

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the effectiveness of response journal writing strategy to enhance students' writing skill. This chapter discusses the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the hypothesis, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and key terms.

A. Background of the Study

There are two modes of the use of language in communication: the spoken and the written languages.¹ Spoken language is used to communicate with other people orally, such as to give a speech, to discuss something, to clarify the information and other communication purposes. Written language is the presentation of information on paper in form of writing.

The importance of spoken language has been realized by many people, but they do not realize that writing is also important in our social life. People can communicate with others through written text when they do not meet each other. The ability to write well is also often needed for the requirement to look

¹ Miftakhul Huda, *Improving The Eight Grade Students' Ability In Writing Recount Text By Using Picture Series At SMP PGRI Sukodono In Academic Year 2010/2011* (College of Teacher Training and Education PGRI Pasuruan, 2010), 2.

for job.² Writing also offers economical benefit. People can get money through writing, such as writing a book, novel, articles and others. Besides, writing is particularly important in education. The learners do not only listen the teacher's explanation or instruction, speak up to respond what the teacher said or read the books in teaching and learning process, but they should be able to write to balance their skills in learning a language. Particularly in English subject, writing is taught in Indonesian school since junior high school to university.

Although writing is important, in Indonesia, most of senior high school students still have difficulties in learning English, especially writing. As stated in a research by Wafa, many learners find difficulty when they are asked to write. This is because they lack of practice, are afraid of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary and lack of understanding in grammar.³ In addition, Aimah stated that the learners generally do not know what they have to write, because they do not have any idea.⁴ Besides, they do not know how to write well. In

² Dawn Mckay R, *Writing Skill: Why writing skills are important*
http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/miscskills/a/writing_skills.htm (accessed on Wednesday, 24 April 2013 at 08.10 p.m)

³ Asmal Wafa, et.al., *Keeping Journal Writing to Improve the Writing Ability of the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Jekulo Kudus in the Academic Year 2009/2010* (Kudus: FKIP Universitas Muria Kudus, 2010), 2

⁴ Siti Aimah, *Demonstration as A Medium in the Teaching of Writing Procedure Text* (Semarang: Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang. 2009), 1

another research by Riya, it was found that the students often choose inappropriate words in their writing.⁵

As the students of senior high school have learned English including writing for at least three years in junior high school, they should certainly have good skill in English, including writing. They should have many vocabularies and understand the appropriate grammar use. In addition, they should also be easy in making a composition. However, several researches reviewed above indicate the opposite.

There are many possible reasons why students still have low skill in English writing although they have learned it for at least three years at school. It can be that they are not interested in the teaching writing activity and they tend to become passive.⁶ They do not ask the teacher when they do not understand about the subject. This can be because their intention in learning English is only to pass the national examination given, because English is the compulsory subject in the national curriculum.⁷ So, they consider that writing is not important. In addition, they are afraid in making mistakes because they think that their friends will gibe them. Besides, they are lack of practice⁸

⁵ Riya Febriana Jamiarsih, *The Advantages of Daily Journal Writing in Teaching Recount Text for The First Grade Students at MAN 1 Kota Mojokerto* (State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2011), 3

⁶ Gundah Basiswi, et.al., *The Effectiveness of A Dialog Journal in Improving Students' Writing Skill in Narrative Text of The Eleventh Graders* (Malang: State University of Malang, 2002), 1

⁷ Siti Aimah, *Demonstration as A Medium in the Teaching of Writing Procedure Text* (Semarang: Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang, 2009), 2

⁸ Asmal Wafa, *Keeping Journal Writing to Improve the Writing Ability of the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Jekulo Kudus* (Kudus: FKIP Universitas Muria Kudus, 2010), 1

whereas practice is important because it can make the learners get used to writing.

One of the schools that face this problem of writing is SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat. Based on the informal interview with ten students in my preliminary study, the students in this school still had difficulties in English, especially writing. They do not know what to write. They were also lack of vocabulary. In addition, they seldom practice to write.⁹ Whereas this school is accredited “A” and often wins international science Olympiad,¹⁰ they seldom wins the Olympiad when they join Language Olympiad. Perhaps, it is because the English skill of the students is not very good because they still have difficulties in writing as stated above.

The above problems can be caused by these following possible reasons. The strategies that teacher uses in the teaching and learning process may not be varied and interesting. The researcher knows it because she was the alumnus of the school. In addition, she did the informal interview to ten students interviewed in the preliminary study stated that the teacher still uses the same old strategy as before.¹¹ When the teacher asks the students to write, he does not give them a specific topic. He only explains the lesson and shows the example in the workbook (LKS). Then, he asks the students to do the tasks

⁹ Informal Interview with ten students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat, Lamongan on Saturday, 23 March 2013. At 10.00 a.m.

¹⁰ Badan Akreditasi Propinsi Sekolah/Madrasah Provinsi Jawa Timur. (<http://www.ban-sm.or.id/provinsi/jawa-timur/akreditasi>), accessed on Wednesday, 24 April 2013

¹¹ Informal Interview with ten students of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat, Lamongan on Saturday, 23 March 2013. At 10.00 a.m.

in the workbook. He seldom asks the students to write a composition. This makes the students lack of writing practice. Therefore, it makes the students difficult to determine what to write. Besides, the activity makes the class boring. For instance, there are some students chatting with their friends when the teacher gives explanation. It is because the teacher does not use strategy that can make the students interested and actively engaged in learning the lesson.

To solve the problem, the teacher can use interesting strategies in teaching writing that can motivate the students to write frequently and help the students improve their writing skill, such as by using diary writing, dialog journal, response journal writing, and many others. Diary writing is conducted by asking the students to write their daily activities. In dialog journal, the students talk to the teacher through written text. Response journal writing is writing response to what the students have read, listened, and seen.¹²

Among the three strategies outlined above, response journal writing serves to be the most suitable strategy to implement to solve the students' problems in writing at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat. This is because compared to diary and dialog writing, response journal writing is considered to be more interesting to do. This is because response journal writing can be collaborated with the use media such as article, movie, and others in its

¹² Annabelle Hernandez Herrero, *Journals: a tool to improve students' writing skills* (Costa Rica: Revista Electronica Publicada Por El, 2007), 8

activity. Meanwhile, diary and dialog journal do not provide it. In diary and dialog journal activity the students are directly asked to write based on students' experience or others. In addition, through response journal writing, the students can get an idea to write by reading, listening, and observing.¹³ Once they have a topic from this process, they can have a focus about what they will write.

Another advantage of using response journal writing is that it can deepen the quality of learning, in the form of critical thinking.¹⁴ When the students are asked to give response to what they have read, viewed, or listened, they will try to understand it. Then, they will give opinions about it whether what they have read, viewed or listened is right or not, suitable or not, touching or not, and others. They may think about it. Journal writing also helps the students to have more opportunity to practice in writing and share their thought, feeling, and ideas. This is because they can write the journal not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. Therefore, they can practice to write by independent study. Besides, the students can enrich their vocabulary from what they have read, watched, and listened. This is because they can get new vocabulary from it.

¹³ James M. Mc Crimmon, *Writing with a purpose* (USA: Florida State University. 1973), 189

¹⁴ Janet, E. McIntosh, *Reader response journals: Novice teachers reflect on their implementation process*. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education* (<http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/McIntoshnoviceteachers2010-1.pdf>, accessed on April 24, 2013), 120

From the phenomenon above, it can be known that mastering writing is important. And considering the advantages of response journal writing to help students in mastering writing, there needs to be a study on the effectiveness of response journal writing to develop students' writing skill. Based on those statements, this research aims to investigate whether response journal writing strategy is more effective to enhance students' writing skill than traditional strategy.

B. Statement of Research Problem

Based on the background above, the question of this research is:
“Is response journal writing strategy more effective to enhance students' writing skill than traditional strategy?”

C. Hypothesis

Hypothesis is the researcher's statement about her expectation of this research.¹⁵ In this research, the hypothesis is response journal writing strategy is more effective to enhance students' writing skill than traditional strategy.

¹⁵ Sugiyono, *Statistika untuk Penelitian* (Bandung: Alfabeta Bandung, 2010). P.84

D. Objective of the Study

The objective of this research is to know the effectiveness of response journal writing strategy to enhance students' writing skill for the tenth graders at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat, Lamongan.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of the study is expected to have significant contribution to improve the quality of English teaching, especially in writing. It is expected that the finding can be a very useful input for English teachers and other researchers in the following ways.

1. Teachers : Response journal writing can be an alternative strategy in teaching writing. This is because response journal writing can help the students to get an idea before they write. Besides, it can increase students' vocabulary. Therefore, the teacher can apply this strategy to teach writing in order to enhance students' writing skill.
2. Other researchers: It is hoped that this research can be as reference for them who want to conduct research on the same or similar strategy as in this research.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Based on the focus of this study, there are three parts of the scope of this research. Those are response journal writing strategy, writing skill and the

tenth graders of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat, Lamongan. This research is limited to the students' writing achievement between students who were taught by response journal writing strategy and those who were not. In addition, the classes that become the samples must have the same schedule, the same material and also they are taught by the same teacher.

G. Key Terms

Key terms clarify the meaning of the elements in the research question of this research as they are operationally used in this study. The terms are defined as follows.

1. **Response journal writing strategy:** Response journal writing is a personal note which is used by students to keep record of their personal reaction to, question about and reflection on what they read, see and listen.¹⁶ In this research, response journal writing is defined as an activity to evaluate the students after they get a material in the teaching and learning process. The first, the teacher explains about the material as usual. Then, the teacher asks the students to read, listen, or watch something. Next, the teacher asks the students to retell about what they have read, listened, or watched in the form of written text. Besides, the students are also asked to give response to it.

¹⁶ Icy Lee, "Fostering preservice reflection through response journals", (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2008), 118

Therefore, the activity is not only retelling something, but also giving response about something that happened inside it.

2. **Traditional strategy:** In this research, traditional strategy is defined as the usual strategy used by the English teacher of SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Babat in teaching writing without applying response journal writing. It is teaching the students using workbook or LKS as an activity to evaluate the students. The teacher explains the material as usual. Then, the teacher asks the students to do the task on the LKS. It is known from the interview that was done to the English teacher of the school in the preliminary study.
3. **More effective:** Effective is successful or achieving the expected results.¹⁷ In this research, effective means that the students who were taught using response journal writing get higher score in writing skill than those who were not.
4. **Writing Skill:** In this research, writing skill means the capability of someone in producing written text. This capability can be improved through lots of practice. It can be measured by a performance test where quantity and quality of performance are tested.

¹⁷ Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary: Third Edition