

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

There are four basic skills that English learners must be master, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As stated by Jeremy Harmer in Fenny Thresia, receptive and productive are two main abilities in the language.¹ Listening and reading are the skills included in receptive because both of them are receiving messages. meanwhile speaking and writing skills are productive messages because both are included in language production. Writing skills were lowered after listening, speaking, and reading. Writing is one of the skills and lessons that are always in every syllabus in learning English. Because of that, writing is one of the communication tools in written text. In short and light communication can be described as the process of transmitting or transferring information or messages from one person to another or among many individuals through various means such as through oral or writing short messages via electronic mail or commonly called e-mail and others to obtain information and feedback from the interlocutor who was sent a message.²

Many students have difficulty in writing test, even for free writing, sometimes students are confused about where to start. As noted by Jack Richard, the most difficult skill in mastering is writing skill.³ Difficulty in writing is not only in generating and arranging fixed ideas how to translate the ideas into perfect text form. Even though writing skill is one course to hone and develop their English skills, it is undeniable that writing skill the skills that is difficult to master because writing skill requires deep and hard thinking and how to organize word for word and sentence by sentence become one unit and good paragraphs. It can be said,

¹ Fenny Thresia, "Improving Students' Writing Ability Through Cue Cards Technique", *Premise Journal*, Vol. 6 No. 1 (2017), p. 8–19.

² Sholihatul Hamidah Daulay, *Language and Society*, (Medan: Lembaga Peduli Pengembangan Pendidikan Indonesia (LPPPI), 2019), p. 10.

³ Jack C. Richards and Willy A. Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching*, (New York: Cambridge University, 2002), p. 303.

mastering writing skills will improve the working ability of the brain because while writing not only expresses ideas in the form of words but also absorb information as a reference source in writing, therefore writing is also close to reading skills. Often reading something can also improve someone's writing skills.

In the teaching and learning process in the classroom, students are not only required to be able to listen to what is explained by the teacher and read textbooks and be able to speak, but students must also be able to write what they absorb from listening, reading and speaking in the form of words said well. Generally, students have problems in organizing ideas on how to write well, such as choosing the right words so that the results can be accepted and readable later. Therefore, the importance of improving writing skills, namely to express ideas and develop them, especially writing in a foreign language such as English is a significant challenge and if it can be mastered well then it can be said to be a great gift because you can write in a foreign language that can improve someone's writing skills.

Based on the 2013 curriculum that has been compiled by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, at tenth grade or senior high school students must be able to master several types of texts, namely descriptive text, narrative text, anecdote text, and announcement text. In the 2013 curriculum of SMA, descriptive text is taught in tenth grade as stated in the core competencies (KI) and basic competencies (KD) in point 3.7 which reads "Menganalisis fungsi sosial, struktur teks, dan unsur kebahasaan pada teks deskriptif sederhana tentang orang, tempat wisata, dan bangunan bersejarah terkenal, sesuai dengan konteks penggunaannya."⁴ which from the explanation here students must master this type of text, namely descriptive text.

Descriptive text is one of the types of text taught at the high school level which the writer previously mentioned above. Descriptive text is a genre of text that must be taught to students so that students can describe any object, be it a person, place, or thing. Descriptive text is a text whose function and purpose are to provide information in the form of a description of something or someone. Although it sounds easy in the explanation related to descriptive text, some students still have

⁴ The English Syllabus of Curriculum 2013.

difficulty writing descriptive text. Students experience difficulties such as where to start first and what techniques are suitable for writing descriptive texts.

However, many students still experience difficulties and problems in writing descriptive texts. Based on previous study that has been conducted by writers, there are several obstacles, such as the methods or techniques used in writing the text are not yet appropriate or suitable, because the teacher must be able to choose the right method or technique in teaching writing to students and be able to explain it well. Then how to develop and find suitable ideas for writing. Students sometimes experience problems like this because they have not been able to develop ideas about what they can write in their writing, as a result, writing is a skill that is difficult for them to master.

As experienced by teachers in the field when teaching writing to students, teachers also experience difficulties because they have not found the right method or technique in teaching writing texts, especially descriptive texts. Not without reason, because the writer took this technique as the object of this study because many things like this happen in the field. Both experienced difficulties between teacher and student. Teachers have difficulty in teaching writing to students because they have not found the right technique as well as on the part of students who have difficulty in writing. After all, it is difficult and feels confused in developing ideas from topics that will be written or text which in this study is writing descriptive text which includes in one of the texts that must be mastered by high school students.

In this study, the writer took the topic for the title of whether clustering techniques affect improving students' writing skills as previously explained that writing ability is still a difficult ability for students to master. The main purpose of applying this clustering technique is to make it easier for writers or students to develop ideas from the main topic which will be translated into an integrated paragraph and text. This technique is very useful for writers who often experience confusion in starting an article that they will write, so the clustering technique is one way for writers to explore many ideas that will be developed into text, by making it a diagram like a branching tree-branches and are interconnected with each other. That's how the clustering technique is described when starting writing in the

pre-writing stage. This is one of the reasons why the writer took this topic or technique in this study to improve students' writing skills, especially in writing descriptive texts.

It is very important for teachers to determine the right technique in teaching students' writing skills so that students are not confused in writing texts, including writing descriptive texts. Like the experience that the writer experienced when was in high school, the teacher did not yet have and taught the right technique to teach the writer so that the students had difficulty when starting to write. Based on the field that in this study the writer also found problems in the same field or school, that is students still had difficulties when asked to write including writing descriptive texts. Therefore, this time the writer introduces the right writing technique, namely the clustering technique to students to make it easier and improving students' writing ability in the future.

Hence the writer took the subject of high school students in tenth grade because it should be at the 1st or 10th grade high school level that students should be able to write simple descriptive texts with precise descriptions and clear organization. But, in fact the 10th grade high school students have not been able to write descriptive texts as expected by the writer. Many students still feel confused and did not know how to write the right descriptive text. Senior high school students are the right choice because at this level high school students have been able to think broadly and deeply and their mastery of English has increased after previously learning English at the junior high school grade and the curriculum in junior high school has also taught descriptive text material. Therefore, this study will focus on the use of clustering techniques to improve students' writing ability of descriptive texts. As the writer has stated above, writing is one of the skills that are difficult for students to master.

Therefore, based on field facts experienced directly by the writer, the writer takes this topic as the title in the study because of the importance of methods or techniques in teaching and improving students' writing skills so that students can get rid of the stigma that writing skills are difficult because they have not encountered techniques. or the right method in improving writing skills. The writer

also believes that students nowadays still have difficulty in writing, especially the description text material, in which the description text is one of the texts that must be mastered by students that are included in the 2013 curriculum for senior high schools.

The technique that the writer used here is the clustering technique. Which is the clustering technique used during the prewriting or writing planning process, or it can be said as the process of developing ideas to be written in paragraphs or text. As explained by Langan, clustering techniques can be referred to as diagramming or mapping.⁵ This method can help students develop ideas for writing, they can use a form such as lines, boxes, circles, and other shapes to show the relationship between each sub-topic of the main topic. This technique can motivate students' visual thinking to find ideas related to the main topic. That way when students start writing their text, the text will not run away from the prewriting stage that uses the clustering technique. By using this technique, every idea that has been developed will be connected and the significance of the writing product can be understood properly.

Furthermore, clustering techniques make it students feel easier to explore ideas for writing descriptive texts based on predetermined main topics. Related to the background that the writer has described above, the teacher formulates a title, namely "The Use of Clustering Technique in Improving Students' Writing Ability at Descriptive Text".

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the writer conducted the following problems can be identified as follow:

1. The teacher did not use the right technique when teaching writing to students.
2. Students have not been able to write descriptive texts at tenth grade now.

⁵ Jhon Langan, *English Skill with Readings: Sixth Edition*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies Inc. 2006), p.25.

3. The students were unable to express the idea when starting to write something.

C. The Formulation of Study

Based on the identification problem above, the writer formulated the problem into a research question as follow:

“How is the application of clustering technique in improving students writing descriptive text ability?”

D. The Objective of the Problem

Based on the formulation above, the objective of the study is to know the students' writing descriptive text ability improve by using the clustering technique.

E. The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study divided into two, that is theoretical and practical as follow:

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is conducted to gain new information and knowledge for the readers about the use of clustering technique in improving students' writing descriptive text ability.

2. Practical Significance

a. For students

This study is expected to facilitate and provide the benefits of the clustering technique in writing descriptive text.

b. For teacher

The results of this study are expected to build the teacher's skill in teaching writing using the clustering technique that can be applied in the learning process.

c. For writer

This study can give new information and also can be useful as a reference in doing the learning process and can gain the students' motivation in writing with this technique.

