

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

In English teaching and learning process, students are expected to master four English skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of English skill which is very important to be mastered. Writing is an activity of expressing ideas and feelings by using written language as its medium of communication (Waris, 2011). It means that writing is a process to express writer's mind, feeling, and thinking about anything in written form to communicate with other people as the readers. Writing is used as an *aide-memoire* or practice tools to help students practice and work with language they have been studying (Harmer, 2007). It means that writing is a good way to develop and understand English.

Unfortunately, many students always think that English is very difficult, confusing and complicated especially in writing. As one of the difficult language skills, some students also do not like writing and the result in the ability of students in expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings in writing is very alarming (Nurhidayah, 2008) and the researcher found it when she did teaching practice (PPL). The students had some problems in vocabulary, grammar, and exploring the ideas. They just copied what teacher said and wrote and did not explore their ideas. This may be because they lack confidence and they did not become active learners. The teacher needs to

engage them from early levels with activities which are easy and enjoyable to take part in, so that writing activities not only become a normal part of classroom life but also present opportunities for students to achieve almost instant success. It is when students have acquired this writing habit that they are able to look at written genres and involve themselves in writing process with enthusiasm (Harmer, 2007).

Recount text is a text to inform about past activities. Recount writing refers to the process of telling and informing the past activities and shares to the readers in order to entertain or inform them. Recount text is one of material conveyed in KTSP curriculum in second grade of Junior High School. This curriculum is applied based on the situation and condition of the school itself. It consists of the school education goal and the contents of school curriculum, the academic calendar and the syllabus.

The researcher chooses this recount text because the students still have problems in creating a good text like recount text. The researcher also has done an observation and interview at SMP Negeri 18 Medan and she found that the students' ability in writing is still low because most of the students got the score below Minimal Completeness Criteria (KKM) of English subject for Junior High School. The score of writing test from the students can be seen in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 The Writing Test Score of VIII SMP

Semester	Score	Students	Percentage	Mean
1 st semester 2014 / 2015	>75	10	30,30	58,09
	≤75	23	69,70	
2 nd semester 2014 / 2015	>75	8	24,24	57,75
	≤75	25	75,76	

The Minimal Completeness Criteria (KKM) applied for the second grade of junior high school in SMP N 18 Medan is 75. From the data above, it can be fulfilled that the students' ability in writing was still low.

Some students got the score under the minimal completeness criteria because they did not organize the writing well such as generic structure, and some grammar. They also had less vocabulary and did not explore the ideas as well. This makes students did not have motivation to write in English and become inactive learners.

Based on the data above, the researcher thought that it was important to find ways to overcome the problem. The researcher used a strategy in order to increase students' writing ability and develop students' achievement by applying Problem Based Learning. Problem Based Learning (PBL) is one of strategy that we can apply to teach recount text. According to Hmelo-Silver (2004), Problem Based Learning is well suited to help students become active learners and makes students responsible for their learning.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the research , the problem of this research was formulated as follows : “ Is there any significant effect of Problem Based Learning on students’ Recount text writing achievement? “

C. The Objective of the Study

There are many genres of writing in English and some of them are put on the English subject in every school based on the syllabus. This research was focused on the Recount text and identifying the effect of problem based learning on students’ recount text writing achievement.

D. The Scope of the Study

There are several methods, approaches, strategies and techniques that can be applied to improve students’ writing achievement. This research was focused on the applying of problem based learning strategy to affect students’ achievement in writing recount text. The object of the research is limited on students of second grade in Junior High School (VIII SMP) .

E. The Significances of the Study

Theoretically , the results of this research are expected to be useful to :

1. Enrich the literature of teaching writing through recount text by applying Problem Based Learning.
2. Give a better understanding and alternative strategy in teaching writing English by applying problem based learning.
3. Give some valuable contribution to the other researchers.

Practically , the findings are useful and relevant to :

1. Motivate the students that writing recount text is very interesting thing since they can share their own story and put their ideas into the text.
2. Make students become active learners since they just received all the information from the teacher and not to learn by themselves and then students can explore their ideas and feeling into the text.
3. Provide information for the teachers especially English teachers about Problem Based Learning, the effectiveness in using it and how to apply this in the class.