

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into six parts, they are: research background, research questions, research objectives, scope of the research, research benefits, and definition of terms.

1.1 Research Background

Writing, which belongs to productive skill, can be described as an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement that is clear to be understood by the people Nunan (2003:88). It can be defined that writing is kind of people's activity on expressing their thought by composing some sentence in a written form. In educational field, writing is important, since many of the tasks from the teacher must be done and submitted in writing form. Moreover in a real business field, especially for the international company, people need writing skill when they have to write an application letter. That is why students need writing lesson to face any challenge.

In order to have good writing skill, motivation in learning English is very basic thing that teacher should build in students. According to the analysis of questionnaire result which was given to some students in one of the middle school in Gunungkidul regency, most of them agreed that writing skill is important. Even, more than fifty percent (68.75%) of the respondents said that writing is fun. This result means that they had great foundation on writing. When the students found that writing is interesting, it will lead them to enjoy writing.

Digitalize learning material is one way to improve the students motivation. Celce-Murcia (2002) in Saeedi (2016) suggests that using media in the classroom serves as an important motivator. This statement shows how great the influence of the digital media in boosting the student's motivation. In addition, on this technological era, learners will be more engaged in the learning process which included the use of technology. On this writing skill case, the teacher can use some digital technology to

attract the students on the teaching and learning process, such as using video, picture, comic strips, and articles from blog. Besides showing some articles from blog as the input on writing, teacher may also use blog as the media on submitting students' writing project.

In fact, based on the survey which was done in the state middle school in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, the teacher still used the traditional way in giving the writing task to the students. Currently, the media used by students in submitting task was paper. Even, there were only few number of students said that their teacher used article from blog as input. Meanwhile, the students hope that they got the real example of writing project such as from blog. This kind of un-synchronous condition may change students feeling, when previously they thought that writing is fun, if they got unexpected input it would reduce their motivation as well as their willingness to write. Finally, the result showed that there were 62.5% or 20 students out of 32 students felt that they have low ability in writing.

The problems of English teaching and learning process in the state middle school in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta were identified during the implementation of *Praktik Pengenalan Lapangan (PPL)*. There were several problems appeared. However, the main problems came from the students, the teacher, and the learning process.

Students' writing skills were low. They often got difficulty in doing writing task. Even there were only around 15% of the students or 5 students out of 33 students who could finish writing task themselves. Most of them could not easily construct a sentence because they lacked the necessary vocabulary items. They just relied on the teacher by asking directly the meaning of some English words. Besides, their grammar was also poor. Even though, most of the students or 68.75% said that writing is fun. In fact, according to the direct observation, the students seemed like did not have passion in writing. Their impassionate in writing skill could be clearly seen, when they were asked to write their own dialogue script to be practiced, most of them were busy with their friends talking about another topics. When they were approached, they felt confused, and finally they only wrote down a dialogue script the

same as what the teacher gave them as an example and they only changed the subject or the object.

In order to engage the students' attention in learning, especially in a writing skill, the teacher must use the interesting media as an input. If the input is attractive, it may boost up students' motivation in doing the project with fun. Besides, the teacher should think out of the box about the instrument which can be used in submitting the task. Traditionally, the teacher still used paper and pen as the main media as stated by most of the students (100%) on the preliminary study. Actually, using paper and pen is not the main problem, but to attract more on students' participation, the use of supplementary media is needed.

In relation to the teaching and learning process, the problems laid on the classroom activities and the writing activities which were monotonous. These kinds of monotonous activities led the students to be bored. There were no fun and challenging activities letting the students to have real writing projects. Classroom activities were dominated by showing picture or newspaper as the input, asking students to write one until two paragraph texts, and submitting in a form of black on white.

Furthermore, the teaching and learning process lacked of the interesting media. Especially in a writing activities, the teacher utilized picture and text as input in which most of the inputs were taken from the textbooks (When English Rings a Bell). Consequently, the students were not attracted in the classroom activity. They got bored with typical learning material which depending too much on textbooks. As a result, most of the students felt frustrated in doing writing activities.

From the problem indicators, choosing suitable media in writing class is one of important things. One of the media that can be used is blog. Blog which is also familiar as weblog or personal online journal is identified as a new technological manner in publishing people ideas in public. Most of blog writers (bloggers) use this media to express their thoughts, as writing in blog helps to improve people's critical thinking (Blood, 2002 in Nadzrah, 2009). Furthermore, Pinkman (2005) in Fageeh (2011) said that in language learning, blog has been experimentally used as tools to

develop writing and reading comprehension skill; implications indicate that although blogging should not replace face-to-face interaction, it may provide a practice environment where students can think, reflect, and create language slowly for a real-life audience. By this statement, it could be concluded that blog will give benefits for the students especially on their writing and reading skill. By sharing idea on blog the students may interact with the tangible audience, who are not only their classmates but also from people around the world. It's good for the students in order to build up their confidence in writing. When the students have an attractive confidence and great motivation, their willingness to learn will also improve and it might influence the writing ability that will extremely improve.

Based on the problems and proposed solution, it was decided to conduct an action research entitled "Using blog as supplementary media to improve the eighth graders' writing skill."

1.2 Research Questions

In this research, there were two questions that were formulated which the answer will be examined in the study, they are:

1. How is the implementation of blog as supplementary media in improving the eighth graders' writing skill?
2. What are the impacts of using blog as supplementary media in improving the eighth graders' writing skill?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the purpose of this research are:

1. To investigate the implementation of blog as supplementary media in improving the eighth graders' writing skill.
2. To find out the impacts of using blog as supplementary media in improving the eighth graders' writing skill.

1.4 Scope of the Research

There were broad areas of problems found in the background and problem identification, it is needed to limit it in order to focus on the problem discussion.

Actually, one of the factors of the result of teaching and learning process depended on the media used. It is the teacher's responsibility to choose or create an interesting and attractive media to get 100% involvement of the students, to engage the students on the classroom activities, and to improve students' motivation in learning. It is believed that the used of blog as the input and submission media can help students improve their writing skill. As an input, the articles from blogs gave the authentic example for the students. While as the submission media, it could be used as a real-life media in publishing their writing project. In this study, the focus was on using blog as supplementary media in improving the eighth graders' writing skill in one of the state middle school in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta.

1.5 Research Benefits

The findings of the research are expected would give benefits to the readers and other researchers. There are two categories of the benefits; theoretically and practically

1. Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, this research can be as a reference in understanding the use of blog in improving students' writing skill. In addition, the study of this research is able to show real implementation of blog during teaching writing and the data needed to analyze the students' improvement in engaging on the writing project and how big is their skill improved. Finally, the research findings will contribute to enrich the teaching theories of how to improve students' writing skill in the classroom.

2. Practical Benefit

a. For the eighth graders

The study in this research will be an effort to improve their writing skill.

b. For English teachers

It will become an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching and learning process in their classroom.

c. For the school principal

The findings of this study will be a stepping stone in improving students' writing skill.

d. Other Researcher

This research hopefully can be used as a reference to support relevant studies done by the other researcher.

e. Students of English Education Department

The findings of this research hopefully will be useful as a reference in conducting the classroom research to know how to improve students' writing skill.

f. University

This research can increase the number of the research in a library, especially on English teaching field.

1.6 Definition of Terms

To avoid any misunderstanding, there are terms that need to be defined as follows:

1. Supplementary Media

In education, media can be defined as devices that can help teacher in optimizing teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Taken from Arsyad (2005: 15-16), media that is used in the orientation phase of teaching will help the teacher in conducting the learning process, improve the effectiveness of delivering the content of the subject, and motivate the students. It means the function of media is to make students interest on the materials given. In addition, supplementary tools or media brings advantages in supporting the teaching and learning environments as has investigated in many studies (Uzun, 2015). Hence, the use of supplementary media is very needed in teaching and learning process, especially to engage the students' interest in learning. When they interest to learn, they will put their attention, beside they will be fully motivated also to join the class.

2. Blog

According to Blood (2002); Winner, D. (2003); Herring et al (2005) in Amir, Z. et al (2011) blog as an approach in teaching and learning can be defined as a media which combines between text and visualization which is used website as it's platform. In addition, Alsubaie and Madini (2018) says that blog is one of the internet utilizations which provides large amounts of advantages in foreign language learning.

3. Writing Skill

According to Naep (2011) in Judith (2014), writing is a complex process which allows writers to explore their thoughts and ideas which are useful for communication that is used in some time variety and with various resources and technological tools. This statement means that by doing a writing we can express our idea to be real and can be seen or understood by others by using some variety of media and sources. While, based on Longman Dictionary, skill is defined as an ability to do something well. Therefore, writing skill is the people or students ability in composing a text which is containing their idea in order to transfer information or express their thoughts to others.

4. State Middle School

The state middle school where the study was conducted is one of the Junior High School which is located in Gunungkidul, DIY. It has six classes on each grade (class A, B, C, D, E, and F). Geographically the school location is very strategic, since it is away from the highway so it is conducive for teaching and learning activities.

Writing skill in this school still needs to be improved, since there are many students who felt difficult in writing simple sentence and they choose to be busy talking with their friends on other topic. Meanwhile, based on the questionnaire result, it could be seen that the students have preference on the digital input and output. Therefore, the use of supplementary media is needed to create attractive teaching and learning activity, especially in writing. Blog is a supplementary media that can be useful to improve students writing skill.

The students are attempted to be confident to share their idea by writing some contents in a blog, so that it can be shared to public to get their feedback. By this kind of online application, the students should try to write as good as possible, in a context of vocabulary, grammar, and the text structure in order to make the readers enjoy their writing product. At the end, when they get positive feedback from the readers, it will improve their confidence and motivation in writing. At the other hand, it will improve their writing skill. In conclusion, using blog in improving students' writing skill means the teacher can use blog to give the writing input (example) and to collect students writing project. Moreover, blog can be one of the alternative ways to improve writing skill of eight grade students.