

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Background of the Study

Learning English has four integrated skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They must be taught and applied in teaching-learning process. They are also divided into two groups; receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills consist of listening and reading. Meanwhile, Productive skills consist of speaking and writing.

Writing as one of the four skills that should be mastered by students has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English (Harmer, 2004:31). Writing is taught after listening, speaking, and reading. Moreover, the real fact faced by student is writing is the hardest skill to be mastered. Oshima and Hogue (1999:3) claim that writing specifically academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native speakers and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a “product”. It means that writing is not only a process of linking words into sentences or paragraphs, but also it is a sequence or steps of ideas, organized thoughts and feeling in the form of words and combined into sentence into form of paragraphs in which every sentence is closely related one another. And writing integrates many aspects of language such as: vocabulary mastery, words-arrangement, grammar proficiency, and constructing paragraph.

The capability of writing as the most super power tool in communication should be owned by students. Everyone can convey their feelings, ideas, and thoughts to others. Tabatabaei and Assefi (2012:138) claim that writing has received a great degree of attention not only because it plays a significant role in transforming knowledge and learning but also in fostering creativity. Writing also needs more knowledge. Due to the writing is the process of transforming ideas, and thoughts, learning is important to improve writing. In addition, writing is chosen to be more effective and efficient to convey information such as in posting letters, business card, leaflet, poster, and much information for marketing a company's product.

In the Curriculum of Educational Stratified Level or *Kurikulum Satuan Tingkat Pendidikan (KTSP)* and written in the standard competence in the syllabus of the first year students of junior high school, students are expected to be able to write some genres in writing namely descriptive, and procedure. The curriculum highlights that students have to be able to write various types of the text genres.

One of the genres that should be mastered by students in the process of learning English is descriptive paragraph or text. Saragih (2010:20) claims that descriptive is used to describe a particular person, thing, or place. Kalandadze (2007:8) states that a paragraph is a group of sentences that support and develop a single idea or one aspect of a large and more complex topic. So, descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that contains descriptions of a particular topic such as person, thing, or place.

Based on the preliminary observation conducted in junior high school namely Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al Abraar Tandem Hilir Grade VII, it is commonly found that students' performance poorly in writing. more than 71.9% students had problems in writing. Their mean of score are still under the Minimum Criteria Mastery or *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)* applied by the school. The *KKM* applied is 75. The mean of students' score from class VII-A are 54.3 and 56.5 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> session in 2012/2013 while another class VII-B are 53.6 and 55.8.

From the interview with the teacher, there are some problems are faced by teacher and students in writing descriptive paragraph. First problem, students don't have motivation to write. The second problem is teaching method applied by the teacher. The teacher still uses lecturing method in teaching writing. Students are asked to pay attention to the example of one paragraph or text. Next, they are asked to write independently.

From the conditions illustrated in advance, students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph tends to be very less because of the learning method applied by teacher of English language is unsuitable anymore in the recent time. The implication of the method applied is students felt bored and lost their interest and they avoided continuing learning process as they had to do. The students' also felt that writing is a difficult activity because they need to express, transfer, and associate their ideas into written form.

The revolution of teaching-learning process runs very fast at this present time. Teacher is not the center of the learning process anymore and sometime it is called as "Teacher Centered Learning or TCL". The approach has been changed

into the needs of the students rather than those of others which are involved in the educational process and system. This approach is theoretically said as “Student Centered Learning (SCL)”. The teacher is functioned as a facilitator and no longer positioned as the main source of knowledge and information in the teaching-learning process. And the main core of the teaching-learning process is moved to the students’ activeness. If the students have difficulty in learning, that is the time for the teacher to play the role as the facilitator to guide the students and to tell them what they don’t know and what they don’t understand.

A paragraph is a distinct unit of thought which may contain a topic sentence (Chitravelu, et.al., 2005:165). Another source, Muschla (2011:113) states that the paragraph contains a topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph and other sentences support the main idea with details and examples. As the conclusion, paragraph is a group of sentences that contains a single main idea and supported by details and examples which is related each other. Writing a descriptive paragraph is not easy. It needs the way to associate the thoughts and ideas.

Coffin, et al. (2005:37) says that Clustering is a helpful technique to see a visual representation of ideas. Kalandadze (2007:6) states that clustering is a technique used to see a visual map of our ideas and able to make us think more creatively in making new association. This technique will lead the students to create and think more creatively in writing. This method is also one of the applications of students centered learning because the students will be led to be more active rather than the teacher in writing.

In addition, previous researcher, Hariani (2013) states clustering technique helps students to improve their achievement in writing recount texts in SMPN 05 Kota Jambi. By considering the different sample, technique, and the genre, the researcher wants to know the effect of using clustering technique in teaching descriptive paragraph in MTsS Al Abraar. Recount genre has communicative purpose to retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining to the readers while descriptive genre has communicative purpose to describe a particular person, place or thing. Moreover, recount has generic structure namely; orientation-record of event-reorientation while descriptive has generic structure namely; identification and description.

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

In accordance with the background of the study, the problem of the study is formulated as follows;

“Is there any significant effect on students’ achievement in writing descriptive paragraph by applying clustering technique?”

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

In line with the problem, the objective is to investigate if there is a significant effect of applying clustering technique on the students’ achievement in writing descriptive paragraph.

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

As written in syllabus of Junior High School, there are some types of paragraph that should be mastered by students. This study is focused on the

students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraph specifically on describing personality by applying one technique that is, clustering technique.

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

The findings of this study are expected to be relevant and useful theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for the readers to broaden and to enrich their horizon in theory of learning English and can be reference for further studies.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for:

- 1) English teachers, as an alternative teaching resource to give more information about another technique which can be applied in teaching writing in order to enhance their competence in teaching
- 2) English learners, to motivate and to enable them to improve their writing achievement
- 3) Decision maker, as one of source of information in making a decision in education