

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of the important skills in English because writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity which requires the writer to demonstrate. Writing is not simply putting down some words into a number of related sentences but it is the ability to produce a sequence of sentence arranged in a particular order and linked together in a certain way in order to produce some ideas, thoughts, and desires (Byrne, 1990: 1).

Writing is one of the four basic language skills that has been taught from primary school to university. In teaching writing, the students must be taught how to choose the approximate words, to construct the sentences, to connect each sentence to another in a paragraph and how to develop paragraphs in a correct way. The goal of teaching these things are to enable the students to describe their ideas or experience in constructing a good writing. There are some important points that should be known by the students in constructing a good writing such as content organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. By paying attention to these points the reader can easily interpret and understand what the writer describes about.

Writing is perceived as the most difficult to be acquired by students and to be taught by teachers. Moreover, writing is 76% most neglected language skill in schools and that most university graduates are not equipped with writing skills (Alwasilah, 2001: 15).

There are some kinds of writing, such as descriptive, narrative, expository, and argumentative. All these kinds of writing can be developed using various methods, such as descriptive, example or illustration, by comparison and contrast, definition, cause and effect, reason, process and narration and the combination of several methods. The method chosen by the writer depends very much on the topic. The choice of this method would enable the readers to grasp his/her idea as it really appears in the writer's mind.

Based on the writer's experience, there are many junior high school students still getting difficulties to express their ideas in writing. It can be known when they are instructed to write a composition. Furthermore, the writer also noticed that the students have good message but they have difficulties in selecting the words to make sentences and combine them into a paragraph. The students usually make decisions to use their native language when they do not know the words in English.

It can be solved by providing picture prompts as a medium in conveying the materials and developing the ideas. They will be interested in and be more concentrate on the plot by using this media, it will be easier for the students in getting of their writing and learning to develop the topic based on the sequential events. Picture prompts can help the students expand their imagination to relate one event to another as what the picture shows.

Based on the statement above, the writer chooses a set of pictures for helping students to build their ideas and writing a composition. The topic has been selected and suitable with the material of the eighth grade students. Regarding the ideas above, the writer is interested to make a study under the title **“A Study on**

the Ability in Writing a Composition Using Picture - Prompts of the Eighth Grade Students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang in the School Year of 2014/2015”.

1.2. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study above, the writer would like to formulate the problem as follows:

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang able to write a composition using picture - prompts?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang in writing composition using picture - prompts?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the questions stated above, this study will be carried out with the following objectives:

1. To find out whether the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 are able to write a composition by using picture – prompts.
2. To find out ability level of eighth grade students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang in writing the composition.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for those who have great concern in language teaching or language learning particularly the English teacher of the researched school, the students, and the writer himself.

1. For the Teachers

The result of this study may give information to the English teachers, especially those at the researched school about the student's ability in writing composition.

2. For the Student

The result of this study can become a good information for the students about their ability in writing composition based on picture prompts, in which they are motivated to study more to improve their proficiency in writing.

3. For the Writer

The result of this study is a good input to improve and enrich the writer's knowledge about writing a composition. The writer is also trained in how to write a scientific writing.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are several kinds of writing namely narration, description, argumentation and exposition. This study is limited to the students' ability in writing a composition using picture – prompts in descriptive text. The writer also limits the analysis on grammar and form in order to determine the students' ability level.

1.6. Definition of the Terms

Concerning with the study, there are some important terms that should be defined. Those terms are presented in the following.

1. Ability

Ability is potential or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1987: 2). In this study, ability means the students' capability to write piece of composition based on the picture – prompts.

2. Writing

Lexically “writing” means any work done by someone using letters or words and a tool in hand and putting them in piece of paper (Hornby, 1974: 996). The term “writing” in this study means the activity of the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang to convey their ideas in printed form concerning the topics chosen concretely and vividly, in order the readers can capture both its details and wholeness.

3. Composition

It is a practice of writing which deals with a text longer than a single sentence, such as paragraphs, essays, and reports (Richards et al, 1985: 53). In this sense, composition means, a short writing produced by the students that should be reasonable and understandable.

4. Picture Prompts

Picture – prompt means the series of pictures (Webster's word dictionary). Picture-prompts composition is writing based on a number of related composition of pictures linked to form a series sequence. Its main function is to tell a story or sequence of events. In this study, picture prompts used are

series of picture regarding some resources as the textbook, calendar, or tourist posters, newspaper, and magazine.

5. SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang

SMPK St. Yoseph Kupang is one of so many junior high schools in Kupang. It is a private school under the foundation of Kupang Archbishop called Swastisari. It is located at E. R. Herewila street No.27, Naikoten – Kupang.