

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher explains the introduction to the study. First, the researcher will explain the background of the study. Then, it will be followed by the identification and the limitations of the problem. Next, the researcher will state the questions of the study. This will be followed by the purpose of the study. Finally, the chapter presents the significance of the study.

### **Background of the Study**

Writing is one of four skills needed in foreign language learning. In writing, there are some benefits which can only be granted by this particular skill. For example, writing can help motivate students to read, and teach them to organize their ideas. According to Ahmed (2010), writing is important for English Foreign Language or English Second Language students because of two reasons: The first reason is writing can motivate students to think. Since, they need some ideas to write something, they will take more time to think before they start to write. The students can also learn to organize their ideas and develop their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. Therefore, they learn how to write by processing their ideas, pouring them into words, and producing the results of their writing that can be delivered to the reader. The second reason is writing strengthens students' learning, reflecting and thinking about English language. In the writing process, students need many ideas, and they will learn how to elaborate their ideas and express their ideas into words.

In foreign language learning, the success of the students in learning process cannot be assessed just by knowing how well they can speak and understand the language. It is also important for the students to be able to write the language as well. The students who are only able to speak, listen, and read the language cannot become a good foreign language learner if they do not have a sufficient writing ability in that foreign language (Roohani & Taheri, 2015).

It is important for teachers to make sure their students have a good ability in writing. One of the ways to monitor students' ability is by conducting assessment. Assessment that teacher will use for their students should adhere to some principles of second language assessment. According to Brown (2003), there are five principles for evaluating and designing second language assessment. The first is practicality, the second is reliability, the third is validity, the fourth is authenticity, and the last is washback.

Washback is very important to be highlighted in assessment process. According to Bedford (2002), washback is the effect of an assessment on the teaching and learning process and it can be positive or negative effect. Brown (2003) also stated that washback is an effect of assessment and washback in assessment generally refers to the effect of test in teaching and learning in terms of students preparation, which mean washback can occur before the assessment itself. Brown (2003) stated that washback also can occur in the middle of teaching and learning process through informal assessment. For example, in writing class teacher create a game for students and ask them to write down one santence about folklore in a paper and give it into student beside them until all of students in the

class are finished write their sentence. Then the teacher will read it in front of the class while fix the grammar and suggest students to used fit vocabulary. Indirectly, students get knowledge of writing skill through a game. Bachman as cited in Bedford(2002) stated that washback will be positive, if the teachers use assessment that reflect students skill and the assessment is suitable with the content given in the class. However, it will be negative, if the teachers prioritize the assessment more than the curriculum. Iyer (2015) stated that it is good for ESL classroom activities if the washback can present a positive effect. However, if the washback gives a negative effect, the classroom activities will be dangerous for the teaching and learning process. The negative effect of washback generally occurs when the teacher and students only perform learning activities for narrow examination purposes. It happens when the teachers ignore the aim of the class, content, methodology, and outcome instead then perform their teaching based on only multiple choice examinations. This situation will give negative effect for classroom activities if the teachers just focus on the score and ignore the aim, content, objective and learners.

The challenge for teachers especially in writing assessment is to make an assessment for student which can give a positive washback. According to Brown (2003), washback is one of the principles of second language assessment. Based on the researcher experience ELED lecturer apply assessment in monitoring students skills including writing skill. However the washback research has never been conduct in ELED,so the researcher is interested in doing this research to find out the washback of writing assessment that is conducted in ELED.

## **The Identification and The Limitation of the Problem**

Writing skill is one of the four skills in foreign language learning which is important for students. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to make sure that their students have a good ability in writing. Usually, the teachers will assess the students' achievement and test their ability by giving them an assessment. In creating a good assessment for the students, it is important to implement the five principles of language assessment which consist of practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

One of the important principles in second language assessment is washback. Washback is the effect of language testing, it refers to the effect of an assessment on the teaching and learning process. According to Brown (2003) the challenge to teacher is to create classroom test where positive washback is achieved. Students' wrong answer in an assessment can be a window to achieve washback, because teacher can give comment and explanation on their answer sheet as a feedback. One way to enhance washback is to comment generously and specifically on students' test performance. Teachers are encouraged to not return students' written test only with a number or grade because a number or grade do not makes students know their weaknesses. It also important for teacher to praise students for their work as the way to improve their motivation.

At English Language Education Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta, washback research has never been conducted before so the researcher is interested to do this research. To find out the washback of the writing assessments conducted in ELED, the researcher will do an interview with

some students of ELED about their perception on writing assessment in their classroom. With this interview, researcher hopes to get a deep understanding about the writing assessments which were conducted at ELED. Then, the researcher will analyze the informations to find out what kind of washback exists in ELED.

### **Research Questions**

This research has been formulated as:

1. What are the activities students do in regard with writing assessment?
2. What is the washback of writing assessment toward students?

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research aims to:

1. Find out the activities students do in regard with writing assessment.
2. Find out the washback of writing assessments toward students.

### **Significances of the Study**

**For students.** The students will know the washback of writing assessment that they usually do in the classroom. The students will know the benefit of assessment for their skill. The students will know about washback and the positive washback. So, ELED students can be more motivated in doing the assessment.

**For teacher.** The lecturer can find out the result of this research and get knowledge about the washback of an assessment. Furthermore, the teacher will

know how to create a good writing assessment for students. Therefore, the teacher can be more selective in using it for future assessment for their students.

**For other researchers.** This study gives some ideas to other researchers who plan to do their research using the similar topic. Other researchers can get the ideas from the result of this study to support their research that have similar topic with this study.