

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

English in Indonesia becomes the first foreign language which has to be taught in schools as a compulsory subject. English is taught at Junior High Schools from first to the third year, and one of its goals is to develop oral and written communication competence in the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four basic competences especially in writing has the benefit to train the students to show his or her idea to the other people logically.

Writing is transforming thoughts into language; it means that we need to think about the contents of our writing first and then arrange the ideas using appropriate language (e.g. grammar and vocabulary) (Harsyaf et al,2009: 3). It means that learning writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary that we have been taught to the learners. When the learners write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned, to take risk.

Writing can help the learners express themselves. If the learners do not involve their skills of writing in the communication, they cut themselves off from a community. Writing can be a great tool to help them know more about the way they think. It can solidify ideas and thoughts and allow them to reflect on them better than if the ideas remained evolving in their head. Writing is one of the ways that can be used to

translate someone's thoughts for other people. Some people are better at expressing themselves in writing than any other.

Writing is both a social and a cognitive process. In real community outside the classroom, the learners write to communicate with the audience, drawing on their knowledge of contents and writing, strategies for planning and revising and basic writing skills. Furthermore, writing assists the learner to combine their knowledge of language with other language tasks as well. It helps them learn how to form language, how to spell, and how to put together a plot. Then the learners will learn how to make a logical argument, or how to persuade, mainly through writing.

In short, writing is a very important skill that should be learned by the students. It covers two significant benefits, for the purpose of communication and learning. To implement this, the government of Indonesia issued the regulation of the Minister of Education number 22, 20006. It states that the Syllabus of School based Curriculum of SMP/MTs should include the objective of learning writing, that is, to develop learners' standard competence to communicate in English in written form. The learners' competence in communicating refers to understanding and producing several types of text, such as short functional, descriptive, narrative, recount and procedure texts.

The basic competence of writing for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of junior high school is that the learners are expected to be able to express the meaning and

produce a short essay in the form of recount and narrative text accurately and fluently.

Writing requires knowledge and focuses on thought. In order to write, learners must have something to express in written form. Therefore, learners must acquire and present content (facts, generalizations and concepts) when they write a type of a short essay in the form of recount text taught in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of junior high school. In this case, learner do not merely express knowledge by writing, they also discover knowledge. Writing is inherently an integrative process, combining the total intellectual capacities of the writer. So, practically, to be able to write a type of a short essay in the form of recount text the learners should be able to integrate their knowledge of a language, the correct grammar and spelling applied in writing process, and their understanding of the fact given to them.

Considering that there are many aspects involved in a writing process and the analysis of determining the passing grade which covers the level of learning indicator complexity, the level of ability of the students, and the support level of school facilities has been done, the English teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan Sragen propose that the passing grade of writing is 6.5. It means that the learners will have mastered the minimal requirements of writing skill when the result of test is 6.5.

Based on the previous explanation stated in the previous paragraphs, it can be determined that, ideally, the writing skill of junior high school

students should cover the skill of expressing the meaning and producing a short essay in a form of a recount text accurately and fluently, integrating their knowledge of a language, the correct grammar and spelling applied in writing process, and their understanding of the facts. These can be reflected when the students have, at least, achieved the score of 6.5 as the passing grade of writing.

However, writing still becomes problems for Junior High School students, especially the students of class VIII of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan. The writing skill of the students has not fulfilled the minimal requirements stated in the previous explanation. The fact is based on the result of an early observation and interview dealing with writing which were done previous semester. The result shows that most students still find difficulties in writing, including in writing recount text.

The followings are the students' answers when the writer asked their reason why they got difficulties in constructing a recount text.

One of the students said:

*“Ketrampilan menulis dalam bahasa Inggris sulit. Dan yang membuat sulit menulis bahasa Inggris karena saya banyak yang tidak tahu bahasa Inggrisnya dan susunan kata-katanya sulit. Saya jarang menulis dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris”, (Retno Utami).*

Meanwhile, another student gave the following argument,

*“Saya sebenarnya suka mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Kalau disuruh mengarang kegiatan yang sudah lampau saya tidak hafal kata kerja bentuk lampau dan bentuk sekarang. Juga ejaan dan cara membaca yang berbeda, saya sering salah menulisnya. Waktu menerangkan cara menulis juga sedikit waktunya”, (Santi Ariyani).*

Next, the researcher asked another student. He answered;

*“Saya tidak mengerti dan bingung membedakan jenis-jenis teks descriptive, narrative dan recount kalau tidak membaca berkali-kali. Kalau procedure agak mudah karena biasanya tentang urutan cara membuat sesuatu atau langkah-langkah. Kalimatnya diawali dengan kalimat perintah. Saya tidak tahu kosa kata dan tata bahasa membuat karangan recount atau descriptive”, (Agus Giyatno).*

When the teacher provided three titles of short texts representing the types that should be learned: descriptive, recount and narrative text, they ranked that descriptive text had least problems and recount text had the most problems. Then, the observation was done to see the results of students' writing from the previous teacher and text, a recount text about past experience and the average score of the achievement. The result was that the minimal skill and requirements of writing that is, producing a short essay accurately and fluently had not been achieved by the students. The reason for this was that the average of classical score of their works was 5.7.

The fact in the previous paragraph that the results of the interview and of the daily test reveal that the junior high school students have not achieved the skills of expressing the meaning and producing a short text accurately and fluently, integrating their knowledge of a language, the correct grammar and spelling applied in writing process, and their understanding of the fact yet. The fact is reflected on their works of writing that most students can not convey the fact well, use their knowledge of language well, and integrate them in the writing process.

To know the cause of those problems of writing, the writer interviewed the students about the problems they had in writing a text, especially recount text. The students said that they had some problems in writing, such as the limited vocabulary, limited knowledge of grammar and limited skill to express opinion. Those are very crucial for the learners in writing a text. Limited vocabulary and grammar deal with the language features that should be applied correctly in writing, whereas limited skill of expressing opinion idea deals with the skill of using logical thinking that should also be involved in writing process. In more specific information, when they were writing, they did not know what ideas to write although the teacher had provided several clues to help the students arrange the ideas in writing. The next problem was that, when they had obtained the ideas, they could not express it in correct grammar, vocabulary and sometimes spelling. Their knowledge of language, dealing with grammar and vocabulary was too limited, it became a great obstacle for them in writing. The limited skills of understanding and applying the language features restrict their capability to arrange the sentence in correct language features. Some learners still find difficulties in how to use a certain language, like grammar and spelling in writing a short text.

The next cause of writing problem is that there were no special materials for teaching writing applied by the previous teacher. The learning material for learning writing activities was merely taken from textbook with no modification and improvement. The teacher regarded the

writing material for teaching and learning process on students' worksheet provided by the publishers was sufficient enough to achieve the desired competence.

The text types of the texts, seemingly, provide a problem for the students. Recount text, for example, has more problems among the texts learned in junior high school. Dealing with conveying the ideas, recount text focuses on a sequence of actions consisting orientation, events, and reorientation (Hartono, 2005: 7–10). The language features include proper nouns to identify those involved in the text, descriptive words to give details about who, what, when, where and how, the use of the past tense to retell the events and words that show the order of events ( for example, first, next, then (Anderson, 1997: 50). Those two writing aspects, conveying the ideas and language features of the text, is quite a problem for the learners. Sometime they are still confused to identify what types of text they were, descriptive, recount or even narrative text.

The next problem is that the previous teaching and learning process was not effective to develop the skill of writing. The teaching model presenting the materials taken from textbook with no improvement at all did not accommodate the need of a basic knowledge of writing, that is, combining the skill of conveying ideas and using correct language features. The teacher did not apply a certain method in teaching writing depending on the types of activities provided in the textbooks and students worksheet from publishers. Ironically, some teachers did not teach writing

in a sufficient portion of time. Writing is taught as a home work for the students with no guidance of the teacher. So writing has fewer portions in teaching and learning process than other skills, especially reading.

From the elaborations above, the students need improvement in writing a short essay text, particularly a recount text. The improvement should cover the skills of conveying ideas, using the knowledge of language of grammar, vocabulary and spelling, the new method of teaching and learning process that allocate writing in proportional time. The method should really activate the learners' awareness that writing is process of communication in written form involving the arrangement of ideas and the correct use of language features.

For this purpose, the writer suggests a type of learning process to help the learners of class VIII A of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan Sragen, that is using a model of applying picture series in teaching and learning process of writing, especially in writing a recount text. It is expected to be able to guide the learners of class VIII A of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan to develop the ability of integrating the knowledge of the language, like the correct grammar and spelling, and their intellectual capacities in understanding the facts of a certain facts and situation around them in a form of writing a recount text.

There are several reasons underlying the use of picture series in teaching and learning process of writing, especially in writing recount texts. The use of picture series as the media can develop writing

competence because that picture is one of the interesting media for learners. The use of picture series can stimulate students' imagination, so they can show or describe their opinion about the picture. Using picture series teach the students to have critical thinking physically and mentality in the teaching and learning process and it can support students' creativity and motivation in their learning and finally they can understand better the concept of material.

Another important reason for implementing picture series as a media in teaching and learning process according to Sukartiwi (in Ruis, 2009: 4) is that there are some advantages of using picture series as a media. Those are: (1) to increase the learners' motivation, (2) to avoid the learners bored, (3) to make the learners easy to understand the instructional material, and (4) to make the teaching and learning process more systematic.

Based on the rationale above, it can be concluded that writing has an important role in the learners' study in general life. In addition, there are many kinds of genres in writing. All students hopefully understand and will be able to show his or her idea in specific genre. However, there are many learners still have difficulty in writing, especially in writing recount text. Here, the writer interested in recount text because there are many learners who cannot write recount text fluently. Many difficulties are faced by the learners.

Through picture series, the learners are hopefully able to make connection between picture and print, helping them to improve thinking skill such as sequencing, predicting and relating cause and effect. The main aim using picture series is to create fun atmosphere in the teaching and learning process, so the learners are more interested in English especially in writing.

### **B. Problem Statement**

Based on the description in the background, the problems of the research can be formulated as the following:

1. Is the use of picture series effective to improve the students' ability in writing recount text in class VIII A of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan?
2. How is the improvement of the students' participation of the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan in writing recount text?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using picture series in writing recount text as media in the teaching learning process in class VIII A of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan, Sragen?

### **C. Objective of the Study**

The objective of this research is divided into:

1. General Objective.

The general objective of the research is to improve the students' ability in writing recount text by using picture series of the learners of SMP Negeri 2 Mondokan, Sragen.

## 2. Specific Objectives.

The specific objective of the research is to obtain the information about:

- a. Whether the use of picture series in the teaching and learning process of writing recount text is able to improve the students' skill in writing.
- b. The improvement of the students' participation in writing recount text.
- c. The strengths and weaknesses of using picture series in improving students' ability in writing recount text.

### **D. Benefit of the Study**

The writer hopes that her research on the improvement of the students' ability in writing recount text has benefits theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the result of the research can be used as references and considerations for the further research in different design to improve the writing skills of the students. Other researchers can continue to develop or to increase the research in the basic theory.

Practically, the result has benefit for the learners, the English teachers and related institution. They are:

#### 1. For the learners

The research result is expected to be a smart solution for the learners in studying English, especially in writing recount text. They are able to have many experiences in creating recount text task from

the pictures series, the students have motivation to write text frequently, and the students get motivation in writing.

2. For the English teachers

The research result is a very valuable contribution of teaching models for them to expand their knowledge of English learning strategy applied in teaching and learning process in developing the writing skill of the learners. By having experiences in using picture series and many kinds of teaching methods, the teacher is more confidence and always ready in facilitating of teaching learning process.

3. For the related institution

The result of the research is a significant input for the decision makers as references in making the policy dealing with education. Especially in Education Department of Sragen Regency, this research expected can develop the quality of education in this regency.

4. For other Researchers

The writer is aware that the research is not the end of the problems being studied. The writer does hope that the findings of the research will be used as starting point of the next research on similar problems. There are many other instructional media that can be used in Teaching English to make the lesson more interesting and more enjoyable.

