

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this era, writing has become one of the most important skills that English learners have to master. However, many people do not recognize it. When people talk about writing, it actually has its own definition. Al Samadani (2010 in Wahyuni, 2017) defined writing as “a complex, challenging and difficult process” because it does not only talk about the words that the writer composes into a piece of paper, but it also can be the way for the writer to discover a thesis, develop support for it, organize, revise, and edit in order to make an error-free piece of writing. The goal of writing is to make the readers understand the message clearly as the writer intends to. Having good writing skills will help the writer to communicate their message better for the readers because there are many cases found when the writers have trouble communicating the message that they want to deliver in a simple and clear way. In the end, many readers find it difficult to understand the message that the writer wants to deliver to them. Because of that reason, writers are expected to have a good writing skill.

Although mastering writing skills brings many advantages, many people, especially students still feel less interested in mastering this skill. Nowadays, students think that improving their writing skills through some writing assignments is useless. Students feel that writing is very boring. The students feel uncomfortable in class when they are being monitored while doing their writing assignments in their classroom (Hamp and Healsey, 2006). Moreover, not all

students can write something spontaneously and can jot down their idea to write a text for their writing assignment in class (Tho, 2000 in Tuan, 2010).

The English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University are expected to master four skills of English which are reading, listening, speaking, and writing because they are being prepared to be teachers. Among those four skills, writing is a very important skill, but perhaps difficult to master. Students of the English Departments are expected to have a good writing achievement. Meanwhile, some students still have poor scores in writing courses. One of the reasons why the students find it difficult to upgrade their writing skills is because of the nature of writing itself, which is boring. Therefore, Journal Writing assignments can be the best solution to solve this problem because by writing journals, the students will get a chance to write any thoughts and feelings that they have as freely as possible. By writing these kinds of journals, the students can overcome their boredom.

In the English Department, the students in Writing B are given the Journal Writing assignments which contain their thoughts about the current progress of their writing class. The students can do their assignments at home. By being able to do this assignment at home, the students are expected to use this chance as an opportunity to share their experience, difficulties that prevent them from developing their writing skills further, and efforts that can be done to improve their writing skills. Later on, their Journal Writing assignments will be submitted to the lecturer and from that assignment, the lecturer will be able to use it as an input to find the best method and material to teach the students. Since the students can

finish their assignments at home without being monitored by the teacher in class, they feel more comfortable and more open or less restricted in writing. In that way, the lecturers hope that the students will have the passion or willingness to improve their writing skills and for the lecturer, the Journal Writing assignments can be an input for them to take the next step.

The writer conducts this study to help both the students and the lecturers in the English Department to improve the implementation of Journal Writing assignments in the writing course. The writer needs to find out the students' perception in order to help the lecturers to evaluate the Journal Writing assignments as one of the techniques to improve the students' writing skills. The students' perception is an important aspect of this study because it is the students who experience the learning process using the Journal Writing technique in writing course.

## **1.2 Research Question**

What are the English Department students' perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages and their suggestion toward the Journal Writing assignments in Writing B?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

This study's objective is to find out the students' perception on the advantages and disadvantages and their suggestion toward the Journal Writing assignments in Writing B in the academic year of 2019/2020.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

Langan (2001 in Mettaningrum et al., 2013) stated that “writing is a process of discovery that involves a series of steps of practices”. It means that writing is a skill that can be trained. Journal Writing can be the best solution to improve writing skill that people have as what White and Arndt (1991:67 in Tuan, 2010) said, “This technique has been found to be an effective and productive means of arousing interest in writing, which, at the same time, develops fluency of expression”. People need to improve their writing skills because as Walsh (2010) explained “writing is important because it’s used extensively in higher education and in the workplace”.

The study also elaborates the theory of perception from Demuth (2013) which divided the perception process into two basic groups which are called bottom-up and top-down processes.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The writer wants to use the finding of this study to give the writing’s subject lecturers an insight and evaluation whether the practice of the implementation of Journal Writing assignments brings positive effects towards the students in Writing class. The finding of this study can also help the students to evaluate their progress toward the students’ Journal Writing assignments.

#### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The basis that is used in this study is a qualitative study. The subjects of this study are the students who took the Writing B course in the academic year of 2019/2020. The students who took Writing B must have passed Writing A. The writer's reason for choosing those students is because the students have finished making their Journal Writing assignments. The writer's reason for using a questionnaire as the instrument of this study is because the students can give a clear answer by pick one of the multiple choices given.

This study is focused on the students' perception about how useful these Journal Writing assignments to increase the students' skill in writing. The type of journal that is being used in this study is a reflective journal.

### **1.7 The Assumptions**

This study is made based on these following assumptions:

1. The lecturers have given clear instruction toward the students before making Journal Writing assignments.
2. The students understand clearly about the lecturers' instruction about Journal Writing assignments.
3. The students submit their Journal Writing assignments.
4. It is assumed that the students have their own opinions or perception on the Journal Writing assignments and that perception can be elicited from the students.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

To prevent any misunderstanding, the writer wants to clarify some of the key term by giving the definition of it as follow:

1. Perception:

Perception is defined as the act that human do to interpret information which is being kept on the human brain (Mahmud, 1990 in Alexander, 2020).

2. Writing:

Writing is the action to develop ideas to the target readers' mind in the form of words (Bryne, 1988 in Alexander, 2020).

3. Journal Writing:

Journal Writing is a well-known teaching-learning method which allowing students to connect specific course concepts with their experiences (Hetitch, 1990: 36 in Santoso, 2018)

4. Writing B:

Writing B is a three-credit course that students in English Department have to take after they passed Writing A subject.