

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

The cognitive processes are the act of knowing specifically an intellectual process by which knowledge is gained from perception or ideas. The cognitive processes are concerned with how human mind processes information. Bein (2018) states that cognitive processes are any mental processes that people use to retrieve, retain, connect, and manipulate information. Mental processes are all the things people can do in their minds. Memory, perception, and thinking are all included (such as thinking process in writing consist of planning, translating and reviewing. In addition, Hvelplund (2011) states that cognitive processes include all processes in which sensory data is transformed, reduced, analyzed, stored, retrieved, and utilized. He also adds that cognitive as the mind's ability to analyze information and apply knowledge in information processing contexts. Thus, the cognitive processes are concerned with how people process information that they have in mind.

In English language learning, three domains are applied: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Based on the curriculum 2013 revision 2017, the basic competencies include these domains which provide direction in the learning process. Basic competencies in the cognitive domain hone students to communicate factual information (related to the topic), procedural information (related to the steps of carrying out a process), and conceptual information (related

to understanding the social function, generic structure, and language features of the text). The learning process refers to topics being taught such as interpersonal text, transactional text, and functional text. In each of these topics, the cognitive domains in the learning process elaborates with the four domains of language skills taught in learning English, namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

This study focuses on writing skills. According to Nunan (2003), writing is a mental process of developing ideas, deciding how to express ideas, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that can be understood by readers. It means that there is a cognitive process tries to process knowledge or ideas through the writing process. This skill is one of the productive skills that students learn. Students must be able to organize their thoughts and construct meaningful and structured sentences. If a student lacks this ability, they will struggle to produce good writing. Byrne (1988) defines several problems that are faced by students in writing, namely: psychological problems, linguistics problems and cognitive problems. Thus, this study focuses on cognitive processes of students.

The writing process is truly a cognitive process that starts with exploring a topic, then moves on to writing, developing ideas and arguments, revising or correcting drafts, and finally publishing the finished draft. All of them force humans to process information in their minds. According to Hayes and Flower (1981), the writer must go through three stages of cognitive process: planning, translation, and review. Planning includes idea generation, evaluation and selection, and conceptual organization. In translation, writers transform and modify their ideas from hierarchical plans into sentences. This includes putting

ideas into words (text generation) and then writing them down (transcription) to create a coherent text. Finally, writers conduct a thorough review of the ideas and goals, as well as the language used in the writing, during the review stage. These three stages activate students' cognitive processes in producing a piece of writing.

In creating a piece of writing, students have different ways of expressing their ideas or opinions in each stage of planning, translating, and reviewing. They have to build cognitive processes in their minds to produce good writing. There are several types of writing that demand active cognitive processes in the mind to express ideas logically, one of which is the genre of texts in the learning process (Pulungan, 2016). Thus, each student has a different cognitive process, so they have different ways of carrying out their cognitive process to write a text.

In English language learning, there are three genres of text in learning English with the use of text-based learning for tenth-grade students based on the curriculum 2013 revision 2017 in Permendikbud number 47 in 2018. These are Descriptive text, Narrative text, and Recount text. This research focuses on descriptive text. In competency 3.4, namely, students are able to distinguish social functions, generic structure, and language features of some texts descriptive oral, and written giving and asking for information related to tourist attractions and famous historical buildings, short and simple, appropriate with the context of its use. And then, in competency 4.4 students are able to compose oral descriptive texts and write it, short and simple, related to tourist attractions and famous historical buildings, with concern to social function, generic structures, and

language features, correctly and appropriate to the context. Thus, competencies 3.4 and 4.4 are expected for tenth grade students to understand descriptive texts that conform to social functions, generic structure, and language features to ensure that readers can identify the author's information and purpose and can use writing skills.

Based on observation conducted at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan, it was found that tenth-grade students did not achieve expectations of the social function, generic structure, and language features in writing descriptive text. When students write descriptive text, they face some difficulties in their cognitive process. First, students have difficulties in analyzing identification and description in descriptive texts. The students' writing tended to refer to the generic structure of the report text: general classification and description, because they completed it without planning. Then, they have difficulty expressing and elaborating their ideas in writing. They write a text but don't know what they are writing or what to do with it. Students should focus on their writing while writing and check their writing after writing. However, students do not check it.

Thus, from the phenomenon written by tenth-grade students in descriptive text which was found by researcher preliminary observation, the researcher conducted a research entitled "Cognitive Processes in Writing of Tenth-Grade Students At SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan".

B. The Problems of the Study

In accordance with background of the study, the research problems are formulates as follows:

1. How are the cognitive processes of tenth-grade students in writing descriptive text at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan?
2. Why do the cognitive processes of tenth-grade students in writing descriptive text occur in the way they do at SMAS Amir Hamzah Medan?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of this study, as formulates based on background of the study and research problems as follows:

1. To describe the cognitive processes of tenth-grade students in writing descriptive text.
2. To explain the reasons behind the way cognitive processes of tenth-grade students occur in writing descriptive text.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the research in the study will focus on the cognitive processes in writing descriptive text of tenth-grade students and using the Hayes and Flower model of cognitive processes theory. The theory of cognitive processes in writing proposed by Hayes and Flower (1981) which consist of three stages in writing process, they are planning, translating, and reviewing. In addition, this study focuses on how cognitive processes of tenth grade students in writing a text and the reasons of the cognitive processes occur in writing in the way they do.

E. The Significance of the Study

The significances of the study are written theoretically and practically. The significance of the study is written as follows:

(1) For the Theoretical Study:

The results of this study can be useful as a reference and empirical evidence for further study. The finding of study provide information about conclusion of problems experienced of the students in compose a text by paying attention to their cognitive processes.

(2) For practically study, the study is expected to be useful for:

- a). Other researchers will interest in doing study about cognitive processes in students' writing. So, this study can be use as a reference for their study.
- b) Teachers can obtain information about their students' mental processes in writing so that they can guide and develop the techniques to teach them in developing ideas and constructing appropriate texts, especially when writing a text.
- c). Students can gain insight from the findings of this study about writing texts by using effective processes such as planning, translating, and reviewing known as cognitive processes in writing.