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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Writing is a medium of communication that represents language and emotion through the inscription or recording of signs and symbols. According to Elbow (as cited in Brown, 2001), writing is a transaction with words whereby the writes can express their feeling, opinion and emotion. It is also called an ability to combine between words and thoughts. It is the process of creating ideas, generating them, and organizing them to communicate with others and express ideas, and the result in paper or screen.

Writing skill is requiring mastery not only grammatical and rhetorical devices, but also conceptual and judgmental elements. According to Brown (2004, p.12), there are 5 general components necessary for writing; language use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic skills and judgmental skills. Regarding to the previous idea, Harmer (2004) said that writing is like any other skill, has its 'mechanical components'. These include handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Those components are needed to help the writers in their writing.

Zemach and Rumisek (2005) stated writing process goes through several steps to produce a good written product. There are some sub-activities to be taken in producing the text. It is more than just putting words together to make



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sentences. The writer should undergo several steps to make sure that what has been written follows the right development of writing process.

According to Harmer (2004, p.31), writing has always formed part of syllabus in teaching of English. It is expected that students are able to have competency not only in spoken but also in written communication since the four language skills are integrated (listening and reading as receptive skills; speaking and writing as productive one). It also means the students should be able to write to make them easier in communication.

In order to accomplish students' needs toward writing, School-Based Curriculum (SBC) provides writing as one of the skills in mastering English that should be taught and learned in Junior High School or Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS). MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru is one of the schools that used School Based Curriculum (SBC) as the guidance in teaching and learning process. According to the standard competence of teaching English in the syllabus, the eighth grade students are required to be able to express the meaning of functional written text and simple short essay of descriptive and recount. Besides, in basic competence, students are required to be able to express the meaning of functional written text accurately, fluently, and acceptably to communicate with the environment and/or academic context.

Based on the interview to Mrs. Indah Pratiwi as one of the teachers of English at MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru, she said that the standard competence and basic competence were not achieved yet. Then, students still had difficulty in

writing such as; they had difficulty in completing the sentences or text using suitable words, arranging the word into good sentences, writing a descriptive text based on the situation given, developing their idea, and using generic structures of descriptive text.

She was not only talking about students' difficulty in writing, she was also mentioning the minimum passing grade of English subject and students' achievement. She said that the minimum passing grade of English at MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru is 75. Therefore, she said that only 25% of the students who achieved the minimum passing grade, meanwhile 75% of the students who did not. Then, for mean score of 75% of students who did not achieve the minimum passing grade was 50.

Then, the researcher concluded the phenomena, as follows:

1. Some of the students were not able to write based on the topic given
2. Some of the students were not able to use language features in their writing.
3. Some of the students were not able to choose the appropriate vocabulary in their writing.
4. Some of the students were not able to complete the sentences or text using suitable words.
5. Some of the students were not able to arrange the word into good sentences.

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The phenomena above can be caused by several factors such as students' understanding about noun phrase. According to Ibad et.al (2014, p.2), by understanding the functions and elements of noun phrase, students can be helped to make a sentence correctly either in writing or in speaking. They also stated when students are able to construct a noun phrase correctly, they will have a good writing. Also, Biber et.al (in Lan, 2015) revealed noun phrase tends to be the most important features in academic writing. Dealing with those statements, Taguchi et.al pointed out noun phrase had a tendency to contribute to writing quality. Then, Cooper (2013) stated the use of noun phrase may demonstrate students' understanding of particular language structures that enhance academic texts as well as students' ability to utilize them in writing.

Based on the phenomena, the researcher wanted to investigate whether there is a relationship between students' understanding of noun phrase and their ability in writing descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled: **The Relationship between Students' Understanding of Noun Phrase and Their Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru.**



B. Problem

1. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem, the researcher identifies the problems as follows:

- a. Why were some of the students not able to achieve the minimum passing grade?
- b. Why were some of the students not able to develop their idea?
- c. Why were of some of the students could not write a descriptive text based on the topic given?
- d. How did students identify the elements of noun phrase?
- e. How did students identify the functions of noun phrase?

2. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems above, the researcher needs to limit and focus the problem of this research on the students' understanding of noun phrase and their ability in writing descriptive text.

3. Formulation of the Problem

The problems of this research are formulated in the following questions:

- a. How is students' understanding of noun phrase at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru?
- b. How is students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru?



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- c. Is there any significant relationship between students' understanding of noun phrase and their ability in writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru?

C. Objective and Significance of The Research

1. Objective of the Research

- a. To find out the students' understanding of noun phrase at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru.
- b. To find out the students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru.
- c. To find out whether there is a significant relationship between students' understanding of noun phrase and their ability in writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru.

2. Significance of the Research

Related to the objective of the research above, the significance of the research is as follows:

- a. The research findings are expected to be useful and valuable contribution for both teacher and students of MTS Al-Fajar Pekanbaru.
- b. The research findings are expected to be positive and valuable information for those who are concerned in the field of teaching English as foreign or second language.
- c. The research findings are expected to be practical and theoretical information to develop the theories language teaching in general.



D. Reason for Choosing the Title

There are some reasons why the researcher is interested in carrying out this research:

- a. The title of this research is relevant to the researcher as a student of English Education Department.
- b. The title of this research is not yet investigated by other previous researcher of State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.
- c. The location of the research facilitates the researcher in conducting the research.

E. Definition of the Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpreting of the terms used in this research, it is necessary to define the definition of terms in this research as follows:

1. Relationship

According to Rouse (2017), relationship is a statistical measure that indicates the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together. In this researcher, it means the connection between students' understanding of noun phrase and their ability in writing descriptive text.

2. Understanding

Understanding is a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as person, situation, or message whereby one is able to think about it and use concepts to deal adequately with that object (Bereiter,



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2002, p.45). Furthermore, she stated that understanding implies abilities and dispositions with respect to an object of knowledge sufficient to support intelligent behavior.

3. Noun Phrase

Noun Phrase is the main construction which can appears as the subject, object, or complement of a clause. Noun phrase is a group of word with noun as a headword and the other words as modifier (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002).

4. Writing Ability

Hughey (1983, p.38) said writing ability in the sum of our abilities to link words and thoughts in order to express ourselves in the most complex of medium.

5. Descriptive Text

Description in writing is the process of creating visual images and sensory impression through words (Artono in Fikri, 2011, p.31). In this research, descriptive text means the students write a text that describes about particular person, place or thing.