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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background

English is one of the languages in the world used by many people in a lot of countries. In this globalization era, English has become the most dominant language used for international communication. It is supported by Crystal (1997) stating that English is the language that has spread throughout the world most extensively and is dominating in a number of important fields including international commerce, education, and communication. English is an international language, used in many countries, both as a native and as a second or foreign language. English is used as a subject or even a language to communicate in terms of education in every country, including EFL countries like Indonesia.

Language is divided into four language skills related to each other. The four language skills related to each other. When the students learn the English language, they usually learn basic skills of English; listening, speaking, reading and writing (Hayashi, 2000). In this case, productive skills which consist of speaking and writing are considered to be very important. But, if we analyze specifically, the writing ability is very important one to prove the successful in learning the foreign language academically. We may be able to listen to the music, read some books, or speak in

English, but if we cannot produce a written form in English, we are not qualified enough for academic purpose.

Writing skill has an essential role in learning English. The learners of English as Foreign Language may be able to listen to the music, read some books, or speak in English, but if they cannot produce a written form in English, they are not qualified enough in English for academic purpose. Writing also can't be separated into other subjects in learning the language since students are often required to complete many assignments in writing forms. For example, in reading, speaking or listening classes, students still do writing activity in doing some assignments. Furthermore, an English essay has been one of the very well-known requirements for the application of students' scholarship, study abroad or international research project, etc. It is very clear that the learners of EFL are demanding to have good skill in writing.

Harmer (2007) states that there are many reasons for getting students to write, both in and outside class. Firstly, writing gives them more 'thinking time' than they attempt spontaneous conversation. This allows them more opportunity for language processing – that is thinking about the language – whether they are involved in the study or activation. Secondly, writing activities are designed to give reinforcement to students. Writing-for-learning is used as a practice tool to help students practice and work with language they have been studying. Another kind of writing-for-learning occurs when we have students write sentences in preparation for some other activity. Thirdly, writing is an enabling activity. Writing-for-writing is directed at developing

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the students' skill as writers. In other words, the main purpose for activities of this type is that the students should become better at writing, whatever kind of writing that might be. And whereas in writing-for-learning activities, it is usually the language itself that is the main focus of attention, in writing-for-writing we look at the whole text. This will include not just appropriate language use, but also text construction, layout, style and effectiveness.

In order to support the mastery of writing ability, it is essential to learn vocabulary. It becomes a central part in English learning. Vocabulary refers to a list or set of words in a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speaker of a language might use (Hatch and Brown, 1995). According to Haycraft in Hatch and Brown (1995) vocabulary is divided into two kinds: receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is word that the students recognize and understand when they occur in a context, but which he cannot produce correctly. Productive vocabulary is word which the students understand, can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. Another expert, Paul Procter (1978), states that vocabulary is (a) all the words known to particular person, (b) the special set of words used in a particular kind of work, business, etc., (c) a list of words, usually in alphabetical order and with explanations of their meanings, less complete than a dictionary. Vocabulary deals with words and meaning. Mastery itself means the comprehensive knowledge. Vocabulary mastery is a comprehensive knowledge to recognize, understand, and produce stock of words and their meaning.

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In line with this, Lado (1964) argues that to clarify the idea of vocabulary, three levels of vocabulary are distinguished, namely: (1) vocabulary to operate the patterns and illustrate pronunciation of the language, (2) vocabulary for communication in areas of wide currency, (3) esthetic and technical vocabularies.

As stated by Wilkins quoted by Thornbury (2002), “Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” It tells us that if someone wants to be able to convey meaning they need a vocabulary. Although someone has known sentence structure, if he/she does not mastery vocabulary, he/she will remain unable to say or write anything and the grammar knowledge will be useless. Thus, by improving the vocabulary, it will be a basic for someone to communicate what is in their mind using the target language.

However, according to Kellogg (2008) in his research about *Training Writing Skills; A cognitive Developmental Perspective*, learning how to write a coherent, effective text is a difficult and protracted achievement of cognitive development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speech. As Reid (1994) says that writing is a complex skill because there are some components that should be focused by writer in writing, such as the purpose of writing and writer’s knowledge of writing like paragraph components and pattern organization.

In addition, Vocabulary mastery is very important for studying English. A learner who just learns grammar without vocabulary will be difficult to convey what he or she wants to say. However, learner who just learn vocabulary or just read text or



open dictionary will be able to say something (Harmer, 2001). According to Hatch and Brown (1995) there are several difficulties of mastering vocabulary. The first is such a test may be used with classes of learners who speak different first languages and thus translation is not a practical approach. Second, there is the likelihood that some learners will have poor reading skills and thus the test needs to be able to be given orally if necessary. And the third is that the contexts of the tested words must not cause too many problems for the learners.

Based on preliminary study conducted on November 15th, 2016, it was informed by the English teacher that the students had so many errors in writing descriptive text so that they could not reach score 75 as the standard minimum criteria (KKM). In a test of writing descriptive text that the topic given was about “My Friend”, it was found that among 29 students, there were only 10 students who reached KKM. It means that the students have problem in writing descriptive text. The next problem faced by the students was a lack of vocabulary mastery. The students could not differ when to use the noun, adjective or verb. They also have limited vocabularies. Another problem the teachers usually finds that the students are not creative in writing activities. The teachers themselves realize that they also cannot find any suitable method to be applied to engage the students during writing activities, so they often choose to teach based on the textbook all the time.

From the problems above, the writer realizes that teacher’s roles are very important to gain the students’ competence. Therefore, the teachers must motivate the

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this method. Another reason is that this method can solve those problems that appear at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru, so that the students can reach 75 as the standard minimum criteria after using this method. Therefore, the writer is interested in conducting the research with the title: “The Effect of Using Four-Square Writing Method on Students’ Writing Ability and Vocabulary Mastery at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The aim of the study was to find out the effect of using Four Square Writing methods on students’ writing ability and vocabulary mastery at Nurul Falah. The problems at the background of the research have been stated that the students face difficulties in writing. The students had low grammar ability; and they had a lack of vocabularies;; the students made more errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization; furthermore, they could not write with good paragraph organization and use incorrect usage. The content of writing was also incoherent and had a lot of jumping ideas.

Furthermore, another problem was about vocabulary mastery. The students got difficulties in mastering high frequency of words. The way the students improve vocabulary was by memorizing the words separately not in context. They still could not differentiate parts of speech, such as to determine noun, verb, and adjective; more



over the students had limited number of vocabulary and it was hard for them to find synonym and antonym.

Regarding to the problems in this study, several questions were important to be addressed related to their writing ability. What made the students have low grammar ability? Why did the students get difficulties in determining the word choice? Why did the students get difficulties in identifying the correct punctuation, spelling, and capitalization? Why cannot the students organize paragraph well? How did the students write the content coherently? Why did the students have a low comprehension in comprehending the text? Why did the students have problems in mastering the vocabularies? Why did the students limit number of vocabularies? Why was it hard for the students to memorize the meaning of words in context?

In order to solve the method problems in the class, especially in writing, Gould (1999) exemplifies this with the use Four-Square Writing Method of teaching written essays. The Four-Square Writing Method is a simplified graphic organizer for teaching writing to students in school. Four-square Writing Method is a method of teaching basic writing skills that is applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. It could be applied to the narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive forms of writing. Four-square Writing Method is a process of arranging in the graphic or spatial organizer. The topic should be focused on the objectives for students learning in the writing process. The arrangement allows the teacher has a clear understanding of what students want to address in the activity and provides the

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students toward Four-Square Writing Method. Then, the additional importances in the implementation of Four-Square Writing Method are it should be clear for the instruction is in direct and indirect instruction, include process and content for using four square organizer to select the words for the four square daily work in writing, select the words for uses the four square organizer. Four-square Writing Method makes the students' center in their classroom works to use the four square organizer. We know that doing so is grounded in proven best practices instruction from form four squares.

Writing is one of the important language skills in English, and the improvement of writing ability needs a special attention from the teachers. The teachers have to be helpful in order to make the students practice to write continuously, because the writing ability needs practice as often as possible. Furthermore, vocabulary mastery is always being an essential part of English. Lewis and Hill (1990: 12) say that vocabulary mastery is important for the students. It is more than grammar for communication purpose, particularly in the early stage when students are motivated to learn the basic words. Without having proportional English vocabulary, students would get some difficulties in using English.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

By considering time, facilities, and funding needed, it is necessary to limit the problem. It is taken in order to focus on one problem and to limit the outcomes and

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time consuming. Here, it is needed to conduct a study on the first year students of SMK Nurul Falah. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of using Four-Square Writing method on the students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery. It is focused on descriptive text which is taught in the second semester at SMK Nurul Falah. The data on the students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery are gathered using written tests. The students are asked to write descriptive texts.

I.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of using Four-Square Writing method on the students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru.

The objectives of this study can be stated as follows:

1. To find out any significant effects of Using Four-Square Writing Method on Students' Writing Ability at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru.
2. To find out any significant effects of Using Four-Square Writing Method on Students' Vocabulary Mastery at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru.

I.5. Research Questions

The problem of this study is formulated in the following questions:

1. Is there any significant effect of Using Four-Square Writing Method on Students' Writing Ability at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru?
2. Is there any significant effect of Using Four-Square Writing Method on Students' Vocabulary Mastery at SMK Nurul Falah Pekanbaru?

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1.6. Significance of the Study

This research is important to be conducted in order to investigate the effect that appears through implementing Four-Square Writing method in the classroom. Theoretically, the findings are to reveal the information that students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery have a significant effect after being given a treatment by using Four-Square Writing method and to give the meaningful learning experiences to the students.

Practically, this study also gives the contribution for the school to add the references of a method in Four-Square Writing that related to affect students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery. It gives some guidance for teaching through using Four-Square Writing method. Thus, it is useful for them to improve their way in teaching writing and vocabulary. Furthermore, hopefully by using this method the students can be more motivated and interested in teaching and learning process. Besides, it will assist the faculty to give a reference for other students who are going to extend this study with different skills.

Finally, by conducting the research, it might reveal the effect of using Four-Square Writing method on the students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery. Then, the method is hoping to become one of solutions to the problem being faced by the students in teaching and learning process.

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I.7. Rationale of the Study

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning English, which is closed relationship with learning process. It is important for every student at each level. By writing, students can develop and express their ideas, feelings and thoughts. Almost every aspect of the students' life is carried out into writing forms such as doing assignments, reports, and even final exams. To write well, students should know the fundamentals of writing and its components. Providing students with the opportunity to engage a variety of writing experiences can enhance their ability to learn the subject matter of a course and to communicate their knowledge to others.

The ability to produce a good written text has been being a must for many reasons, especially in academic purposes. Through writing, people can interpret the idea and share it with each others. It allows them more 'thinking time' than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation. It also gives them more opportunity for language processing –that is thinking about language- whether they are involved in the study or activation (Harmer, 2007).

Meanwhile, vocabulary is needed to improve the four English skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This means that the vocabulary plays an important role in the study in their field of study. The students, who are less in vocabulary, will be difficult in understanding the text, unable to speak English, and difficult to write their own idea. In addition, students with a small vocabulary also read slowly because



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they do not understand many of words or have to stop and look them up in a dictionary (Edwards, 2006; 177).

Based on the former study written by Juitania, et al with title *The Effect of Using Four Square Writing Method on Students' Writing Skill*, it is found that the t-test value is 5.60, the value of the degree of freedom (df) is 68, and the list of value in t 0.05 level of significant is 2.39 and in t 0.01 of significant is 1.67. Since t-calculated is higher than t-table ($5.60 > 2.39 > 1.67$), it means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. So, it can be concluded that the use of the four square writing method affects students' writing skill of analytical exposition text in term of content, vocabulary, and language use.

Another study has been conducted by Kurniawati, Nia Fatma entitled *The Effectiveness of Four Square Writing Method to Improve Writing Skill in Descriptive Text of the Seventh Grade Students at SMP Muhamadiyah*. It was found that the result of pre-test before the researcher gave the treatment was 54.83, and the result of post-test after the researcher gave the treatment was 77.83. The result of t-test value is 10.28. The t-test value was higher than t-table. It means that using Four Square Writing Method was effective to improve writing skill on descriptive text.

From the explanation above, rationally, Four-Square Writing method can help students to learn by themselves without being bribed by the teacher. According to Gould (1999) Four-Square Writing method is a learning activity to develop and to increase the students' vocabulary knowledge by making a personal connection with

words likes in the sentences or paragraph. This method will guarantee that students can write with confidence and fun. Four-square Writing Method briefly performs the students about the purpose of the genre of text, the generic structure, and also the language features of the text. It also helps the students in making a paragraph unity and trains them to develop their ideas.

Based on studies above, it is clear that Four-Square Writing method affects students' writing ability and vocabulary mastery. It can be more challenging for students to be active and they will not easily feel bored because they will learn materials by using an interesting method.

1.8. Definition of Terms

In order to clarify the meaning of several terms of this research, thus the terms are defined in several key words: effectively; Four-Square Writing method; students' writing ability; and vocabulary mastery.

a. The effect is change that somebody or something causes in somebody or something else, (Oxford Dictionary: 2005). In this research, the effect can be seen from the students' reading achievement and students' motivation that will be given through the tests and questionnaires.

b. Four-square Writing Method is a writing method which uses a simple graphic organizer – the four-square – so that the students can eventually learn to write a

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variety of forms of composition; including expository, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive paragraphs and essays (Gould, 1999).

c. Troyka (1987) states that writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. While Honrby (1995) states that ability is a special nature of students to do something well. So, writing ability is a special nature of students to communicate a message to a reader for a purpose.

d. Vocabulary mastery is defined by the ability to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of vocabulary words to be define and use them in sentences (Langford 1995).