative text.
- 2) Practically, as a contribution to English teachers concerning how to encourage the learners to use learning strategies especially in writing a narrative text.

E. Scope of the Research

The research was conducted to the first-year learners of SMA. Based on 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) on English, in the first semester the learners should have mastered text writing, and one of the texts that they should master is narrative text.

Thus, this research would identify language learners' learning strategies in composing narrative text and investigate whether there is a significant correlation between learning strategies and students' writing competence. The learning strategies in composing a narrative text are classified into three categories (Chamot in Wenden and Rubin, 1987: 77), namely "metacognitive, cognitive, and social". It is also assumed that writing competence depends on the learning strategies applied by the learners.