

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## A. The Background of the Study

Language is a means of communication that is used by human to express, convey, share their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and expression. There are many languages all over the world and one of them is English. English is one of the international languages that has been commonly used in worldwide conversation. However, English is still as foreign language in Indonesia. It can be seen from many people who are not able to understand English well.

English has been taught from elementary school to university level, and even now, it has been taught in the kindergarten school level as well. The objective of teaching English is to develop competences to communicate in English which cover effective reading ability, ability to understand speaking language, speaking ability, and writing ability. It means that the students are demanded to be able to use English to fulfill their daily needs such as for reading newspapers and communicating both spoken and written for solving their life problems. In other words, it refers to how students can comprehend and produce texts both in written and spoken.

Writing is one of the four language skills that plays a very important role in second language learning. Basically, writing is expressing idea, opinion, experience, or information in the mind of the writer into the form of written language. It encourages thinking and learning to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible and concrete.

In the Educational Unit Level Curriculum, (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP) for high school students, it is stated that one of the main objectives of learning English is to be able to write various short functional text type, monologue and essay in some text genres. One of the important genres needed to be mastered in the tenth grade syllabus is recount text.

Recount is a text which retells events or experiences in the past, whether real or imaginary for the purpose of informing, entertaining or reflecting. The function of learning recount text for students is to explore their abilities in transforming the experiences that happen in their lives into a piece of writing. Basically, the act of retelling experiences happens frequently in our daily life, therefore it is important for students to master it.

However, writing requires and combines more basic skills than any other subject area. That is why writing is the most difficult skill for students to master. The process of writing is difficult not only in generating and organizing ideas but also transforming the ideas into a text.

In producing a good writing, students also have to pay attention to three main aspects namely the grammatical and linguistic competences and the transition signals. These aspects are essential to be mastered in order to be able (a) to govern elements of writing into meaningful organized sentences with the rules of morphology, syntax, grammatical semantics of sentences and phonology, (b) to connect the sentences and paragraphs together and (c) to provide coherence to the writing, (Lobanova: 2008).

The difficulty of writing texts, especially recount text, was also faced by the students of Grade X State Senior High School 5 (Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 5: SMAN-5) Binjai. Based on the Field Practice Experience (Praktek Pengalaman Lapangan: PPL), it was found that when the students were assigned to write a recount text, most of them just copied the materials from the internet. It was happened because they did not have ideas about what to write. Their writing also showed that they did not know how to organize sentences using good grammatical features and they could not relate one sentence to another. It proved that they were lack of grammatical and linguistic competence and the ability to use transition signals.

From the reason which has been explained above, creative and engaged strategy should be used. Learning to write is complex and difficult series of processes that requires more effective and fun teaching strategies (Knapp and Watkins, 2005:14). Thus, in this study it is determined to conduct a research by applying blind sequencing strategy to improve the students' writing skills.

Teaching writing will be more effective if cooperative learning strategies are applied (Mandal, 2009:96). It means when the teacher gives a writing task, the members of the groups work together towards certain shared learning goals. They help each other during the process of drafting the writing. They review and evaluate their writing together.

Blind Sequencing is a cooperative learning strategy created that is used for team-based learning (Kagan, 2009:10.3). Blind sequencing strategy encourages observing and arranging pictures and events to help the students understand

chronological order and sequence of events. Sequencing is an important skill in pre-reading, comprehension, and writing, so the use of blind sequencing as one of the strategies can create effective team-work learning (Spivey, 2008:167).

In this strategy, the students use picture sequence as the media to create the story. Pictures are extremely useful for teachers to be used as the idea for creative writing, (Harmer, 2003:135). It is interesting for students because it gives ideas to be developed into stories. Moreover, it does not need big budget for teachers to seek the picture sequence since it is available for free in internet.

The main activity of this strategy is to give the students different pictures to be sequenced. They are not allowed to see the other members' pictures; therefore they have to describe the situation that happens in their picture. Then they can work together to decide the sequences.

The focus of using this strategy is to improve the ability in writing recount text, but this strategy can also develop the students' ability to describe, work in team, and think critically. That is why it is encouraged for the teachers to apply the cooperative learning strategies, especially blind sequencing, in order to improve students' writing achievement.

### **B. The Problem of the Study**

In the expectation of teaching writing English, it is required that the students are able to produce text in some genres including recount text. However, the students still find it difficult to write the recount text especially in transforming the ideas into writing matter. Therefore, to solve the problem, blind sequencing strategy is applied to improve students' achievement in writing. The problem of

the study is formulated as follows: *“Does the use of blind sequencing strategy significantly improve students’ achievement in writing recount text?”*

### **C. The Scope of the Study**

There are some cooperative learning strategies that can be applied to improve the students’ writing achievement. This study focuses on the applying blind sequencing strategy to improve the students’ achievement in writing imaginative recount text. In this case, the pictures used in blind sequencing strategy will be the theme of the recount texts written by the students.

### **D. The Objective of the Study**

In relation of the problem mentioned previously, the objective of the study is to discover whether the use of blind sequencing strategy significantly improves students’ achievement in writing recount text.

### **E. The Significance of the Study**

As this study concerns with the use of blind sequencing strategy to improve the students’ achievement in writing recount text, the findings of the study are expected to be useful:

1. theoretically, as for the teachers to improve the quality of the students’ writing and for the other researchers to use this study as reference to conduct next research; and
2. practically, as for the students to improve their writing skill, especially in writing recount text and to widen their horizon about the function of the strategy in improving students’ writing skill.