

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory Remarks

As the introductory section, this chapter presents initial description related to the study. This includes the background of study, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, general approach and methodology of the study, clarification of the terms, and conclusion.

1.2 Background of the Study

Unwritten resources can be written and incorporated by students to their journals, because those can be cheaply obtained everyday and everywhere as long as they have consciousness to record them. As stated by Comprone (1974: 5) that “a variety of stories, and experiences that are potentially exciting surround the students at any moments and places of their lives but unluckily they often ignore them and seldom break through their consciousness”. Therefore, it seems to be pleonastic if they are not eager to include those stories and experiences as their recorded documents because “by recording those specific stories and experiences students can watch the process by which they perceive and experience their world” (Carr, 1979: 5).

Actually, students’ personal stories, experiences, imaginations, and life impressions can be made as their writing resources, and those can be permanently written and saved by them through giving full of attention” (Comprone, 1974: 5, 174 & 417). Then, the way they record those stories, experiences, imaginations,

and life impressions are also very important because if they do not record them immediately, they will miss out the most valuable part of their lives. Therefore, “students’ personal journals can be good place to record their stories, experiences and life impressions as accurately as possible” (Comprone, 1974: 12; Carr, 1979: 5; Winterowd, 1981: 30; Brereton, 1982: 6; Crosby & Carter, 1986: 23; Stanley at all, 1988: 3; Gould at al, 1989: 72; Harmer, 2001: 339; Harmer, 2004: 126; Lingley, 2005; Stewart, 2006; Alwasilah, 2007: 146 and Trejos, 2008). Since, journal might be one of the progressive, effective and factual techniques for some students to develop their writing skills (Carr, 1979: 5; Harmer, 2004: 126; Genesee & Upshur, 1998: 120; and Alwasilah, 2007: 105) and thinking practice (Carr, 1979: 5; Brereton, 1982: 7 Stanley, at al, 1988: 4; Gould at al, 1989: 72 and Harmer, 2004: 126).

Generally, in Indonesian context, EFL writing teacher is not an active writer (Alwasilah, 2007: 47 & 137), therefore, students should not depend on their hopes to their teachers to be the main reference in writing because teacher is not the only one of the available resources. In this case, teacher is hoped to be as a motivator, feedback provider, evaluator and etc, (Genesee & Upshur, 1998: 121; Harmer, 2001a: 261 & 2004b: 41 & 42). In short, the improvement of students’ writing skill might be attained through their independence in writing practice (Alwasilah, 2007 & Harmer, 2001a: 335 & 2004b: 127).

Students might get more practice than theory. Since learning to write puts more emphasis on theory, this has failed to produce successful student writers” (Alwasilah, 2007: 5 & 59). Therefore, “practiced-approach might be more

effective to improve and develop students' writing competence" (Johnson, 2003 in Emilia, 2008: 13).

It is the opportunity for English teachers to carry out their students to write Narrative Texts through journal (Walshe, 1981: 167) and "how to guide them in developing their writing skills by encouraging them enthusiastically to increase the frequency of their students' writing habit" (Harmer, 2004: 61 & 84) because through writing habit, there are some advantages that students might obtain, for example "it might increase their thinking competence. Through such adequate competence, they might write progressively (Oshima & Hogue, 1997: 2) because their minds are frequently sharpened by thinking more through writing practices (Harmer, 2004: 31 & 126).

Improving writing skills might stimulate and improve thought capacity. This means there is a close relationship between writing and thinking (Gould at al, 1989: 102; Taylor, 1990: 22-23; and Alwasilah, 2005: 42). If students are able to manage the relationship between thinking ability and writing skill and even to be supported by having more writing practice, they might pass a lengthy process comfortably and the writing failure can be avoided. In short, the more students write Narrative Texts through journal the better their thinking ability will be. Since, by writing more Narrative Texts in journal, students are able to sharpen, stimulate and improve the quality and the sensitivity of their thoughts and imaginations (Gould, at al, 1989: 102 and Carr, 1979: 5) and "it also enables them to perform their self-expression, or as a way of understanding themselves better and they will also find it a valuable source of material in their future writing and

thinking (Blanchard and Root, 2004: 17). Since Narrative Texts can be a suitable genre which can help students express and retell their stories, experiences, imaginations and life impression step by step; and it can also embodies their self-reflection” (Derewianka, 2004: 40 & Comprone, 1974: 107), there can be a lot of benefits that can be found by students if they keep their life stages in a journal (Harmer, 2004: 126; Blanchard and Root, 2004: 16). In short, writing in journal might develop students’ writing skills, enable them to express themselves freely and openly and achieve their self-reflection and assessment” (Carr, 1979: 5 & 6 and Harmer, 2004: 126 & 127).

In addition, learning to write well in Narrative Texts might be a difficult and lengthy process that comes to the anxiety and frustration and often leads students in reluctance to write more, and the activity is felt alien by students and might make them pessimistic (Harmer, 2004: 61 & Alwasilah, 2007: 28). Therefore, there should be a progressive writing technique and an intensive approach to facilitating them in solving such problems. In other words, the technique and approach should contribute to the development of students’ writing skills.

With reference to the description above, Teaching Narrative Texts through Journal at one of International Secondary School in Bandung was interested to be investigated. In this study, the researcher specifically describes accurately and comprehensively about the kinds of activity take place during the process of teaching and learning narrative texts through journal, students’ opinions about writing Narrative Texts through journal, and the obstacles that the students encounter in writing Narrative Texts through journal. But the most important aim

to achieve in this research is to know the benefits that the students obtained from writing narrative texts through journal. All of these become the prime issues to be investigated in this study.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulated five research questions, as follows:

1. what kinds of activity that take place in the process of teaching and learning Narrative Texts through journal?
2. what are the students' opinions about writing Narrative Texts through journal?
3. what obstacles do the students encounter in writing Narrative Texts through journal?
4. what benefits do the students obtain from writing Narrative Texts through journal?

1.4 Clarification of the Terms

1.4.1 Teaching Writing

In common agreeable definition of teaching is guiding and facilitating, enabling the learners to learn and setting the condition for learning writing (Brown, 1994: 7). In this study, the term of teaching is associated with teaching of an EFL writing, to be specifically concerned with teaching Narrative Texts through journal.

1.4.2 Narrative texts

The word of narrative derives from *narrate*, which means telling a story. A story is a sequence of events or incidents in chronological order, fiction or non fiction (Comprone, 1974: 107; D'Angelo, 1980; p. 196; Crosby & Carter, 1986; 6: Brown, 1987; p. 62: and Derewianka, 2004). A Narrative Text is to entertain, to tell a story, or to provide an esthetic literary experience (Derewianka, 2004). Narrative Text is based on life experience and is person-oriented using a dialogue and familiar language in chronological order (Ruggiero, 1985 Crosby & Carter, 1986: 6 & Alwasilah, 2007: 119).

1.4.3 Journal

Journal is a record to be used to record daily or weekly happenings, but it has a more value than just a record of what happened to one's life because it is a tool for learning (Carr, 1979; Brereton, 1982: 6; Stanley at al, 1988; and Hadley, 2001; Harmer, 2001a & 2004b). In this research study, personal journal (Carr, 1979 & Stanley at al, 1988) and Learning journal (Stanley at al, 1988; Harmer, 2004 & Trejos, 2008) were specifically studied and investigated. It is like a diary but it is different from diary (Comprone, 1974: 418; Carr, 1979: 1; Brereton, 1982: 6; and Carter & Crosby, 1986) and even it should be more than that as well (Stanley, at al, 1988: 4). It contains personal stories, experiences and records of what a person feels, observes, thinks, and experiences (Carr, 1979: 2). Writing a journal can be in a bound book (Brereton, 1982: 6), notebook or composition book (Stewart, 1996 & Hadley, 2001:), a spiral or loose-leaf notebook, a manila folder for keeping pages together, a file in desk, a box to contain three-by-five or

four-by-six cards (Winterowd, 1981: 29), email or blogs (electronic journal) (Stewart, 1996; Johnson, 2004; and Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005), a ring binder full of papers, a single blank paper, a collection of electrical particles on computer disk or an audio tape (Stewart, 1996). In short, journal can be written in diverse place and ways.

1.5 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study determine the research activity that the researcher conducted. Therefore, all research activities would be clearly directed if the purposes were explicitly decided at the beginning. The purposes are related to the kinds of activity takes place in teaching and learning Narrative Texts through journal, students' opinions about writing Narrative Texts through journal, students' obstacles in writing Narrative Texts through journal, and the benefits that the students obtained from writing Narrative Texts through journal. Therefore, based on the above statements, this study has five purposes:

1. to explore the kinds of activity that take place in process of teaching and learning Narrative Texts through journal;
2. to know students' opinions about writing Narrative Texts through journal;
3. to identify students' obstacles in writing Narrative Texts through journal, and;
4. to identify the benefits that students obtain from writing Narrative Texts through journal.

I.6 Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the results that emerged from this study might be beneficial to the school, students, teachers, English departments, policy makers, and other researchers. Significantly, since journal writing is a luxurious habit to do, this study might generate students' encouragement to generate their willingness and to improve their habit in writing Narrative Texts through journal.

The results of this study are also expected to answer the obstacles faced by students in writing, so journal writing is expected to be an alternative solution to overcoming such writing obstacles—those which are always experienced by most students. Then, making students familiar with journal writing can be a long-term prospective investment for developing their writing skills, so the intensive writing practice guidance might help them because to write well is a complex and lengthy process. Thus, “students may take pride in writing even though they just write a single paragraph in one day” (Harmer, 2004: 84).

In addition, the results that emerged from this study also provide contributions to English teachers who have problems in teaching EFL writing, to provide contributions to the policy makers, especially for the EFL writing courses, and to provide some information to the English programs about the benefits of journal writing. Furthermore, this study may also inspire other researchers to conduct such this research in the related issues in writing. It accordingly can enrich English teaching methods to come to the most effective, progressive and factual teaching and learning activity. Therefore, the technique for teaching

writing through journal writing should be improved by teacher and hopefully it can be well practiced by students.

1.7 General Approach and Methodology of the Study

As this study attempts to understand the process of “Teaching Narrative Texts through Journal at one of International Secondary School in Bandung”, the qualitative approach was used as the research method. In addition, to find the answers to research questions (the kinds of activity, the opinions, the obstacles, and the benefits), “a case study design was applied as an appropriate design in understanding the journal writing by which events and actions took place” (Maxwell, 1996; 19). In line with this, Merriam (1988: 16) and Yin (1984) stated that a qualitative case study is an intensive investigation to retain a holistic description and analysis; and meaningful characteristics of real life events of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has elaborated the background of this case study. The problems and purposes, the clarification of terms, the significance, and the general approach and methodology are also included in this chapter. The next chapter discusses the related theories to research findings and literature review.