CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background; (2) research problems; (3) research objectives; and (4) significance of the research.

1.1. Background

Language is as a communication tool to connect a person to another. It is used to give information, opinions or ideas to each other in written or spoken form. Therefore, Algeo (2010, p. 2) states that a language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. It means that language is important because without language, people are difficult to communicate with others. In the world, English is one of languages used for communication in spoken or written form. According to Rubinstein (2014, p. 4), English is a primary language, a frequently used secondary language, or the most popular foreign language chosen by students. For this reason, many countries have begun to introduce English from the early level of education.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language taught to the students from elementary to university. According to Lauder (2008, p. 10), a complete social account of English in Indonesia from Independence to the present would necessarily involve information about the role that English has played in society at large, and in particular in business, politics, education and the media. However, constraints such as limited time and the difficulty of tracking down adequate sources made this impossible. Briefly, however, it is possible to note that English

has played an important role in education as it is a compulsory subject in schools and it is unlikely that university students will complete there courses without being assigned at least some readings in English. It is widely recognized that English is important for Indonesia and the reason most frequently put forward for this is that English is a global or international language.

Brown (2000, p. 232) says that English has four skills- reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Based on KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan), the students are expected to learn four skills in order to be able to use English effectively. Hence, the students should learn four skills in learning English. They are, writing, speaking, listening and reading. All of the skills are improved in the process of teaching and learning English.

The main objective of teaching English in junior high school level is to produce competent English students in secondary school level. According to the school based curriculum of 2006, the scopes of teaching English in junior high school is discourse competence or ability to understand and produce spoken text and written text which is integrated comprehensively in four skills. In relation to written text, writing becomes an important skill that should be learnt by students. As stated by Harmer (1998, p. 91), the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a basic language skill. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisement and increasingly, how to write using electronic media.

Harmer (2004) also states that, through writing students are able to express their ideas, thought, and feeling into written symbols. Furthermore, writing is the

primary basis upon which our work, our learning, and our intellect will be judged—in college, in the workplace, and in the community. Moreover, the importance of writing can be seen in the verses of Al-Quran that mentioned the word pen or writing in several verses of Al-Quran and one of them as follows :

<div dir="rtl">ن َّوَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُون ۟</div>

"Nun. By the Pen and by that which the writers are writing"
(QS. Al-Qalam :1)

Because of some verses in the Qur'an, it means writing is very important. Everybody should be more motivated to be more active to write.

In addition, writing was taught in junior high school students at each semester, the basis of achieved in the English writing subject was the eighth grade students have ability to develop and produce simple written functional text. There were four kinds of texts in junior high school to be learned, such as descriptive text, procedure text, recount text and narrative text that the learning materials are provided in textbook including the task as an instrument to assess students' knowledge.

Writing is one of difficult skill in learning English because there are many aspects to be considered in writing such as, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling and still many others. Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 303) state that

> Writing is the most difficult skill for the second language or foreign language learners to master. The difficulties not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into a readable text. The difficulty becomes more noticeable if their language proficiency is weak.

In fact, writing is problems for students because the more they think about how they do writing, the more difficult it will be. Based on Liu (2000, p. 89), it is

caused by many factors, such as incoherent ideas, misuse and insufficient use of functional connectives. The students dislike writing because they are not confident or do not believe in their writing ability. As stated by Richard and Renandya (2002, p. 301), students who are learning to write in a new language with different system would encounter feelings of being less confident and less self-assured which would affect their performance.

Therefore, it is important that the researcher to know students' self-efficacy in learning writing. Hence, self-efficacy is the feelings of the students about their own ability. High and low sense of self-efficacy can effect to their achievement in learning process.

Self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situation (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). According to Pajares (1995, p. 4), self-efficacy beliefs are important influences on motivation and behavior in part because they mediate the relationship between knowledge and action. That is, environmental, cognitive and affective factors influence behavior partly by influencing self beliefs. As such, these beliefs are strong predictors of individuals' subsequent performances. In addition, Bandura (1994, p. 71) states that people who have a heightened sense of self-efficacy see challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and demonstrate a stronger sense of commitment to them. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. Bandura (1994) argue that students who

evaluate themselves as poor writers tend to perform being reluctent to engage in writing works and making brief or incomplete pieces of writing while students with higher self-effcacy have been found to complete writing tasks at a higher standard. In addition, Maguire, Reynolds, & Delahunt (2013, p. 1112) state that a student who has high self-efficacy for academic writing is likely to try hard to improve his or her writing and to persist even in the face of setbacks.

Self-efficacy has powerful effects on learning, motivation, and performance, because people try to learn and perform only those tasks that they believe they will be able to perform successfully (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 1). Based on Bandura (1994, p. 71), people who have a low sense of self-efficacy they avoid difficult tasks and view them as personal threats. They have a weak commitment to their goals and believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities. When they faced with difficult task, they dwell on personal failings and negative outcomes, rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties and easily develop depression and stress. According to Tripathi (2013, p. 37), the students with low self-efficacy do not have self confidence that they can achieve any goals with their abilities, nor they expect to do well in any condition. They don't believe that they may complete any task well, consequently they don't try. Thus, students with poor self-efficacy have disappointing results in the learning process.

It is in line with the result at writer's informal interview with the teacher of English of eighth grade at SMP Negeri 28 Palembang, she said that most of the

eighth grade students had difficulties in learning writing. The students were still confused on how to write. They had no ideas to make a sentence or paragraph such as descriptive text, procedure text, recount text and narrative text. Sometimes the teacher gave them some difficult words in the white board or asked them to open their dictionary. Beside that, the researcher also did the informal interview with the students of eighth grade about their difficulties in writing English. They said that English was difficult because English was different from Indonesian, especially on the writing. They had difficulties to write in English because they had no ideas. It made the students confused when they write. When the teacher gave them a task to write a paragraph they usually discussed or cheated with their friends. Researchers also asked about self-efficacy with them, but they had no response or could not answer because they do not know about self-efficacy.

So, based on the researcher's preliminary study at SMP Negeri 28 Palembang, the researcher found that the eighth grade students faced some problems in learning writing for example, they had no ideas and did not believe in their own capabilities. Although the descriptive text was learned from the second semester of seventh grade and first semester of eighth grade, students of eighth grade still had problems in writing descriptive text. Thus, in this study, the researcher used a descriptive text in writing test.

This study is supported by Williams (2012) that the use of 50% of the participants participated in an intervention designed to increase positive writing attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and achievement. The study found a significant positive relation between writing self-efficacy and attitudes. The intervention was

found to have not effect on the self-efficacy, attitudes, or performance of participants. However, in the study of Mahyudin, Elias, Cheong, Fauzi, Noordi and Abdullah (2006) the result indicates that, achievement in English language will improve when students have high self-efficacy in the language. Another research has been conducted by Hindi (2015). He found that there is a significant positive correlation between law students' self-efficacy and their achievement in writing.

Since, the students have difficulties in learning writing, it is better for the teachers to know what the factor that influence their writing achievement. It will be very useful for them to get better output. Therefore, in this study the researcher wants to find out the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their writing achievement and whether students' self-efficacy influences to their writing achievement. In conclusion, due to some reasons mentioned above, the researcher is interested in doing a research study entitles "the correlation between self-efficacy and writing achievement of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 28 Palembang".

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background, the research problems can be formulated as follows:

1. Is there any significant correlation between self-efficacy and writing achievement of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 28 Palembang?

2. Does the students' self-efficacy significantly influence their writing achievement?

1.3. Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study can be listed as follows:

1. To find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between self-efficacy and writing achievement of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 28 Palembang;

2. To find out whether or not students' self-efficacy influences their writing achievement.

1.4. Significance of the Research

This study may give the information how writing achievement relates to students' self-efficacy. More specifically, hopefully, the result of this study will be useful for students and will help students be aware of their internal self beliefs in order to increase their writing achievement. The researcher also hopes that the result of this study can contribute to the literature on how self-efficacy may affect the writing achievement of students in SMP Negeri 28 Palembang. For the teachers, the result of this study is expected for the teachers' knowledge about self-efficacy to improve students' self-efficacy and administer more effective teaching learning process which is reflected in the creativity of their teaching style, especially when they teach writing. This study can also be expected for the researchers' knowledge that students' self-efficacy influence their writing achievement. It is also hoped that this study will be useful for the further research as an enhance of inspiration in her research and can help add a reference for the researchers.