CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the research, problem formulation, objective of the research, operational definition, benefits of the research, and the scope of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

In learning a second or foreign language such as English which is known as the lingua franca and has become the primary subject in Indonesian schools, there are some competences or skills that must be mastered by the learners. Those four skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are divided into two kinds, receptive and productive skills. When students are learning language, they develop both receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills include understanding when you listen and when you read. You receive the language during listening, decode the meaning to understand the message, read the text and get the point of the text you have read. Listening and reading are called as receptive skills are because we use our skill in receiving the information from outside. While productive skills are speaking and writing. We use the language that we have acquired and produce messages through speech or written text that we want others to understand. This is the process of producing any information we have got from listening and reading by elaborating our own conclusion.

Since English has become the primary subject at school based on the curriculum, which is stated that students are expected to be able to master four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, then it is hoped that by using those English skills, students are supposed to get informational skills which can help them to explore themselves in accessing many kinds of information source in English, such as articles, novels, magazines, etc. After getting any information from reading any written media as mentioned before or from listening to any oral information like BBC news, TV programs, etc the students need something to do, to share or spread all the knowledge they get, therefore, writing is used as the best sharing media.

Furthermore, even though writing is placed at the last arrangement of the four skills that must be mastered in learning language, it does not mean that writing is not important. It has the same equality to be learnt and mastered as the other language skills. Moreover, writing is an important skill during the learning process both in academic context and non-academic purposes. In context of education, it is also worth remembering that most exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge (Harmer : 2004 : 3). While for non-academic purpose, writing skill is needed to do the future need such as applying for a new job. The applicant has to submit his application letter as the first requirement to the company or institution he wants to work for. The company will scores based on the applicant's writing before go to the interview process. Therefore, it is obvious and important to have a good writing proficiency. Moreover, in now days society, most of people are using their writing skill to interact or to communicate among them through e-

mail, blog, SMS (Short Message Service), or the more popular communication tool, social media such as facebook, tweeter, line, wechat, or BBM (Blackberry Messenger). Although it is the common thing to update our status by writing what's in our mind, in fact, the majority of students usually refuse to write, it is because they do not know what they want to write. The writing skill is considered to be the most difficult of the language skills for Indonesian students. The first stage in learning language is by hearing it. The students are able to understand what they heard but they do not know how to write it down. They might be familiar with English listening and speaking such as from the English songs or watching the Hollywood movies. Then, some general signs are easy to find in public area which is related with the use of their reading comprehension of language context, for example 'push and pull' at the door of a store, 'no smoking', 'parking area', 'welcome', 'grand opening', 'city square' etc. In contrast, the writing skill could be both new and difficult things used in daily life. It caused by the complexity of writing. The students must consider about some aspects of a good writing product such as word choice (vocabulary), grammar, mechanics, spelling or punctuation, and form or organization (Hughes 2003:101).

There are still many reasons why writing English is difficult. Most people's relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness. First they cannot write satisfactorily or even cannot write at all. Worse yet, their efforts to improve do not seem worked (Elbow: 1973:12). Furthermore, Elbow said that most people have had bad experiences with writing. They have come to dislike it or fear it and usually they avoid it. They feel confused when they have to write because they do not even know how to get start to write. This difficulty happened to the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kalibaru. Based

on the interview which was conducted with the English teacher, the students writing score was low due to the external and internal factors. The internal factors are most of them get difficulties in expressing their ideas, choosing the appropriate words, having low grammar mastery, and mechanics, moreover, they are too shy to ask about the important information related to the material given. While, the external factor is the teaching media used during the lesson which only focused on textbook. This external factor make the students passive during the teaching and learning process. As a result, the students score in writing was out of the expectation. There was only 25% of students passed the standard minimum score and the rest was failed. The teacher said that they could get better score after they followed some remedial test.

Due to the fact that students are not interested in writing activities, the teacher needs a new technique which can be used to increase the students' learning motivation and the technique is free writing. Elbow (1973:1) stated that the most effective way to improve writing is to do freewriting exercises regularly. At least three times a week. They are sometimes called "automatic writing," "babbling," or "jabbering" exercises. It also can be useful media in order to help students start to write. Moreover, Elbow (1980:14) also found that this free writing activity can help students learn simply to get on writing and not be held by worries about whether they use good words or right words. Free writing is a writing technique that makes students write whatever comes into their head without stopping, worrying about grammar, spelling, organization or even making basic sense. The main aim of free writing is to get something on the page. Start writing and keep writing is the main point of freewriting activities.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the above explanation, this research tries to answer the following

questions:

1. How can a freewriting technique improve the eighth grade students writing's ability
   at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016?

2. How can a freewriting technique improve the eighth grade students' active
   participation in class at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Related to the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the research are:

1. To describe or exposure the use of freewriting technique in improving the eighth
   grade students' writing ability at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of
   2015/2016.

2. To explain the use of freewriting technique to improve the eighth grade students'
   active participation in class at SMPN 2 Kalibaru in the academic year of 2015/2016

1.4 Operational Definition

There are two terms that need to be defined operationally in order to make a clear

illustration about the research.

1. Writing Ability is the students' ability to express or write their ideas based on the topic
   given related to recount text which consists of 10-15 sentences and must consider about
   the writing aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

2. Freewriting is a kind of technique which is used to make students feel free to write what is on their mind without worrying about grammar, spelling, and organization in a certain period of time. If the time for free-write is up, then they can do revision before submitting their writing. This technique makes students easier to find ideas and generate them to use their own words.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The result of this research is expected to give a contribution to the teaching and learning process of writing in English as a foreign language.

1. For the Students

Through this research the researcher expects that this technique can be used to help the students in generating ideas which help them to write easily. Besides, it helps students to improve their writing ability.

2. For the English teacher

The researcher hopes that this technique will be able to give new information for the teacher in order to consider free writing as additional technique in teaching writing for EFL/ESL students and it is a contribution in English language teaching and learning, particularly in the way on how to improve students' writing skill.

1.6 The Scope of The Research

        This research will be conducted at SMPN 2 Kalibaru especially for the eighth grade students. This research focuses on improving the students writing ability construct a recount text freely.