

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

There are four basic abilities that English teachers should teach their pupils while teaching English as a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is considered the most difficult and sophisticated language skill to learn out of all of these. It comprises a student's ability to express their beliefs or thoughts in writing in a clear and efficient manner. These skills can only be attained if the student masters some writing strategies, such as how to gather ideas for what the students' will write about, how to express them in a series of sentences, how to organize them chronologically and coherently, and how to review and revise the composition until it is well-developed.

The preceding explanations highlight the importance of English teachers paying more attention to their students' writing ability in order to assist them in completing their language acquisition. Writing as a communicative activity should be promoted and nourished throughout a language learner's academic career. Teaching writing is a unique strategy to reinforce learning and reinforce grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary. As a result, it is clear that writing is an important language reinforcing ability and a crucial talent because it is used to learn, discover,

grow, and refine language ability. Students become more engaged with the target language by writing, attempting to convey their thoughts, and continually using their eyes, hands, and brain as a unique strategy to reinforce learning.

Writing is an activity to explore an idea in the mind and then put it down on the paper to produce a creation. According to Hayes (2008), writing is the only other useful talent that is taught in Indonesia schools, particularly in secondary schools. The ability to write well in English is not something that comes naturally. Since many students who learn English still struggle to create English texts, they must work hard to enhance their writing skills. Due to their limited vocabulary and language skills, students still struggle to choose the right words and communicate them in an effective manner. Another problem is that the approach taken still feels dated or, more accurately, that there has not been much progress in how to impart knowledge without making pupils bored.

According to Brown (2001), the process of writing requires an entirely different set of competencies. Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that requires specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develop naturally. However, many teachers are less aware of the importance of teaching the writing stages to the students as they more focus on the writing products. Consequently, the students' writing ability is

not really good. Teacher should provide the students with the strategy that can motivate and to make the students easier to write well.

In this case, the researcher focuses on writing skills. The reason is that writing is one of the skills that must be mastered by students. First, writing can help students to improve grammatical skills, utterance, and vocabulary, that has been taught by the teacher. Second, if the students do writing activities, they have a chance to be more courageous in language. Therefore, writing skill is very influential in writing for students.

When teaching English in high school, researcher found that students struggled to write material. Richard (2002) states that writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered by people who make English a second language. In writing, the students find it difficult to express their ideas and arrange words to make good sentences, especially in narrative text material. It is mean there are many reasons that make it difficult for them to write, like gathering ideas, organizing to write in the essay, and lack of vocabulary make them reluctant to write.

According to Cook, Green, Meyer and Saey (2001), students are reluctant to write because they have low confidence, inadequate writing time, limited peer collaboration and lack control over the English writing tasks, which often have insufficient relevance to real life. Improving students' writing ability is important since some facts show that many Indonesian students have problems in English writing achievement.

One of the genres that students are required to master in the English curriculum of vocational schools is narrative text. Narrative text is a type of text that tells a story to entertain or inform the readers. According to Knapp and Watkins (2005), narrative texts have specific social functions that includes sharing experience and entertaining the audience. The generic structure of narrative text typically consists of orientation, complication, resolution, re-orientation and sometimes a coda.

Narrative texts aim to entertain and inform by telling stories or recounting events. Writing narrative texts requires students to be imaginative and creative, as well as to understand the elements of storytelling such as orientation, complication, resolution, and re-orientation. However, in reality, many students struggle to write narrative texts effectively. They often face difficulties in generating ideas, organizing story elements, using appropriate tenses (especially past tense), and expressing their thoughts in a logical and structured way.

Based on researcher preliminary observations at SMK Negeri 6 Padang, the researcher found that many first-grade students still struggle with writing, especially when it comes to narrative texts. Some of them seem hesitant to write because they lack confidence and are unsure how to get started. Others tend to produce paragraphs that are not well-organized, with repeated vocabulary and frequent grammatical mistakes. These problems

show that students need more support—not only to build their motivation, but also to help them learn how to organize their writing more effectively.

To help students overcome these difficulties, teachers need to apply appropriate teaching strategies that guide them through the writing process. One strategy that can be useful is the four square strategy. This strategy offers a clear and structured way for students to organize their ideas using a simple graphic organizer. It divides the page into four squares for supporting details and one box in the center for the main idea. This layout helps students plan their writing step by step before turning it into a complete paragraph.

The four square strategy is a graphic organizer designed to help students organize their writing. According to Cramer and Jago (2016), the four square strategy divides a paper into four squares plus a middle box, where students can outline ideas for the introduction, supporting details, and conclusion. This strategy simplifies the writing process by enabling students to focus on one part at a time, improving organization and clarity. It has been found effective in improving students' writing ability, especially among those who find writing challenging.

Four-square strategy is a strategy of teaching basic writing skills that is applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. Graphic organizers are visual displays of key content information designed to benefit learners who have difficulty organize information. The step by step approach can help the students in cohesiveness, coherence, and transition words.

This research investigates the implementation of the Four Square Strategy as an instructional strategy to improve the writing ability of first- grade students in composing narrative texts. The study focuses on how the strategy helps students organize their ideas, structure their paragraphs, and enhance the overall coherence and clarity of their narratives. By using a graphic organizer that divides writing into four key components—main idea, supporting details, and conclusion—the strategy is expected to assist students in overcoming common writing difficulties, such as lack of organization, limited vocabulary, and underdeveloped story elements.

B. Identification of the Research

Based on the background that the author has provided, several problems can be identified in the teaching and learning of writing. First, the students' writing ability remains low. Many students struggle with grammar, vocabulary, and organizing their ideas into coherent paragraphs. Second, students still face difficulties in generating ideas. This problem often occurs when they begin a writing task, as they lack strategies to brainstorm or structure their thoughts effectively. Third, the teacher lacks the use of various techniques in teaching writing skills. The reliance on limited or traditional methods may lead to a monotonous learning environment, which does not support the development of students' writing proficiency. These issues

highlight the need for more effective and engaging instructional strategies to improve students' writing outcomes.

C. Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to investigating students' writing ability, specifically in composing narrative texts. The study focuses on students' difficulties in generating ideas, organizing content, and developing coherent and structured paragraphs in their writing. It does not examine other language skills such as speaking, reading, or listening. The study is confined to a specific group of first-grade students within a particular school environment, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational levels or contexts.

D. Research Question

Based on the background and limitations of the problem, several problems can be formulated, including:

1. How is the use of four square strategy improve the writing ability of second grade students at SMKN 6 Padang?
2. What is the significant effect of using four square strategy in writing narrative text for the second grade students at SMKN 6 Padang?

E. The Purpose of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the research objectives outlined by the author include:

1. To find out whether the use of four square strategy can improve the writing skill of second grade at SMKN 6 Padang.
2. To find out whether there is significant effect second grade students at SMKN 6 Padang.

F. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research is expected to be useful for:

a. Theoretical

1. For students

To help students better understand and make it easier to write the text given by the teacher.

2. For English teachers

This strategy can inform English teachers to create more productive classes in teaching writing comprehension classes.

3. For researcher

Help other researcher in researching other strategies to create an active class and not monotonous in the field of writing comprehension.

b. Practical

1. For students

By using this strategy, students can optimize their writing skill and be more motivated when writing English

2. For English teachers

This strategy can increase the quality of teaching and learning and can also enrich teachers knowledge.

3. For researcher

It is hoped that further researchers who are interested in teaching English writing at the intermediate level can obtain basic information from this research.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding about the terms used in this research, the researcher should define the phrase chosen.

1. Writing

In general, writing is to express ideas, thoughts, and opinions in an article. Although writing is considered an activity that drains concentrations, it turns out that there are also many who want to become writers. Indeed, being a writer is not just about having intentions and ideals.

2. Four Square Strategy

The four-square strategy is one of many types of graphic organizers that can be used to assist students in learning languages. The four-square

strategy, which is made up of four squares that are connected to each other with another box in the middle, is a simple shape that can help students' plan and organize their ideas or thoughts in writing.

3. Narrative Text

Narrative text is fiction or nonfiction that tells the story of a certain event or incident in a fictitious or imaginary form. It should be noted that narrative text is made up stories rather than facts.