

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first section of this chapter deals with: (1) the background of the research, (2) research problem, (3) significance of the research, (4) limitation of the research, (5) definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Research

Writing is one of the four language skills which should be developed in the teaching English. However, as a matter of fact, in the process of learning and teaching English, writing is placed on the last stage among the four skills. The stage of the skills shows that a student has to be familiar with the first three skills, listening, speaking, and reading, before coming to the writing skill. It is natural that a student has to listen before learning to speak. Then, the student learns to read before learning to write. Language develops sequentially from listening to speaking, then to reading, and finally to writing.

Considering writing is the last skill to develop, it is considered to be the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master (Richards and Renandya, 2002).¹ Moreover, Mukminatien (1991)² states that writing is not a favorite subject for both students and teachers. Writing is considered the most complicated skill for students to master. This opinion is supported because writing involves several components that are contents, vocabulary items,

¹J. C Richards & Renandya, W.A (Eds.) *Methodology in Language Teaching. An Anthology of Current Practice*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 189

²Mukminatien, N, *Making a writing Class Interesting*. TEFLIN Journal. Vol. 4 (22). 1991. pp 129-145.

organization, grammatical structure and mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization (Hartfied, et al., 1985, as cited by Cahyono 2001)³. On the other hand, teachers are uninterested in teaching writing because it needs much time to prepare and to evaluate.

In addition, Latief (1996)⁴ who, conducts through a qualitative research on the assessment of English writing skills for EFL students, found that as students took more writing courses, there was no improvement in the rhetorical and coherence qualities. In other words, the teaching of writing involves many components, for example choosing words, grammars, organization, and mechanics. This condition requires that we should have adequate capability in order to fulfil the requirement of the written language rules. As a rule, however we do not write just one sentence or even a number of unrelated sentences but we produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways (Byrne in Astuti, 2004)⁵.

Because the teaching of writing involves many other components, the English teachers still face some problems in their teaching of writing. Consequently, the teachers almost have never taught the writing at the classroom (Wahyuningsih, 2006). This phenomenon also happens in the school where the researcher held this research, namely MTsN Pagu.

³B. Y Cahyono, *Second Language Writing and Rhetoric: Research Studies In the Indonesian Context*. (Malang: State University of Malang Press, 2001), 35

⁴ M. A Latief, 1996. *Assessment of English Writing Skills for Students of English as a Foreign Language at the Institute of Teacher Training and Education IKIP Malang*. ELE. 2 (1):17-25.

⁵Astuti. *Cooperative Learning In Improving Paragraph Writing of the Third-Year Students At SLTP Lab. State University of Malang*. Unpublished Thesis. (Malang: Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas Negeri Malang, 2004), 4

In MTsN Pagu, the students of VIII-H have low scores in writing text types especially a descriptive text. The scores obtained from a test conducted on the preliminary study on April 25, 2015. From the scores, it was found that only 2 out of 35 students of this class scored 75 or above. This means that only 5.71% of the students passed a good level. The results of the students' writing descriptive text in preliminary study show that they mostly made many errors in grammar and vocabulary; and some of them also made errors in content and organization.

A preliminary study shows that writing activities were mostly dominated with students' complaint. Most of the students complain that the writing task is too difficult for them because they rarely practice it in the classroom. When the researcher asks them to write a descriptive text, they answer often include such statements as "*I don't know how to start writing*", "*I will need hours of dictionary consultation*", "*It is too difficult*," "*I don't know more about vocabulary*". They did not know how to begin to write a descriptive text. They wrote a paragraph without relevance to the topic. Consequently, their paragraphs were not focus on one idea.

Several reasons come up as the causes of the problems above are: (1) teaching of writing at junior high school has not been emphasized; (2) the monotonous writing activities that were dominated with grammatical exercise; (3) the students usually do the writing task individually, without dictation.

The first cause of the problems based on the preliminary study is teaching of writing at junior high school has not been emphasized. In practice, the teaching of the English skills is presented in an integrated manner in which the listening skill is mostly emphasizes, and writing has a minor proportion. In addition, writing is excluded from the national evaluation; it is not included the indicator of the success of English teaching-learning related to National Examination (UN). Therefore, both English teachers and students think that writing is not as important as listening which in the national evaluation material, and then it can almost be neglected. Besides, most English teachers avoid teaching writing because teaching this language skill is time consuming, while the time allocation of the English teaching is limited. Consequently, the teachers almost never give the students writing practice.

The second cause of the problems is the monotonous writing activities that were dominated with grammatical exercise; the teacher delivers the materials monotonously. The teacher would like to focus on the instruction on her book rather than to explore the materials by conducting to the students' prior knowledge. In addition, the teacher did not give more explanation and elaboration about the material. Moreover, she just gave the task without giving a model first.

The third cause of the problems is the students usually do the writing task individually. They never work cooperatively when they were writing. To make things worse, they often utilized internet to deal with their writing task

– they just brows from the internet to copy and paste the text. They are not accustomed to sharing ideas/knowledge to each other. Furthermore, their projects are same taken from internet source.

To minimize the students' problem in writing descriptive text, a well-planned effort is greatly needed. The solution has to be able to solve the students' difficulties in producing a descriptive text containing adequate ideas, in well-constructed content, using appropriate vocabulary, well-organized manner, and grammatical structure. Therefore, the researcher would like to use a dictogloss technique as the well-planned effort to help students solve their problems and to make students more motivated in producing a descriptive text.

As a matter of fact, there are numerous text types in the academic field. Those are narration, description, exposition, or letter writing (Fachrurrazy, 2012)⁶. However, the researcher delimited the research in the activity in writing, especially descriptive text because this type of text is important for the students to recognize something around them. The ability to describe is something essential in the students' daily life. Moreover, descriptive text is a basic for dealing with other type of text. However, the students still find some problems dealing with this text, especially in producing this type text. That is why; the researcher chooses descriptive text for her research.

⁶Fachrurrazy. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Teachers in Indonesia*. (Malang: State University of Malang Press.2012),56

According to Larson as cited by Cahyono (2011)⁷, a descriptive text is “a text which says what a person or a thing is like”. The descriptive text is one of the types of writing that should be learnt by the students at senior high school. It includes several kinds of descriptive text, namely descriptive text about person, animal, and tourism resorts. (Curriculum KTSP).

Description of a person is a picture of a person with words. It is described to show someone to someone else. The best way to describe a person is to limit the description of the person because there are so much that can be said about an individual. However, describing a person must be focused on the characteristics of individual, providing specific details that illustrate that person (McKay 1983)⁸.

Description of a place (tourism resort) is a picture of a place that is described to show someone the actual place or to take a picture of it. In describing a place, the writer should give the readers an idea of the size, location, and types of a place. If the place is a home or a room, it is important to describe the size and arrangement of space involved. If, on the other hand, the place includes many things such as a downtown area, the description will likely focus on the location of the various buildings. Finally, if the place is an entire country, the description will be much more general and provide information about things as the land formation, climate, and major cities (McKay 1983)⁹

⁷Ibid.

⁸S. McKay, *Fundamentals of Writing for a Specific purpose*. Englewood Cliffs,(London: Prentice-Hall. Inc, 1983),51

⁹Ibid.33

Describing an object (famous history building) is also an attempt to give a picture of an object with words. The best way to describe the physical characteristic of an object is, of course, to point to the actual object or to show a picture of it. At times, however, it is not necessary or possible to include an illustration of the object. Instead, a description of the important characteristics of the object such as its size, shape, and color is adequate. The description might then proceed to describe other characteristics of the object such as its purpose or construction (McKay 1983)¹⁰.

A descriptive text can be written if the students know well who or what students will describe. They have to understand the object or place they will describe to the reader. Therefore to begin to write a descriptive text, the students must be geared to know the elements i.e. who, what, where, when, and how of the person, object, or place they want to write. Writing a descriptive text allows students to share interesting impressions of a person, a place, or an object surrounding the students. Students describe when they are talking or writing about a picture; writing about a character or place in a story; reporting on a famous places (Knapp and Watkins, 2005)¹¹.

B. Problem of Study

Based on the background of the research, the main aim of this research is to improve the writing ability of eighth graders of MTsN Pagu in writing

¹⁰Ibid.17

¹¹P Knapp, & Watkins, M. *Genre, Text, Grammar. Technologies for Teaching And Assessing Writing*. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005),

descriptive text by dictogloss technique. Thus, the research problem can be formulated as: "How can the implementation of dictogloss technique improve the writing ability of the eighth graders of MTsN Pagu?"

C. Objective of Study

In relation to the previously stated problem, the objective of the study is to describe how the dictogloss technique is implemented to improve the writing ability of the eighth graders of MTsN Pagu.

D. Significance of the Research

The finding of this research can be useful for English teachers and other researchers. For the English teachers, the finding and other empirical finding can enrich the technique which can be applied to improve students' writing ability for improvement of the teaching and learning process, particularly in teaching writing at MTsN Pagu. In other words, this research is expected to give practical contributions to the teachers with a technique of dictogloss in teaching of writing descriptive text. Later they can adopt it as one of the ways to solve similar problems in writing descriptive text. Meanwhile, for the further researchers, this research can give additional knowledge and references in terms of the way to implement the dictogloss technique, particularly its implementation to the same or other language skills, other types of text, and other field of disciplines.

E. Limitation of the Research

The present research focused on the teaching of writing descriptive text through dictogloss technique that is aimed to improve writing descriptive text, especially in terms of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This research was classroom action research and conducted MTsN Pagu of the eighth graders of H class on the even semester academic year of 2014/2015. This class was chose under the consideration that the practical problems in teaching and learning were found in this class.

F. Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity, the researcher defines the key terms. The following is the definitions of the terms used:

Dictogloss technique is an integrated – skills technique for language learning in which students work together to create a reconstructed version of a text.

Descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or things. Descriptive writing creates an impression in the reader's mind of an event, a place, a person, or thing. The writing will be such that it will set a mood or describe something in such detail that if the reader saw it, they would recognize it. Descriptive writing will bring words to life and makes the text interesting.