

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates the basic considerations for conducting this study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, hypothesis, significance of the study, research methodology which includes the research design, population and the sample, data collection, research procedure and data analysis, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

#### 1.1 Background

Many students consider that writing is a difficult subject to learn even in their own language (Harmer, 2004; Alwasilah, 2005). Harmer (2004) states that writing is a weird activity for students because they seldom write even in their own language. It is hard for them to start writing. The main reason which causes that problem is teachers do not know how to teach writing effectively. Consequently, students do not have any clue when they are asked to compose a text.

As motivators, English teachers should build self-confidence for students to write. If students feel confident in writing, they will find themselves like to write and it will become a habit in and outside the

classroom. In building self-confidence for students to write, then appropriate activities are needed for students in their level. In line with this, Byrne (1995) states that the activity of writing can comprise writing a message, a letter, and a diary.

Gaith (2001) states that students are more willing to experiment, explore, revise and edit their own writing. Most students surrender when they cannot get good results in the beginning of their writing. They are involved in the process of writing by exploring, revising and editing their writing. Teachers can stimulate students to write easily by giving a topic in their own area. In addition, Harmer (2004) states that teachers often encourage students to write about themselves, including stories about what they have done recently.

In creating a good topic for writing, Byrne (1995) states that teachers should provide students opportunities to communicate their ideas through enjoyable writing. In this case, writing a diary is used as an activity to improve students' writing ability. Writing a diary is interesting to do for students because they tell their activity or experience.

Afwan and Forer (1986) states that most students write a good text when there are something and reasons to say. Hence, teachers should determine a good topic for them. In writing a diary, students get an idea to write easier and no excuse to write. This activity gives an opportunity for students to write what they want to write; as the consequence, writing can be an enjoyable experience or activity for them. This idea is supported by Byrne

(1995) who states that when someone is forced to write, his writing is not good. When teachers tell his students to write a diary, they might enjoy the process. This is because they will write what they know and what they want. In other words, they have initiated to write.

In a writing activity, usually teachers ask students to write in academic setting and force students to write. It will be better if teachers can provide a context that is related to students. Writing a diary is closely related to the students' daily experiences. They write about their friendship, family, habits, plans, and also about love; those are generally interesting experiences for them.

Writing is a process of selecting words, characters, settings, and plots to support the stories. In addition, Byrne (1995) states that good vocabulary competence, including spelling, is a must in writing a text. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are also important in writing but some students ignore these rules in writing. Harmer (2004), however, states that writing correction should occur only in verb tenses, punctuations, and sequences of words.

This study was conducted to discover whether or not using a diary in teaching recount texts improves students' writing ability. Hopefully, this study will inspire English teachers to be more creative in creating new techniques or activities in teaching English, especially in teaching writing.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Is writing diary effective to improve the students' writing ability?
2. In what ways can writing diary improve the students' writing ability?

## 1.3 Aims of the Study

1. To examine the effectiveness of diary writing to improve the students' writing ability
2. To discover what ways writing diary improves the students' writing ability

## 1.4 Scope of the study

This study is only limited to examine the effectiveness of writing a diary in teaching recount texts to improve students' writing ability. In addition, this study reveals the ways in which writing a diary increase students' writing ability.

There were two classes taken as the sample of the study. Each class consisted of 44 students. The results are expected to indicate a degree of generalization in that population. This means that there is a tendency which is statistically justified.

Nevertheless, the context of the study was limited on teaching writing using a diary in junior high school, especially to the eighth graders of SMPN 1 Lembang.

### 1.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is a null hypothesis. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) indicates that there is no difference in mean adjustment levels between the students who receive experimental treatments and the students who do not. According to Coolidge (2000: 98), the formulas are stated as follows:

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$ : There is no significant difference between the two population's means.

$H_A: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ : There is significant difference between the two population's means.

Specifically, this study was directed to reject the null hypothesis, namely, there is no difference in mean adjustment levels between students who are assigned to write a diary about their activities and those who are not.

A diary was given as treatments to the students in the experimental group. Meanwhile, the control group was not given any treatment. This study is expected to show the different scores between the experimental group which receives the treatments and the control group which does not.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Hopefully, this study will give benefit for many people, especially for those who are associated with this area. For English teachers, writing a diary is implemented to improve students' writing ability. Writing a diary can be another activity for teachers in teaching writing.

For students, they will find that writing is a fun subject by using a diary in which they can write something related to their experiences. Hopefully, writing a diary can stimulate students to like writing because a diary belongs to personal writing, different from academic writing. In addition, it is expected that students have a great interest and motivation in writing.

For other researchers, this study is expected to be used as an additional source. Especially, it is beneficial for those who conduct a study on students' writing ability in junior high schools.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

### **1.7.1 Research Design**

In this study, a quasi-experimental design was used to gain the data. The experimental design is one of the most powerful research methodologies which can be used by the researchers. Hatch & Farhady (1982:24) states that "Quasi-experimental designs are practical compromises between true experimentation and the nature of human language behavior which we wish to investigate."

Due to limited time and cost, random sampling would not be feasible. This is the case in administering random sampling. It will need more steps to be taken, for example, making a list of junior high schools in Bandung, making a list of names of students in eighth grade in all junior high schools in Bandung, choosing a random sampling methods which has four methods (simple, stratified, cluster, two-stage random sampling). Therefore, a quasi-experimental design was used to conduct this study. A quasi-experimental design was used to control the variables that appear and to limit the interpretation of the cause and effect relationship in focusing on the statements.

**Table 1.1**  
**The Experimental Research**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
Experimental group	T <sub>1</sub> E	X	T <sub>2</sub> E
Control group	T <sub>1</sub> C	-	T <sub>2</sub> C

Where

T<sub>1</sub>E : The pretest for the experimental group

T<sub>2</sub>E : The posttest for the experimental group

X : The Treatments

T<sub>1</sub>C : The pretest for the control group

T<sub>2</sub>C : The posttest for the control group

### **1.7.2 Population and Sample**

This study was conducted in a Junior High School in Bandung. This study used a purposive sampling technique. The samples were chosen based on some criteria, namely: 1) recount text is taught in eighth graders of junior high school; 2) the two groups have the same number of students (44 students); 3) the two groups were chosen by a teacher's judgment which explains that both groups are homogeneous; 4) the sample has not been given any treatment of writing a diary yet.

The population of this study consisted of the eighth graders of SMPN 1 Lembang which consisted of nine classes. Two classes were taken as the sample of the study as an experimental group and a control group. Class VIII-I was the experimental group and class VIII-C was the control group. In addition, the recount text is taught in eighth graders based on the Standard Competencies and Basic Competencies of junior high school. This study used a diary as a practice of writing for students in the experimental group.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection**

#### **1.7.3.1 Research Procedures**

In collecting the data, some steps were taken in this study. First, an experimental and a control group were chosen as sample which was taken from the second grade of a junior high school. Second, a pilot test was administered to 5 students



out of the sample in this study. Third, pretest was given for both the experimental and control groups by asking the students to make a recount text. Fourth, a pretest scores from both experimental and control groups were analyzed. Fifth, teaching materials were designed. Sixth, the treatments were given by asking the students to make a diary in their homes. Seventh, a posttest was given to both the experimental and control groups, after the treatments were given to the experimental group for a period of time. Eighth, a pretest and posttest scores were analyzed. Ninth, an interview was conducted to the experimental group in which the class was given treatments to discover the students' responses towards using a diary in improving students' writing ability. Tenth, the data were interpreted and discussed.

### **1.7.3.2 Instruments**

In this study, some instruments were used in collecting the data to answer the research questions. It consisted of a pretest, a posttest and an interview.

#### **a. Pretest**

In answering the research questions, a pretest and a posttest were administered to both the experimental and control groups. The pretest was conducted to reveal the students' basic knowledge in writing recount texts and, later on, it was used as data to compare both the control and experimental groups in the posttest. The

statement above is supported by Hatch and Farhady (1981) who states that a pretest is administered to capture the initial differences between the two groups.

#### **b. Posttest**

The aim of the posttest was to examine if there was any significant difference between the control and experimental groups in which the experimental group received some treatments.

#### **c. Interview**

After the treatments were completed, an interview was conducted to the students in the experimental group to reveal the students' responses toward the learning process. The interview was conducted using interview guides. The interview was recorded by an audio recorder.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis**

The data of this study were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative analyses. The writing scores on pretest and posttest of both groups as the quantitative data were analyzed by using t-test application in SPSS 16.0 (Statistical Packages for Scientific Studies). Significant differences were analyzed between the experimental and control groups. Meanwhile, the data from the interview as the qualitative data were interpreted to examine students' responses towards using a

diary in improving students' writing ability. The interview was conducted in the experimental group to which the treatments given. After the data were collected from the interview, the next step was transcribing the data from the interview and interpreting in order to analyze the results of this study. The last step was discussing the results from the data.

### 1.8 Clarification of the Terms

- 1. Writing Diary:** this study uses personal diary which is students write about anything related to their lives (Hamayan, 1989). Specifically, in this study, diary is a daily written text from the students about daily life experiences. A diary was observed as an activity in the treatments of this study.
- 2. Effectiveness:** the word "effectiveness" is the measure of achievement or goal of observation (Fraser, 1994). In this study, effectiveness is indicated by improvement of writing ability, that is, the improved scores of writing class. The word "effective" in this study has some possibilities, namely, very effective, effective, or less effective to improve students' writing ability by using a diary.
- 3. Recount Text:** a text which retells the activities or events that have occurred (Anderson, et., al, 1997).

### **1.9 Organization of Paper**

There are five chapters in this paper. Chapter one is introduction, this chapter provides the information on background of the study, aims of the study, scope of the study, hypotheses, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. Chapter two consists of theoretical foundations; this part elaborates in detail theories which are relevant to the study. Chapter three describes research methodology; this section discusses methodology of the study to answer the research questions including the respondents, stages of perceiving, instrument and data collection. In addition, chapter four explains findings and discussions; this chapter describes the results of the instruments analyses, such as pretest data analysis, posttest data analysis, and the data from the interview, and the interpretation of the findings from the study. The last chapter contains conclusion which describes the results of the study and suggestions were given for future research.