

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the background of the study. The statement of the problem is also stated to specify this study. Also, there is limitation of the problem, research questions, and objectives of this study stated in this chapter. Lastly, the significance and the outline of this study are added to the completion of this study.

Background of the Study

In language learning, there are generally four main skills that should be possessed by a language learner which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These four skills are essential for language learners, also known as receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (speaking and writing). However, the researcher focused only on the writing skill that is included as one of the productive skills. Of the four language skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing), writing skill has, for a long time, been underestimated (Shokrpour, Keshavarz, and Jafari, 2013). People tend to think that the most important skills in learning a language are speaking and listening so that they will be able to communicate. That is not entirely wrong, yet a language learner should know the importance of writing skill because this skill helps students express their thoughts and ideas in a well-defined and coherent manner (Tucker, 2017). Moreover, for college students, they are demanded

to have this particular skill from writing an essay to writing a research. Basically, college students need to write because they are required to.

Writing is one of the most difficult skills that second-language (L2) learners are expected to acquire, requiring the mastery of a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural competencies (Barkaoui, 2007). Also, writing is considered as the most difficult skill from language learners because they need to have a certain amount of L2 background knowledge about the rhetorical organizations, an appropriate language used or specific lexicon with what they want to communicate to their readers, as stated by Tangpermpoon (2008). A lot of requirements in writing mentioned by Barkaoui and Tangpermpoon seem to be one of many reasons for students not keen on doing the writing, let alone to improve their writing skill.

The position of English as a foreign language in Indonesia made it harder for some students to construct their own writing. A lot of considerations should be made, not to mention the vocabulary and grammar mastery. Just as stated by Megaiab (2014), a student should be able to utilize graphology, grammatical structure, and vocabulary in writing activity. In English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, writing is a skill that is being introduced and taught since the very first semester. In the first semester, the students are taught how to write simple paragraphs and essays. In the second semester, how to write a business letter and mini-research are taught. The students are taught how to write the simplest sentences to the complicated research. However, even though the writing skill has

been taught since the early year of students in English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, the researcher found that a lot of students are still struggling to write in English. A lot of students are complaining about writing quite often.

To overcome this condition—struggling and complaining—faced by most students, a habit should be set up. Myles (2002) stated that the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional setting or another environment. From Myles (2002), the researcher could conclude that in order to write better we need to set up a writing habit. Starting out from little things may lead to great things, keeping a daily journal would help a lot if the students are committed to it. Journal writing helps learners write better day by day since it provides learners with more opportunities to freely write about what they wish to whenever they feel like writing (Tuan, 2010).

English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students are required to be able to write a research to finish their study. They, of course, faced certain difficulties in English writing since English is a foreign language and they are not accustomed to writing, let alone writing in English. Writing a daily journal could be the answer to trounce the difficulties faced by students. Set up a writing daily journal habit is beneficial. “Daily journal” is referring to students’ writing that is written every day, for example, about experience of the day. Some students, including the researcher, are experiencing the process of writing English

daily journal. Hence, the researcher is curious whether students find that writing daily journal helps their writing skill. In short, this study will benefit the researcher to know what students' motivation to write English daily journal is by inspecting students' perception on the benefit of writing daily journal toward their writing skill mastery at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

Identification of the Problem

Writing skill is very crucial in language learning. A lot of students tend to think that it would be fine only to have the ability to speak and listen to the target language. Nevertheless, students are required to write, sooner or later, and a writing skill would be exceptionally needed. Writing must be a burden to some students since they faced various difficulties. To overcome the difficulties, writing a daily journal as a habit to deepen writing skills may help. Yet, a daily journal is usually secretive and private so that the writer will feel hesitant to show the writing to anyone. This might be a problem because there will be no one to read their writing to assess the writing or even to assess the writer. The writer only feels it from his or her own sense. Also, lack of vocabulary and grammar understanding may cause laziness for the writer to continue writing.

However, some students are still trying to write English daily journal because they believe that their writing skill is getting better. Hence, the researcher would like to explore what motivations that make students keep writing English daily journal and their perception of benefit that they get on writing English daily journal toward their

writing skill mastery is at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2013.

Limitation of the Problem

In order to limit the study, in this research, the researcher limits her study only to discover the students' opinion of writing English daily journal which cover the motivations of the students to write and the benefits that the students experience in writing English daily journal. The researcher has three participants that all of them are active students of English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2013. The research is also only conducted in Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta so that it is convenient for both the researcher and the three participants. The result of this study might be different if conducted in other universities or institutions, so the result could not be generalized.

Research Questions

Constructed by the background of the study elaborated earlier, the research questions of this study were concluded as the following:

1. What motivates the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students to write English daily journal?
2. How do the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students perceive the benefits they obtained from writing English daily journal?

Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this research were to:

1. explore what motivates the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students to write English daily journal, and
2. find out the benefits obtained from writing English daily journal perceived by the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students.

Significances of the Study

This research will be beneficial for the following people who are involved in language learning, such as the researcher, students, teachers, and other researchers.

Firstly, this study is hoped to benefit the researcher. This study is expected to help the researcher as a student-teacher of English to be able to accustom herself more to writing English daily journal. Later on, the researcher may help to accustom her students a habit to writing English daily journal for the sake of her students' writing skill ability.

Secondly, this research would be useful to students. Expectantly, students will be inspired to start English daily journal so that they might have the benefits that the participants of this study got from their habit of writing English daily journal. So, they will be motivated to start writing English daily journal.

Thirdly, this research will offer worthy information about the use of writing English daily journal and reveal what motivates students to write English daily journal to the teachers. They may start encourage their students to write English daily journal.

Lastly, this study is hoped to benefit other researchers. Expectantly, the future researchers will find this research aid them to know and to analyze this topic. Future researchers may use this study as a reference. Also, the future researchers may want to conduct further research related to this topic.

Outline of the Study

The structure of this research is organized as follows. In chapter one, the researcher explains the introduction of the research presenting the background of the study, limitation of the problem, research question, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and outline of the study. Chapter two focuses on the literature review of motivation, writing, teaching writing, learning to write, writing daily journal, related study, and the conceptual framework. Chapter three presents the methodology used in this study which includes research design, setting and participant, data collection method and data analysis. Chapter four reveals the findings based on the data analysis and the discussion of the findings. The last, chapter five summarizes the overall result of this research and recommendations from the researcher are also included.