

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of problem, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, the objective of the study, and significance of the study.

A. Background of Problem

English is very important because it becomes an international language which is spoken by many people around the world as a first language or second language. English is also the language of the international communication business tourism, education, science, computer technology, media, and the Internet. In Indonesia, English is a subject which must be taught in the school. English has also become one of the compulsory subjects which should be taught to the students in the school now. The ability in using English is much needed nowadays. It becomes an important thing which must be learned and it is also important in the future.

The students have been learning English for so many years, but they still have difficulties to master an English subject. They state that English is a difficult subject to be learned. In studying English, there are four major skills which must to be mastered by the students. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills and speaking and writing are productive skills. Reading has a good relation with writing. When the students have a good reading ability, they will get competence in writing too.

Among four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult one. Writing is one of the skills that must to be mastered by students in Junior High School. Based on curriculum or *KTSP*, students in Junior High School have to be

able to not only understand about the nature of writing but also to produce certain various short functional text, monologue and essay in form of procedure, descriptive, narrative, recount, and report. Therefore understanding the nature of writing is not enough. The students have to produce certain kinds of the text. Moreover, writing facilitates students to better learning some aspects which are used for learning English. Writing becomes one of the important things in English. It must be learned by the students. In writing, there are some aspects which must be known. Students must give attention about generating ideas, purpose of their writing, spelling, punctuation and capitalization, vocabulary, grammar, and preposition. They are the important subjects in writing and they are needed in writing.

The writing ability of the students in Junior High School usually is low. Many students in Junior High School often find difficulties in writing. The students still find difficulties when they write a text in English. There are some factors related with those. First, students have low motivation in writing. They are not confident with their writing. Second, students are still confused in using grammar, vocabularies, spelling, preposition, punctuation and capitalization. Sometimes students still make mistakes about them. Not only about those, but also they are confused about how to generate or develop their ideas in writing. Students find difficulties to get the ideas in writing. So, they are still confused about what they are going to write in their writing.

Generating ideas is one of important aspects in writing. In the text, it must conduct of a topic or idea. So, students must understand about how to generate or develop the ideas in writing before they are going to write their whole text. It because, generating ideas is a soul of writing which contains of a message

to be delivered from writer to the reader. The researcher finds that some students get difficulties to get their ideas. So, they are confused about *what they are going to write* in their text. Sometimes, this problem is influenced by the English teacher. The teacher only gives them about the examples of the text and then suddenly the teacher asks students to produce or write a whole text. It means that the teacher does not give enough opportunities and guidance to the students in writing production. The teacher does not stimulate students by using media to help students to get the ideas in writing. In fact, to be able to produce a good writing, students also have to master the sub skills of writing. However, many students are lack of those sub skills.

The same problems were found at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta. Many students was low in writing ability including the grade VII students at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta. The grade VII students at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta found difficulties in generating their ideas. That was the main problem in writing. Many students still got difficulties in generating ideas. They state that they did not find an idea when their teacher asks them to write a text. There were also some supporting students' writing problems in grade VII students at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta. They still found difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, preposition, punctuation and capitalization. They still got difficulties in using the appropriate grammar. So, they still made mistakes in arranging the English sentences. The students' vocabulary mastery was also still low. Many students did not master some vocabularyies enough. It could be said that the students' vocabulary mastery was still low. So, they got difficulties to express their vocabulary in writing. Sometimes they also spell their vocabulary incorrectly. And the last problems were punctuation, capitalization and preposition.

Punctuation and capitalization are important aspects in writing. It is used as a code and a tone in writing. Many students did not more give attention in using punctuation and capitalization. They did not use appropriate punctuation and capitalization in their sentences. Not only about punctuation and capitalization, the students also made mistakes in using of prepositions. They were still confused in using of preposition.

Based on those reasons, the researcher conducts to use a technique which makes students understand about how to generate ideas or topics and to make a good text in English. The researcher uses picture-cued activities to improve the students' writing skill as the solution in the teaching writing problems in grade VII at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta. Picture-cued is the picture telling or illustration which is used to illustrate someone, something's, or somewhere. By using picture-cued activities, it can help students to stimulate their brain to generate or develop their ideas in writing. In this stage, the researcher guide students to explore students' ideas by using pictures. The main purpose in using picture-cued activities is to help students in generating ideas in writing. So, the students would not get difficulties about *what they are going to write* anymore. To support the good writing, the researcher also improves the students' ability in using grammar, vocabulary, spelling, preposition, and punctuation and capitalization mastery. She gives some activities to improve all of them.

B. Identification of Problems

Based on the statement before, the writing ability of grade VII students at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta was low. Students still found difficulties in writing. There were some problems in writing. The first problem was generating ideas. Generating ideas is the important thing in writing. Generating ideas means that

constructing the message in order to be acceptable when it is read by readers. An idea is a soul of writing. Without the ideas, students could not write a text. It is important to generate ideas before students write a text. Naturally, students could develop or generate their ideas in writing, but sometimes they were still confused about how to generate their ideas in writing. So, they found difficulties about *what they are going to write*. It because, their teacher only explained about the text and the teacher did not give the students' opportunity to practice their writing enough. The teacher also did not use an interesting media to stimulate the students' ideas in writing.

The second problem was grammar. Grammar becomes an indicator whether the students' writing is good or not. There is a relationship between writing and grammar. It influenced in writing. Sometimes, students still got difficulties in using grammar. Students still found difficulties to apply the appropriate grammar in their writing. It made students got difficulties in arranging English sentences. They were also still confused in using the appropriate English sentence patterns. They were confused in using of '*tobe*' and '*verb*'. Sometimes, they still mixed both of '*tobe*' and '*verb*' in a sentence. They also still found difficulties in using *present*, *past*, and *future* tense. Based on the problems, the researcher also focuses about the grammar aspects in her research. She would improve the students' grammar mastery.

The third problems were vocabulary and spelling. Vocabulary is about the word choices. When the students write a paragraph, they must consider about kinds of the word choices in their writing. If students have good vocabulary mastery, they can choose suitable vocabulary in their writing. In other hand, many students in grade VII at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta had low vocabulary

mastery. They often found difficulties about vocabulary. Sometimes, they also got difficult to apply the appropriate vocabulary in their writing. Not only about vocabulary, but also students still found difficulties in spelling. Sometimes, the students still made mistakes in spelling. They did not give attention in using spelling. They did not spell their words or vocabulary correctly and completely. In this case, the researcher tries to solve the problems about vocabulary and spelling. She would use some activities to improve students' vocabulary mastery and spelling in grade VII at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta.

And other problem was punctuation and capitalization. Punctuation and capitalization are one of the aspects in writing. They are very important in writing, but many students often do not give attention about those. Punctuation is a sign which is used in writing. Punctuation marks are essential when you are writing. They show to the reader where sentences are started and finished and if they are used properly, they make your writing easy to be acceptable to understand. We can conclude that punctuation give tone in writing and they can help clearly in our writing. In other hand, capitalization is also the important aspects in writing. Capitalization is about the letters rules in the written form. There are some rules in the capitalization. When the students write a sentence, they must start the first letters with capital letters. If students want to write name or place, they must also use capital letters too. In the fact, students did not give attention about those. Sometimes they still forgot to start their first letters in their sentences with the capital letters. Some of them also did not know when they write a name or place, it must use capital letters. Based on the problems, researcher would conduct some punctuation and capitalization exercises to

improve and solve the students' problems in using punctuation and capitalization in writing.

And the last problem was preposition. A preposition describes a relationship between other words in the sentence. There are some types of prepositions. They are preposition of place (*at, on, in*) and preposition of time (*at, on, in, since, for*). They have different ways and rules in using prepositions. In writing, preposition is important, but many students were still confused about using of preposition. It still was found mistakes about preposition in their writing. They still found difficulties in using appropriate preposition in their writing. They did give attention in using the prepositions in their writing.

C. Limitation of Problem

In reference to the problems above, the researcher focuses on improving the students' writing skill in the descriptive text especially in generating ideas by implementing picture-cued activities as the media in teaching writing. To support the students' writing problems, she would try to solve the problems about the content aspects in writing (grammar, vocabulary and spelling, preposition, and punctuation and capitalization) by implementing some activities related with those. She also tried to conduct an enjoyable teaching learning process. She tried to stimulate students to explore their writing ability. The students would learn about how to produce the short sentences, a descriptive, and sentence story by using the picture-cued activities. She provided some colorful pictures and then she showed the pictures on LCD projector. She also provided some colorful pictures in the students' tasks.

D. Formulation of Problem

The formulation of the problem in this research is:

How can picture-cued activities be implemented to improve the students' writing skill in grade VII at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta in academic year 2013/ 2014

E. The Objective of Research

Related to the formulation of the problem, the aim of this research is to know how picture-cued activities can be implemented to improve the seventh grade students' writing skills at SMP Negeri 7 Yogyakarta. It is used to improve some important aspects in writing like generating ideas, grammar and vocabulary mastery, using of spelling, preposition, punctuation and capitalization. If it can improve the students' writing ability, it can be continued further with advanced development.

F. Significance of the Study

The result of the research can expect to:

a. The English teacher

This research can be used as the reference media in the teaching and learning English in the class. The teacher can modify the picture-cued activities with another media in teaching and learning English.

b. The students

This research can be used to improve the students' writing skills. The picture-cued activities also can be used to help students in generating ideas. In this research, the researcher also teaches some another's aspects in writing.

It is happened, it can improve the students' ability in the using of the aspects of the writing. It means that the students must give attention in using of the

aspects of writing. So, if they complete all of them, they can produce the good descriptive text.

c. Further researchers

The research affords a new insight into the teaching writing in which teachers attempt to implement picture-cued activities in teaching and learning process.