

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language is an important tool for human to communicate. Language is communication instrument, It is used by them for interaction in their daily life to each others. By language, they also can communicate and make relationship with another. Moreover, by using language they can express their will, opinion, and perception. Also by language, people can transfer messages or information to others not only in a certain region but also in all over the world.

According to Brown (2000, p. 5) he gave a statement in his book on the title *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*,

Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gestural symbols that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another. Depending on how fussy you were in your response, you might also have included some mention of (a) the creativity of language, (b) the presumed primacy of speech over writing, and (c) the universality of language among human beings.

Language also holds an important role, especially in communication field. Actually, besides the linguist, other experts who work on science and technology broaden their knowledge on the theory or practice of the language. In addition, everybody realizes that interaction in many kinds of activities is going to be lower without language.

Nowadays, everyone is aware that he or she is living in globalization era rmodern era. In this era, English becomes the most important language in the world. As international language, mostly English is used by all people in the world when they do communication in abroad. Even, English is used as lingua franca. English is used for science and technology development. Allah the Almighty in the Holy Koran, 22nd verse of surah Ar-Ruum, Allah said about the important of language, that is, to know each other in this world by using language:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ ۚ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتَلَفُ السِّنَتِكُمْ وَاللُّوَانِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لَايَتٍ لِّلْعَلَمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

In this verse, Allah the Almighty explained that people can communicate each other and express their feeling and thinking by using language.

Communication is not only about oral speaking but also written. Good communication will happen if between two or more people who do communication can understand each other well, even in spoken or written form.

English has four skills that have to be learned and mastered by the Indonesian learners so that they can use English as their foreign language well. The four skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing as the last skill becomes main focus of this research.

Students are demanded to use their English in two ways of communication, those are oral and written communication. Both of them are

important to be mastered. The oral communication is used for communication directly, and the written communication is used for the passive or indirect communication. Besides the learners can listen, speak and read the English, they also have to be able write it well.

Writing needs to be taught because it is the most essential form of communication. It is taught at school at any levels of study, either at junior high school or senior high school even in university.

Because of the importance of writing, in the Holy Koran, the 1st verse of surah Al-Qalam, Allah the Almighty explained the command of writing and the importance of writing :

بِ الْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾

These verse explain to people that Allah expresses the high honor to words, pen and scientific writing. It means that Allah also orders to increase their faith, knowledge and so on, especially in writing.

In order to reach the objective of communication through writing, students are required to have a good ability in writing. If their writings are good, the readers could understand them well. So, they have to write clearly, correctly and interestingly as possible. Murcia in Armiyah (2013, p. 3) argues that “A writer is obligated to try to write a clear, relevant, truthful, informative, interesting and memorable text”.

A good ability in writing means having a good ability in vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation besides the content and the organization of

writing. Supported by Celcia-Murcia's point of view that the most important is present a product which does not suffer from intelligible handwriting, numerous of spelling errors, faulty punctuation, or inaccurate structure, any of which may render the message unintelligible. Thus, if students have a good ability in all of the aspects, their writing will be intelligible.

According to Ur (2009, p. 163) in his book entitled *A Course in Language Teaching-Practice and Theory*, he stated that in principle the purpose of writing is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the readers; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style and the most importantly, writing as a skill in its own. (Harmer, 2001, p.79)

Writing has certain characteristics, which seems difficult to make it for most students. Even, writing is regarded as a complicated task, but it is still a useful, essential, integral, and enjoyable part of the foreign language lesson. It lets ones to think, to express idea, to form an opinion, to make response, and to change the oral into written communication. Most of students also assume that writing becomes the most difficult skill in English, because the writer have to pay some attention to formal aspects such as neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary.

In some previous research in writing skill mostly students have problem in this skill. The research that has been done by Armiyah (2013) shows that the students' writing ability in sentence building of social department students at

eleventh grade of MAN 2 Model Banjarmasin academic year 2012/2013 are in low category and so is the students' mastery in structure.

In addition, according to Hafizah (2013) in her research which investigates students' mastery in writing skill through picture-cued sentence identification, she concluded that students have difficulties to produce English writing. They often make mistakes in structure of sentence, sometimes they have limited vocabulary in their writing. The common errors that made by students when writing are in grammar (wrong position of noun, verb, adjective, and adverb), additional plural –s and –es, and vocabulary.

Like many other aspects of English language teaching, the type of writing the teachers teach to the students to do will depend on their age, interests and level. Teachers get beginners to write simple poems, but they probably won't give them an extended report on town planning to do. When the teachers set tasks for elementary students, they will make sure that the students have or can get enough language to complete the task. Such students can write a simple story but cannot create a complex narrative. Those are all of the question, the students have at their command and should achieved in their language learning.

Generally, however, teachers will try to get students writing in a number of common everyday styles. These will include writing congratulation card, postcards, letters of various kinds, filling in forms such as job applications, writing narrative compositions, reports, newspaper and magazines articles etc. Another factors which can determine teachers choice of writing task is the interest. Because of this, writing congratulation card is quite relevant to discuss.

Congratulation messages allow one to celebrates another person's accomplishment. Recognition makes accomplishments even sweeter. Sending a few words of congratulation is like a little bit of sunshine in an envelope – it adds warmth to both business and personal relationship. Springtime brings natural opportunities to send good wishes for graduations and weddings, but there are many other milestones to celebrate as well.

The reason for choosing congratulation card because this is very interesting for the students to make this kind of writing. It can be one of ways for students to try to practice their writing skill in the first before they practice to write the longer writing such as paragraph or a short essay. Congratulation card usually made in short and simple and it is taught for students at the eighth grade of junior high school. Although this kind of writing is simple and short, students have to put their attention carefully when writing it because writing skill is not easy for students have to pay some attention to formal aspects in writing. It is known that junior high school students are taught writing from the basic and they are asked by their teacher to write a simple and interesting writing, so are the students in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Gambut. MTsN 2 Gambut is well-known as one of the most favorite junior high schools around Banjar regency. The main focus of teaching and learning English in junior high school is to develop the students' ability in communicating, to give knowledge about the language both spoken and written, and to increase students' awareness about how important the English to be learnt.

According to the syllabus, the students have writing task for some topics and one of them is to write congratulation card. This topic is taught for students who are at the grade eight. Based on the explanation above, the researcher want to know the students ability in writing congratulation card and interested in getting a research entitle: **Students' Ability in Writing Congratulation Card at the Eighth Grade of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Gambut Academic Year 2014/2015.**

B. Problem Statement

The problem in this research is about the students' ability in writing congratulation card at the eighth grade of MTsN 2 Gambut. To understand the problem well, the researcher presents the research questions as follows:

1. How is the students' ability in writing congratulation card at the eighth grade of MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2014/2015?
2. What are the students' difficulties in writing congratulation card at the eighth grade of MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2014/2015?

C. Objectives of Study

Considering the problem above, the research is oriented towards the following purposes:

1. To describe the students' ability in writing congratulation card at the eighth grade of MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2014/2015.

2. To know the students' difficulties in writing congratulation card at the eighth grade of MTsN 2 Gambut in academic year 2014/2015.

D. Significance of the Research

This research will contribute for the following persons:

1. Teacher

The research findings can inform her to take appropriate strategies for improving the success of teaching and learning process, especially in teaching writing congratulation card.

2. Students

After having information about how far their ability in writing skill, especially in writing congratulation card, they have to motivate to learn better.

3. Writer

It could enrich the writer's knowledge and experience in scientific research field, that is about the students' ability in writing in general and congratulation card in particular.

4. Lecturers and Students in English Department

As an additional information for lecturers and students, especially in English Department of Tarbiyah and Teachers Training Faculty to discuss writing congratulation card in writing subject.

E. Operational Definition

1. Ability : is natural or acquired skill or talent for doing something, like writing. Ability in this research means students' capability in doing or using knowledge to improve ability that students have especially for writing congratulation card.
2. Writing : the root of this word is "write" which is a verb. Write added by -ing becomes "writing" that means to write something; something that has been written or printed. Then, the writing here means produce language in written form by using words and aspects of writing well. In this research, the aspects focused on content, grammar, diction, and punctuation.
3. Congratulation : expressions of pleasure or joy; felicitations; words expressing one's praise for an achievement or good wishes on a special occasion.
4. Card : a piece of thick, stiff paper or thin pasteboard, in particular one used for writing or printing on.

Therefore, Congratulation Card is a decorated card with a message of good wishes that is sent or given to someone on a special occasion, usually made in short and simple and an interesting as well. Thus, this title means students' ability or student's skill in writing or creating congratulation card well.