

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background

The increasing of international interactions and opportunities to study abroad makes writing competence becomes one of the essential language competences which should be mastered by students (Yi, 2009). Writing in English is highly valued in the academic context as well as future career development. Writing competence is a language skill which demonstrates students' skills, knowledge, and ability (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). Furthermore, writing can be defined as an activity which quite challenging to be mastered by students in English learning. As it is mentioned by Rahman and Sarker (2019), writing is categorized to the most difficult skill because when someone writes, he or she will through a mental process. Therefore, suitable various techniques or strategies needed to be applied by teacher so that the students can be good in writing. As it is stated by Alsmari (2019), teachers' role in overcoming students' writing problems is significant because they need to identify the appropriate techniques and methods in helping students develop their writing competence.

In other hands, there is another task which is essential in improving students' writing competence which also considered as part of teaching writing. According to Wihastyanang et al., (2020), the task which is considered as the most important in teaching writing is conducting an assessment. Dewi (2014) states that conducting assessment can provide many benefits not only for teachers but also for the students. Wihastyanang et al., (2020) found that most students think that one of the parts of

assessment such as feedback was crucial for their writing performance. Ismail (2011) has found that even minimal feedback given to the ESL students' writing competence was helpful and made students to do self-revision. Additionally, teachers should consider the nature of assessment from the modern view, not from traditional view (Conrad & Openo, 2018). Assessment from the traditional view sees that an activity that is used to evaluate students' understanding about factual knowledge. Meanwhile, the modern view sees assessment as an activity that is designed to motivate students in learning.

Assessment from the modern view is also known as formative assessment (Ni'ma et al., 2020). Formative assessment is a process which is conducted during the learning process and it allows the teacher to collect learning evidences of students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be used as an input to improve students' learning and also to adjust learning instructions. As mentioned by Brown (2004), formative assessment is an ongoing process which focuses on the development of students. The ongoing process means that whenever the teacher gives feedback, comment, or suggestion, all those things are offered in order to improve students' language ability particularly in writing competence. Formative assessment is essential to be conducted by the teacher to improve students' writing competence. As stated by Widiastuti et al., (2020), this type of assessment focuses on helping students to improve their language competence by identifying students' learning improvement and achievement and detecting students' needs. Thus, it will help students understand their own learning in writing so that they can produce good written products. Rutherford and Slade (2018) also emphasize that formative assessment should be done by teachers because through this assessment, teachers

can provide effective feedback for students and help students to develop and support students' writing competence.

There are varied formative assessment methods which can be implemented in the classroom to help teachers in gaining understanding of students' progress and understanding in writing. One of formative assessment strategies which is used by teachers in assessing students' writing competence in the classroom is by giving feedback to students' writing production (Imen, 2020). The author further states that by assessing students' formatively it can provide the students with the chance to improve their quality of writing. However, regarding Covid-19 Pandemic, teaching writing and assessing students' writing competence formatively cannot be conducted at the classroom. According to "*Surat Edaran Nomor 7194 Tahun 2020 Poin 1*" (Leaflet Number 7194, 2020, Point 1), teaching and learning activity should be done at home. That is also because Indonesia particularly in Bali is still in red zone, and it means that Bali are not allowed yet to conduct teaching and learning in school or it should at home ("*Panduan Penyelenggaraan Pembelajaran Pada Tahun Ajaran Dan Tahun Akademik Baru Di Masa Pandemi COVID-19*"). Fortunately, the rapid growth of technology helps teachers still able to assess students' writing competence formatively at home without going to the school or it is known as online learning.

Formative assessment in online learning can be an effective way to encourage students to learn in meaningful education experiences particularly in writing. As it is explained by Rutherford and Slade (2018), formative assessment in online learning can improve students' writing competence and assessment-centered focus. However, the variety formative assessment methods should be done for assessing

students' competence in online learning. On the other hand, teachers can implement the concept of online learning such as synchronous and asynchronous in supporting the implementation of formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning (Hrastinski, 2008). Synchronous learning refers to live communication. Ghirardini (2011) mentions that synchronous learning refers to learning or teaching that takes place simultaneously in the real-time interaction between students and teachers using audio or video conferencing. Meanwhile, asynchronous learning takes place not in real time. According to Perveen (2016), in asynchronous learning, students are not bound by the time and can learn on their learning. Students are provided with the materials that can be accessed anytime and anywhere through the learning application.

However, according to Alam (2020), the changes from real learning to online learning can be a challenge for teachers. The writer further argues that there are some challenges that they are experiencing during the online learning as follows; (1) Some teachers are poor in technological literacy, which means that they should be able to use the technological means of teaching and learning. (2) It is hard for teachers to manage feedback for each student to make them involve in the material. The challenges which are faced by teachers in online learning direct to others challenges in assessing students' writing competence formatively. As stated by Quyen and Khairani (2016) the challenge can be appeared from the students' understanding of formative assessment, the class sizes and time consuming and the school authorities. Another challenge in implementing formative assessment in online learning can be also come from the teacher itself or it is also known as teacher assessment literacy. Zulaiha et al., (2020) state that teacher assessment literacy can

be defined as teacher's understanding to know what and how to assess students based on the certain objectives. Thus, teachers are expected to develop their professional capacity related to assessment literacy in order to solve the challenges which might be faced in implementing formative assessment.

Moreover, as mentions by Lam (2019) assessment practices which refer to how innovative assessment are planned and implemented in teachers' work context are the primary component of teacher assessment literacy. Teacher assessment literacy has another important aspect in conducting assessment become effective and meaningful in online learning. Similarly, assessing students' writing competence by using formative assessment in online learning related with the use of ICT. Therefore, Rudner and Schafer in Giraldo (2018) mention that the use of technology has been included into the part of teacher' assessment literacy. In consequence, teachers are required to have understanding of how to assess students' writing competence effectively by using formative assessment and able to use the learning application as part of technology that is used to conduct formative assessment in students' writing competence in online learning. Related to this research, the knowledge of how formative assessment are planned and implemented by the teachers for assessing students' writing competence in online learning is included in teacher assesement literacy.

As one of the junior high schools in Denpasar regency, there are junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar who have been conducted teaching and formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning by using both types of online learning such asynchronous and synchronous online learning. The junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar

assessed students' writing competence by conducting varied formative assessment strategies in online learning. The asynchronous modes of application in online learning which were used by teachers were Whatsapp, Google Classroom and Google form. In synchronous learning, Zoom was used by teachers in conducting formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning.

Hence, based on the phenomenon above, teacher assessment literacy is really needed not only in planning but also in the implementation. Therefore, it is essential to investigate further formative assessment practices in English instructions particularly in writing competence at SMPN 3 Denpasar during the online learning. The English teachers' formative assessment practices can be analyzed from the analysis of teaching preparation and its implementation from teachers' point of view. This also includes the challenges that might be faced during the implementation of formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning. Thus, this study tried to investigate how formative assessments are planned and implemented by the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar for assessing students' writing competence in online learning and what are the challenges of formative assessment implementation in assessing students' writing competence in online learning at SMPN 3 Denpasar. From this study, it is expected that there will be more comprehensive evidence on formative assessment practices in writing competence in online learning.

## **1.2. Identification of Problem**

As part of teaching and learning, assessment is important to be applied for students' development in writing. One of the kinds of assessments which suitable

to be applied is formative assessment. It is because this type is generally used to help students in improving their language competence, identifying the learning improvement and achievement as well as students' need. Therefore, teachers are expected to have the knowledge of how assess students' writing competence by using formative assessment. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, teachers cannot conduct formative assessment at the classroom. With the help of technology, the teaching and assessment process are done by using application or it is known as online learning. This make teachers are expected to have an understanding about formative assessment planning and how it will be implemented for assessing students' writing competence in online learning. In other hand, assessing students' writing competence in online learning, the teachers might be faced several challenges since the changes of instructional mode came in suddent. The pre-observation data showed that junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar have conducted formative assessment for assessing students writing competence in online learning by using both of mode in online learning such as asynchronous and synchronous learning. However, how teachers plan and implement formative assessment and also the challenges of formative assessment implementation in assessing writing competence in online learning are have not identified yet. Thus, this study arised to investigate how formative assessments are planned and implemented by the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar for assessing students' writing competence in online learning and what are the challenges of formative assessment implementation in assessing students' writing competence in online learning.

### **1.3. Limitation of Study**

However, some limitation should be noted. The first one, this research is focusing on writing competence which refers to students' skills, knowledge, and ability in writing. The second one, this research was only conducted at SMPN 3 Denpasar since from the preliminary study it was found that the teachers implemented several kinds of formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning by using both mode of online learning. Finally, this study focus on how the English teachers practice formative assessment in online learning on writing competence assessment that include the formative assesement plan and its implementation from the teachers' point of view.

### **1.4. Statements of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the statements of the problem can be stated as follows

1.4.1 How formative assessments are planned and implemented by the junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar for assessing students' writing competence in online learning?

1.4.2 What are the challenges of formative assessment implementation in assessing students' writing competence in online learning at SMPN 3 Denpasar?

### **1.5. Purposes of the Study**

Based on the statements of the problem, the purpose of the study can be stated as follows:



1.5.1 To investigate how junior high school English teachers at SMPN 3 Denpasar planned and implemented formative assessments for assessing students' writing competence in online learning.

1.5.2. To investigate the challenges of formative assessment implementations in assessing students' writing competence in online learning at SMPN 3 Denpasar

## **1.6. Significances of the Study**

The significances of the study are viewed from two perspectives. They are theoretical significance and practical significance.

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

It is expected that the result of this study can be used as reference in education field and give contribution to improve the quality of formative assessment practices particularly for assessing students' writing competence in online learning.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significances**

a) For English Teachers

The result of this study can be used as base for teachers to improve the quality formative assessment for assessing students' writing competence in online learning. Teachers can also improve the strategy to assess students' writing competence by considering the challenges that are found in this research. Hopefully, it will help teachers to conduct better formative assessment in online learning.

b) For Stakeholders

The result of this study can be used as feedback on the standard of assessing students' writing competence in online learning which also can improve school's assessment practice. Thus, it can help teachers to be more knowledgeable in constructing good formative assessment in online learning.

c) For Prospective English Teachers

This study can be used as references for prospective English teacher in writing a studies about assessment in online learning or formative assessment practices.

