

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

English is a very popular global language which has been used in whole wide world. It is one of the most important subjects that we have to learn since we are in kindergarten until up to university level.

In learning English language, there are four skills should be taught to students. There are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In practice, learning the lessons taught writing after speaking, listening, and reading. But, this does not state that learning writing is not important. In fact, since writing is a very important lesson learning why writing is taught after the third important element is taught and writing also is the very difficult subject for the students. It is related to Oshima and Hogue (1999:3) statement that writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill.

Writing is a very important skill for being owned by students, for it is excellent communication tool. Through writing, each person is able to convey feelings, ideas, and announcements to others. Sharples (1999) states that, writing is an opportunity; it allows students to express something about themselves, explore and explain ideas. Students can convey their ideas in their mind by organizing them into a good text so that the others know them and they can think critically. Therefore, learning is very important to improve writing in particular learning of English in Indonesia because the writing is a process of transformation of thoughts and ideas into tangible forms of writing. In addition, many people

choose writing as a means of effective and efficient communication, such as posting letters, business letters, and important information in a company's product.

In the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) 2006, syllabus of junior and senior high schools curriculum require students to be able to write some kinds of genre in writing, they are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, discussion, reviews, anecdote, spoof, and news items. In Indonesia, writing English is considered as the most important part to be learned by the students in school. It is stated in the Curriculum 2006, the Educational Unit Curriculum, that students of Junior High School were expected to communicate in spoken and written language in simple form. It means that students must be able to write any kind of genre, and one of them is Recount text.

From the facts found in the field, that students had difficulties in writing activities when being assigned to them. As beginners in learning English, they still have problem in constructing well-formed sentences. They generally produce less syntactically complex sentences that contain more grammatical errors (Myklebust, 1973). They may also produce sentences that were shorter with higher percentages of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling error; and were lower in overall quality than those of their average-achieving peers (Graham & Harris, 1989; Myklebust, 1973). Anderson (1982) adds that less skilled writers had more missing subjects and verbs in their writing than regularly achieving students, and more often over use the connector.

On the one hand, this overcoming problem in sentence construction is an important problem to Junior High School student as young writers for several reasons. First, problems with sentence production skills may interfere with other processes such as planning, content generation, and revising because attention devoted to lower level skills depletes available cognitive resources that can be applied to higher level processes (Graham, 1997). Second, lack of knowledge of effective writing formats at the sentence level hinders a writer's ability to translate his or her thoughts into text (Hayes & Flower, 1986), this problem of course directly affect the complexity and the coherence of the communication. Ultimately, difficulties constructing well-designed, grammatically correct sentences may make the material that the students wrote became more difficult for others to read.

The researcher also found this condition during her preliminary study in SMP Budi Satrya. It was found that almost half of students from each classes got under 75 point for any kind at genre of writing. The students had many difficulties in grammar, word choice and in using punctuation and capitalization. They wrote with the short and choppy sentences, and the sentences always begin with the same manner. Another problem was that the students wrote paragraph which is not relevant to the topic given.

To moderate such problems above, teacher as a fasilitator should find out the solution to help students in their effort to be able to write a constructive writing. Changing the way of teaching would be is the solution. Teachers should be able to figure out which better teaching technique should be applied to solve the problem because there are so many options available to be applied. One of the

instructional techniques that provides direct practice with sentence constructional skills known by sentence combining technique is good to be applied to solve such problems faced by the students.

As one of teaching techniques, sentence combining can prompt students to use syntactical options in their writing by providing them practice in consciously controlling and manipulating syntax (Saddler, 2005). The application of this technique can be started by training students to combine words into phrases, and phrases into kernel sentences. After the students are able to combine words into phrases and phrases became kernel sentences, teacher can move to the next level in which the students are practicing to combine some kernel sentences. Teacher can give them two sets of kernel sentence then asks them to combine it at least in two different ways. Once students understand the concept of kernel sentence, it is beneficial for them to write their own sets of kernel sentence. Teacher models how to make compound subjects, predicates, adjective modifiers, and conjunctions. Then teacher practices them to combine the compound sentences into a paragraph. By doing this process of decombining and recombining sentences, they learn how complex sentence really carry many ideas and make sentences became more varied, interesting and sound better to read.

Many studies involving sentence combining research had been conducted and proved that this technique was effective to increase the quality of students' writing. A study by McAfee (1980) in Strong (1986) randomly assigned fifty five graders to experimental group and control groups. Over a six-week period, the experimental group receives sentence combining treatment for forty minutes, while control group follows their regular program. The sentence combining

treatment consisted not only of sentence manipulating but also the writing paragraphs and stories. Results indicated that the sentence combining technique students achieve significant gains over their control group in written language scores and free writing. The other study by Stoddard (1982) in Strong (1986) showed the effect of sentence combining against regular programs. In a six-week study involving 120 students in four district schools. Results show that the treatment groups' score was significantly higher on syntactic fluency and overall writing quality than the control group students. A recent study by Saddler and Graham (2005) which assessed the effect of sentence combining procedure involving peer-assisted practice shown that the experimental students who receives the teaching treatment by using sentence combining technique has positive improvement in writing. From the results shown above, it can be concluded that sentence combining technique was one of the alternatives and effective technique to be applied to increase the students' writing achievement in Indonesia.

Based on the explanation above, it was decided to conduct a research about the Applying Sentence Combining Technique on Students' Achievement in Writing Recount Text.

B. The Problem of The Study

In line with the background of the study above, the problem was formulated as follows:

“Is students' achievement in writing that taught by using Sentence Combining Technique higher than taught by using Complete Sentence Technique?”

C. The Objective of the Study

The objective of the research was to investigate whether the application of Sentence Combining Technique significantly affects the students' achievement in writing.

D. The Scope of the Study

In genre-based text, writing consist of thirteen types of text such as narrative text, news item, procedure text, argumentative, expository, spoof and others. The research basically, was limited to the students writing on the students' achievement in writing skills particularly on recount text, Sentence Combining Technique.

E. Significance of the Study

The finding of the study was expected to have both theoretical and practical importance in writing as a process and product especially the framework of writing.

1. Theoretically

- a. English teacher, as the source to students' achievements in writing Recount Text
- b. English learner, to their writing skills, specifically in writing recount text and to enlarge their knowledge about sentence combining technique.

2. Practically

- a. English teachers to apply this teaching technique to improve their students' achievement in writing recount text.
- b. Other researchers to increase and update their knowledge about how to improve writing skill and as the reference for further study related to this research.

