

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter portrays the background of the research that explains why this research is enticing to be studied. This chapter also elaborates on several theories in which this study adapts several theoretical frameworks based on the views of certain experts.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

A challenge is something that can be found by anyone when they carry out a process in their life. As in the field of education, the challenge of teaching will always be found over time. Furthermore, in teaching English, Khong and Saito (2014) define the challenges as social challenges, institutional challenges, and personal challenges. Those challenges come in various cases, such as the limited classroom opportunity, the mismatch between language policy and the real practice in lower primary, negative attitudes of students toward English, an overloaded basic English curriculum, large classes, and limited access to resources (Astuti, Mentari & Solikhah, Imroatus, 2021).

In teaching writing to EFL learners, teachers often face some challenges since writing has been considered the hardest language skill to master. Many English teachers argue that writing is difficult to teach (Ho & Thuy, 2009). The difficulty of teaching writing is because of the problems encountered by students in learning writing skills and teachers in applying methods in teaching writing. On the other hand, students' development of linguistic and communicative competence is an essential part of teaching English writing skills. This is what makes teaching writing a challenging task for teachers because teachers must have professional responsibility for the development of students' writing (Leki, 2008).

Wang (2015) specifies the significance of focusing on the process of writing; the students ought to continuously rewrite, revise, and edit their writing to improve it. Unfortunately, those important processes are difficult for

teachers to do, especially in large classes, because the teacher should check and assess the students' work individually. In addition, this factor implies that the teacher cannot carry out some kind of essay consultation on written notes, so that students may not have enough time to ask for clarification of the revisions made by the teacher in their writing.

The COVID-19 outbreak has spread rapidly throughout the world since the end of 2019. It has influenced all structures of normal life, including the education system. In Indonesia, the government announced a new policy regarding learning activities ranging from face-to-face learning to online learning (Adnan, 2020). This policy is taken to temporarily close the process of teaching and learning at schools and universities and requires them to study at home and conduct online learning to break the chain of virus spread. This situation forces educational institutions to arrange breakthroughs regarding the learning methods and models that must be chosen so that online learning continues even with all its limitations.

In dealing with teaching writing in an online environment in this pandemic era, teachers must also have challenges because the teaching process should be done online in a way that is genuinely different from the teaching process in the classroom. A significant difference that can be found between teaching writing during normal times and pandemic times is the teaching method. When learning is carried out normally in the classroom, teachers are free to arrange more flexible teaching methods such as reading approaches, singing-alongs, storytelling, and task-based learning approaches. However, within this pandemic situation, some limitations cause teachers to be unable to apply methods in online learning that are usually applied in the classroom. Problems in developing teaching materials and curricula are the main issues in online teaching (Surakarta, 2021). This is to say that to face the problems in the process of teaching writing online, the creativity of teachers is needed. Teachers are expected to be more creative in applying teaching methods within the existing limitations. Further, teachers should have their own strategies to

teach writing in an online environment because the way teachers teach writing in an online environment must be different from face-to-face in the classroom.

A senior high school in Ciamis is also applying online learning during this pandemic. When the researcher observed the school and the process of English learning, it turned out that there were many problems and obstacles encountered by both teachers and students when implementing online learning, especially in the writing process.

Therefore, based on the statement above, the researcher aims to investigate what challenges are faced by an English Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in teaching writing through online learning. The researcher is also intended to find out what possible solutions there are to overcome teachers' challenges of teaching writing in an online environment. The significance of this research is to acquire more information related to problems in teaching writing online from teachers' perspectives. The researcher will conduct this research at one of the senior high schools in Ciamis based on the learning conditions in the school which have been observed by the researcher.

## **B. Research Questions**

This research can formulate the problems based on the background above as follows:

1. What are the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching writing through online learning?
2. What are the solutions to overcome the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching writing through online learning?

## **C. Research Purposes**

The objectives of the research are in line with the formulation above as follows:

1. To investigate the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching writing through online learning.
2. To find out the solutions to overcome the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching writing through online learning.

#### **D. Research Significances**

This research is expected to become a reference for challenges encountered by teachers in teaching writing through online learning. Hereafter, this study is intended to provide an understanding of the significance of paying attention to challenges.

Theoretically, the result of this research is expected to highlight challenges that exist in teaching writing through online learning. This research can provide information about the challenges English teachers face in teaching writing through an online class.

Practically, this research offers significance to:

1. Teachers

This research will become an input to English teachers to pay attention to the challenges encountered by other English teachers in teaching writing in an online environment.

2. Students

This result is expected to notify students about challenges in the process of English writing learning in an online environment. They can help the teachers solve the challenges found during online learning so that students can enhance their writing ability.

#### **E. Research Scope**

The scope of this study will be limited to the analysis of challenges faced by English teachers at one of the senior high schools in Ciamis in teaching writing through online learning. The research data will be collected through interviews and observations with two English teachers.

#### **F. Conceptual Framework**

Teaching writing is considered an essential process as it is one of the four skills of language acquisition. A great deal of theoretical work on the existence of L2 writing and learning has been done since the 1980s (Brown, 2000). For a long time, writing instruction has only focused on what the writing material

is about and not on the writing process (Harmer, 2004). Thus, the teacher should consider several things to understand the student's writing process:

1. The way the teachers get the students to plan. The first thing that students must do is plan what to write. When the students want to make a plan, the teacher can guide them by telling them what, how, and for whom the writing is intended.
2. The way the teachers encourage the students to draft, represent, and revise. Writing is a way for students to create drafts, thoughts, and written revisions. They will respond to each other and inspire each other to produce good writing.
3. The way the teachers respond to their students writing. To find out their answer and give the right advice, the teacher could correct the results of the student's writing one by one.

Teaching writing to EFL students becomes challenging because teachers are used to using writing instructions such as asking students to write paragraphs about certain topics. The stereotypical pattern of teaching writing is that the teacher provides the topic and the students write it down. Teaching writing is more than just a traditional activity (Ariyanti, 2016). In other words, the teacher cannot just collect the students' writing and put a mark on it; in doing so, the teacher neglects the most important aspect, namely the process. In responding to students' writing, teachers tend to correct grammar structures and try to minimize errors in language form. That is why today, teachers often find out that they cannot understand what message students want to convey in their writing. This seems to happen because students write solely to avoid grammar mistakes.

Online learning has been implemented in this pandemic era since the learning process is not carried out in schools. Online learning, or e-learning, is a learning process for all levels of education, both formal and informal, that is carried out online, namely by using digital networks that have the function of conveying material, interacting, and facilities (Setiawan et al., 2017). In conducting online learning, it is highly intertwined with the notion of "internet"

and "technology" as the support system (Reese, 2000). It also requires teachers to grasp the internet and technology in their teaching. In online learning, students can learn in a variety of forms whenever they choose to learn and they can easily and rapidly move from one scenario or context to another (Wong & Looi, 2011). Besides, there are many applications or learning media that could be used as utilizing tools to support online classrooms, such as WhatsApp, ZOOM, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and so on. The decision to choose the required learning tools must be made intentionally based on the ability of teachers to access technology, student conditions, and other structural components. The use of these tools then helps both teachers and students carry out the teaching and learning process while managing online learning.

In line with the teaching writing process, teaching writing in an online environment presented a number of challenges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching writing has become a challenge for most teachers, and now they have to deal with problems in teaching online, which means teachers are finding new challenges in teaching writing. In online writing classes, students can take more risks in their writing because of the lack of feedback they get from the teacher (Premont, 2020). It occurs because students always need direction, feedback, and even improvement during their writing process. Besides, challenges are found because of the differences in teaching offline in the classroom and the online classroom. A bad connection that can annoy the process of teaching and learning, problems in explaining the material, and problems in operating the application are examples of challenges that are often found in teaching in an online environment (Tukan, 2020). In writing learning sessions in an offline classroom, the teacher can give writing assignments, supervise directly, and provide input on the mistakes of students after their assignments are submitted. However, in an online writing class, even though the writing assignment would be the same as in an offline session, the teacher could not directly supervise students while doing their assignments, namely when they were writing, let alone correct student mistakes or provide direct feedback. It could happen because long-distance learning from home is not

optimal in helping them increase their writing skills because of the limited time during virtual learning with lecturers, inaccuracies in the presentation of material, and limited feedback on students' writing (Handayani & Handayani, 2020).

At the same time, teachers should know how to ensure the quality of their students' learning activities during the online classroom and, at the same time, how to develop the students' physical and mental well-being during the pandemic (Zhao et al., 2020). The atmosphere of teaching online is very different from that of a face-to-face classroom. Students are more often asked to read the instructions for the task rather than hear the instructions directly from their teachers, as in the normal classroom. Thus, teachers should have other strategies for applying the method to teaching writing through an online classroom in this pandemic situation.

#### **G. Previous Studies**

The researcher concluded from previous studies that helped so much that they conducted this study. Some studies have been conducted in the field of teaching writing to EFL students. First, research was conducted by Rachel Nyanamoney Moses and Maslawati Mohamad in Malaysia. This research explored the challenges faced by both students and teachers in teaching and learning writing skills in elementary schools. This research was done through a literature review, which means that the researcher explored the literature review on the challenges in the process of learning and teaching writing faced by both students and teachers. This research found that students are facing many challenges in the process of writing, and it is quite hard to teach writing for English teachers to their students. Each student faced different challenges in learning to write. The following challenges are: lack of vocabulary, having trouble with grammar, poor spelling, students' readiness, lack of exposure to books and reading materials, and lack of motivation. Besides, the challenges faced by teachers in teaching writing are having a hard time motivating the students, having different levels of students in the classroom, parental indifference, lack of professional experience, and lack of students' interest. By



understanding the challenges students and teachers face in learning and teaching writing, teachers may choose an approach to teaching writing by providing feedback and guidance (Moses & Mohamad, 2019).

The second previous study was conducted by Kuni Hikmah Hidayati from Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia, which figured out the challenges of Indonesian teachers in teaching English writing and their solutions. For an interview, 10 English teachers were collected who come from different parts of East Java, Indonesia, and teach English in junior and senior high schools. The instrument used was a structured interview. The results showed that there are internal and external factors that cause challenges for teachers in teaching writing. Internal factors include linguistic competence, first language interferences, motivation, and reading habits of students, while external factors include classroom conditions, tools available for teaching writing, and time availability. From the challenges that exist, there are some ways to overcome the challenges that teachers can apply. The teachers got to match the assignments that they asked the learners to perform with their language level. This entails ensuring that they have the least amount of language proficiency required to complete such a task. Furthermore, teachers ought to ensure that there is a purpose to the task and that learners are aware of this. Last, the teacher should pay attention and remember that students need to be guided in their process of writing. The results of this study will make it easier for teachers and related authorities to improve ELT, especially in teaching writing (Hidayati, 2018).

Third, the research by Dwi Warry Octaviana from Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Garut investigated students' perceptions of their writing skills in the classroom environment and determined factors of students' difficulties in learning to write. This research employed descriptive qualitative research to answer the purpose of the research. The data was gathered by way of classroom observations and questionnaires. The subject of this research was 39 students of class XIII IPA 1 at SMA YKBBB Leles, Garut. The result of this research was that the students gave positive and negative



statements toward the English writing subject. Their positive perception was related to knowledge enrichment when they strove to write English. Meanwhile, their negative perceptions were related to the difficulties in the process of English writing. This research found that most students had difficulties in writing English. These difficulties exist due to the limitations of English grammar and a lack of English vocabulary. Besides, the main reason for the students' low ability to write English is the lack of writing practice. (Octaviana, 2016).

Last, the research by Sri Wahyuningsih from Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus investigated some challenges of teaching English in academic writing skills for Indonesian students at IAIN Kudus. The result found that numerous challenges faced by students in academic writing include difficulties in starting writing, limited English vocabulary, a lack of intensive and extensive reading, and a lack of interest in writing English. Also, honing receptive skills is an opportunity that can be used to improve the teaching process of academic writing skills among English Department students at IAIN Kudus, namely by reading and listening to obtain successful productive skills, including speaking and writing, and asking them questions. Use reference management tools properly when citing some references consisting of books, journal articles, etc., using technology or digital tools such as Instagram, Facebook, blogs, and so on, to improve the process of teaching academic writing skills and pursue them for academic writing workshops and seminars (Wahyuningsih, 2018).

While previous research focuses on the teacher's challenges in teaching writing, this research centers on the teacher's challenges in teaching writing through online learning. This research is different from previous research because nobody has focused on the teacher's challenges in teaching writing through online learning.