

Chapter One

Introduction

There are some important points presented in this chapter. This chapter discusses several points such as the reason in choosing the research topic, statement of the problem, and the research question. Additionally, the purposes and significances of the research are described in this chapter. Thus, the organization of the chapter is also explained in this chapter as well.

Background of the Research

Writing is a crucial skill in English learning which requires much knowledge on how one communicates in academic education or in the community. According to Nunan (2003), writing is an action to develop the ideas through thinking how to elaborate them into statements and build the paragraphs that will be received by a reader. In English teaching and learning, a learner will be successful if she or he can implement the objective of the learning which is relevant to the student's need. Besides, it is very important to pay more attention on the learning sources because learner should be taught the appropriate teaching material at virtually every grade level (Warschauer, 2004). If the students have already understood how to develop a main idea to become a good paragraph since young age, they probably find it easy in mastering the skill when they are growing up. Therefore, writing is a fundamental language skill that must be learnt and mastered by English learners (Nurjanah, 2012).

Writing performance is the important point that assesses person's ability in elaborating the paragraph of writing. It indicates that the performance of people's

writing has the impact to their competency in developing the content of their writing. Most studies tell that the important point of topic types will influence the final result and the writer's performance (Spaan, 1993). That way, the students need to do writing practice which can control their thinking skill in every opportunity and get relevant feedback. The more someone practice writing, the better someone will write (Tuan, 2010). Practice improves college student's writing when the context is appropriate in the higher education which means she or he will be highly motivated student to try harder to always learn (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007).

Writing is one of the English skills by which someone can easily communicate what she or he thinks about rather than speaking. By writing, someone will calmly describe what happens and what they feel toward a certain event. This writing activity is usually called as reflective writing. Moon (1999) stated that reflective writing is a kind of activity to reflect the skills and many actions implemented in every different place and situations. Besides, reflective writing has an important tool for professional development (Schon, 1987). Thus, reflective writing has function to enhance students' learning experience, and it can also be used for teaching and assessment tool.

Most of the researchers assumed that reflective writing has crucial role in higher education. The students of college will usually reflect their experience of learning a course at the end of the semester (Boutet, Vandette, & Valquestte-Tessier, 2017). Also, reflective writing is important for the students that can assess person's ability development through the performance and knowledge after joining the classroom activities. That way, it can influence someone to have critical response

about all of learning activity and also affect someone's future achievement. Hence, the result of students' reflection can be the way to have more awareness toward what they have achieved in the learning process.

However, writing reflection is sometimes regarded as a difficult activity by the learners. Based on researcher's friends and the researcher's experience, most students of English Language Education Department (ELED) at a private university in Yogyakarta faced many obstacles when they were asked to write self-reflection. The first problem is related to the content development in writing. It is very crucial point for the students to support their reflection. Also, the students need to elaborate their writing about the opinion, ideas or suggestion of the course that they have joined. In other word, the students should evaluate what they have written and try to have critical response in their own thinking. Likewise, having critical thinking is one of important skills to explore the explanation of students' description about their experience during learning some courses. In addition, the students should have supporting detail to prove the statement of opinions or ideas. Some supporting details are needed in student's writing. Thus, the students have to give the reason why they state the opinion whether they feel excited or not in a certain learning activity.

Then, the second problem is related to the organization of the paragraph. Some students do not pay attention of the paragraph's structure when they try to connect the first paragraph to the next paragraph. For example, when the teacher gives some questions for students' reflective writing assignment, the students are asked to answer the question by elaborating the answer. Also, the students are sometimes asked to elaborate the answer in a form of a paragraph. In fact, not all of

the students are able to arrange a sequence paragraph. As a result, the students' writing becomes incoherent. This matter can make the reader feel confused to understand the meaning of the writing. Then, it is possible that misinterpretation can happen from the lecturer side when she or he reads students' reflective writing. From the students' reflection problem, it can be concluded that the students should have capability to develop the main idea to become a good paragraph and can relate it to the next main idea.

Another problem is that the students' writing skill given the feedback from their lecturer rarely. Although students' reflection will be assessed at the end of the course, the feedback is generally not given by the lecturer. Thus, they do not have comprehensive knowledge on how to write the reflection in the right way. In addition, giving feedback has the influences toward students' assessment especially in writing. Actually, feedback is a need to enhance students' achievement whether they have good performance or not in producing writing skills. Accordingly, these conditions mentioned above inform that the students need writing skill to face all of the obstacles in writing.

There was other researcher who had been investigated the problem of reflective writing. In the study by Brauer (2009), the different level becomes one of student's problems in reflective practice. The different level means here that the student who are not aware of their levels will probably mention what they have done during learning process and jump to general conclusion without giving some analysis toward the learning activity. On the other hand, the students who know what they should explain in their reflection do not have ability to explain the ideas in

appropriate way. From the statement mentioned, it might cause the students feel demotivated to write in their reflection honestly. Also, the students will feel uncomfortable if the teacher knows their weaknesses when joining the courses. Therefore, most students of English Language Education Department (ELED) at a private university in Yogyakarta have common problems in experiencing reflective writing assignment.

Reflective writing is a term of writing assessment given at the end of the course in each semester by a certain teacher. This writing assignment is a way to evaluate students' progress in learning process implemented in some courses at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. Besides, reflective writing in this study is not specified by certain courses instead it is specified by only one lecturer. The rule of this reflective writing is that the lecturer gives some questions and limitation of words to the students. Then, the students should share their opinion, suggestion or comment by answering the question. The paragraph should also include the introduction and the topic that will be explained. In addition, the limitation of the words and the kind of questions are different in each semester. Likewise, it indicates that the higher the level of the students, the more words students should write. Accordingly, the students should follow the rule in order to be able to write in an appropriate way.

To sum up, the students might have some problems on their reflection related to their achievement after joining the course. That way, the researcher wants to investigate the students' obstacle in conducting reflective writing assignment at

ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. Then, the researcher also wants to discuss the solution to solving the problems.

Statement of the Problem

Reflective writing has been the common assessment for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner in higher education. In English learning, students find the problems in reflecting learning experiences. The content development and students' way in organizing the paragraph are two examples of common problems in writing self-reflection. Thus, the students face difficulties to reflect what they have achieved after joining the courses.

In addition, it seems to be possible if students' lack of motivation to tell their performance or ability in getting the knowledge from the courses. The lack of motivation here means that the students do not feel excited or less able in writing reflection. Even though the lecturers have given the questions and limitation of words for students' writing, the students still have problem with their self-confidence in the content of reflection. Some of them cannot deliver what should be reflected in an appropriate way.

To make this research more specific, the researcher focuses on the student's perception about reflective writing assignment. Besides, this kind of assessment is specified by only one lecturer. There is a lecturer at ELED who usually gives an assessment of self-reflection. Then, the students who were taught by this lecturer will be asked to reflect their experience after joining course in each semester. Hence, the content of reflection will also be assessed with the deserved score.

The problems which have been mentioned earlier may be faced by college students especially students of ELED when they are asked to write self-reflection. Probably, those students have different problems related to the experience of reflective writing assignment. Knowing the problem mentioned becomes the reason why the researcher is interested in conducting the research about the obstacles revealed by the students on reflective writing assignment. Additionally, this study is intended to explore the strategies in solving students' problem when doing reflective writing assignment at ELED.

Research Question

Based on the background of research above, there will be two main research questions addressed in this research:

1. What are the students' obstacles in conducting reflective writing assignment at English Language Education Department of an Islamic Private University?
2. What are the students' strategies in solving the problems of reflective writing assignment at English Language Education Department of an Islamic Private University?

Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the purposes of this research are:

1. The research attempts to discuss the obstacles revealed by students on reflective writing assignment at English Language Education Department of an Islamic Private University.

2. The research attempts to explore the strategies of the students in solving the problems of reflective writing assignment at English Language Education Department of an Islamic Private University.

Significances of the Research

This research is expected to give positive advantages for the researcher, the students, the lecturers, and other researchers.

For the researcher. The result of this research can become knowledge for the researcher as a prospective English teacher. Besides, the researcher will know better on how to implement reflective writing as one of the English assessment to the students.

For the students. This research will provide additional knowledge about reflective writing assignment at higher education. The students are hoped to be able to write reflection in an appropriate way after knowing the finding of this research in order to reduce the obstacles that can happen in the future. They are also hoped to have self-confidence in writing the contribution of the learning process before. Besides, this reflective writing can be a habit for students to improve their achievement in English learning particularly in writing skills and able to give more explanation toward their comment or opinion about the courses which they have joined. In addition, students can be capable in constructing a good reflective writing by applying the provided information in this research about the strategies in solving the problem.

For the lecturers. This research will provide valuable information about the implementation of reflective writing for the lecturers. It may encourage the lecturers to improve students' writing ability and achievement by understanding the students' problem in writing assignment especially reflective writing. Knowing this research, the lecturers can find the solution to overcome students' writing obstacle which can motivate them to keep writing inside and outside the course. Moreover, the lecturers can get more knowledge from the journal articles provided in this research in order it can be additional sources about the implementation of reflective writing assignment especially in the higher education.

For other researchers. The research can be beneficial for other researchers. By reading this research, it can be inspiration for other researchers who want to investigate the same topic related to reflective writing assignment. The other researchers can use the findings of this research as references of further research on the same topic and might become recommendation of further research. Hopefully, this research can provide some information which is valuable for other researchers to avoid the difficulty of reflective writing that probably will happen in the future. Accordingly, by conducting this research, it can also encourage the researchers to conduct the research related to the same area of this research.

Organization of the chapter

This research consists of five chapters, and each chapter has sub-chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher presents introduction which consists of the background, statements of the problem, research questions, and purpose of the

research. Then, the researcher also presents the significances of the research and the organization of the chapter.

The second chapter of this research discusses the literature review that consists of the theory of reflection and reflective writing. The next section discusses the obstacle in conducting reflective writing, the cause of obstacles in conducting reflective writing and strategies for students in solving problems in doing reflective writing. Additionally, the review of related studies and conceptual framework are also highlighted in this chapter.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology used to collect the data. It discusses the research design, research setting and participant, data collection method, and data analysis. Additionally, the interpreting issue and trustworthiness are also defined in this chapter.

The fourth chapter discusses the finding and discussion of the research. In this chapter, the researcher analyses the data that have been obtained in advance. In addition, the researcher also compares the findings with relevant literatures of the research.

The fifth chapter provides the conclusion and recommendation of the research. In this chapter, the researcher describes the result of the research. Besides, the recommendation is also presented to recommend or suggest for further research.