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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

It is acknowledged that English has been recognized as an international language that is more dominantly used compared to other international languages. This language is widely used for many purposes such as in science and technology, politics, education, etc. In the field of education, English is taught from primary education to higher education where students are prepared to pass in the national exams for them to go to go university In higher education in particular, students learn English to prepare them to have four language skills by which they could compete in the job market after they graduate. Lauder (2008) in Mappiasse (2014:114) states that English is being used for technological and scientific purposes and also for better job opportunities. Furthermore Mappiasse (2014:114) argues that the English Language has been seen as a good medium of communication in Indonesia. Apart from the fact that it has been adopted as a teaching language in higher Institution, it is also being considered as enhancement for social status. English language has been seen as a de-facto standard medium of communication all over the world, especially in Indonesia. In other words, teaching and learning of English Language has been considered as an integral part of the Indonesian educational system for a long time now.

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In English, there are four skills that are taught in the curriculum; one of them is writing. Through writing, everybody is not only able to express feelings and ideas, but also to communicate with others and have remembering facts and ideas. For the students, writing is a kind of media to express their thoughts and feelings. Oshima and Hogue (1991:3) describe that writing is one of the four skills in English that must be studied by learners in both ESL and EFL contexts. Writing is not an easy job; it takes study and practice seriously to develop this skill for both native speakers and new learners of English. It is important to note that writing is a process, not a product. It means that pieces of writing have never been completed unless it is always reviewed and revised, and reviewed and revised again.

A piece of good writing cannot be produced if the writer does not have enough capability in both grammar and vocabulary. Widdowson (2001) in Tarek (2015:10) argues that writing is the use of visual media to manifest the graphical logical and grammatical system of the language. It is said that writing in one sense is the production of sentences as instances of usages. Consequently, students must have an acceptable level of mastering different aspects of language such as: the graphic system, the grammatical structure, and select appropriate vocabulary (mechanisms of writing) related to the subject matter.

Understanding the importance of writing, the School-Based Curriculum as the educational orientation for most of the schools in Indonesia expects that the students are able to write various types of genres. Based on

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curriculum for Junior High School, the students are expected to be able to write at least five genres: narrative, recount, descriptive, report, and procedure in the context of daily life.

Most of the students have learned English writing since primary school, but most of them still fail to write well. Based on the preliminary study towards the eighth grade students of junior high school 2 (SMP 2) Tembilahan on February 2016 about teaching and learning of writing skill, it was found that the students had difficulties even in a simple writing related to the topic which they have learned. This condition made them spend more time just to write one simple paragraph. They also had difficulties in finding and organizing ideas related to the topic given. Then, many sentences that they wrote in their papers were not related to the main idea. Besides, they made more mistakes or grammatical errors in their writing.

Carroll (1990:4) explains that most of the students' writing failure in mainstream (i.e., non-developmental) courses are due to lack of clarity, coherence, and/or focus. Then they frequently make ambiguity that occurs when a word and expression is used in such a way that can be understood in more than one way. They also sometimes use the grammatical structure of a sentence that causes ambiguity

In addition to writing ability, it was also found that the students had a problem about their anxiety in writing. The teacher said that when he asked them to write, most of looked worried about what was going to happen, they looked confused and nervous because they thought writing was hard to do. So,

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they felt afraid to begin writing, they did not feel relaxed and did not enjoy studying.

Daly & Wilson in Dede (2011:43) state that the experience of composing a piece of writing and having it evaluated by an instructor or peers is anxiety provoking for many students. Writing anxiety refers to a situation and subject specific individual difference associated with a person's tendency to approach or avoid situations perceived to potentially require writing accompanied by some amount of perceived evaluation. Furthermore Cheng, *et al* in Dede (2011:45) reveal that second and foreign language learners, who experience feelings of anxiousness associated with writing, often fear not being able to express themselves clearly in their writing and worry that readers of their writing will judge them negatively as a result. Writing anxiety manifests itself much as general language anxiety: through excessive worry, self-evaluation, fear of others' judgments, and avoidance or excessive time spent on the composition.

Based on the problems, it is important to apply the appropriate strategy in teaching writing. One of them is collaborative writing strategy. Topping (2001) in Jafari & Biria (2013:165) defines paired writing as a structured system for effective learning in writing. Since the paired or group approach is potentially a viable alternative which addresses some of the concerns surrounding the more traditional approaches, the purpose of this study is to investigate how learners working together perform in a writing task. Furthermore, collaborative writing strategy can be used to reduce anxiety like

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Clement, *et al* in Fong (2012:2) states that the advantages of collaborative writing are reducing anxiety.

Based on the above explanation, it was necessary to conduct a research entitled: “The Effects of Using Collaborative Writing Strategy on Students’ Writing Ability and their Anxiety at State Junior High School 2 Tembilahan”.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

English is one of the dominant language skills that should be mastered by the students. Based on the observations carried out at SMPN 2 Tembilahan, some problems were found in an English lesson; one of them was the students’ writing ability. They had difficulties in finding and organizing ideas, they made frequent mistakes in grammar, they had a problem with coherence and they also had a problem in word choice. Consequently, their writing ability was low and unsatisfactory. Besides writing ability, the students also had anxiety in writing. The teacher said that when he asked them to write, most of them looked worried about what was going to happen, they looked confused with their thoughts because of the difficulties of writing students taught that writing was hard to do. So, they felt afraid to begin writing, they did not feel relaxed and did not enjoy studying. To solve the students’ problem, collaborative writing strategy was believed to be able to solve the student’ problems in writing.

In conjunction with the above problems these questions need to be addressed: Why do the students have low writing ability? Why do students

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have high anxiety? What are the causes that make students get numerous difficulties in writing and have high anxiety? What efforts should be made to enhance students' writing ability and their anxiety? Does collaborative writing give positive effect in writing ability and their anxiety? How do the teachers apply collaborative writing strategy and meaningful activities to their students? And to what extent does collaborative writing strategy give effect to students' writing ability and their anxiety?

Graham & Perin (2007:23) states writing ability develops over time. It begins with a kind of free association of ideas that a reader may find it difficult to follow. From this comes growing knowledge of stylistic conventions and more sophisticated uses of processes for planning, evaluating, and revising. Development continues with compositions marked by awareness of an audience and writing as a more unified and productive craft. Finally, at the most advanced stage, writing becomes a personal tool for transforming one's own experiences and knowledge. As they become more proficient writers, students move gradually from "knowledge-telling" to "knowledge-transformation."

In addition, Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) in Graham & Perin (2007:23) explains knowledge-telling is most typical of less proficient writers and involves writing content that could in principle also be conveyed orally. Knowledge-transformation is more complex; the writing process is used as a way to extend ideas and reasoning and as a vehicle for the development of knowledge, philosophical ideas, and personal awareness. It can be inferred

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that writing is an active activity (Harmer, 2004:4) that occurs through four processes of writing: planning, drafting, editing and final process.

Based on the previous statement, it was explained that one way to solve the problem of the students' writing is using a strategy in writing instruction; that is, collaborative writing. It encourages the students' team work in pair and in a group, it makes them have confidence to produce a good piece of writing, because they can share each other if they face difficulties. Fong (2012:396) states the importance of collaborative writing is further boosted by its wide use in the workplace. And the advantages of collaborative writing are reducing anxiety, helping to form cohesive and mature groups, promoting critical, fostering excellence, staying on task, and promoting motivation. In addition, Elola & Oskoz (2010:52) argue that a number of research have been carried out by Storch (2005), Villamil & de Guerrero (1996, 1998). Their research show that in a collaborative situation writers is impelled to make decisions about the language needed to express their ideas, and thus to formulate the structure in which to express those ideas as they produce a text together.

Collaborative writing offers an authentic learning environment where students do not only develop their writing skills, but also critical thinking and decision making skills. Lin & Maarof (2012:600) said that a study was undertaken by Elola (2012) which indicated that collaborative writing has great potential as a pedagogical approach; it encourages reflective thinking and a pooling of knowledge about language. Speck (2002:19) states that writing appears to be inherently collaborative as a good reason to rethink how

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writing is used in the classroom. When professors consider the various ways texts are really produced, they also should consider how they can integrate text production processes in the writing they ask their students to do. It really makes little sense to take the fiction of author attribution and build pedagogy of writing in that fiction

Based on the previous study that was conducted by Lora M. Beseler & Lin-qi (2015), it was found out that collaborative writing had a positive effect on learners individually and as team members. Another previous study was conducted by Mulligan & Garofalo (2011) where collaborative writing assignments and peer editing done in pairs or small groups, could have numerous affective benefits for the learner. Such tasks can enhance student interaction in the EFL classroom, lower the anxiety associated with completing tasks alone and raise students' self-confidence. These previous studies really strengthen this research to apply collaborative writing strategy on students' writing ability and their anxiety.

### 1.3. Limitation of the Problem

This research investigated the effect of using collaborative writing strategy on students' writing ability and their anxiety. Writing ability in this study focussed on recount text. This research was conducted only towards the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Tembilahan involving two classes or two groups of students broken into an experimental group and a control group.

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## 1.4. Purpose and the Objective of the Research

The main purpose of the study was to find out the significant effects of using collaborative writing strategy on students' writing ability and their anxiety at State Junior High School 2 Tembilahan.

The objectives in this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the difference of students' writing ability pre-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group.
2. To investigate the difference of students' writing ability pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group.
3. To investigate the difference of students' writing ability pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group.
4. To investigate the difference of students' writing ability post-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group.
5. To investigate the difference of students' anxiety pre-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group.
6. To investigate the difference of students' anxiety pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group.
7. To investigate the difference of students' anxiety pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group.
8. To investigate the difference of students' anxiety post-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group.

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## 1.5. Research Questions

Based on the limitation of problem above, the formulation of the research questions are:

1. Is there any significant difference of students' writing ability pre-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group?
2. Is there any significant difference of students' writing ability pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group?
3. Is there any significant difference of students' writing ability pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group?
4. Is there any significant difference of students' writing ability post-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group?
5. Is there any significant difference of students' anxiety pre-test mean scores between the experimental group and the control group?
6. Is there any significant difference of students' anxiety pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group?
7. Is there any significant difference of students' anxiety pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group?
8. Is there any significant difference of students' anxiety post-test mean scores between of the experimental group and the control group?

## 1.6. Significance of the Study

This study apparently one of the attempts to investigate the effects of collaborative writing strategy on students' writing ability and their anxiety.

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The results of this study are expected to give a contribution to learning English, especially in improving the quality of student writing through collaborative writing strategy. Also, it can be as a reference for further researcher. Furthermore, this study may help to clarify the benefits of applying collaborative writing strategy in teaching writing so that more teachers can replicate the study and apply it in their daily teaching to improve students' writing ability and reducing their anxiety in writing. Then, for the students of the eighth grade of VIII SMPN 2 Tembilahan, collaborative writing strategy can increase their learning activity and their learning outcomes and to decrease their anxiety especially for their future learning difficulties.

In addition, in learning and teaching process, the results of the study through the application of collaborative writing strategy can be used as a medium by the teachers to enrich the teaching and learning activities. This strategy can be used as an alternative to decrease students' difficulties in learning writing. Besides, this study can help teachers to find out the factors that influence the students' anxiety.

Finally, for management of school, the findings of the study could become an effort to improve the quality of schools through the students' better learning achievement using collaborative writing.

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### 1.7. Rationale of the Study

Widdowson (2001) in Tarek (2015:10) states that writing is the use of visual media to manifest the graphical logical and grammatical system of the language. It is said that writing in one sense is the production of sentences as instances of usages. Consequently, students must have an acceptable level of mastering different aspects of language such as: the graphic system, the grammatical structure, and select appropriate vocabulary (mechanisms of writing) related to the subject matter. It was explained that writing is not an easy job, but it was hard to do.

Moreover, Anxiety is one of the factors that affect the process of learning writing. Zhang (2001) and Hilleson (1996) in Kara (2013:104) state that when students perform activities that require productive skills, they experience a considerable amount of anxiety. As a productive skill, writing has been viewed as a demanding process. In addition, Bruning, et. al. (2000) in Kara (2013: 104) states writing anxiety occurs because of language complexity in general and complexity of writing as a skill in particular. The issue to be addressed in writing anxiety is whether anxiety is a cause or a result of poor performance. Daly & Miller in Dedeyn (2011:44) state anxious writers often avoid writing because they expect to fail.

To have a good writing ability, the teacher must have an appropriate strategy of teaching to help the students learn it. Collaborative writing strategy is one of the effective strategies in teaching writing. It can improve students' writing ability and decrease their anxiety in writing because of

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having a team work to produce a text. Chin (1996: 5) in Supiani (2011:19) asserts that collaborative writing is an area where group may provide significant benefit. It allows students to simultaneously work on different portions of the same document and or to review and critique the written works of others.

In addition Speck (2002:72) states the uncertainty of how the group is going to function students may also have anxiety about how the work is going to get done. Collaborative planning--constructing effective plans to achieve their goal is one way to help reduce students' anxiety that might lead to conflict. Collaborative planning requires part of the group to be writers or planners and part of the group to be supporters.

### 1.8. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation among the readers, it is necessary to clarify some of the key terms used in this study.

1. Effect

Hornby (2005:138) states effect is a change that something or somebody causes in something or somebody else or result.

2. Collaborative writing

Speck (2002: 5) states that collaborative writing is commonly considered as two or more persons writing together.

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3. Writing ability

Brunswick (2007: 7) states that writing is a complex process that involves thinking and composing, the consideration of audience and purpose, the use of standard written forms, and the use of conventions of written language.

4. Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of uneasy suspense, the tense anticipation of a threatening butobscure event (Rachman, 2004:26)

