

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter presents the researcher's purpose to conduct this research. Then, research questions and objectives are explored. Additionally, the research limitation and significances are also described.

Background of the Research

Writing is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life including academic education. The writing process provides the elaboration as one attempt to explore and communicate someone's knowledge and feelings (Yinger & Clark, 1981). Other times, people write because they are required to write. If they are students, their teachers may give written exams and assign essays or term papers (Blum, Johnston, & Shell, 1983). It will not realize if a student does not know how to write the right way. Being able to write in English is a common thing in college, it might be an asset in people's future career. Tuan (2010) says that writing is an ability that makes sense that the more you practice writing, the better you will write. Therefore, writing is one of the most aspects of education and it is necessary for both students and other people of all business divisions (Tuan, 2010).

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill for language learners because they need to have a certain amount of L2 background knowledge about the rhetorical organizations, appropriate language used or specific lexicon with what they want to communicate to their readers (Tangpermpoon, 2008). They are demanded to be able

to write, but in fact there are still problems that appear especially among language learners.

Based on researcher' observation, students of seventh semester at English Education Department (EED) of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta faced many obstacles when they are asked to write. As the common problems, the students get the problem to find the content in writing. In one condition, it is also quite difficult to use the proper words and do not have much vocabulary or notions when it is obliged to write.

In addition, the students do not get the feedback on their written assignment from their lecturer. Whereas according to Yinger & Clark (1981), he points out that feedback is powerful feature that support learning. Then, assignment of writing is only given less than three times of each semester. Another problem is the students' writing skill has not been reviewed. Thus, they do not have comprehensive knowledge on how to write in the appropriate way.

These conditions tell that those students or even the researcher as the learner needs writing skill to face all of the obstacles in writing. The more students write, the more they can improve their writing skills. Writing weekly journal is a way that has been used in EED of UMY. Writing weekly journal is a new mode of learning which aimed to practice students' skill specifically in writing, even though it is might be not a new thing in other institutions.

Yinger and Clark (1981) state that journal writing is an utility for learning method used by students and for professional development for teachers. It is a

powerful learning tool for improving the professional thoughts. Tuan (2010) maintains that journal writing as a way to develop the habit of transcribing one's thoughts into paper is by and as a way to develop accuracy on paper.

“Weekly Journal” is a term of weekly writing assignment that is given for each meeting of a week. It had been implemented in seventh semester in one of the courses at EED of UMY. The rule of this weekly journal is the lecturer gives a cope of journals to the students, and students should read the chapter then they would answer the questions from the lecturer according to the chapter for about three to five minutes. Through this technique, a student did not have another choice since they need to keep reading and writing a weekly journal. Therefore, the researcher wants to find out how the students' response on writing weekly journal as a new mode of learning at EED of UMY is by investigating what students' perception of using this weekly journal.

Statement of the Problem

Writing has been the most challenging skill for students as an English Foreign Language (EFL) learner. In English learning at EED of UMY, EFL students find the problems in writing. For the example, some lecturers did not provide feedback hence make students still hard to write properly. Then, many courses were only giving writing assignments less than three times of each semester. Moreover, the students' writing skill has not been reviewed, so the students do not know their mistakes in writing. In EED of UMY, weekly journal was rarely used as a strategy of teaching in the classroom.

Based on these problems, the researcher would like to explore what students' perception on writing weekly journal as a new mode in learning process is. Then, to carry out the obstacles that the students face when they do writing weekly journal at English Education Department (EED) of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2011.

Limitation of the Problem

To make this research more specific, the researcher limited the research as the following; firstly, the research would focus on the students' perception on writing weekly journal at EED of UMY. Secondly, the researcher also wanted to find out the obstacles that students face of writing weekly journal at EED of UMY. Thirdly, the participants of this research were the students in seventh semester for the academic session of 2014/2015. The result might be different when the participants were taken in other institutions, hence the result could not generalize to other researches and institutions.

Research Questions

Based on the background of the research above, there would be two main research questions addressed on this research:

1. What are students' perceptions on writing weekly journal at EED of UMY?
2. What are the obstacles faced by students at EED of UMY on writing weekly journal?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the problem stated on the research questions, the objectives of this research were:

1. The research attempts to investigate students' perceptions on writing weekly journal at EED of UMY.
2. The research attempts to discuss the obstacles revealed on writing weekly journal at EED of UMY.

Significance of the Research

In relating to the problem statements above, the benefits of this research are as follows:

The Researcher

This result of this research can be knowledge for the researcher as a prospective English teacher. She will know better on how to implement weekly journal as one of the English teaching methods.

The Students

There was writing weekly journal as a new learning style applied at EED of UMY. This writing weekly journal could be a habit for students to improve their vocabularies and English skills, particularly in writing, reading and speaking. Students would get more knowledge from the journal articles.

The Lecturers

This research will provide valuable information about the implementation of writing weekly journal. It may encourage lecturers to prepare the strategy in better

ways to improve students' writing ability. The lecturers can motivate students to keep reading and writing inside and outside the course.

Other Researchers

This research would be beneficial for other researchers. It could encourage them to continue implementing weekly journal by doing preparation on this strategy with a better way. Hopefully, this research can provide some information that is valuable for them to enhance student's ability.

Outline of the Research

This research consisted of five chapters and each chapter had the sub-chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher would like to tell about introduction which consists of the background, statements of the problem, limitation of the problems, research questions, the objectives of the research, significance of the research and the outline of the research. The second chapter of this research would talk about literature review that consists of the theory about writing skill, teaching writing, journal writing, related study and the conceptual framework of the study. The next chapter would focus on methodology used to collect the data and also discussed the research design, research setting, research participant, data collection method, then, data analysis. The fourth chapter would present and discuss the finding of the study, including the data description, and the result of using weekly journal at EED UMY. The final chapter would conclude and provide recommendation of the research. The conclusion would be answering the research questions and also the recommendations are written of this research to gain the solution.