

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some aspects which are underpinning the topics of the research. It includes: background of the research, problem of the research, objective of the research, operational definition, significant of the research, the scope and limitation of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Now a day, it is an important subject in the fields of education in Indonesia. Moreover, English has become the compulsory subject which is taught in Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School, even in the University.

Barber (1993:234) said in Bahrudin, Akhmad thesis (2008:01) that English is one of the major world-languages. It is used by most of countries around the world. English is a means of communication and it has many functions. First, English as universal language in the world, it means many countries in the world used English as second language; And people in different countries with different languages can communicate each other by using English. Second, English plays an important role in some fields, such as technology, education, politics and economics. Third, people can express their ideas and thoughts by using English in spoken and in written form.

English has four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. That must be mastered by students. I choose writing skill because I think

this skill is good for students to develop, writing is considered as a difficult and complicated skill. According to Vicki and Monette writing is a recursive process. Students should learn strategies for invention and discovery. Effective writing fulfills the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs. All teachers can use writing to improve content learning. Dealing with the difficulty of writing, Byrne (1984:4) said in Bahrudin, Akhmad Thesis (2008: 2) divides the problems or difficulties in writing into three groups, namely psychological problems, linguistics problems, and cognitive problems. Psychological problems are some problems which are mostly caused by the lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the readers.

In this case, the writer cannot receive the readers' response directly. Linguistic problems are some problems which are related to the use of structure of the utterance produced. This means that in writing the sentences produced should use correct words and structures so that the readers may understand the content of the writing easily. The last problem is the cognitive problem relating to the learning process of writing. This means that writing is learned through an instructional process, a writer should consider some aspects, such as grammar, mechanics, content, vocabulary, and organization when they write by (Hughes, Arthur: 100-102). Besides those considerations of aspects, the writer should think about the ideas that will be written.

Based on preliminary study conducted at MTS Al Faruq Grugugan Bondowoso, most of the seventh grade students had difficulties in writing. The information was gained by interviewing the seventh grade English teacher. The result of interview was that most of the seventh grade students experienced difficulties in writing a paragraph in terms of developing and organizing their

ideas, using their vocabulary appropriately and mastering tenses. In developing and organizing, the students faced difficulties in expressing their ideas into written form. Therefore, they had barriers to start writing. They had problems to begin and to develop their ideas. They had difficulties in organizing their ideas that their writing was incoherent. In terms of vocabulary problems, the students actually had enough store of vocabulary but they were sometimes not able to place the right vocabulary. They sometimes chose inappropriate words, and this made their sentences did not make sense. Dealing with the problem of tenses mastery, the students were often unable to make sentences by using appropriate tenses. When the students were required to write a descriptive paragraph to describe a particular person, place or thing, they did not apply present tense consistently. According to the seventh grade English teacher their average score of writing ability test of descriptive text was 50 while the standard score is 65. There was only around 50% of the students got score ≥ 65 in the writing ability test held by the English teacher.

The teacher never used any media to help the students write a paragraph, except black board, chalk or marker, LCD and handbook. The students were usually given a theme before writing a paragraph which made them take a long time to produce the intended paragraph. The seventh grade English teacher had actually been trying to solve the students' problem in writing paragraph by applying cooperative language learning. The students were required to work in group so that they could help each other. However, it had not worked well. When the teacher applied cooperative language learning approach, the students were still unable to solve their difficulties in writing a paragraph. Moreover, the class could not be well-managed since the students tended to be noisy. After discussing with

the English teacher, the researcher proposes to use Mind Map strategy to help students write a descriptive paragraph.

It is now widely accepted that people have a better memory for images than for words. The combinations of words and images that are not simply decorative have been found to facilitate learning, understanding, remembering and performing. Images can help students select, structure, synthesize and integrate information in a meaningful way. Aristotle said, "The soul never thinks without a mental image". The mind mapping strategy is one of the teachers' strategies in teaching. Not only Mind Maps show facts, but also show the overall structure of a subject and the relative importance of individual parts of it. It helps students to associate ideas, think creatively, and make connections that might not otherwise make (Tony Buzan, 2010). As Alamsyah (2009) explained that Mind maps work well as their visual design enables students to see the relationship between ideas, and encourages them to group certain ideas together as they proceed.

The mind mapping strategy can be used to explore almost any topics in writing and also used in every kind of writing such as : narrative, descriptive, recount, persuasive, argumentative, essay etc. Students can improve their ideas and lend themselves to discussing ideas in groups.

Considering the above description, this classroom action research will be conducted. It is entitled "Improving the writing ability of seventh grade students of MTS Al Faruq Grujugan Bondowoso through Mind Map strategy in the academic year 2014 / 2015".

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background above, the problems are formulated as follows:

How can Mind Map strategy improve writing ability of the seventh grade students at MTS Al Faruq Grujugan Bondowoso in the academic year 2014 / 2015?

1.3 Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to find out how Mind Map strategy can improve writing ability of the seventh grade students at MTS Al Faruq Grujugan Bondowoso in the academic year 2014 / 2015.

1.4 Operational Definition

The function of definition is to make it easier to determine the purpose of writing this thesis. So, the writer decided to choose the key terms of the title to be defined. The terms are writing ability and essay writing.

1.4.1 Writing Ability

Writing ability deals with the score of the students' writing test after being taught the proposed actions that is writing a descriptive paragraph. Descriptive Paragraph in this research is a paragraph that describes a particular person, place or thing. The students are required to write a short descriptive paragraph consisting of at least 30-40 words. The measurement of the students' paragraph writing covers content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and organization. The students are required to write a descriptive paragraph by using simple present tense. The allocated time for the writing test was 80 minutes.

1.4.2 Mind Map strategy

A mind map, is a strategy for making notes on a topic, prior to writing. It is a structured strategy, which shows the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas, as opposed to an unstructured strategy, such as brainstorming, in which students produce notes at random on paper. Having an organized display of information from the outset of the writing process may help some students, as it is more easily converted into a draft, whereas in brainstorming, the random recording of ideas might lead to problems with the structure of students' texts.

Mind Map strategy will be selected based on the topic from the 2006 Institutional Level Curriculum for the seventh grade students in the academic year 2014 / 2015.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The result of the research was expected to be useful theoretically and practically.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

In theoretically, team teaching done with the English teacher is useful to get an experience of implementing of the actions that can be used as alternative in teaching writing to improve the students' writing achievement by using Mind Map strategy.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

In practically, the actions given to the students are useful to provide them new experience in writing practice by using Mind Map Strategy. By knowing this

strategy, the students will be able to improve their writing ability as well as their achievement.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of the research is focused in learning writing, especially writing descriptive text by using Mind Map strategy in teaching learning process of the seventh grade students' at MTS Al Faruq Grujugan Bondowoso in the academic year 2014/ 2015.