CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

It is crystal clear that English holds an important role in the global society. English is used as a means of international communication in practically all fields of life: economics and business, international relations (diplomacy), the media, and even education. Thus, the urge to learn and master English has become a must. Since communications do not always happen orally, but it can also happen in written way, it becomes essential to be skilled in writing.

The development of writing skill, like in speaking skill, needs an understanding of how to put the linguistic components (knowledge of vocabularies, grammar, and structure (genre)) altogether to be able to produce a text. Recount text is one of the many texts students must learn in English class at school. Recount text is a text which has the purpose to inform past activities.

In Indonesia, limited exposure to English in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) causes students to lack confidence to write in English. When they are asked to write, they struggle with many problems in conveying what they want to say: selecting proper words, using correct grammar, generating ideas and developing them into a proper organizational pattern.

Based on the result of a preliminary observation which has been done in one school in Deli Serdang, it was found that the eighth graders in SMP Swasta Bandung Deli Serdang still have a low ability in writing. When their teacher assigned the students to write, they found difficulties to put their ideas into the

writing. They even had it hard just to produce a sentence. They lack vocabularies and the understanding of how to use past tense. While to write a recount text, the students are demanded to use verbs and *to be* in their past form. During the teaching-learning process, it was also seen that the whole class put the center only on the teacher. The students did not participate actively in the learning process, but only sat and heard the teacher's explanation, then did the exercises. The lecture method which was used by teacher is actually a good method to transfer knowledge, but for middle school students, a method that engages them in more activities can motivate them to be more active during classes and hopefully increase their achievement.

This matter about the low ability to write does not happen only in Indonesia. This also happens globally as in Thailand, the problem found by Kitchakarn (2012: 111) was that students could not choose the right words and did not know how to start writing. As the result, it affected students' achievement in English subject. Students got a low achievement. This problem really needs a concern.

In today's teaching-learning process, contextual teaching and learning (CTL) can be useful to solve that problem. In CTL, teachers relates the subject matter content to real world situations or to students' life experiences or prior knowledge that enables students to discover meaning of a subject matter on their own. The procedures of applying CTL are based on the scientific approach that guides students to be more active, creative, and productive.

In line with writing recount text, CTL is very helpful. Teachers relate learning materials with students' life experiences or prior knowledge by orally

giving an example of a recount text and interactively involve students to discover the meaning of recount text by themselves. Through this relating process, students will understand the generic structures of recount text and its other characteristics. Not only that, teachers would also engage students in a group work for them to learn by doing until finally they can put the concepts they have newly found in use and be able to write a recount text.

Based on the explanation, the writer expects to find the effect of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) on students' achievement in writing recount text for the eighth graders in SMP Swasta Bandung Deli Serdang year of academic of 2015/2016. Choosing recount text as the research material refers to the curriculum and the syllabus used by the school. Recount text is taught in the English subject to the eight graders of this school.

B. The Problem of the Study

As related to the background of the study, the problem is formulated as follows:

"Is students' achievement in writing recount text taught by using contextual teaching and learning higher than the students' taught by using lecture method?"

C. The Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate whether the writing achievement of the eighth graders in SMP Swasta Bandung Deli Serdang year of academic of 2015/2016 taught by using contextual teaching and learning is higher than the students' taught by using lecture method.

D. The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the using of contextual teaching and learning that aims to improve the writing achievement of the eighth graders in SMP Swasta Bandung Deli Serdang year of academic of 2015/2016, mainly in writing recount text.

E. The Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical significance

   The findings of the study may give information that contextual teaching and learning has an important role for the successful learning process to improve students' achievement in writing, especially recount text.

2. Practical Significance

   a. For teachers, as guidance and to give information that contextual teaching and learning can be applied by teachers to teach English writing, especially recount text.

   b. For students, they can be motivated to be more active in class and be able to write recount text well.

   c. For other researchers, the findings of this study can be an idea donation and be useful for science development.