

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In this modern era, written language is more popular than spoken language. It can be seen in many daily life activities people do. Most people prefer to use written language to communicate with others and make their activities easier and more efficient. Writing is a skill that has to be mastered by students because through writing. Students can express ideas, opinions, knowledge, feelings, and experiences. There are two reasons why teaching writing is considered important. First, it reinforces the grammatical structure, idiom, and vocabulary. Second, it can guide the students to write well if they have a clear knowledge of the generic structure of writing. Thus, they should know well the generic structure in writing. The teacher should emphasize that writing is an interesting activity and make it easy to understand so the students will enjoy the teaching-learning of writing.

According to Harmer (2001:80), the type of writing students will do depends on their age, level, and interest. It means that if teachers set tasks for the students, they should make sure that the students have enough vocabulary to get enough language to complete the task. Furthermore, the question is prominently emphasized on what kind of language the students have at their command and what can be achieved with the language. According to Zemach and Rumisek (2005:3), in the writing process, the writers do more than just put words together to make sentences. They also need writing exercises to provide the paragraph with a good idea so that the paragraph looks interesting to read.

Through writing, the students are expected to be able to convey the meaning of ideas and deliver those ideas in written forms, and writing is not easy for students.

As has been stated by Taylor (2009:2), in writing, people bring knowledge into being and they record and preserve it. Therefore, it is important to practice a lot when learning to write. Based on the curriculum for junior high school, especially eighth-grade students, emphasizes them achieving a good score in composing a descriptive paragraph which consists of essential parts such as identification, description, and conclusion. In addition, students should develop their ideas when writing descriptive paragraph which is interesting to read.

In addition, writing is both a process and a product (Nunan, 2003:88). The process of writing is cyclical, and the product of writing is what people can see and read, such as essays, books, letters, stories, or research reports. The cyclical process of writing means that writing is not an instant process; however, it requires some practices that should be done to produce a well-written product. Writing has not received serious attention because many students think it is one of the most difficult skills they have to learn. It means that a teacher has to help students improve their capabilities to write something they want to write based on each of these aspects that the researcher adopted from the expert.

Based on the observation carried out in the present research on the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023, it could be identified that the problem was caused by the teaching technique that was implemented during the teaching-learning process in the class. The teachers only explained and gave descriptive paragraph examples in the English class. After that, the teacher asked the students to do pre-writing by themselves without giving any media like pictures. The English teacher did not facilitate them to discuss with their friends to share their ideas. The students should follow the long steps in writing paragraphs. On the other side, if students got stuck in drafting and imagining the

object they should describe, they would become lazy to write and could not continue to the next step of writing a descriptive paragraph.

The conventional teaching technique that the English teacher applied only gave the students an explanation of descriptive paragraphs as the learning material. After that, the English teacher gave the students an example of a descriptive paragraph, and then the English teacher asked them to create a descriptive paragraph without giving any media like a picture. The English teacher also did not facilitate the students discussing their ideas with their friends. The conventional teaching technique that the English teacher applied in the English class in teaching descriptive paragraphs made the students not interested in writing descriptive paragraphs. It created boring teaching and learning process.

The conventional teaching technique that was applied was individual. The students cannot share their ideas with their friends, and in the teaching and learning process using this technique, the English teacher did not give clear directions to the students about how to write a good descriptive paragraph. Besides, the English teacher did not use media like a picture to help the students write descriptive paragraphs. In this research, the researcher applied a teaching technique to facilitate the students discussing their ideas in writing a descriptive paragraph with their friends and giving the students media like a picture. Also, the teaching technique the researcher applied gave a clear direction to write a good descriptive paragraph.

Small group discussion combined with picture is a technique that can help students make a good descriptive paragraph. Media like pictures implementing this technique are appropriate for cooperative teaching and learning. The small group discussion combined with picture is started by making a group of four and five students. The teacher gives a picture as media and then introduces the material to

the students. The teacher then asks the students to discuss the topic and picture. After discussing the topic and the picture, the teacher asks the students to write a descriptive paragraph individually. At the end of the study, the teacher and the students summarize the topic that has already been discussed.

Small group discussion combined with picture is an exciting and challenging technique for students in learning writing. Small group discussion combined with picture addresses academic and social skill learning. The small group discussion combined with picture allows the students to get knowledge and share ideas with the other students, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs. Besides being able to exchange their ideas, the students would enhance cooperation and togetherness in solving the problem they encounter in doing the task. Moreover, the form of small group discussion combined with picture is straightforward to understand because using media like picture in the small group discussion combined with picture as teaching technique can help students imagine the thing, they must describe in writing a descriptive paragraph. This teaching technique was expected to guide the students producing a well-written paragraph.

Considering the fact above, the researcher is interested to know whether or not small group discussion combined with picture could be used as an appropriate technique. It could be used to improve the students' writing skills. In addition, students can share their ideas in more detail and more easily imagine what they should describe in writing a descriptive paragraph. Small group discussion combined with picture strategy is one of the writing strategies to make their writing better. Therefore, the researcher conducted research entitled "Improving Writing Skill of the Eighth-grade Students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in Academic Year 2022/2023 through Small Group Discussion Combined with Picture."

1.2 Research Problem

As what has already been mentioned above, their writing achievement especially in writing descriptive paragraph was low and reflected in their language ability, so an appropriate and enjoyable technique should be applied. The researcher chose small group discussion combined with picture as the teaching technique in this study. The small group discussion combined with picture was the appropriate teaching technique to solve their problems in paragraph writing. Thus, the research problem of the study could be formulated as a question as follows: can writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 be improved through small group discussion combined with picture?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The present study was conducted to improve the writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar by using small group discussion combined with picture. It was essential to achieve this as the students still had difficulty expressing their ideas and had limited chances to get involved, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs. Therefore, their ability to write descriptive paragraphs should be improved through an appropriate teaching technique, such as a small group discussion combined with a picture. Based on the background of the study above, the research objective was to determine whether writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 could be improved through small group discussion combined with picture.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The discussion of writing skills was complicated and broad to be elaborated on in a single study coverage. To avoid misunderstanding among readers, the

discussion of this study was limited to improving writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 through small group discussion combined with picture. In the present study, the school SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar applied the 2013 curriculum for the eighth-grade and ninth-grade students. In this study, the subjects were the eighth-grade students. Thus, the lesson plan and learning materials were based on the 2013 curriculum and syllabus of the eighth-grade students. Thus, this study focused on the fourth main competency and basic competency of the eighth-grade students.

The fourth main competency was focused on trying, processing, and presenting everything in a concrete domain (using, explaining, stringing up, modifying, and constructing) and abstract domain (writing, reading, calculating, drawing, and composing) in line with the learning materials which have been learned at school and other sources that are theoretically the same. Besides, the researcher focused on the fourth basic competency (4.12), which was constructing a short and simple transactional text in the form of oral and written, which shows asking for and giving information related to a person, thing, and animal by paying attention to the social function, the text structure, and language features correctly and contextually. The paragraph focused on writing a descriptive paragraph with a complete generic structure: identification, description, and conclusion.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher paid attention to using small group discussion combined with picture to improve writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023. The research findings were expected to give theoretical and practical information on the importance and useful

using small group discussion combined with picture in teaching writing, especially in writing a descriptive paragraph. Both theoretical and practical significance were important to make sure that the study would give a beneficial impact. Moreover, the theoretical and practical significance could strengthen explanations of the research. The theoretical and practical significance could be defined as follows.

Theoretically, the present study could explain the theories of small group discussion combined with picture to the eighth-grade students of the VIII D class and provide information on the technique so that it could be implemented in the teaching and learning process, especially in teaching writing. It also could be used to enrich the study of small group discussion combined with picture technique as an effective technique to develop their thinking process in arranging ideas into a well-structured descriptive paragraph. Furthermore, the present study could also be implemented as the basis of further empirical evidence to facilitate future studies on the same area so that deeper studies could be conducted.

Practically, the present research findings were expected to benefit the teachers, students, and other researchers. The present study was expected to help the teachers solve their problems in generating and organizing ideas in descriptive paragraph based on the criteria needed. These findings were expected to provide the English teachers with the ability to teach writing in much more various teaching technique that could make the classroom enjoyable. On the other hand, the findings were expected to motivate students to improve their writing skills. The strategy could be applied continuously in school to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process. At last, the present study could be used as a reference for other researchers who would conduct similar research using classroom action research design and applying small group discussion combined with picture.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

The title of the present study was “Improving Writing Skill of the Eighth-grade Students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar in Academic Year 2022/2023 through Small Group Discussion combined with Picture”. To avoid misunderstanding or confusion about the study and provide clear information about the present study, the researcher needs to define the research variables used. The definitions of key terms were operationally described to understand this study better. Two key terms were defined to make this research clearer. They were writing skill and small group discussion combined with picture. The researcher operationally defined the important key terms used in this study as follows:

1. Writing Skill

In the present study, writing skill is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Cipta Dharma Denpasar to construct a short and simple descriptive that consists of 6-12 sentences with a complete generic structure: an identification, descriptions, and a conclusion.

2. Small Group Discussion Combined with Picture

Small group discussion combined with picture in this research follows three steps: introduction, directing discussion, and summarizing. In the introduction, the researcher facilitates the students to ask and answer questions while explaining the learning material. In directing the discussion, the students make a draft in a group based on the given picture. Finally, in summarizing, the researcher asks the students to summarize the discussion results in the form of a paragraph with a complete generic structure: an identification, descriptions, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review in the present study used in a scientific study should be based on some theoretical background and framework. Every scientific study is conducted based on related theories that provide information or knowledge of the variables used. Some theoretical reviews are written in this chapter, including many relevant theoretical reviews from many related kinds of literature to support this study. This study could be based on the following theoretical reviews: writing skill, descriptive paragraph, small group discussion combined with picture, and assessment of writing. It would be better to give further detailed discussions of the related theoretical frameworks to clarify the current study.

2.1.1 Writing Skill

Writing skill becomes an important skill and should be mastered by all students besides the other language skills. As a challenging skill, English writing has been widely viewed and recognized as a difficult subject by students because writing is not only putting words down on paper, but writers putting their feeling as well. In addition, writing is an essential feature of learning a language because it provides good vocabulary usage. Moreover, teaching writing helps students to understand the material that the teacher teaches. Indeed, several experts are in an attempt to define all aspects of writing. Some experts support why writing skills are essential and teaching concerned with teaching the skill to students.

Zemach and Islam (2005:5) state that writing is an essential form of communication in day-to-day life, but it is imperative in high school and college.

Writing is also one of the most challenging skills to master foreign languages. Supporting the statement, Zemach and Rumisek (2005:6) state that writing is a vital part of a study because, through writing, the students will write the assignment that may range from one paragraph to several pages and will write answers on tests and exams that may be a few sentences. Academic writing in English may differ not only from academic writing in their language but even from other writing in English during the teaching and learning process.

English is a widely spoken and written language. Many books, manuals, newspapers, letters, emails, and information are written in English. If the students do not learn English, they isolate themselves from almost half of the world's knowledge. It is also used in various professional fields such as business, information technology, medicine, entertainment, aviation, diplomacy, etc. Therefore, it is essential to write in English, as people from thousands of miles away might be from a different country, understanding only the global language, English. Alderson and Bachman (2002:1) state that the ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important worldwide and instruction in writing.

Oshima and Hogue (2007:14) state academic writing is used in high school and college classes. Academic writing differs from creative writing, in which the students write stories. Creativity writing and personal writing are informal; therefore, the students may use slang, abbreviations, and incomplete sentences. Murray (2005:10) argues that academic writing is the conventions readers see in a thesis or published paper in writers' disciplines. It is a definition that becomes more precise once the writers scrutinize examples of published writing in their target journals. Academic writing is formal, and the students should not use slang or constructions. In other words, it should be made in complete sentences.

Wolf (2009:1) states that the actual writing process starts with unique right-brain creativity techniques that people can use to generate an endless flow of ideas. In addition, writing is expressing something in the right rule that can make the readers understand. Besides, Fulwiller (2002:65) states that figuratively, at least, writers find ideas to write about in one of two places; inside or outside. The inside ideas come from people's memories, imaginations, insights, and aspects of the self, uniquely one's own. The outside ideas come from texts, people, objects, and events. To write about personal experiences, writers go inside and retrieve impressions, images, and words buried somewhere in their memories.

Therefore, Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) state that writing is never one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act. When someone wants to write something, four steps should be followed in writing. The first step is called pre-writing. It is a way to get ideas by choosing a topic and collecting ideas to explain it. The second is organizing, in which the writer organizes the ideas into a simple outline. The third step is writing, where the writer writes a rough draft using the outline as a guide. Moreover, in this step, the writer should write as quickly as possible without sopping and think about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. They only need to write their ideas on paper. The last step is polishing. In this step, the writer revises and edits what they have written to make it much clearer.

Graham (2008:6) states that many skills-developing writers need to learn to the point where they can be executed with little effort. This includes handwriting (or typing), spelling, punctuation, and capitalization skills. As a complex skill, writing requires an effort of language learners to master every detail of the writing component. Thus, mastering writing still means that the learners are also to deliver their feeling and thought with incorrect spelling, punctuation, grammar, and so on.

Moreover, by learning writing, they are expected to be able to carry out other essential writing processes like planning, evaluating, revising, and so forth that are conducted in the present study to yield worthwhile findings.

According to Fulwiler (2002:7), writing does certain things better than speaking. It is because when we miswrite, we can always rewrite and catch our mistake before someone else notices it. Besides, if we want to develop a complex argument, writing affords us the time and space to do so. Writing also makes a permanent record to be reread and studied in our absence when we want our words to have the force of law. By having a good ability in writing, we can deliver a message or ideas to other people without directly meeting those people. That is because writing to maintain a specific tone and cool manner can be accomplished more quickly than in a face-to-face meeting in the classroom.

Writing is one of the most complex skills that everybody cannot always do, so everybody should learn the process of writing a good paragraph. Patel and Jain (2008:125) state that writing is a skill that must be taught and practiced by the students in the classroom. Writing is an essential feature of language learning because it provides an excellent means of fixing vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure. It becomes a necessary aspect of students' expressions at a higher stage. Writing is the most efficiently acquired when practicing in writing parallel practice in the other skills. In addition, writing provides an excellent consolidating activity. Writing is also helpful for setting homework exercises and for some class texts.

From the definition above, the researcher can conclude that writing is instrumental because people can communicate information and specific purposes in written form. By making it brief and precise, it can be an excellent tool to be used in communication. Based on the theories that have been explained, the researcher

uses the theory of Oshima and Hogue (2007), which states that writing is not an easy process, but it needs four steps to be done to do good writing. The four steps namely pre-writing, organizing, writing, and polishing. It means that writing a good descriptive text must follow those four steps. Because in writing, the students are sometimes confused to start writing, they might follow those steps to make them no longer confused in writing, and they can create interesting products.

2.1.2 Descriptive Paragraph

Zemach and Islam (2005:9) mention that paragraphs can give information, tell an opinion, explain something, or even tell a short story. The sentences are arranged logically, so the readers can easily understand what the writer wants to say. Therefore, a paragraph is a series of sentences describing the information or idea which wants to be delivered by the writer to make the readers understand the topic and message. In writing, there are different types of paragraphs; each has a specific purpose and information or story that it wants to tell the readers. One of the important paragraphs is a paragraph that can describe something in vivid detail the genre of these paragraphs is descriptive paragraphs.

Descriptive paragraph writing is often put into two broad kinds, objective and subjective according to Savage and Mayer (2005:34), who state that adjectives describe a person, place, or thing. Moreover, adjectives appear in different positions in the sentence. The writers need to clearly and objectively state the details that readers will need to identify what is being described. When the writers describe a place, they can develop the paragraph by adding descriptive details-information that tells how the place as an object looks clearly. Thus, the readers can easily catch the meaning of the writer's feelings on the object that has been written in the form of a

paragraph in writing well-written descriptive paragraphs. Thus, the paragraph writing will be useful to improve its quality.

According to Savage and Mayer (2005:28), descriptive writing uses word to build an image for the readers. This image may come from sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or even feelings. Good descriptive writing makes the reader feel as if she or he is present in the scene. It can be assumed that the reader can feel, imagine the sounds, tastes, or smells, and even feel the object that is being described by the writer. In describing an object in descriptive writing, the writer should explain or describe how the object looks clearly. As a result, the readers can easily catch the meaning of the writer's feelings on the object that has been discussed. It means that the presence of the five senses is important in order to make the reader have the same picture as the writer in writing descriptive paragraphs.

In addition, Branan (2010:309) states that to develop skills in describing things, four things can help the students to create more vivid descriptions: using specific language, using five senses, creating a dominant impression, and organizing details spatially. Meanwhile, Kane (2000:351) defines that description deals with visual experience and perception of the object; thus, it aims at describing how the object looks, sounds and tastes. Therefore, the readers can easily catch the meaning of the descriptive paragraph. A good writers use words that appeal to some or all of the five senses sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell to help describe a topic in a writing descriptive paragraph. (Folse et al. (2010:136)).

According to Fiderer (2002:17), a descriptive paragraph gives a clear picture of a person, place, object, event, or idea. On the other hand, a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes a thing, person, and place in vivid detail and concerns how it looks and feels. Writing descriptive paragraph in vivid detail, it made the

readers more easily to imagining the thing, person, or place. In addition, details for descriptive paragraphs come from the writer's senses, smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight. Moreover, a descriptive paragraph requires the students to describe a thing, person, and place in vivid detail so that the readers can imagine the described thing, person, and place or feel what is being described. It would make their descriptions much more detail that enable the readers to picture the object.

Besides, Zemach and Rumisek (2005:25) state that a descriptive paragraph explains how someone or something looks or feels. in writing a descriptive paragraph the writer is required to use adjectives to tell the readers how a thing looks, tastes, sounds, and smells. There are many adjectives that the writer can use to describe a person, thing, or place while writing a descriptive paragraph. Moreover, the adjectives in a descriptive paragraph are important, especially when the writers describe a place in writing a descriptive paragraph. The preposition tells the readers how a place is organized. Therefore, the readers are easier to describe how the place is organized in such vivid detail.

Furthermore, Folse et al. (2010:135) explain that a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes how something or someone looks or feels and it gives an impression of something. Therefore, to give an impression of how something is described in writing descriptive paragraph, the writer should write a detailed description of how something looks and feels. It gives an impression of something in writing a descriptive paragraph. The description in a descriptive paragraph should be stated clearly. In addition, Savage and Shafiei (2007:30) state that in a descriptive paragraph, the writer uses words that create an image and help the readers see, touch, feel, smell, or taste the topic that is being described. The students' knowledge on the paragraph will help them writing.

A good descriptive paragraph should make the readers easily understand what is described. Thus, a descriptive paragraph should be well-organized. In addition, Evans (2000:7) states that a descriptive paragraph consists of some components, such as the introduction, main body, and conclusion. The introduction or identification tells about the object that the writer describes in the first sentence. Meanwhile, the main body is similar to the descriptions, which describe the appearance and character of the object in detail to make the writing more descriptive. Furthermore, the conclusion concludes what has been described in the main body. Moreover, the conclusion may be included or not.

According to Oshima and Hogue (2007:61), descriptive writing appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good descriptive text can make the reader imagine the object, place, animal, or person in their mind directly. From the definition, it can be assumed that a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that is used to explain the detailed characteristic of an object. In writing descriptive paragraph, the object should be explained as clearly as possible. So, if the students more clearly describe the object in writing a descriptive paragraph, it can make the reader easier to catch the meaning that the writer wants to deliver to the reader and the reader can imagine how the object looks that has been described by the writer in vivid detail.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that is used to describe something or an object that the writer knows. In the present study, the researcher uses the theory from Oshima and Hogue (2007), who state that descriptive writing appeals to the senses about how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. It means that the explanation of a descriptive paragraph should be vivid in detail and use language features such

as simple present tense, action verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The descriptive text contains three generic structures: identification, description, and conclusion. Identification is the introduction of the object, description is used to explain more specific characteristics or detail of the object, and a conclusion is used to add a summary, comment, or opinion of the object that is described. In addition, the written product has to be coherent and unified.

2.1.3 Small Group Discussion Combined with Picture

Small group discussion is a small group discussion technique with a maximum of four students. A small group of four students provokes great development and participation in the larger group. Harmer (2001:117) states that group discussion which is dramatic guidelines and allows for the interchange of ideas within the context of a group under the direction of the presenter. Serravallo (2010:5) writes that small groups allow students to hear other students thinking about their reading process and responses to the text. Using it could make it easier for the students to participate actively. They meet as small gatherings or as break-outs of large meetings, offering many opportunities for creativity and flexibility.

According to Kendall and Khuon (2006), a small group includes as many as five students. Small group events emphasize learning (as opposed to teaching), a specific task or focus and involve active participation by group members. Therefore, each small group strategy lesson includes two sections: instructional materials and teaching moves. Depending on the purpose and nature of the group, small group teaching can also help to develop 'transferable' skills, such as study skills, communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving, and personal development. In addition, certain, conditions need to be in place in classrooms to

support small-group strategy instruction for English language learners. This type of classroom management would help the students learning from their partners.

Small group discussion, also known as cooperative learning, involves a high degree of interaction. Based on Serravallo (2010:6), small group discussion allows students to feel like part of the team as they work toward the same goals as other students. The teacher can make the students more active in the teaching and learning process. Small group discussions usually make learning more fun and interesting. They need to know how to share resources fairly, take turns, and engage in democratic decision-making. The students can be passive recipients if they have rarely been allowed to interact with their peers, but through small group discussion, many ideas can be developed, and the discussion would be more fun.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:196), group formation is important in creating positive interdependence. Moreover, the factors involved in setting up the group should be done through some conditions. The group can be teacher-selected, random, or selected and recommended students as a usual mode to create a group. The group is heterogeneous on such variables as past achievement, ethnicity, and student roles in the group. Besides, each group member has a specific role to play, such as noise monitor, turn-talker, recorder, or summarize. Many techniques in cooperative learning can help English teachers to improve their writing skills, especially descriptive paragraphs.

Ornstein et al. (2000: 294) say that a small group occurs when the large group is broken up into subgroups according to ability, interest, project, or other criteria. From those theories, it can be concluded that small group discussion combined with picture is the exchange of information, opinion, and ideas among all group members that consists of at least three or five members to solve problems

occurring in the learning process. In this study, the researcher combined the small group discussion teaching technique with a picture as a medium to support the teaching technique. Small group discussion combined with picture is an attractive teaching technique for implementing in teaching writing descriptive paragraphs.

For the present study, the researcher will combine the small group discussion teaching technique with the picture as a medium to make the students more interested in learning with this technique. Pictures are often involved in language teaching and the learning process. Teachers use pictures to create various activities and get students' attention in learning. Harmer (2001:134) states that teachers have always used pictures or graphics-whether drawn or taken from books, newspapers, magazines, or photographs to facilitate learning. Using pictures in teaching new words makes the process enjoyable and memorable because pictures attract pupils' attention and deepen their understanding of vocabulary.

Harmer (2004:551) states that an engaging writing task involves students not just intellectually but emotionally as well. To make an engaging writing task, the teacher should provide a stimulus to encourage the students to write. The stimulus can be pictures for those who are stimulated by visual input. It means that pictures are also contextual to the students in writing especially in writing descriptive paragraph. A teacher can draw certain situations on them. Pictures bring the outside world into the classroom in a concrete way. They can improve students' stimulus because after observing the picture, they will immediately need the vocabulary, idiom, and sentence structures to discuss or explain what they see.

According to Kagan and Kagan (2009:48), cooperative learning provides more mediation. In cooperative learning, Students are in heterogeneous teams, with one high achiever, one high-middle achiever, one low-middle achiever, and one low

achiever on each team. It allows a group to efficiently discuss the topic the English teacher has already given with their friends. It means that selecting the students in small group discussion can make the students in a group discuss the topic given by the teacher more efficiently. In the present study, the group was selected by the researcher. In the group there were one high achiever, one high-middle achiever, one low-middle achiever, and one low achiever on each team. The researcher selected the students based on their scores on the pre-test.

Small group discussion allows presenters to announce a topic or idea for group discussion among participants. Therefore, a small group discussion follows democratic guidelines and allows everyone to contribute many ideas for others to discuss and reflect upon. The discussion in the present study allows an interchange of ideas within the context of a group under the presenter's reaction. Brewer (1997:23) states several steps must be taken when conducting small group discussion. In conducting a small group discussion combined with picture, there were three procedural steps: introduction, directing, and summarizing the discussion. The steps could be briefly described as follows:

1. Introduction

The teacher must prepare before the discussion for it to be successful. The teacher should try introducing a topic on which all participants have some background knowledge, so they have a basis for discussion. In this study, in the introduction, the teacher stimulated the students to ask questions from a prepared list to stimulate thought. The teacher answered the students' questions.

2. Directing the Discussion

The teacher is in charge of directing the discussion to get it started. The teacher should ask the participants if they have any questions about the topic at hand.

These questions can start the discussion, or the teacher may want to ask a few questions from a prepared list to stimulate thought toward the topic. In this study, in directing the group discussion, they made a draft based on the picture.

3. Summarizing

Sometimes the participants may be confused or retain a wrong idea as right. The presenter should summarize to ensure the participants understand what has been discussed. For small group discussions seeking consensus, it is vital to summarize to provide all the participants are thinking along the same lines. A final summary is essential at the end of the discussion. In this study, the students made a paragraph based on the draft as the result of their discussions.

Besides, the purpose of the small group discussion is to contribute and circulate information on a particular topic and analyze and evaluate the information for supporting evidence to reach an agreement on general conclusions. The implementation of small group discussion in the present study adapts the above theory. It has three steps: introduction, directing the discussion, and summarizing it. In the introduction, the teacher stimulated the students to ask a few questions from a prepared list to stimulate thought toward the topic, and the teacher answered the students' questions while explaining the material. The second is directing the discussion. The students in the group made a draft based on the picture as a topic already given. Finally, summarizing the discussion, the students made a paragraph based on the draft resulting from their discussion.

2.1.4 Assessment of Writing

Assessing students writing is giving feedback and score on the achievement of students writing skills. In addition, Brown (2004:4) states assessment is an

ongoing process encompassing a much wider domain. English teachers need to give an assessment to be done because they know to what extent the students have achieved the materials. Writing is a difficult skill to score because it uses the subjective judgment of the teachers. The assessment of writing is integral to the effective teaching of writing to students with learning disabilities. In addition, Alderson and Bachman (2002:2) state that a writing test involves at least two basic components: one or more writing tasks or instructions.

According to Carter and Nunan (2001:138), an assessment is carried out to collect information on their language proficiency and/or achievement that the stakeholders can use in language learning for various purposes. Assessment is important and must be done by the teacher during the learning process so that they know the student's ability, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs. Assessment is also the feedback for the students about what they have learned and to know their mistakes and try to improve the students' ability in writing especially in writing descriptive paragraphs. In other words, the students' writing achievement is not only gathered from the test but also from observation.

In line with Fulcher and Davidson (2007:27), assessment and learning are integrated with the teaching and learning process. In the classroom, the teachers are deeply involved in the evaluation and care about the outcomes of the assessment. Teachers are correctly assessing, but the primary purpose of the evaluation is to inform better teaching and a more efficient learning process. Moreover, the evaluation also aims to give positive feedback to the teachers and the students. For the teacher, the assessment gives information on the process of students in the teaching and learning process. Besides, for the students, it is used to inform the achievement and motivation in the teaching-learning process.

According to Miller et al. (2009:28), assessment is a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about students' learning (observation, rating, or performance or project paper and pencil test) and the formation of value judgment concerning learning progress. Therefore, the assessment measures students' improvement in understanding the material and shows the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the assessment also gathers information about students' improvement in writing especially in writing a descriptive paragraph, and motivation in writing and also the faces of students' problems in mastering the material in writing especially in writing a descriptive paragraph of the teaching and learning process.

In the teaching and learning process, assessment is required to know the students' achievement toward the material and also the measured effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In addition, Hyland (2003:212) adds that, as a result, an understanding of assessment procedures is necessary to ensure that teaching has the desired impact and that students are being judged fairly. In addition, without the information gained for assessment, it would be difficult to identify the gap between students' current target performances and to help them progress. In carrying out the assessment, especially the writing assessment, the teacher needs to consider the test that should be appropriate to the material that has been taught and focus on the genre of the paragraph. Furthermore, the teacher should construct a writing task appropriate to students' abilities.

Classroom assessment refers to the assessment carried out by teachers in the classroom (McKay, 2006:140). The classroom assessment is conducted to evaluate the teaching-learning process in the classroom. Classroom assessment is in the form of formative assessment or summative assessment. A formative assessment

provides a decision to further teach the students in the classroom. A summative assessment is conducted at the end of the teaching process to report the student's progress in understanding the material that was delivered in the classroom. The classroom assessment which is formative assessment and summative assessments were used by the teacher to know the students' ability in understanding the previously taught learning material in the teaching-learning process.

In this study, the researcher uses a paragraph construction test to measure their achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs. The research will ask the students to write a descriptive paragraph according to the topic given. Based on Brown (2004:243) writes classroom evaluation is best served through analytic scoring. In analytic scoring, scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than given a single score. In addition, formal, punctuation, mechanics content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure are five criteria for descriptive paragraph writing. Furthermore, based on the situation in scoring students' writing skills in that school, the researcher would adapt the scoring rubric which was designed by Oshima and Hogue (2007).

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review is required to provide empirical evidence that supports the present study. An empirical review is a way of gaining information by making observations based on the results of previous research. The function of the empirical review is also as a comparison because the present study is relevant and related to the previous research. The previous research would be used as this study's empirical review. Some similar researchers were found related to the present research. In the empirical review, the researcher has two relevant previous research pieces. The two

of the related research used as the empirical review could be described in chronological order as follows to strengthen the current research.

The first was from Daniati (2018), entitled “Improving Writing Skill of The Eighth Grade Students of SMP Sila Dharma in Academic Year 2017/2018 through Small Group Discussion”. The purpose of the research was to determine whether the writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Sila Dharma in academic year 2017/2018 can be improved by using the small group discussion teaching technique. Based on the results of the post-test in cycle I and cycle II, the research showed that implementing the small group discussion teaching technique could significantly improve the writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Sila Dharma especially in writing descriptive paragraphs.

The second research was conducted by Lesmana (2020) entitled “The Use of Small Group Discussion Strategy to Increase Descriptive Paragraph Writing Skill among The Eighth-Graders of MTS Manbaul ‘Ulum Gayabaru II Central Lampung”. The objective of the research was to know whether or not descriptive paragraph writing skills among the eighth-grade students of MTS Manbaul ‘Ulum Gayabaru II Central Lampung can be increased through a small group discussion strategy. Based on the result of the post-test in cycle I and cycle II, the researcher showed that using a small group discussion strategy could improve students’ writing skills, especially in writing descriptive paragraphs of the eighth-grade students of MTS Manbaul ‘Ulum Gayabaru II Central Lampung.

Both researchers could improve students’ writing skills, and the students got a progressing mean score at the end of cycle II through small group discussion techniques. However, both researchers did not use media like a picture to support the teaching technique in writing descriptive paragraphs. It confused some students

about imagining something they wanted to describe in a descriptive paragraph. It made the situation of teaching and learning process was not efficient. In the present study, to make the students clearer in imagining something they want to describe, the researcher gave the picture of a thing and person as media to support small group discussion as the teaching technique in writing a descriptive paragraph. The small group discussion combined with picture can make the students more motivated and interested in writing descriptive paragraphs.

