CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes seven components: background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the keys terms.

A. Background of the Study

Most of people lives from a group in the world. And people it self as human being cannot live by themselves. They must communicate and interact with their society to fulfill their needs by means of verbal, sign or, symbols in writing. Then, if someone talks about communication, he/she also talks about language because language is a means of communication. In other words, language is the most important in communication because by using language, people can express their ideas, feelings, thought and, desire. Lado writes that language is considered the chief means used by human beings to express their feelings and fulfill the basic needs for social interaction with other persons².

¹ Lim Kiat Boey. An Introduction to Linguistics for the Language Teacher. (Singapore: University Press, 1975), P. 3

² Robert Lado. Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach. (New Delhi: Tata Mc. Graw Hill Publishing Co. Ltd, 1979), P. 7

In line with Lado, Aranoff also says that language is many things-a system of communication, a medium for thought, a vehicle for literary expression, a social instruction, a matter political controversy, a factor in nation building³. It means that language is the main instrument of expressing ideas or relating information and message to other people should understand what the others means.

So that, English as an international language is one of the most important languages in the world. It plays a very important role in every part of human international relationships, such as science, commerce, technology, culture, and humanities. Considering the importance of English, in the late few years, the Indonesian government gives attention to English especially in the education system. So, this subject needs to be given since the students are in kindergarten. In other words, English is one of the subjects that have to be mastered by the students to improve the human resource quality.

Learning English language means learning the language skills namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills are presented in harmony. Besides, one skill supports the other language skills: the students also have to study the components of the language. It consists of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Xing and Jin states that writing, as we all know, is a

³ Mark Michael Aranoff and Debrovolsky and William O'Grandy. Contemporary Linguistics-an Introduction. (St. Martin's Press Inc, 1993), P. 1

comprehensive ability involving grammar, vocabulary, conception, rhetoric, and other elements, it has everything to do with listening, speaking, and reading⁴.

Since English becomes the target language in educational world, of course, it will arise some problems that may be faced by the students while acquiring the target language. For a lot of students, the most difficult skills are writing. Most students complain to their teachers when the teachers give writing assignment to students. Learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the macro skills for all language users whether the language is the first, second, or foreign language⁵.

Actually, this is true because learning a language, especially the writing skill, cannot be done in one time. Someone should practice it continuously and requires much patience. This means that writing cannot be done automatically, but it needs process guidance and sustained practice⁶. And there are many ways to improve writing ability. Based on the previous research conducted by Alisia Yunita Rahmawati in English and Art of Faculty, with the title "Using pictures of situation to teach writing descriptive texts to the Eight grade students of Junior high school", the focus of her research are teaching writing descriptive text using pictures to the eight grade of junior high school and the based on the result of the

⁴ Zang Feng Xin and Cheng Shin Jin. Teaching Forum: A Journal for the Teacher of English outside the United States. (Volume XXVII, 1989), P. 34

⁵ David Nunan. Designing Task for the Communicative Classroom. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), P. 89

⁶ Gina Cantoni and Harvey. Content Area Language Instruction Approach and Strategies. (California: Addison Wesley Publisher Company, 1987), P. 81

students writing, the number of the students writing that are consisted of two schematic structures (identification and description) are always increasing in every meeting⁷. And also, based on the previous research conducted by Oktabety Kusjayanti in English and Art of Faculty, the title is "The use of BBC's wildlife documentary video to improve the descriptive writing ability of the second year students of SMP Negeri 1 Tuban", from the research can be found that student's writing ability improvement when video of BBC's wildlife is used in the class, every meeting from the first meeting until four meeting. And the student's responses are enthusiast to learn about writing by using of video as a teaching material.

Therefore, the researcher wants to apply letters as teaching material to improve writing ability in SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo. Because, the student's SMPN 1 Buduran-Sidoarjo has a problem in writing ability, especially in that school. Most of the students got bad score when the teacher conducted the test in writing whereas, they are good in components of writing such as grammar. Writing letters is one of the most difficult forms of composition and writing a letters in here that writing personal letters are one ways of activity that enhance each students creatively and courage, because they are pushed to communicate with others besides their friends by using English actively and correctly. And the principles of writing letter should be understood by everybody who has any

⁷ Yunita Alisia Rahmawati. Using Pictures of Situation to Teach Writing Descriptive Texts to the Eight Grade Students of Junior High School. (Thesis: UNESA, 2008)

knowledge of written language. According to that statement, Lado states that the ability to write creatively requires special talent and training⁸. If they can do it, they will be able to transfer what they mean to others. And writing a letter needs writing skill. A letter is a written message from one party to another; letters are usually intended to be received by other in so far away. It is also well known way in communication; it has been existed since human being was born. So, if we do not write the letter correctly, the receiver will find difficulties to convey the meaning in his/her letter and misunderstanding.

So, the study is hoped to answer apply of the letters in the teaching writing to the second year of junior high school in SMPN 1 Buduran-Sidoarjo is appropriate and can stimulate the student's creativities and also can improve the students writing ability.

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the explanation above, the question to answer the research problem as follow:

- 1. How is the use of letters applied in teaching English writing at the eighth grade in SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo?
- 2. In what way the use of letters improve the English writing ability at the eighth grade in SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo?
- 3. How are the student's responses to the use of letters in writing ability?

⁸ Robert Lado. Language Testing. (Hong Kong: Wing Tai Cheung, 1961), P. 81

C. Objective of the Study

- 1. To describe the application letter in teaching English writing to the eighth grade in SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo
- To improve the junior high school student's English writing ability using letters at the eighth grades in SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo.
- 3. To describe the student's responses to the use of letters in writing ability.

D. Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected that it will be useful and helpful for English foreign language classroom, both for the teachers and for the students and given the contributions to the educational world. For the teacher, letters can be used as the best interesting way to improving writing ability and excellent way to introduce to the students in writing because letters writing can support cultural enrichment. And also it can inform the English teachers the ways to use letters as a teaching technique of writing; it can give an objective description to the teacher how to teach the students English writing by using letters as their materials and also, help their students to learn more about letters. For the students, letters can improve their writing ability since they serve pleasure, and writing can attract their interest in learning English writing.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to apply English writing using letters. The materials are designed for the eighth grade in junior high school at SMPN 2 Buduran-Sidoarjo. Then, the class for action of the research is only VIIID class. This class is chosen randomly.

F. Definition of the Key Term

The definitions of the terms are necessary to give clear definition about some terms to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

- 1. A letters is a written message addressed to a person or an organization⁹.
- 2. Writing is a visual representation of thoughts, feelings, and ideas using symbols of the writer language system for the purpose of communication or recording¹⁰.
- 3. Improve is a process to make something better. In this study by using letters students writing ability was expected to have better achievement than before.

⁹ AS Hornby. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English fifth edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), P. 677

¹⁰ James A Poteet. "Written Expression" In Curriculum-Based Assessment and Programming. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc, 1992), P. 231