

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays writing activity is inseparable from people lives (Nadia, cited in Dawami, 2010). There are many advantages of writing activity, some of which improve students' self confidence and intelligence. Knudsen (2009) believes that the definition of writing is a language skill which is developed in written form. Also, writing is the most difficult language skill that learners may face (Byrne 1978; Alwasilah 2001). However, writing is one of the language skills that should be mastered by students especially in junior high school.

According to Alwasilah (2001), there is a reason of why writing activity is hard for students that they do not know how to write. Hence, a teacher as a motivator has to find a way in order to stimulate the students to feel comfortable in writing and to improve their writing ability. In addition, this activity will be more difficult because students are involved in the process of writing including; making an idea, writing and editing (Brown, 2011).

In this case, junior high school students need stimulation and enjoyable activities to help them learn English comfortably as their second language. Teachers tend to be encouraged to make many interesting ways that will get their interest and passion to learn English. If they show their interest, they will learn automatically without being forced. Based on Smith (1999, 2006) if students have the passion and comfort to write they will easily write their thoughts. In line with

this, Moon (1999) states on her article that students often love to write about themselves because it encourages them to write freely.

One condition which makes students write freely and honestly is when they are writing about their experiences or themselves such as writing on a daily journal or a diary. When people write, their thoughts will be open and they will write automatically follow their minds and wants. It is related to a theory of Moon (1999), when they write for themselves it helps them to be confident and they will realize that they can write. It is the teacher's responsibility to make students confident in writing.

In addition, Byrne (1978) states that students required chances to share their ideas through enjoyable writing. In this case, writing journals is one of the ways to make students enjoy in writing activity because according to Williams (2011) journal writing is fun and adaptable to a variety of writing experiences.

It accordance with that, teachers are encouraged to be creative to make some interesting topics to write for students' learning. Because an interesting topic will help students start their writings about their familiar things and interest. They are not forced to write something that they do not like. This argument was affirmed by Byrnes (1978) who believes that if someone is forced to write, the writing is not good.

Furthermore, the teachers should find the way to build up their comfortable feeling and writing ability. The writer encouraged to arouse the students' interest and ability of writing skill especially in writing recount texts. The writer chose a technique to help the students by using journal in order to improve their writing

ability. It is according to Carr's statement (1979:5) that journal can be one of the effective and factual that can be used as teaching and learning tool to develop students' writing skill. People can share anything freely and enjoyably in a journal. A journal itself has contents that are similar to a recount text. It is similar to a statement argued by Stanley (1988) and Stewart (1996), that both recounts and journals are related items and can be used in teaching and learning process.

As a recount text, a journal also tells about past events and sequence of events.

Based on the problem above, this study is aimed to investigate the use of learning journals in teaching writing of recount texts and the students' perceptions toward it. The writer hopes that students' ability will improve.

1.2 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is writing journal able to improve students' ability in writing recount texts?
2. What are the students' perceptions about writing journal in their learning?

1.3 Aims of Study

This study was conducted to do the following:

1. To investigate whether writing journals contributes to improving students' ability in writing recount texts.

2. To reveal the students' perceptions of writing journals in their learning.

1.4 Scope of this study

This study limited the investigation into two issues. The first issue was about the students' ability in writing recount texts. The second issue was the students' perceptions of writing journals in their learning.

This study was conducted at a junior high school in Bandung. The participants of this study were second grade students of junior high school which was two classes taken as the sample of the study. This study was conducted as a quasi-experimental design, therefore, one of the classes was as an experimental group and the other as a control group. The treatments were conducted for the experimental group. Moreover, the context of the study was limited on teaching writing recount texts using learning journals in a junior high school.

1.5 Significance of Study

The result of this study is expected to contribute the teaching learning of writing. Hopefully, this study will be beneficially useful for people who are related to this area of this study, such as: government, educators or teacher, students and other researcher.

For the government officials, it is hoped this study will help government's mission to build education in the society, especially for students to be intelligent, also

help to find another ways to increase students' interest and ability in writing activity. The writer hopes that this study is successful and it will make young generation love writing.

For teachers or educators, the writer expects this study will inform them around this study may be good or bad for their students or learners. If the result is good, they can use this ways to improve their students' ability about writing. In addition, this study may inspire them to make better ways to help students in the learning process.

Especially for students, this study is expected to encourage students to realize that writing is enjoyable and fun activity to learn English. Hopefully, their ability will improve and the students will love writing, especially about their experience either bad or good things.

For the researchers, this study is expected to help them to get information about this study. If this study is successful, it is possible for them to develop this study through different techniques, participants, or approaches.

1.6 Research Methodology

Experimental designs are especially meaningful in order to get evaluation questions about the effectiveness and impact of programs. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design is used to gain the data for this study. The researcher substitutes statistical "control" for the absence of physical control of the experimental situation

and give treatments to the experimental group. The groups were taken from the second grade students of a junior high school. Some instruments were used in collecting data to answer research questions, they are; pretest, posttest, and questionnaire. The data of this study were analyzed through quantitative analyses.

1.7 Organization of Paper

This section has 5 chapters about the organization of this paper, as follows:

Chapter one, this is as introduction, which is explained the background of this study, research questions, aims of this study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, and organization of the paper.

Chapter two, it provides theoretical foundations which consist of details theories which are related to the study. Theoretical background refers to writing, journal, recount texts, and the previous of study.

Chapter three, it consists of research methodology which aims to answer research question and describe how the process of this study, this chapter discusses more about methodologies including respondents, instruments, and data collection.

Chapter four, it is related to the finding and discussion. This chapter also describes the results of the instrument analysis, for the example; posttest data analysis, and data from questionnaire, and interpretation of the findings from the study.

Chapter five, it consists of conclusions and suggestions. The conclusions provide the finish result of the study and suggestions involve some obstacles which the writer face during the investigation, the writer suggestions' for the future research or people who interested to this area of study.

