

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Language is used as a means of communication among human being. There is a standard definition of language. It is stated that language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal symbol, written or gestured symbol that enables member of given community to communicate intelligibly one another”.¹ Language is a means to communicate ideas, opinions and feelings. Susan Feez stated that “Language is a functional, meaning-making system which is systematically linked to the contexts which it used; people draw on this system to construct whole unified texts each of which fulfils a social purpose through its structure.”²

Based on the definition, the function of language for human beings is for communication. Language used in communication can be in the form of spoken and written one. Language is expected to help students to know themselves, culture, and the other culture. Students can share their ideas, feeling, and be active in the society in which this language is used. One of language widely used by the nations in the world is English.

English has become a lingua franca.³It means that English is a language with the largest number of native or “first” language speakers. English has been taught almost at every level of education as a second language. It has gained important status since it is needed to develop science, technology, art, and culture. For those reasons, the government has decided to apply the English earlier at school, beginning from the elementary school as a local content up to twelfth school grade of senior high school.

¹H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of language learning and teaching*, (Newk York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2000), p.5

²Susan Feez, *Text-Based Syllabus Design*, (Sydney: Macquarie University), 1998, p.12

³Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 3rd Ed., p.1

As part of the language teaching, writing is an important skill besides listening, reading, and speaking. Writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing) has always become part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. Although writing is not the first skill, it does not mean that writing can be ignored. There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learner to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are highly complex.⁴

Writing is very important for many people because it will help them understand many paragraphs written in English, either to obtain information for scientific purposes or just relaxation. Through writing, the students can enlarge their point of view of their atmosphere and knowledge. They can also convey or write their ideas, imagination, and experiences into a paragraph and it can be explored to become histories. The importance of English writing is also stated in Competence-Based Curriculum 2004; it states that English is understood as a means of communication as well as in writing. In this case, it also explained the meaning of communications. Communication is an understanding and expressing of information, thoughts, feeling, science, and culture developing by using language.⁵

Allah states in the glorious Al-Qur'an⁶

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ (١)

We cite the inkstand, and the pen, and that which is thereby written.

The verse above contains an order to write by using qalam (pen). Writing is a great gift coming from Allah. Writing has a function as a means to understand human-interest. If there are not writings, the knowledge will be lost, religion track will not exist and life will not be comfortable. All learning

⁴Jack C Richard, *Methodology in Language Teaching*, (United State: Cambridge University Press), p.303

⁵Depdiknas, *Kurikulum 2004 Standar Kompetensi Mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Pertama dan Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, (Jakarta:Departemen pendidikan Nasional,2004), p.7

⁶Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *The Quran*, (Great Britain: Curzon Press Ltd, 1981), p. 574

activities, teaching learning and others are categorized as worship like Rasulallah said⁷:

وعن انس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلعم من خرج في طلب العلم فهو في سبيل الله حتي يرجع (رواه الترمذي وقال حديث حسن)

From Anas ra., He said: Rasulallah said: "Whoever came out with the aim of studying, then he is on the path of Allah until he returns.

Islam gives full of attention and its development. Islam ennobles human who believe on Allah as their god and elevates the degrees for people who have had sciences.

Teaching and learning English itself should be in line with KTSP curriculum. This curriculum will help teachers how to plan their teaching learning activities. The government published a KTSP curriculum which has been designed to improve the students' competence to use English as communication tool. The KTSP curriculum implements the literacy approach in which the English education must be based on what the native does.

Based on the Curriculum, Concept, and Function of English above, I assume that Learning English has the purpose to develop four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing), so students are able to communicate between at oral and written form. It is called English language components which consist of vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation (in speech) or spelling (in writing): they are also important to be taught.

Writing skill in SMP should be learned based on genres. The genres which should be taught in junior high school are procedure, descriptive, recount, and narrative. Descriptive is one of the genres that is taught in order to make the students know how to describe any subject in their surrounding. According to Oshima and Hogue description is writing about how something (or someone) looks and uses space order. In space order, you might describe something from up to bottom or from left to right.

⁷Imam Nawawi, *RiyadhusShalihin (Translated)*, (Jakarta:Pustaka Amani,1999), p. 318

The writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgemental elements.⁸For those reasons, as teachers of English we should provide materials that are appropriate with the curriculum and find suitable method or strategy in teaching learning process to enable the students to master those language skills. Furthermore, in order to make English teaching successful, we have to consider some factors such as the quality of teachers, students, etc.

In this case, the researcher will try to observe and improve the achievement of teaching Descriptive writing using the power of two and four strategy and for MTs Irsyaduth Thullab especially with 8th grade students. This will help the students of MTs Irsyaduth Thullab to improve their writing skill without feeling bored because teaching writing descriptive text by using the power of two and four strategy has never been done there.

Researcher expects that this research will help language teachers investigate the achievement of the power of two and four strategy in teaching writing descriptive text and find out students perception on the strategy in relation to their writing improvement. It will help them in designing their course syllabus, determining specific learning outcome in writing course as well as selecting and managing materials and tasks relevantly respond to the ultimate goals of writing works.

B. Reasons for Choosing The Topic

There are some reasons why the researcher chooses this research topic. They are:

1. Strategy which only focuses on written text sometimes can make students bored and does not engage the material. Doing this classroom action research will give more information as to which strategy can be used to teach writing. Generally, English teachers teach descriptive text using

⁸J. B. Heaton, *Writing English Language Tests*, (England: Longman Group Uk Limited, 1988), p.135

traditional descriptive text that can make students engage and improve their interest during English course.

2. Doing this research will give a new way in teaching writing descriptive text for English teachers of MTs Irsyaduth Thullab because they are less in cooperative learning for teaching so far.
3. Investigating students perception on their learning activity conducted through this strategy will be reference for English teachers in designing their course syllabus as well as selecting and managing materials which are relevant to students' interest in order to reach the ultimate goals.

C. Research Questions

1. How is the implementation of power of two and four in improving students' writing skill in descriptive text?
2. How is the improvement of students' achievement after being taught through using the power of two and four?

D. Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this study will be about:

1. To describe the implementation of power of two and four in improving students' writing skill in descriptive text.
2. To describe the improvement of students' achievement after being taught through using the power of two and four.

E. Significance of The Study

By doing the research, it is expected to reveal the following:

1. Students

The result of this study may help the students to improve their writing skills in descriptive text. It could have a positive force for obtaining higher achievement.

2. Teacher

Every teacher, especially English teacher or second language teacher may apply this method (The Power of Two and Four) to stimulate students in writing descriptive text.

3. Institution (school)

The result of this study is hoped to be valuable for institution/school by giving information that can be method of improving the quality of the institution/school.

4. The Development of Knowledge (Teaching-Learning Strategy)

This study is hoped to be valuable as the contributor in educational world about the achievement of using the power of two and four in improving students' writing skill in descriptive text.

F. Limitation of The Study

A research should be limited in its scope, so that the problem being examined is not too wide and the research is effective. To limit the scope of the research and to analyze the problems, the findings of the research should be limited by the following factors:

1. Using the power of two and four to improve students' writing of descriptive text at 8th grade of MTs Irsyaduth Thullab Tedunan Wedung Demak at the preparation activity, main activity, and evaluation activity.
2. The assessment of students' writing covers the parts, qualities, and characteristics of the object to determine the improvement of students' writing of descriptive text.
3. The contributions of the use of the power of two and four to the students' improvement in descriptive text.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Students' writing skill

Based on Oxford advance learners' Dictionary of current English, a student is defined as a person who is studying at a school, college, university, etc.⁹ or a person formally engaged in learning, esp. one enrolled in a school or college; pupil. Any person who studies, investigates, or examines thoughtfully.¹⁰

The word writing comes from a verb, which means it is an activity, a process. Writing is a way to produce a language, which you do naturally when you speak.¹¹

According to Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary of the English, Writing is act of one who or that which writes; state of being written; written form.¹²

According to Webster Skill is the ability, coming from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude, etc., to do something well or competent excellence in performance; expertness; dexterity.¹³ Skill usually requires a certain environmental stimuli and situation to assess the level of skill being shown and used.

So, we can conclude that students' writing skill is the capacity of human being to communicate in written text that mastered by students.

2. Descriptive text

Text is a unit of meaning which is coherent and appropriate for its context.¹⁴ Text based syllabus design uses text-types in teaching. Text is any stretch of language which is held together through meaning.¹⁵

⁹A. S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of current English*, (New York: Oxford University Press 6th Edition, 2000), p.1292

¹⁰ Library of congress cataloging publication, *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridge Dictionary of the English language*, (New York: Portland House, 1989), p. 410

¹¹Meyers, *Gateways to Academic Writing*, (New York: Pearson Education, 2005), p.1.

¹²Library of congress cataloging publication, Op. cit, p. 1648

¹³*Ibid*, p. 1335

¹⁴Rudi hartono, *Genres of texts*, (Semarang: English Department Faculty of Language and Art Semarang State University, 2005), p.4

¹⁵Susan Feez, Op. cit, p. 4

Descriptive is having the quality of describing; characterized by description.¹⁶In description, a writer uses words to paint a picture of something-a person, a scene, or even a feeling.

So, it can say that descriptive text is a text which social purpose to give an account of imagined or factual events.

3. The power of two and four

The power of two and four is the activity is used to promote cooperative learning and reinforce the importance and benefits of synergy-that is, that two and (four) heads are indeed better than one.¹⁷Its purpose is accustomed to active learning individually and group (The result of grouping study is having the impression more)¹⁸.

¹⁶Library of congress cataloging publication, Op. Cit, p. 390

¹⁷Mel Silberman, *Active Learning 101 Strategies to teach any subject*, (USA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996), p.106

¹⁸Ismail SM, *Strategy Pembelajaran Agama Islam berbasis PAIKEM*, (Semarang: RaSAIL Media group, 2008), p.77