

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer presented; (1) background; (2) problems of the study; (3) objectives of the study; and (4) significances of the study.

1.1 Background

English is an international language. It is used in most countries in the world as mean of communication. It is the primary language of several countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada and Australia and the second language in a number of multilingual countries including India, Singapore and Philippines. Many countries use English for many occasions such as social, education, etc. According to Gradol (1997), English can be placed as an international language because of the growth of the people who speak in it and those who need. Richards and Rogers (1986) stated that five hundred years ago, Latin was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and government until in late tenth centuries, English has replaced Latin as the language which mostly used around the world. Until in this decade, English is now known as the most used language all around the world.

In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language. As a foreign language, English is not commonly used for daily interactions but is used in formal setting such as school and university. Moreover, Dardjowidjojo

claimed that English is now officially called as the first foreign language of the country (as cited in Rini, 2014, p. 4). Dardjowidjojo added that the first foreign language status makes English is a subject which should be learned by students in secondary level four times a week (as cited in Rini, 2014, p. 29). This can be proved by the 2013 curriculum or *K13* designed by the Ministry of Education of Indonesia, which states that English is included as one of subjects which should be taught from junior high school until senior high school.

Writing is one of the four skills in English included in the 2013 curriculum. Writing itself is the activity of transferring idea into written form. According to Harmer (2004), writing is a way to produce language and express idea, feeling and opinion. It also can be defined as a process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation, and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. It is done through some process; planning, drafting, editing and final version. In addition, Nunan (2003) claimed writing concerns in some contrasts such as physical and mental act, express and impress to the goals the writing and the last is process and product. In brief, writing a process of transferring idea which done in some stages.

Writing is assumed as the most difficult skill. Yusuf, Yusuf, Yusuf and Nadia (2017) stated that since English is treated as foreign language in Indonesia, the EFL learners encounter problem in learning the language. It is difficult because writing involves some elements such as content,

grammatical function, vocabulary, and the mechanic like punctuation, capitalization and spelling. In addition, Jahin and Idrees (2012) said that as every writer should have balance among several aspects in his/her writing, writing seems difficult for both native and non-native learners (as cited in Salma, 2015, p. 3). Thus, in the context of learning English as foreign language such as in Indonesia, writing skills become very troublesome to learners because the language is not used in practical or real life conversation. Writing becomes more difficult to learn since the writing culture in Indonesia is poor. In accordance with Nurhayati (2016), it is proved by a survey from Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that showed the level of literacy in Indonesia is still low. To conclude, since writing has many aspects, and because of English is not used in daily need and also because of the poor literacy, writing is considered as the most difficult skill.

Recount text is one of text which should be mastered by the students. Recount text is text which tell about someone experience that happened in the past. For instance, it tells about a holiday or an unforgettable moment which been experienced by someone. According to Purwati (2017), recount text is a kind of text which tells about someone's past events or experiences. In addition, Yasthi (2016) remarked recount text is a text contains event, stories or facts happened in the past. The purpose of a recount is to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred. There is no complication among the participant who are involved. In brief, recount text

tells about someone's past events in which there is no complication in it.

Based on writer's preliminary study, it was found that the tenth grade students have difficulties in writing recount text. Through the interview to one of the English teachers in SMA N 11 Palembang, she stated that it was hard for the students to write recount text. She said that score of the students recount text writing is still not good enough. The teacher also added by saying that the students had a serious problem in their spelling and grammar. The students sometimes found it was hard and confusing when they had to deal with simple past tense, which one of the language features in recount text. Moreover, the use of time connector, adjectives and adverbs often made them confused. They even got confused when they had to start writing. The students sometimes didn't know what they had to write because they didn't get chance to list the idea related to their writing. In addition, based on the interview which done with some of the tenth grade students of SMA N 11 Palembang, they said that writing was difficult because they had lack of vocabulary, didn't understand about grammar and didn't know how to start their writing.

As an additional information, the writer also asked about the way the teacher taught recount text writing to the students. The result is that there were some steps which was done by the teacher. First, she explained the generic structures of recount text; orientation, event(s), and reorientation. Second, she gave the example of each part of the generic structures. Third, after the students understood the parts of recount text and got the example,

the teacher asked them to write the paragraph based on the generic structures which had been explained.

Based on the preliminary above, the writer assumes that the teacher already taught recount text writing well. However, some additional steps in writing could be beneficial for the students in order to reduce their difficulty in writing recount text. Those additional steps could be in the way of providing the topics to the students. Then guide the students to list the idea related to the topic they have chosen and ask them to elaborate the idea. After that, guide the students to activate and use their list to make supporting sentence in their paragraph. The last additional step is that guide the students to evaluate their writing before they submit their writing. There should be strategy in order to make the students be able to write recount text correctly. PLEASE strategy is one of strategies that could be used to teach writing. Welch (1992) described that the PLEASE strategy was developed to address specific difficulties in paragraph writing which are mostly related to prewriting planning, composition and paragraph revision. The writer assumed that this strategy can help the students to write recount text because this strategy has writing steps which are parts of common writing stages and this strategy also can direct the students from the very beginning steps of writing that is choosing a topic until the end which is evaluation.

PLEASE is the acronym of six steps of writing. According to Welch (1990), PLEASE is the acronyms of pick, list, evaluate, activate, supply, end and evaluate. "Pick" a topic is the first step. In this first step, the teacher will

guide the students to choose the topic for their recount text writing. List the ideas about the topic is the second step. Teacher will ask the students to write some words related to the topic they have chosen. The next step is Evaluate the list. At this step, students evaluate their list to see if it is complete or it is necessary to add some more ideas. After they complete the evaluation, they sequence or organize the ideas. Activate paragraph with topic sentence is the next step. Students will start their paragraph by constructing a topic sentence. The following step is Supply supporting sentences. Students supply sentences that support the topic sentence by using their list of ideas. They are expected to turn each idea into a sentence and elaborate on it. The last letter is E which refers to the word End and Evaluate. The final step is that the students will end their writing with conclusion. They are also expected to evaluate their work by revising their ideas and editing their mistakes.

PLEASE strategy can be a useful way to improve students writing ability. Liza and Refnaldi (2013) argued that PLEASE strategy is effective to improve students' writing ability because it can make students be able to start doing their writing and generate their ideas. Moreover, Welch and Jensen (1990) claims that PLEASE strategy was effective in developing written expression in their investigation. In accordance with the above descriptions, the writer is interested in applying PLEASE strategy in enhancing the tenth grade students of SMA N 11 Palembang in writing recount text.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, the writer formulates the problems of the study into the following questions:

- 1) Was there any significant improvement on the tenth grade students' recount text writing before and after taught by using PLEASE strategy at SMA N 11 Palembang?
- 2) Was there any significant difference on the tenth grade students' recount text writing between those who were taught by using PLEASE strategy and those who were not at SMA N 11 Palembang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to find out:

- 1) whether or not there was a significant improvement on the tenth grade students' recount text writing before and after taught by using PLEASE strategy at SMA N 11 Palembang.
- 2) whether or not there was a significant difference on the tenth grade students' recount text writing between those who were taught by using PLEASE strategy and those who were not at SMA N 11 Palembang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since teaching writing through PLEASE strategy offers different and easy ways to engage students in learning, it is expected that the result of this study

gives benefit for many parties. Students can improve their writing achievement in recount text and raise their interest as well as their creativity in writing activities. It also can give broader view to English teacher how to teach writing by using different technique, such as PLEASE as the alternative one. For writer herself, it can give good experience for her in conducting a research paper. The last but not least, the result of this study can motivate other researchers who are interested in writing in the classroom; therefore, they can use and adapt the principals and the activities described in this research.