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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### **I.1. The Background of the Research**

In globalization era, the development of science and technology demands us to master English as a means of communications. It is an international language that most of the people around the world use it. Lynne (2004:17) states that many regard the spread of English around the world as the beneficial result of a natural process, in which English is benignly chosen as a trade lingo of choice because as a language it is somehow neutral in its social, political and economic entailment. The use of English for the universality is very well known and understandable. It is the most widely spoken language in the world so that English today is fast becoming a lingua franca of international trade and commerce.

In Indonesia, English is considered as foreign language and taught formally from elementary school up to the university level. Powers (2010) defined that the main purpose of the EFL teaching to develop four skills: are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All skills are integrated and interconnected. To the level of elementary school up to senior high school, English is taught as integrated subject. Students learn the four skills in one subject, that is English. Moreover, for university level, the students who take the English Department as their focus learn each skill separately.

In order to master those four skills, students firstly need to know a lot of vocabulary in English. It will make them be confidence to listen

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instructions, to talk to people, to comprehend texts, and to write passages. Johnson (2008:93) states that vocabulary is an important part of enhancing students' ability to read, to, write, to speak, to listen and to think. Therefore, it is impossible to master four language skills in English without mastering vocabulary since it is the first requirement needed to receive and produce a language.

Thus, among the four skills in English, writing is considered as a productive skill that needs a complex process to be mastered. Hughey (1983: 90) pointed out that in writing, sentence structures and patterns must be carefully formulated, word choices more precise, and ideas organized in a manner readily coherent for the readers. In other words, some sub language skills are challenges involved to be proficient writers. Besides, Hussain, et.al (2013: 831) also claimed that writing is the most complicated skill because it requires much concentration, conscious efforts and practice in all its steps, i.e. composing, developing and finalizing.

Related to the complex process of writing, therefore, it is not surprising that many students still get difficulties in writing passages. A study by Megaiab (2014:190) in Senior High School 1 and Senior High School 3 Bali revealed that from 140 compositions by students, 1654 grammatical errors were found in spelling, plurals, verb tenses, prepositions, articles, capitalization and punctuation. Besides, a research by Mustafa et.al (2017: 40) in Junior High School 7 in Banda Aceh found that the most dominant types of students' error in writing were word forms (48.4%), followed by articles

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(35%), nonfinite verbs (34.9%), verb tenses (34.3%), plurals (33.3%), and prepositions (30%). These studies show us that most of Indonesian students both Senior and Junior High School still have difficulties in writing.

Writing is taught at schools based on the writing objective in the National Curriculum. In this case, Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau applies School Based Curriculum as the guidelines. It is stated in the learning syllabus of School Based Curriculum (2006: 130) that writing competence for the second semester of Junior High School level is that students are expected to be able to write very short functional paragraphs in the form of descriptive and procedure by the use of accurate language in order to interact with the social environment. Besides, in teaching and learning activity, teacher and students have to discuss and develop related vocabulary including nouns, noun phrases, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

Based on the writer's preliminary research conducted in November 2016, English was taught two times a week in the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau. It took eighty minutes of time allocation for each meeting. There were two English teachers that officially taught English for all grades. The teachers used projectors, textbooks, worksheets and other teaching equipments for teaching and learning process in the classroom. The students also learned English in English club. It was done once a week in order to enrich their experiences about English. Another agenda was called as "English week" in which students were required to use full English both inside and outside of the classroom in a week.



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Besides, the teachers have used various strategies to develop students' skill in English both inside and outside of the classroom. Chamot (1999: 2) stated that learning strategies are procedures or techniques that can help students learn both language and content. But, in fact, some of the students still got problems in writing, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs. They were not able to develop ideas, to make coherent sentences, and to use correct grammatical order in the process of writing. They also had a lack of vocabulary to describe people, things and places. They definitely knew the words in Bahasa but have no idea to say in English. Therefore, some students still could not reach the minimum standard score that was 78.

One of the factors that can improve the students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability is the use of strategy in teaching and learning learning English. Learning strategies have essential part in learning process for the students who want to reach their objectives in learning. It makes the students easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective in the learning process, and then, learning strategies, also make the students more self-directed, more transferable to new situations (Oxford: 1990). Then, according to Green & Oxford, 1995; Khaldieh, 2000; Wharton, 2000, language learning achievement or proficiency had also been consistently linked to strategy use.

Another factor is the use of media. Media are meant as everything that facilitates communication and learning (Sharon.et.al: 2008). The six basic categories of media which are defined as text, audio, visuals, video, Manipulatives (objects), and people will practically assist teachers in classroom



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activities. Media are able to engage students to be more active and motivated in teaching and learning process. Harmer (2003: 134) explained that as language teachers, we use a variety of teaching aids to explain language, meaning and construction, engage students in a topic, or as the basis of a whole activity.

Based on the explanation above, it is assumed that language learning strategy and the use of media can give significant influence on the students' achievement in English. In this research, pictures that are used through Background Knowledge hopefully will improve students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability. Wright in Hesty (2009: 44) stated that picture can help students understand many aspects of foreign languages; it also motivates the students to learn, it makes the subject which is taught clearer. The students will be easily understood the material given by the teacher through some pictures shown. Thus, it is necessary to conduct a research entitled *"The Effect of Using Pictures Through Background Knowledge Strategy on Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Writing Ability at Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru"*.

## 1.2. The Statement of the Research

It has been recognized that some of the first year students at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru still faced the problems in writing ability and vocabulary mastery. Some of the students have lack of vocabulary, they definitely knew the words in Bahasa but they did not have any ideas to say in English. Some of the students were not able to develop ideas in writing, to use appropriate

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vocabulary, to write coherent sentences, and to use the correct grammatical order in writing descriptive paragraphs.

Thus, some questions need to be addressed; is the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy able to encourage students' vocabulary mastery?, is the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy able to develop students' ideas in writing descriptive paragraphs?, is the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy able to help students to use appropriate vocabulary in writing descriptive paragraphs?, is the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy able to guide the students making coherence sentences?, is the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy able to assist the students using correct grammar in writing descriptive paragraphs?.

These are some questions addressed related to the students' problems in vocabulary mastery and writing ability at Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau that are considered as statements of the problems in this research. What make the students obtain low achievement in writing English? Why do the students fail to use correct cohesion, conjunction, choice of words and vocabulary in writing descriptive paragraph?

### 1.3. The Limitation of the Research

Based on the background and statement of problems above, the research focused on the students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability difficulties at Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau.

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The scope of the research was limited as follows:

The research focused on students' improvement on vocabulary mastery. In the other words, the writer observed how students received new vocabulary, how students understand the function of those vocabulary, how students remember those vocabulary, and then how they use those vocabulary as long as the teaching and learning process. Then, the writer will also focus on the students' improvement in writing ability during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The writer observed how students find ideas to write, how students make coherent sentences, how students find appropriate vocabulary, and how students use the correct grammar in writing descriptive paragraphs.

#### **I.4. The Purpose and The Objectives of the Research**

Generally, the purpose of this research is finding out the significant effect of using pictures through Background Knowledge strategy on students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru. Specifically, the research was done to fulfill the objectives that can be stated as follows:

1. To find out the significant difference of pre-test vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
2. To find out the significant difference of post-test vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and control group at Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.

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3. To find out the significant difference between pre-test and post-test vocabulary mastery in the experimental group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
4. To find out the significant difference between pre-test and post-test vocabulary mastery in the control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
5. To find out the significant difference of pre-test writing ability between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
6. To find out the significant difference of post-test writing ability between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
7. To find out the significant difference between pre-test and post-test writing ability in the experimental group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru.
8. To find out the significant difference between pre-test and post-test writing ability in the control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Islamic Boarding School Technology of Riau Pekanbaru.

## 1.5. The Research Questions

The general question of this research is that “is there any significant effect of using pictures through Background Knowledge strategy on students’ vocabulary mastery and writing ability of the Islamic Junior High School of Islamic Boarding School Technology of Riau Pekanbaru?”. While, based on



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the limitation of the problem above, the research questions of this study are specifically formulated as the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference of pre-test vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
2. Is there any significant difference of post-test vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
3. Is there any significant difference between pre-test and post-test vocabulary mastery in the experimental group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
4. Is there any significant difference between pre-test and post-test vocabulary mastery in the control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
5. Is there any significant difference of pre-test writing ability between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
6. Is there any significant difference of post-test writing ability between the experimental group and control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?
7. Is there any significant difference between pre-test and post-test writing ability in the experimental group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?

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8. Is there any significant difference between pre-test and post-test writing ability in the control group at the Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru?

## **1.6. Significance of the Research**

This research is intended to investigate the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability. Therefore, this research may provide useful information for further research in this area of interest. It will guide teachers to develop the more effective implementation of pictures and Background Knowledge strategy, not only in teaching writing and vocabulary, but also in other language skills such as listening, reading and speaking. Teachers will be able to provide appropriate pictures and strategies based on students' need during the learning process. Hopefully, teachers are also able to develop classroom's activities by the use of pictures through certain strategy to make teaching and learning process more fun and effective.

Then, the findings of the research hopefully can give benefits in the English teaching and learning process, both practically and theoretically. The findings are also expected to bring some contribution for teachers and students as the subjects and objects of education. Then, it can be used as a guideline for EFL teachers to enhance students' vocabulary mastery and writing ability. Moreover, the result of this research hopefully will motivate the students to learn more how to write clearly and how to master vocabulary in order to accomplish the four major skills in English.

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## 1.7. The Rationale of the Research

This research will be conducted based on the consideration that Vocabulary is a subskill that supports strongly the four language skills in English. By recognizing a lot of vocabulary, the students are able to write many kinds of paragraphs easily. Vocabulary is also a required aspect to be good listeners, readers, and speakers in English. Besides, writing is one of the basic skills that should be mastered by students. The students can inform news, express feeling, give opinions, or share ideas through writing. Moreover, being able to write in English will also help the students to develop listening, reading, and speaking skill. Therefore, the teacher should find out the solutions related to students' problems in mastering vocabulary and writing ability.

Thus, the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy will provide some advantages. Harmer (2003: 135) stated that pictures of all kinds can be used in a multiplicity of ways; (1) Drills, especially flashcards for 'drilling' grammar items, for cueing different sentences, or practising vocabulary; (2) Communication games: pictures are extremely useful for describing and drawing activities; (3) Understanding, for the purposes of presenting and checking of meaning; and (4) Ornamentation, for making work more appealing; (5) Prediction, for getting students to predict what is coming next in a lesson; (6) Discussion, pictures can stimulate questions such as: What is it showing? How does it make you feel?.

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Thus, the use of pictures through Background Knowledge strategy will be a good combining way to enhance students' background knowledge at the pre-writing stage and then lead them to write some ideas related to the topic discussed. The pictures make the material more clear and Background Knowledge strategy provides a range of questions and steps that stimulate the students to recall any information they have known related to the materials. Therefore, the students that have a good experience and knowledge about the topic will be good at their writing. It is supported by Urquhart and McIver (2005: 76) that authors—professional and novice—do their best writing when their knowledge base is strong.

## 1.8. The Definitions of Key Terms

Based on the key terms of this research, four definitions are explained to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The title of this research is *"The Effect of Using Pictures through Background Knowledge Strategy on Students' Vocabulary Mastery and Writing Ability at Islamic Junior High School of Technology Boarding School of Riau Pekanbaru"*. The definitions of key terms are as follows:

### 1. Background Knowledge strategy

According to McGee and Richglesin Moreillon (2007: 20) Background Knowledge is a mental structure in which we store all the information we know about people, places, objects or activities. It means that Background Knowledge strategy is a strategy that provides a range of steps to stimulate students' knowledge in the mind related to certain topics



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or materials. It will help them to be ready coming up with the further discussion about the topics or materials.

2. Pictures

Wright (2000: 2) stated that pictures are the teaching aids which are not just an aspect of the method, but through their representation of places, objects, and people they are essential part of the overall experience the teachers must help the students to cope with. Moreover, the picture is one of the media that visualize certain objects to help both teachers and students in teaching and learning process.

3. Vocabulary Mastery

According to Nunan (2005:121) vocabulary is the collection of word that an individual knows. It means vocabulary is a set of words known to a person or other entity, or that part of specific language that is used to communicate with other people. Moreover, mastery is regarded as the ability of a student to implant the essence of the lesson given in a while. In other words, vocabulary mastery means an ability to use a number of words as means for making communication with others.

4. Writing Ability

Writing ability is the ability of people to deliver ideas, thoughts and feeling to readers in a meaningful written language form. SIL International (1999: 8) stated that writing ability is a specific ability which helps writers to put their ideas into words in meaningful form and interact with the message. Therefore, in writing, we are trying to deliver our message, to

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share ideas and to express thoughts and feeling of the readers in a meaningful written language.

### 5. Descriptive Paragraph

According to Kane (2000: 352) descriptive is defined as a paragraph which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing. Furthermore, in writing descriptive paragraphs students need to show up the physical characteristics and other related information as the description of the objects being discussed.