

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the research problem, the research objective, the research hypothesis, the research's significance, the scope and limitations of the research, and the definition of key terms.

### A. Background of the Study

At the level of international interaction, most people choose English as a communication medium which is generally known as English as a Lingua Franca. This is an example of English utilization performed by many people with various backgrounds such as the speaker from English as a second or foreign language, this happened because English is commonly understood by many speakers, even if their native language is not English.<sup>1</sup>

According to Crystal, the language is now spoken by over two billion people with different accents and competency levels. He observed that the native speakers are now fewer in number when compared with the non-native speakers because the use of the English language has spread beyond the borders of Britain. The English language has now become the world's language for research, publication, business, and commerce. Teaching and learning are

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<sup>1</sup> Devy Angga Gunantar, “*The Impact of English as an International Language on English Language Teaching in Indonesia*”, *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, X/2, (2026), p. 142-143.

majorly being conducted in the English language by universities and colleges around the globe.<sup>2</sup>

Kachru categorizes the deployment of English in the world into three circles, there are the inner, the outer, and the expanding circle. The native speaker's countries whose mother tongue is English such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand are clustered into the Inner Circle. People of those countries are called monolingual English Speakers or English native speakers. On the other hand, several countries like South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia, Filipina, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are counted in the Outer Circle. This is caused by the fact the citizens of these countries use English for daily communication along with their local language as their mother tongue language. The last category, the Expanding Circle, includes countries where English is primarily used in specific contexts, such as academic settings, foreign offices, and events like seminars, conferences, and meetings. In these regions, English is mainly studied in schools or language institutions. Some countries like China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Thailand, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Russia belong to the Expanding Circle.<sup>3</sup>

In the educational system, English instruction begins in junior high school, with mandatory instruction in English. According to Nababan, junior high

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<sup>2</sup> Sitti Syamsinar Mappiasse & Ahmad Johari Bin Sihes, “*Evaluation of English as a Foreign Language and Its Curriculum in Indonesia: A Review*”: Journal of English Language Teaching, Canadian Center of Science and Education, Vol. 7, No. 10 (2014). p. 113

<sup>3</sup> Devy Angga Gunantar, “*The Impact of English as an International Language on English Language Teaching in Indonesia. Language Circles*”, p. 142.

school student studies English for four hours per week, focusing significantly on oral skills to establish a solid foundation in the language. In senior high school, students study English for three to seven hours per week. The teaching method shifts to grammar-translation as more emphasis is given to reading. At the university level, students receive instruction in reading skills for 1 to 2 hours per week, for a minimum of one year, in an English course designed for a specific purpose.<sup>4</sup> In Indonesia, learning the English language is a requirement in Junior and Senior High Schools. Students are mandated to study English as it is a compulsory subject for their academic curriculum, and they must pass it in their examinations. Additionally, some universities require their students to take English as a compulsory subject at the higher education level.<sup>5</sup>

The four fundamental English language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are important to form the basis of effective communication in English. They enable individuals to convey and receive information, express ideas, and connect with others. When students learn English as a foreign language, they learn to communicate, understand, speak, read, and write.<sup>6</sup>

Among the four fundamental language skills involved in the language learning process, English foreign language learners who are successful in English writing bring benefits to their English learning and opportunities in their

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<sup>4</sup> Peter H & Lowenberg, “*English as an Additional Language in Indonesia*”, Pergamon Press: World Englishes, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1991), p. 129

<sup>5</sup> Suryanto & Zahra Eka, “*Difficulties and Strategies in Learning English: An Analysis of Students From English and Non-English Education Department in Indonesia*” Atlantis Press: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, Vol. 518 (2020), p. 313

<sup>6</sup> Ann Raimes, *Techniques in Teaching Writing*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). p. 3

careers. Glazier contends, “Being able to write in English is essential in college, and it probably will be an asset in your career”.<sup>7</sup> Writing is important because it is widely used in higher education and the workplace. Students who do not know how to express themselves in writing will struggle to communicate effectively with professors, employers, peers, and others. Much of professional communication involves writing proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, emails, and more. These forms of communication are essential parts of daily life for college students and successful graduates.<sup>8</sup> It can be concluded that writing skills are essential for students' further education and future preparation.

Writing is a communication tool in written form, such as email, business letters, newspapers, diaries, and so on. This skill is crucial for expressing students' thoughts and ideas and organizing them into coherent sentences or paragraphs.<sup>9</sup> Emphasizing the teaching of writing skills to English foreign language students is essential for encouraging language development, adopting effective learning approaches, and making writing a compulsory subject. Therefore, writing has become an indispensable skill for preparing students to communicate and acquire knowledge in this era of information technology.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Luu Trong Tuan, “*Enhancing EFL Learners' Writing Skill via Journal Writing*”, Canadian Center of Science and Education: English Language Teaching, Vol. 3, No. 3, (2010) p. 1

<sup>8</sup> Blanka Klimova, “*The Importance of Writing*”, Paripex-Indian Journal of Research, Vol. 2, (2013), p. 9

<sup>9</sup> Supiani, “*Teaching Writing Skill Through Collaborative Writing Technique: From Theory To Practice*”, JEELS Vol. 4, no. 1 (2017): 37

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Harmer, “*How To Teach English*” (Longman, 2001). p.79-80

Writing is an instrument of thinking that allows students to express their thoughts. Writing helps students understand and share their perceptions of the world around them.<sup>11</sup> Through writing, students can organize their ideas, analyze information, and construct logical arguments, thus enhancing their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

The ability to write is more important as advances in transportation and technology allow people from nations and cultures across languages to communicate with each other. It can be seen that the instruction in the written form is in English as a second or foreign language.<sup>12</sup>

An integral part of participating fully in a new cultural setting is learning how to communicate when the other person is not right there in front of us, listening to our words, and looking at our gestures and facial expressions. Visitors to another country will often have to leave a note for the mailman, fill out a customs declaration form, give written instructions, or write a thank you letter.<sup>13</sup>

Writing is one of the four English skills that should be mastered well in school, university, or any other context where writing is needed. It is a complex process that requires various skills. However, writing abilities can develop by following certain strategies and practicing multiple patterns. Additionally,

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<sup>11</sup> Sarah Kartchner Clark, “*Writing Strategies for Social Studies*” (Shell education, 2007).  
p.7

<sup>12</sup> Sara Cushing Weigle, “*Assessing Writing*”, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 1

<sup>13</sup> Ann Raimes, “*Techniques in Teaching Writing*”, p. 3

Harmer stated that writing is a form of communication used to convey thoughts or express feelings through the written form.<sup>14</sup>

There is an additional and crucial reason: writing helps the students to learn. First, to emphasize the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary they have been learning in the class. Second, the students have a chance to explore everything that they want to say with language. Third, when students write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language; they make an effort to express ideas and engage their eyes, hands, and brains.<sup>15</sup>

Writing is one of the difficult skills for learners to master. The difficulty is not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating them into readable text. The writer needs to pay attention to the skills of planning and organizing, as well as spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. The difficulty becomes even more pronounced if the student's language proficiency weakens.<sup>16</sup>

Writing is a complex activity that requires intellect, creativity, and strategic thinking. Many students struggle to express their ideas in writing due to low writing skills and a lack of vocabulary. This can lead to reduced motivation in writing. Proper writing strategies and exercises are essential to help students develop their writing skills and become more interested in writing. It can assist students in critical and analytical thinking and in structuring logical arguments.

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<sup>14</sup> Annisa Raudatus Sa'adah, "Writing Skill in Teaching English: An Overview", EDUCASIA vol 5, no. 1 (2020): 22

<sup>15</sup> Ann Raimes, "Techniques in Teaching Writing", p.3

<sup>16</sup> Richards Jack C, and Willy A. Renandya, "Methodology in Language Teaching", (Cambridge University Press, 2002). p.303

At Subulussalam Islamic boarding School, the students get additional subjects and basic grammar in the learning activity. Considering that students of Subulussalam Islamic boarding school come from various majors, not only from the English department, and not all students have good writing skills.

The factors contributing to students' difficulty include a lack of motivation, an inability to organize ideas, limited vocabulary, and a lack of consistent writing practices. In addition, internal factors such as low self-confidence and external factors such as lack of support and opportunities to practice writing regularly can affect the development of students' writing capabilities and challenges in writing.

Ann Raimes, in her book entitled *Techniques of Teaching Writing*, mentions the techniques of teaching writing, including the use of visual aids like pictures to stimulate ideas, reading authentic texts to model writing styles, integrating all language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking to support writing development, and creating opportunities for practical writing through guided writing, peer reviews, and process writing methods.<sup>17</sup>

Duke and Pearson suggest the most effective way to become a good writer is to make a habit of writing. The more experience one has in writing, the better a writer one becomes.<sup>18</sup> Besides that, Harmer mentions that having students regularly write in a journal can be an excellent method to tap into personal experiences of daily events, personal reflection, questions about the

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<sup>17</sup> Ann Raimes, “*Techniques of Teaching Writing*”, New York, Oxford University Press (1938), p. 27-29

<sup>18</sup> Sarah Kartchner Clark, “*Writing Strategies for Social Studies*”. p.19

environment, and reactions to experiences in many fields, including educational settings, especially in English and literature subjects.<sup>19</sup> Through a journaling strategy, teachers can help students build their writing habits. So, this strategy gives them a comfortable and enjoyable way to support students in writing regularly. Students who consistently develop regular writing habits significantly improve their writing skills, resulting in greater fluency, organization, and overall quality.<sup>20</sup>

Several previous studies have supported the use of journaling as a strategy to improve students' writing skills. One notable study is titled "Enhancing Class XI Students' Writing Skills Through Journaling: An Action Research Study at Lhuentse Higher Secondary School" by Dorji Nidup and Yanten Ningtob. Another relevant piece of work is "The Effect of Journal Writing Technique on Students' Writing Ability" by Eliwarti and Indah Tri Purwanti. Additionally, "The Effect of Using a Diary to Improve Students' Writing" by Iin Ainun Nissa contributes to this discourse.

Further research includes "The Influence of Triple-Entry Journal Strategy on Students' Writing Skills Among Eleventh Graders at SMA N 1 Seputih Raman" by Eva Sofiati, and "The Effect of Reflective Journaling on the Writing Skills of English as a Foreign Language Students: A Quasi-Experimental Study" by Nur Aisyah Amalia, Abdul Syahid, and Akhmad Ali Mirza.

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Harmer, "English Language Teaching", p.329

<sup>20</sup> Key Hyland, "Second Language Writing", (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 130

Research from previous studies indicates that journal writing can be an effective strategy for improving students' writing skills. It is clear that the practice of journal writing positively influences the improvement of students' writing abilities.

To improve students' writing skills and minimize face difficulties, the researcher chose a journaling activity as a strategy to help students at Subulussalam Islamic boarding school. Journaling as a strategy to motivate students to practice writing without pressure, was implemented into writing instruction in the English foreign class.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the researcher's problem experience, she struggled with all of her English skills, one of is writing skills. The researcher found a video in YouTube by Zahid Ibrahim that talks about the benefits of journaling. It is working enough for the researcher and she feels curious about how the journaling strategy was implemented at Subulussalam Islamic boarding school.

Journaling can be defined as the permanent records of thoughts and ideas that an individual has processed and clarified through writing or otherwise recording their experiences.<sup>22</sup> Journaling is also an effective tool in academia to promote reflection on and articulate students' thinking, assist students in identifying and analyzing their deficits, and improve problem-solving skills strategies.<sup>23</sup> Journaling have a various form they are means of recording

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<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Walter-Echols, "Journaling as Writing Practice, Reflection, and Personal Expression", CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching vol 4, no: 9 (2008) p. 121

<sup>22</sup> Frederick B. King, Diana J. LaRocco, "E-Journaling: A Strategy to Support Student Reflection and Understanding", Current Issues in Education vol. 9 (2006). p. 1

<sup>23</sup> Krista K. Fritson, "Impact of Journaling on Students' Self-efficacy and Locus of Control", A Journal of Scholarly Teaching vol. 3 (2008). p. 75

personal thoughts, daily experiences, and evolving insights. The process often raises conversations with the self, another person, or even an imagined other person. A learning journal typically is handwritten in a notebook or on a pad of paper as a means of recording thoughts, reflections, feelings, personal opinions, and even hopes or fears during an educational experience.

Journaling has a various type and formats, in this research the researcher mentions thirteen. The fourteen are learning journals, diaries, autobiographies, life stories, and memoirs, electronic journals, spiritual journals, personal writing journals, creative writing journals, family journals, friendship journals, scrapbooks, sketchbooks, travel journals, and gratitude journals. The researcher in this research chooses a gratitude journal as a strategy. From the gratitude journal, the writer has an opportunity to word processing to express emotion and experience related to appreciation for the small things in life. This practice can also help to expand new vocabulary. Furthermore, keeping a gratitude journal encourages the development of writing habits through daily practice, which is the key to improving writing skills.

Roger Hiemstra recommends that students maintain a personal journal, diary, or log to capture their growing understanding of the field, a particular subject, or their professional development. This can include systematic observations of insight, events, and changes in personal perspectives during the course. Journaling, as it is often called, is typically one of the most complex of all forms for recording personal changes and insight. For many students, the process of maintaining a journal helps them become more organized and

focused on the areas they are studying. There is often a bit of personal clarification that takes place, too, as the journaling process helps in the elucidation of opinions, beliefs, and feelings.<sup>24</sup>

Early on, teachers used journaling primarily to improve a student's writing skills. According to Andrusyszyn, Davie, and Halva-Neubauer, the use of journaling is to be a valuable strategy for checking students' understanding of core concepts, promoting reflection, on the connections between theory and practice, enhancing insight, and promoting critical thinking.<sup>25</sup> Reflecting through journal writing allows learners to shape their ideas, create new ideas, and connect them to what they already know. By its very nature, journal writing supports the learning process.<sup>26</sup>

Previous research has confirmed the effectiveness of journaling strategies in improving students' writing abilities. However, most of this research was conducted in formal educational settings, such as junior and senior high schools or universities. In contrast, this study is conducted at Subulussalam Islamic Boarding School, which is a non-formal educational institution.

This research addresses a gap by applying the journaling strategy within a non-formal educational context that is significantly different from most previous studies. It aims to provide a fresh perspective on how journaling can

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<sup>24</sup> Roger Hiemstra, “*Use and Benefits of Journal Writing*”, Elmira Collage-New York, EBSCO Publishing (2003). p.21

<sup>25</sup> Frederick B. King, Diana J. LaRocco, “*E-Journaling: A Strategy to Support Student Reflection and Understanding*”, p. 1

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 2

be effectively integrated into the unique environment of an Islamic boarding school.

Based on the explanation above, the main focus of this research is to investigate the journaling strategy in improving students' writing capabilities. In this case, the writer would like to conduct quantitative research by implementing a journaling writing strategy. The researcher titled the research: "The Effectiveness of Journaling Activities in Improving Students' Writing Capabilities at Subulussalam Islamic Boarding School".

## **B. Research Problems**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher identified research problems as follows:

- a. How is the effectiveness of the journaling strategy in improving students' writing capability?
- b. Is there any significant difference between the students who use the journaling strategy and those without the journaling strategy to improve students' writing capability at Subulussalam Islamic Boarding School?

## **C. Objective of The Research**

Based on the research problems, the researcher identified the objective of the research as follows:

- a. To evaluate the effectiveness of the journaling strategy in improving students' writing performance.

- b. To determine whether there is a significant difference in writing capability between the students at Subulussalam Islamic Boarding School who are taught using the journaling strategy and those who are not.

#### **D. Significance of The Research**

- a. To the student

This research aims to contribute to the learning of learners, especially students of the Subulussalam Islamic boarding school, to help them improve their writing capabilities. It can also serve as a provision for their further education and future preparation.

- b. To the teacher

This research aims to contribute to inspire English teachers that journaling activities can be an ongoing evaluation tool to assess the development of students' writing skills over time. Through analyzing students' journals, teachers can gain deeper insight into students' writing capabilities, so that they can provide more specific and appropriate feedback.

- c. To the future researcher

This research provides valuable experience for the researcher in applying theoretical knowledge to a practical context. It also enhances the researcher's understanding of the implementation of journaling strategies in teaching English writing skills, particularly in a non-formal education.

## **E. Scope and Limitations of The Research**

This study is only conducted for the Subulussalam Islamic boarding school students of the academic year 2024/2025, marhalah ula and marhalah tsanni classes. The students of these classes were chosen because they both got the English material in their college classes and their learning activity at the Islamic boarding school. Through journaling as a strategy to help strengthen their understanding of the material they have learned in class, linking theory with practice, and developing their writing style.

The research will take place over two classes to provide sufficient time for students to show progress in their writing capabilities. Research should be conducted within a limited time frame and with available resources. Therefore, the focus of the study is limited to students in Marhalah Ula and Marhalah Tsanni only.

## **F. Variable**

A variable is something that is an object of research or something that is a concern, which will then be used as an object in determining the research objectives. A variable has a role in research or the phenomenon studied.<sup>27</sup>

This research has two variables: dependent and independent variables.

### a. Dependent variable (Y)

The dependent variable is the one affected by another variable. In this research, the dependent variable is students' writing capability. Writing

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<sup>27</sup> Ratna Wijayanti, Noviansyah Rizal, dan Riza Bahtiar, “*Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*” (WidyaGama Press, 2021), p. 36

capabilities refer to a person's ability to compose written text effectively and according to linguistic rules. John Anderson focuses on five key aspects of writing: grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form.<sup>28</sup>

In this research, writing capability is measured through the result score of the writing test including pre-test and post-test. The assessment includes five aspects: grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form. Students' scores were analyzed to see the change or improvement in writing ability after being treated with the journaling strategy.

b. Independent variable (X)

Independent variable is the one affecting the other variable. In this research, the independent variable is journaling activity.

Journaling is a reflective writing activity that encourages students to record their thoughts and feelings in writing.<sup>29</sup> In this research, journaling activities refer to writing daily reflective entries in English for 30 to 40 minutes. The content focuses on personal thoughts, feelings, and reflections on learning.

## G. Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings about the concept used in this study, the writer must provide some definitions of the terms used in this study. Those are:

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Hughes, “*Testing for Language Teacher, Second Edition*”, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 101-102

<sup>29</sup> Roger Hiemstra, “*Use and Benefits of Journal*”, p. 20

a. Writing

Writing is the making of letters or characters that constitute readable matter with the intent to convey meaning.<sup>30</sup> According to Omaggio Hadley, writing involves composition, which means telling or retelling pieces of information through narrative or descriptive forms or transforming that information into new texts such as expository or argumentative writing.<sup>31</sup>

b. Journaling Activity

A journal is a notebook in which you write about your life and thoughts.<sup>32</sup> A journal is typically handwritten in a notebook or on a pad of paper. It records thoughts, reflections, feelings, personal opinions, and even hopes or fears during an educational experience.<sup>33</sup>

c. Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the measure of how well a particular teaching approach or technique achieves its intended goal<sup>34</sup>. The effectiveness of this research means a significant improvement in students' writing capabilities by using a journaling activity strategy.

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<sup>30</sup> Sarah Kartchner Clark, “*Writing Strategies for Social Studies*”, p.7

<sup>31</sup> Giti Mousapour Negeri, ”*A Study on Strategy Instruction and EEL Learners' Writing Skill*” (Canadian Center of Science and Education, International Journal of English Linguistics Vol. 2, No. 2, (2011), p. 229

<sup>32</sup> Ann Hogue, “*First Step in Academic Writing*”, (Pearson Longman Second Edition, 2008). p.18

<sup>33</sup> Roger Hiemstra, “*Use and Benefits of Journal Writing*”, p.20

<sup>34</sup> David Nunan, “*Language Teaching Methodology*”, (Prentice Hall International English Language Teaching, 1999), p. 15