

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

It has been known that English is an international language and used by the majority of the people all over the world. It is also used in most international activities either orally or in written form. The role of English is not found only in educational field but also in other fields, such as: economy, technology, health, tourism, correspondence, etc. In Indonesia, English is taught from Elementary School up to University level. Even nowadays, English has been introduced in Kindergarten or Pre-Elementary School.

The main objective of English lesson is to develop the ability in English communication both in oral and written. There are four skills that are taught both separately and integratively. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is stated in the 2004 Curriculum of the Junior High School and Senior High School, is that the students are able to communicate both in oral and written. They can understand kinds of text: descriptive, narrative, procedure, and recount. The English Foreign Language students are also expected to have not only receptive skills (listening and reading) but also productive skills (speaking and writing).

Based on the government regulation (PP No 19, 2005), it is stated that language education should develop language competence with special emphasis on reading and writing according to the literacy level set up for every level of education. In this case, the students must be directed to the standard competence and standard basic of English lesson. The level of literacy of Junior High School

students is functional level. It means that they are able to use English to get things, use English for survival purposes (buying and selling, asking and giving permission, making and canceling appointment, read and write simple text, read popular science, making agreement and disagreement, handling phone, etc)

To achieve those competences, students must be given or taught all the language skills and language elements or components, such as: listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, grammar, diction, pronunciation, etc. Those language skills and language elements must be given in an equal portion so that EFL students will have adequate or even complete abilities in English.

However, based on the preliminary research done by the researcher in the VIII D of SMP Al Huda Kediri through observation, , it can be concluded that there were two main causes from both teacher and students. The causes from the teacher were as follow: (1) She still used traditional technique in which she only demanded the students' writing product: (2) She only gave fewer portions for writing though writing is a complex skill: and (3) she made the students write a text that must fulfill the written language rules. On the other hand, she did not give sufficient attention to teach them how to write a text in English correctly: (4) The students were seldom taught to make a better writing by using various techniques. The techniques used were monotonous: and (5) She did not consider that writing is a complex skill in which it needs time for revising the content, grammar, and mechanics. The causes from the students were a follows: (1) The students' writing mastery was still low: (2) The students' ability how to organize sentences was low. Consequently, their writing was incoherent: (3) They sometimes lost their ideas and stuck: (4) They got difficulty how to start to write

so they could not continue their writing: (5) They were lacked of vocabulary. It could be seen that the students did not organize their writing well. Their ideas were constructed incoherently. They often lost their ideas and got stuck.

As a result, they could not continue their writing. Their grammar was also low. That was why they could not also use tense in the right context. They were lack of vocabulary and their understanding of mechanic was low. They seldom read their writing after they finished writing. Consequently, the result of their writing was under average and still far from what was expected. This finding was supported by the result of the students' writing, the average score of the students' writing test was 52.77. This distribution score of each element of writing can be seen in the table below.

Table 1

The average scores of each writing element

No	Writing Elements	Average score
1.	Organization	44.62
2.	Content	57.44
3.	Grammar	49.49
4.	Vocabulary	55.90
5.	Mechanics	56.41
The average score of writing elements		52.77

From the writing score above, there were only 4 or 10.26% students who got writing score above 60. While the others 35 students or 89.74% got score under 60. It means that they failed to write English well. The scores of the students showed that the worst element of writing was on organization. Then, it

was followed by grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, and content. It can be concluded that their writing ability was under average.

In line with the statement above, the result of questionnaire which was given by the researcher showed that the students had more difficulties in writing than the three other language skills: listening, speaking and reading as shown in the table below.

Table 2

Rank of English Skill Difficulties

Class VIII D of SMP Al Huda Kediri in the Academic Year 2008/2009

No	English Language Skill	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1.	Writing	19	48,7%
2.	Listening	11	28,2%
3.	Speaking	6	15,3%
4.	Reading	3	0,7%

Table 2 shows that writing is regarded as the most difficult language skill among of the other language skills. It is 48.7%. One of the students of VIII D said that:

“Terus terang saya itu ndhak suka nulis pak, kesulitan saya ketika nulis cara memulai nulisnya pak, kosa kata saya cuma sedikit dan cara merangkainya kata-kata saya juga bingung, grammar juga saya amburadul”.

The students’ writing ability problems were shown by some indicators as follows: (1) The students were not able to organize the words or phrase to become a good sentence or sentences: (2) The students were not able to construct a text chronologically: (3) The students got difficulty to choose the appropriate dictions: (4) The students were not able to make sentences grammatically correct.

Based on the result of observation and interview done in the preliminary research, the researcher found that the teacher's way of teaching was very conventional. The indicators were as follows: (1) She never used teaching aids to carry out the materials: (2) She dominated the classroom activity: (3) She rarely walked around the class to make sure what her students were doing or whether they were paying attention on what she explained or not: (4) She often sat on her chair: and (5) She only focused more on how to finish the students' worksheet published by a certain publisher rather than how to give various teaching materials. The previous teacher said:

“Kesan saya mengajar di kelas VIII D ya biasa-biasa saja, jenengan kan ya perso tho, sekolahane awae dewe ini murite lak yo turahane sekolahan negri dadi yo sing sabar. Saya sudah pernah ngasih materi writing pada mereka, sekali kalau ngak salah, hanya sekali thok. Ya gimana ngejar tayang (materi). Tanggapan mereka ketika saya kasih materi menulis responnya dingin, terutama pada saat saya meminta mereka untuk menulis teks. Dan hasil writing mereka ya gitulah, sangat kurang.”

In accordance with the statement above, it can be concluded that writing is an uninteresting subject. Consequently, the EFL students are not able to write a piece of writing in English. Besides, there are many things that must be mastered by EFL students in writing English.

Writing skill involves or requires many kinds of things that are beyond the language, such as: patience, concentration, struggling, etc. Stott and Avery (2001:

1) state that:

“Writing whatever of kind is not just about having something to say (although you cannot begin with nothing to say), is also about struggling with words on paper. Patience, strength of purpose, deliberation and skill are all essential qualities of a teacher to perfect his or her craft”

The common complaint is that the class activity is boring. Very few teachers are interested in teaching writing because it is time consuming in terms of teaching preparation and evaluation. Those facts indicate that writing is indeed, not a favorite subject. This condition also makes the students' motivation to learn English low. Due to the fact, it is necessarily needed to make an attempt to improve students' writing ability by applying other teaching technique. English teacher should also be able to improve students' interest and motivation to study English better by creating an interesting atmosphere that makes them enjoy the teaching-learning process and gives a bit fun. One of the teaching techniques which cover such kinds of those activities is *Word Cluster*.

Dawson and Essid (2008: 1) state that Clustering is type of prewriting that allows one to explore many ideas as soon as they occur to him. One of brain storming activities is clustering. It has many advantages when it is implemented in writing text: *a procedure text*. The advantages of word cluster are as follows:

- 1) It enables the students to generate the words needed in writing a procedure text.
- 2) It was a way for the students to express their ideas on (they put their ideas in the clusters)

The researcher chose this technique and this text type because they were easy to be carried out in teaching writing text and the students have been familiar with them so it was easy for the researcher to carry out the teaching-learning process.

Word Cluster is a useful and meaningful technique for the students to give not only a brainstorming to generate the dictions needed but also one of the ways

how to classify and embody the words needed in writing a procedure text. Thus, it enables the students to explore their dictions.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study and the result of the preliminary research, there are some problems that are caused by both students and teacher. To overcome those problems, the researcher will apply *clustering* because theoretically *Clustering* enables students to generate words, ideas, and thoughts which are going to be written by the students.

Based on the statements above, the problems of the study that will be analyzed are:

1. Can word cluster improve the students' ability in writing a procedure text at SMP Al Huda Kediri?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of word cluster as a technique to improve the students' writing ability in writing a procedure text?

C. Objective of the Research

The implementation of this action research is expected to:

1. find out whether word cluster can improve writing ability of the eighth year students of SMP Al Huda Kediri.
2. know what happens when word cluster is implemented in the writing class of the eighth year students of SMP Al Huda Kediri.

D. The Benefit of the Study

Hopefully, the result of the study can give some benefits.

1. For the writer himself

This study gives the writer understanding toward the implementation of clustering in teaching writing directly. Up till now, the writer only knows clustering technique theoretically. By implementing clustering to improve students' writing ability, it will provide useful practical experience for the writer himself.

2. For students

The result of the study will help them to write better. By implementing clustering, the students are able to write according the stages suggested. As a result, their writing will be much better. It means that this technique will improve students' writing ability. It is also expected that the result of study will make the students interested in learning writing and more motivated in following the lesson.

3. For other English teachers

This study enables to provide contribution and information for the teachers to apply another technique dealing with the teaching-learning process especially in the teaching writing and to conduct further studies related to the problem studied. By considering the result of the study they will not use monotonous method and change their orientation in teaching writing from product based to process based.

4. For other researchers

The result of the study will be useful information to conduct further studies.