

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study related to writing, journal writing, and journaling by using electronic media. Next, it will cover research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of key terms, and paper organization.

1.1 Background of the study

English is used to communicate among people worldwide since it is the international language. In Indonesia, English is used and taught as a Foreign Language (EFL). Basically, teaching English is aimed to master four main skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. From those four skills, writing is considered as the most challenging skill to be mastered. Writing is essential to be learnt. According to Graham *et al* (2007), writing, either paper-based or electronically, allows us to communicate and have relationship with others. However, many students could not meet grade-level demands of writing in school (Graham et al, 2007). Those who could not write well face some obstacles.

Students' difficulties are caused by some factors. Harmer (2004) states that some difficulties faced by students are the fear to make mistakes on: grammar, spelling, generating ideas and making a good writing systematically (Harmer, 2004). He adds that students' low frequency in writing even in their mother language is also one of the causes of students' unwillingness in composing a text. Moreover, beginners' anxiety and motivation matters make them have less enthusiasm in composing texts (Lindstrom, as cited in Westwood, 2008).

Based on the difficulties above, there should be condition which makes students comfortable in writing. Harmer (2004) says that writing habit should be created by teachers to make students have a willingness to participate in writing activities. In addition, writing should facilitate teacher-students' relationship, student collaboration, and appreciation on the process of writing rather than the product (Boscolo and Gelati, as cited in Graham *et al*, 2007). One way to overcome the problems above is by implementing journal writing.

Journal writing is one of techniques which facilitates students to write and express their feelings, thoughts and ideas. Harmer (2004) says that students can write anything they want through journal writing. Journal also involves introspection and reflection. Furthermore, journaling is one way for students to practice writing at home or everywhere they are. According to Tuan (2010) journaling activity forms a habit of thinking through writing. By journaling, students' interest in writing and fluency in expressing ideas also will increase. This technique can be implemented either in classroom or as students' homework.

The journaling activity is usually written by using paper and pencil (Dunlap, 2006). It is the traditional way of journaling. Meanwhile, the modern version of journaling is written by using electronic tools. Recently, technology has been implemented in educational field. Both teachers and students are expected to be familiar with the use of technology in teaching and learning process. Moreover, several studies that have been conducted on the field show positive effects (see Ellis, 1995; Shang, 2005; Kaplan *et al*, 2007; Foroutan, 2013)

Electronic journaling is a kind of journaling which is new learning tool that can be used for journaling in this digital age. The journaling activity uses electronic tools to write such as blogs, websites, emails, social media and others. This computer-based journal gives positive effects on students' writing skills. Also, using electronic media in journaling can erase some weaknesses in traditional version such as students' handwriting problem, late submission, continual feedback, monitoring of student, and time problem (Phipps, 2005; Moon, 2006, as cited in Hayes, 2011).

Some researchers found that electronic journaling could improve students' writing skills. Ellis (1995) conducted a research on the use of electronic journaling by using e-mail to improve students' writing skill. Fifty students in Montana State University enrolled in this study. The students were divided into two groups. One group wrote by using e-mail while the other group wrote by using paper and pencil. The results revealed that students who journaling by using e-mail were better in their writing skills than the other group. In addition, Foroutan (2013) conducted a study on dialogue journaling by using email. The study was aimed to investigate students' writing performance. The participants

were 42 undergraduate students in a university in Malaysia. The result revealed that dialogue journaling by using email was effective on students' writing performance especially on language use.

Based on the effectiveness on the implementation of electronic journaling by using e-mail above, this study attempts to conduct the same technique. This study is aimed to investigate whether or not electronic journaling can improve students' ability in writing recount text as stated on School Based Curriculum (KTSP) in which Junior High School students should be able to write Recount Text accurately, fluent, and acceptable. It is hoped that this study will give positive contribution on students' writing skill, especially the use of electronic journaling as a newer tool than paper and pencil. Later, electronic journaling can be implemented on the teaching and learning process continuously.

1.2 Research Questions

This research is conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Is electronic journaling effective to improve students' ability in writing recount texts?
2. What are students' responses toward the implementation of electronic journaling in teaching writing recount text?

1.3 Aims of the study

Based on the research questions, the aims of this study are:

1. To find out whether or not electronic journaling effective to improve students' ability in writing recount texts
2. To find out students' responses toward the implementation of electronic journaling in teaching writing recount text

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is expected to give contribution in theoretical, practical, and professional benefits.

1. Theoretical

The research findings can be used as the contribution and reference toward the research about electronic journaling in improving students' ability in writing recount texts.

2. Practical

The research findings will be useful to teachers, students, and also the readers who are interested in teaching English. The finding will be beneficially useful especially for English teachers to help their students improving their ability in writing recount texts through electronic journaling

3. Professional

The research findings can be used especially for English teachers to improve their quality in teaching writing, to create good relationship between teachers and students and to create interesting technique in teaching.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study focuses on two concerns. The first is to find out whether or not electronic journaling effective in improving students' ability in writing recount texts, and the second is to find out students' responses toward the implementation of electronic journaling in teaching writing recount text.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding in this research, some key terms will be defined as follows:

1. **Journal** refers to personal record/experience in which students write their own experiences based on some topics decided by the teacher.
2. **Electronic Journaling** refers to a technique used in writing journal. In this study, students write their journals electronically. Students use electronic mail (e-mail) as the medium to submit journals and receive teacher feedback.
3. **Recount Text** means a text that tells the readers about past experience or activity.
4. **Writing Ability** refers to the ability to write Recount Text which is seen from several categories: content; organization; and language use of the text. The categories are measured by numeric and scoring rubric by Coffin, *et al* (2003; Hyland; 2004, cited in Emilia, 2011)
5. **Improvement** refers to students' improvement on writing scores of Recount Text after receiving electronic journaling technique.

1.7 Paper Organization

This study is organized into five chapters. The chapter is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter involves the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II : THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides theoretical foundations of the topic including writing, journal writing, electronic journaling and recount text.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology in conducting and analyzing this research. It also explains the data collection and site and participants.

CHAPTER IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explains the research findings and analyzes the results in discussion. It also describes the answer of the research problems, which are to find out the improvement of students' ability in writing recount texts and to find out the students' responses toward electronic journaling activity.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter concludes the findings and discussion. It also offers suggestions for further researchers and English teachers.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented several points including the background of the study which followed by several theories and research. Also, two research questions will be the focus in this study. Moreover, this chapter also has elaborated the aims, the significance, and the scope of the study. The next chapter will focus on theoretical review related to the study.