CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of the essential skills in communication besides speaking. In learning a language, writing skills must be mastered by students in all grades. In writing, students have a chance to generate ideas in written form. Johnson (2008:203) states that writing is having ideas, organizing them, and communicating them. Through writing, students can share their ideas, feelings, opinion, information, and experiences in a written paragraph. Teaching writing at school is proposed to improve students' writing skills and allow them to use correct writing components. This way, the students will learn more about making a good writing product to share their written ideas with the readers.

Writing is a combination of process and product of thinking skills and creative skills. In the writing process, the writers always involve the product of writing, such as discovering the ideas, putting them on paper, and working with them until they are presented to the reader in a polished and understandable manner. According to Hyland (2003:22), writing is a socio-cognitive activity involving skills in planning and drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts, and audiences. In addition, writing is a tool for students in learning because they can think and rethink ideas to make them attractive. The writing product should be reshaped and revised to make it better. The students are also expected to be able to produce a whole text with their own creativity.

Writing is one of the productive skills which needs creativity to express ideas, emotions, and thoughts. In the teaching and learning process, students create their creativity in writing by pouring their ideas and telling other people. Thus,

1

students not only save their ideas for themselves, but they can also express them to other people. Moreover, in the teaching and learning process, students develop their ideas in writing. Besides, writing is also not easy because it needed to explore criteria such as punctuation, grammar, spelling, ideas, and paragraph construction. Harmer (2001:257) states that the students could focus on the product of writing or their writing process. The ability to write good English is a need of students.

In addition, some students faced some problems in improving their writing skills. Writing skill was important to be mastered by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023. However, writing skills became more difficult for students because it required hard thinking and simultaneously producing words, sentences, or paragraphs. Moreover, the students still had problems writing a paragraph. They did not know what they should write to begin their descriptive paragraphs. The students did not understand why they were supposed to write. The eighth-grade students had limited vocabulary, so they struggled to connect appropriate dictions in their sentences. They could not compose correct and meaningful sentences, even in a short paragraph. These kinds of difficulties made them unattractive in writing class.

In addition, the teacher used a technique that made the teaching and learning process collaborative learning. The English teacher of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara taught the students how to write texts and paragraphs by applying a small group discussion. The teacher explained a descriptive paragraph in the teaching and learning process and gave an example. The teacher asked them to make a small group consisting of 3-4 students in each group. All the group discussed the material that they learned that day. The teacher's goal was to apply a small group discussion in the learning process so the students could solve their problems and be more active. Even though

the teacher explained the learning material, it did not guarantee that all students wanted to focus on learning because the class situation became noisy.

Even though the teacher explained the generic structure, social function, and language features, it did not guarantee that all students wanted to learn because not all understood what the teacher taught. Only the students who were high achievers could understand and be able to make a paragraph because they focused on learning. Students who were average, even low achievers, could not write a good paragraph, especially a descriptive one because they did not understand. Then, the results of students' descriptive paragraphs did not achieve the expected basic competency. Furthermore, this situation made them uninterested in learning writing, and it also made most of the students did not write the paragraph correctly and clearly.

In teaching, they need something different presented by the teacher. It could be in the form of new teaching techniques or methods that support and help them in writing. To solve the problem in this research, the technique meets students' needs and interests. In the learning and teaching process, there are a lot of techniques that can be applied to learning writing. One of them is clustering technique. The clustering technique is a technique to turn a broad subject into a limited and more manageable topic for short text or paragraph. This technique can be used to generate ideas in writing. It is helpful for students to think visually. In clustering technique, the students write a topic in the center of a piece of paper, then write the ideas suggested by the topic around it, connect these to the topic with lines, and follow the same procedures with their subtopics.

By using clustering technique, the teachers can get students' attention when they explain the material in front of the class. Students can write down the main point of the explanation in a large circle and other details in smaller circles. Langan

(2010:22) states that the clustering technique is another strategy that can be used to generate material by using lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among ideas and details. Thus, students can think and generate ideas to make a good paragraph. When students are interested in the material, they can explore their ideas to write descriptive paragraphs using their own words. Moreover, clustering technique is a simple teaching step. Therefore, if the researcher can get students' attention, it makes the researcher easier to control the atmosphere in the class.

According to the explanation above, the researcher was interested in conducting clustering technique in teaching writing. The researcher considered that the clustering technique to teach writing could help the students organize their ideas in more detail, and they can express their ideas in their minds. In addition, this technique stimulated the students to produce a good writing product. Clustering technique is one of the techniques of teaching writing to make students' writing better. Using this technique encouraged and motivated the students to write, and they could get meaningful interpretations easily. As a result, by looking at the result from the observation above, the researcher was also highly interested and motivated to research on "Improving Writing Skill of the Eighth-Grade Students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in Academic Year 2022/2023 through Clustering Technique".

1.2 Research Problem

The most important aspect of doing any research is formulating the research problem. The researcher must decide on specific and correct questions to be answered and conveyed to find the answer. Based on the background of the study, the students seemed to have a problem understanding the generic structure of descriptive paragraphs. They had difficulties generating and developing their ideas

into unified and coherent sentences to form a paragraph. Thus, applying clustering technique was expected to improve the writing skill of the eighth-grade students, especially in writing the descriptive paragraph. In addition, based on the research background above, the present research problem can be formulated as follows: can writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023 be improved through clustering technique?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Generally, the research objective is undoubtedly intended to answer and solve the research question. A scientific study was conducted to answer the research problem, which has been previously formulated and determined. The present study would be conducted based on the research problem above to answer the problem. To make the present study have a clear direction, it certainly needed to find a solution or scientific answers to the problem in the research that has been formulated. The objective of this study was to determine whether the writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023 can be improved through clustering technique.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

In relation to the research objective, the researcher limited the present study to improve writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023 through clustering technique. In the present study, SMPN 2 Kuta Utara applied the 2013 curriculum. Thus, the present study focused on the fourth main and basic competency as requirements in constructing the lesson plan. The fourth main competency in the 2013 curriculum was focused on processing, reasoning, and presenting the material in the form of concrete and abstract domain

concerned with the development of the material which has been learned and being able to apply the appropriate method in line with the scientific rules.

The basic competency of the present study was about constructing a short and simple transactional text in the form of oral and written which showed asking and giving information related to a person, thing and animal by paying attention to the social function, the structure of text and language features correctly and contextually. In the present study, the researcher focused on the students' skills to write very simple descriptive paragraphs. It focused on describing an animal and person per the generic structure, such as identification, description, and conclusion. Furthermore, it should fulfill the scoring rubric criteria, which mainly focused on format, punctuation and mechanic, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. In other words, the students write a descriptive paragraph based on the criteria needed to get the maximum scores.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Every problem in the present study was supposed to be solved in every research. This research focused on improving the writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023 through clustering technique. The present study is highly expected to provide meaningful research findings. In other words, the result of this study is expected to be an additional review, and they could be implemented in the teacher's real teaching and learning process. Moreover, the results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical as well as practical significance as the following elaboration.

Theoretically, the research finding is expected to contribute and support the evidence of the teaching and learning English especially in improving writing skills

through clustering technique. Moreover, the findings of the present research are expected to give more empirical and approvable evidence in investigating the effectiveness of improving writing skill through clustering technique at SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023. The theory used in this study could enrich existing references and support the explanation. Therefore, these findings may reveal further research areas in foreign language acquisition and they are expected to be used as a basis for conducting similar studies in the future.

Practically, the research finding of this study is beneficial for teachers, students, and other researchers. For teachers, the research findings give some information about using clustering technique to improve students' achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs. It is expected to provide informative feedback concerning the accomplishment of teaching and planning more effective and efficient teaching of writing skills, especially in teaching descriptive paragraphs. For students, the research findings are to give a contribution to the students to improve their ability to write descriptive paragraphs. It is useful for the students to increase their writing in organizations about their writing. On the other hand, for other researchers, the research findings give some references for the next researchers who would implement this technique. This technique was interesting to help the teacher in the teaching and learning process.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

Some complicated terms were used in this research. The definitions of key terms were essential to give a clear understanding of the topic. It can be used to make a better understanding of the topic that was discussed in the present study briefly. The key terms were based on the research variables of the present study.

The researcher only focused on two key terms to avoid misunderstanding and confusion in this research. They were writing skill and clustering technique. To make it clear, the definitions of the key terms were used to give the readers a profound understanding of the present study. The definitions of key terms used in the current research could be briefly and operationally defined as follows:

1. Writing Skill

   Writing skill is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023 to write a descriptive paragraph that describes an animal and person based on the generic structure of descriptive which consists of an identification, descriptions, and a conclusion.

2. Clustering Technique

   Clustering technique is a teaching technique that would be applied to improve writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Kuta Utara in academic year 2022/2023, which was started by clustering the main ideas in a very simple form. The main idea is placed in the middle, and all words must be related to the topic. Students can further develop their writing ability based on the cluster which has already been written down.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review is a set of concepts and terms from experts that are used and required in this study. Therefore, any scientific study conducted is based on some relevant theories. It would assume knowledge and acceptance of the theories that depend on them. The foundation of thought is derived from theories that are needed to solve research problems. Some concepts and terms are used and required for this study to avoid misunderstanding on the readers' part. Theoretical review limited the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables. As a result, the researcher discussed essential points from some related literature. Thus, the present study was based on the following theoretical review: writing skill, descriptive paragraph, clustering technique, and assessing writing.

2.1.1 Writing Skill

Writing skill is an activity used to express ideas, thoughts, issues, and feelings about what someone reads, sees, or experiences to others through written form. Writing can usefully be prepared for by working on other listening, speaking, and reading skills. Some experts have different arguments about the definition of writing. Hyland (2003:9) defines writing as a way of sharing personal meanings, and writing has the individual power to construct their views on a topic. Moreover, writing has the most critical effect; the writer's idea can be seen through their written style. Writing skill differs from other skills like speaking and listening. The course is not passed without someone's ability to express feelings in writing. This makes writing becomes important language skill to be taught.

Meanwhile, writing is a language skill that involves language production and is often referred to as a productive skill. Writing is not just an activity to take notes or information in the media using letters but also to describe the language of expressing the writer's meaning. In learning a language, students can explore their thoughts, feelings, and concepts by using words on paper. Writing is a skill that must be taught and practiced (Patel and Jain, 2008:125). Through writing, they will indirectly communicate information in written form. It means that the students must have knowledge of the structure of language in arranging letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs to obtain good writing results.

In addition, the process of writing is an important thing to control the students. They would understand writing step by step and decrease the problem in writing. The process of writing is a series of integrated activities. However, Pollard (2008:49) states that writing is a productive skill; it needs a reason or purpose for writing. In writing, it just focuses on the process rather than the final product. The writing process aims to help the students understand every stage as essential. In the writing process, the student will be part of the intellectual knowledge and experience. In short, the writing process will enrich their knowledge and experience to do something good in their writing product.

Writing is a process that must be done little by little, not instantly. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007:16), there are four steps in the writing process. They are pre-writing, organizing the ideas, drafting, and polishing. The first step is pre-writing. It can be a way to get some ideas. The second is organizing ideas. In this step, the writer organizes the ideas into simple outlines. The third is drafting. The writer writes the rough draft by using the outline as a guide. The last is polishing. In this step, the writer polish what they have written. Thus, in learning

a language, the steps above are essential for the students to be creative in making their creativity in learning the writing process.

Writing is not a simple task and requires special skills to make students interested in writing. Writing is one of the challenging language skills that should be practiced rapidly by students. Ramet (2007:1) states writing something, everything, and every day would enable students to build up the discipline and commitment required to ensure that they cloud to produce a good writing product. Writing is an activity to share personal meanings, and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual in building their views on a topic (Hyland, 2003:9). In other words, in writing, the students are challenged to pour the ideas and make a good paragraph of a particular topic. In addition, the students must practice every day to be mastered in learning a foreign language.

Anyhow, writing capability is very important in studying English. Writing helps students to learn not only to write down on paper but what they will see in the future with the benefit. Graham (2008:2) states that writing is a complex skill requiring considerable effort and time to master. Teachers must all devote significant attention to the teaching of writing if they expect students to learn how to write effectively with discipline. Besides, writing can be said to be a tool to express ideas to the public community; even it can be referred to by those eager to practice their English in life. Writing can motivate students to elaborate ideas and information so that others can understand them well. They will become more aware of what is important to them, of their own beliefs and values.

The written language has more practice. Someone who never practices writing a lot will find it challenging to master the writing process because it is not a natural process, it takes a process and more practice to be mastered. Harmer

(2004:31) states that students have more time to think than verbally when writing. They can go through what they know in their mind. They can also consult dictionaries, grammar books, or order reference mastery to help them. It means that practice and more references are important in writing to produce language on the writing rules. The writing process provides some necessary steps to produce a good quality writing product that is interesting to read.

From the ideas previously, the researcher concludes that writing is one way to convey their views about some topics in written form. In writing, students can communicate with the reader because writing is a way of remembering and thinking. Writing is not a natural process, but it needs to be mastered. In writing, the writer needs to think about what they need in the writing process to do good writing. In this study, the researcher focused on the theory from Hyland. As a result, writing is a result that is obtained by a process to construct some aspects of writing. In writing skills, the students should be able to create good and interesting writing pieces, but the process is complicated and requires hard work.

2.1.2 Descriptive Paragraph

A paragraph is a group of related sentences which develop one main topic. Zemach and Islam (2005:9) state that a paragraph is a group of sentences with a single topic that describes a particular object. A paragraph usually consists of six to twelve sentences. Generally, a single paragraph consists of three parts; the first paragraph is the topic sentence. The other sentences are called supporting sentences. The supporting sentences contain detailed explanations, reasons, and others that support the topic sentence. The concluding sentence ends a paragraph by repeating the main idea or providing comments. It means that at least one paragraph has one

main topic and the other sentences support that point. In other words, a paragraph should have complete important parts that comprise the paragraph.

Related to the statement above, there are some sentences in that paragraph. Zemach and Islam (2005:5) state that a paragraph comprises about six to twelve sentences on a topic. All of the sentences explain the writer's main idea about that topic. Besides, a descriptive paragraph appeals to the senses and tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description, especially in a descriptive paragraph, the explanation about the topic can be imagined by the reader. In addition, the topic sentence of a descriptive paragraph should control the overall impression of what you are describing. Each sentence also states a topic and controlling idea so that the ideas are clearly expressed.

In addition, a descriptive paragraph is one of many kinds of paragraph writing. The descriptive paragraph is about describing an object. Descriptive means a way to describe something by giving more details. Fiderer (2002:17) states that a descriptive paragraph gives a clear picture of person, place, and objects. The description presents the object in detail to visualize the things that would be described. A good description gives imagination to the reader in the form a picture of the object. In addition, paragraph acts as structural signals for the readers to guide them in catching and understanding the writer's meaning. Thus, the reader can imagine the object and make them easily understand what is being described.

Zemach and Rumisek (2005:25) state that a descriptive paragraph explains how something looks or feels. This paragraph uses prepositions to tell how things look, feel, taste, sound, or smell. Besides, Kane (2000:351) states that the description of a descriptive paragraph is about a sensory experience, like how something looks, sounds, and tastes. Moreover, the descriptive paragraph can

describe a place, thing, or person that appeals to the readers' senses. In writing a descriptive paragraph, three generic structures must be considered: identification, description, and conclusion. It means that the description in a descriptive paragraph would be expressed in detail and vivid descriptions of the events.

Evans (2000:7) defines a descriptive paragraph as describing a person which consists of the content, including the generic structure of the descriptive paragraph. The generic structures of a descriptive paragraph are, namely, introduction, description, and conclusion. The writer gives general information about what things would be described in the introduction. The next part is in the main body (description). In this part, the writer gives some information in which descriptions about the person, thing, or place. The descriptions describe its appearance, physical appearance, personal qualities, and others. Moreover, the conclusion is about the point of the writer's opinion about the object that is going to be described. In this part, the writer should conclude the paragraph.

A descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that deals with the use of an adjective. This paragraph uses adjectives that tell the reader how someone or something looks or feels. Adjectives are important in a descriptive paragraph. They are like spices. They add flavor to their writing. Zemach and Rumisek (2005:25) state that a descriptive paragraph explains how someone or something looks or feels. This paragraph uses adjectives, which tell students how the object looks, feels, smells, sounds, and tastes. In addition, it also needs prepositions to tell them how the space was organized. Each student must learn the ability to write. Thus, writing is necessary to teach to make students easier to express their idea in writing.

To sum up, a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that describes an object, such as a person, place, or thing. The descriptive paragraph has three parts of

generic structures. They are an introduction, description, and conclusion. In the introduction, there is one main topic sentence in the paragraph. The description presents the specific detail and develops to visualize the reader as an object. The last part is the conclusion. The writer concludes their paragraph writing by giving any comments that restate the topic sentence and supporting sentences. In addition, the paragraph must have one main idea with a single topic. The supporting sentences must support and develop the main idea.

2.1.3 Clustering Technique

The term technique is commonly used in the teaching-learning process. Clustering technique is one of the techniques used in learning writing activities. A technique is a way of doing something expertly or requires skill. In other words, the technique is the teacher's way of teaching their students in a learning process to make it easier to understand the material of a subject. Brown (2004:14) states that technique is the specific activities manifested in the classroom consistently with a method and therefore align with the approach. When learning, teaching techniques are essential for the teacher to apply in the classroom. If the teaching technique is appropriate, the learning atmosphere will be more comfortable for the students.

The clustering technique is a creative activity. In creating a clustering technique, people tried to find things related to the topic using a visual scheme or chart. It is a new association for students to think more creatively. Clouse (2005:24) states that clustering is a way of generating and connecting ideas visually. Clustering is a good way to be used when they are uncertain how to express their ideas well. In addition, using the clustering technique gives the students opportunities to be active in teaching and learning. Students can relate new

vocabulary to other terms, helping them incorporate the new vocabulary into their knowledge base. Clustering technique can be used to develop their writing ability. It can make the students follow the teaching and learning process interesting.

Clustering technique can help students write descriptive paragraphs. According to Hogue (2008:23), clustering technique is a pre-writing technique that helps students to the idea in writing. This technique stimulates the students' ideas by connecting each word when they develop their descriptions in the writing process. It is used as a reflection of creative thinking. Clustering is related to summarizing or listing the idea. In pre-writing, the student lists ideas to include in writing. The clustering technique helps the students organize their thoughts before developing them into paragraphs. Thus, clustering is a pre-writing process that helps us to organize the ideas from a brainstorming list into categories of circles/boxes, lines/arrows to do good writing.

In addition, Savage and Mayer (2005:57) state that clustering technique is another effective method that we could use to narrow a subject. To cluster, write the subject in the middle of the page and then circle it and write related ideas around the circle around the subject. A writer can easily give an idea of what will be written through clustering technique, which is especially helpful to visual learners. In a cluster diagram, the central components of a paragraph are presented visually. Therefore, clustering could be considered a creative activity because when creating a clustering, students try to find things related to the topic using a visual scheme or chart. While students understand their clusters, they can perceive their use in practice to continue writing and seeking the relevant case of the topic.

Clustering is another technique that can be used to generate material. According to Langan (2008:31), clustering can provide an initial understanding of

ideas and details to one. Like brainstorming or free associating, clustering allows the writer to the idea. The clustering technique uses a pictogram to show the relationship and order of ideas. The main supporting idea is connected to the center with lines and cycles, and minor supporting details are also incorporated into each circle containing the main details. In clustering, students can use lines, arrows, and circles to show how the ideas are connected. Moreover, the clustering technique can be used when they cannot express their ideas.

Moreover, clustering is a technique in writing a paragraph that is like the process of classification or grouping. Clustering is an activity before writing a paragraph by making clusters about the ideas that are owned, and the relevance of the paragraph will be written. In applying this technique in the writing process, the students can easily generate their ideas and make the students interested in learning to write descriptive paragraphs. Besides, clustering technique is recommended to improve students' motivation. In addition, they write a descriptive paragraph based on Oshima and Hogue (2007), who state that there are four steps in teaching writing through clustering technique. The steps can be described as follows:

1. Students can determine the choice by choosing one topic suggested and writing it in a large circle in the center of the piece of paper.

2. The students start to think about ideas for one or two minutes, write each sub idea next to the topic, and draw a circle around it. Connect it with a line to the main idea.

3. The students continue to add related ideas in a line and write any ideas in even smaller circles.

4. The students look over the group of circles which probably be the most productive ideas for the paragraph.

In addition, clustering technique is a useful technique that can stimulate a creative idea for students in writing a paragraph. In the present study, the teacher gives a topic to the students. The researcher asks the students to write the topic in a large circle in the center of a piece of paper. The students start to think about the ideas related to the topic, write each new idea in smaller circles around the large circle, and draw lines to connect it to the main idea. The students continue to add ideas, each circled and connected by a line to one train of thought. The students continue it until they look over the groups of circles. Moreover, the students can easily develop and organize their ideas systematically.

2.1.4 Assessing Writing

Assessing students is the essential part that must be done by the teacher during the teaching and learning process, especially in writing a descriptive paragraph. According to Hyland (2003:213), assessment refers to various ways to collect information on students' language ability or achievement. Without the information gained from the assessment, it would be difficult to identify the gap between students' current and target performance and to know the progress. Carter and Nunan (2001:138) state that assessment is carried out to collect information on their language proficiency and/or achievement that stakeholders can use in language learning programs for various purposes. Thus, to evaluate the students, the teacher should assess them; then, teachers will know their abilities.

Assessment refers to various ways of collecting information on learners' language ability or achievement. There is some function of assessment, such as measuring their ability to master the material, measuring the students' experience, and measuring to what extent the students catch the material that the teacher gives

in the teaching and learning process. Miller et al. (2009:28) state that the assessment is a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about student learning (observation, rating, performance, or project paper and pencil test) and the information of value judgments concerning the learning process. Furthermore, the teacher should prepare a test design to assess the students' skills.

A starting point for developing an assessment strategy is to identify the objectives required by the teacher to assess the students' writing. Marzano (2006:3) adds many conclusions that provide insight into effective classroom assessment, such as (1) feedback from classroom assessment should give students a clear picture of their progress on learning goals and how they might improve, (2) feedback on classroom assessment should encourage students to improve, (3) classroom assessment should be formative, (4) formative classroom assessment should be frequent. Those things need to be given by the teacher so that the students are more interested in writing activities during the teaching and learning process.

One of the primary concerns of educational assessment and testing has reliability. According to Weigle (2002:81), the final point to be made with the design aspects of the test development is that it is important to consider all aspects of test usability (reliability, construct, validity, authenticity, instructiveness impact, and practically) from the start of the test development process. The reliability would give good feedback to the English teacher. The important aspect is that the teacher can test students' writing skills. Richards and Renandya (2002:335) state that more authentic assessment forms, such as portfolios, interviews, journals, project work, and self or peer assessment, are more student-centered. On the other hand, assessment tools provide them with the tools to engage more in their learning and give them a better sense of control over their learning.

According to Arends and Kilcher (2010:217), there are two types of assessment: formative and summative. Formative assessment involves collecting information before or during instruction, which the teacher can use to make instruction decisions. Students can also use this information to adjust the learning technique they use to learn particular content and solve the problem. Besides, summative assessment involves collecting information after an instructional segment, such as a unit, a semester, or a year's work. Summative assessment is often used to judge and evaluate students' accomplishments. The formative and summative assessment aims to report on their progress in teaching and learning.

Assessment of writing is critical to know their understanding of the materials taught. Students may be required to produce essays, written examinations, or laboratory reports whose main purpose is to demonstrate their mastery of disciplinary course content. Weir (2005:1) states that in developing assessment tools, a decision must be taken on the criteria in the particular domain under review. This decision and the measure used for operational vibrancy must be ethically defensible, and the developers must be accountable for their product. In assessing writing, the teacher focuses on the content and language (Coffin et al., 2003:75).

The researcher gives the paragraph construction test to the students because they want to know whether or not the achievement of students' writing skills. The assessment requires a set of criteria in the analytic scoring procedures. Analytic scoring is based on a depth analysis aspect of writing, such as the organization, elaboration, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Oshima and Hogue (2007:196) state that the format paragraph includes punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure. An analytic score is usually based on a scale of 0-100, with each aspect receiving a portion of the total points.

Therefore, the analytical scoring procedure is important in writing tests because it validates the scoring test as an important aspect of learning assessment.

Every teaching and learning process is completed with an assessment to determine the success of each teaching and learning activity and to know the subjects' progress. In the present research, the researcher focused on assessing students' skills in writing descriptive paragraphs. In addition, the assessment is administered ordinarily by giving tests. The test includes pre-test and post-test. The researcher will ask the students to write a descriptive paragraph and score the students' writing results using the scoring rubric adopted by Oshima and Hogue (2007:196). The scoring criteria are format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical review is the review of the relevant research result, which has the function of reviewing the previous research with the present research. The purpose of the empirical review is to support the present study by considering the result and whether or not the present study would be as successful as the relevant studies in the empirical review. Besides, the knowledge of empirical review evidence can help the researcher avoid unintentional replication of previous research results and keep the researcher in a better position for their study result. Two similar types of research were related to the present research. The related study used as references could be briefly and concisely described as the following.

The first research was conducted by Wijaya (2017), entitled "Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text through Clustering Technique for the Eighth Grade Students of SMPN 23 Malang". The objective of his research was to

know whether or not the eighth-grade students of SMPN 23 Malang could write a descriptive text. This study investigated how clustering technique could improve the eighth graders of SMPN 23 Malang in writing descriptive text. His study showed that the clustering technique can improve their ability to write a descriptive text. Their scores in the test delivered showed improvement. Moreover, the clustering technique could help the students achieve a good score.

The researcher above showed that after conducting two cycles there were constant improvement after the researcher applied clustering technique, the students had a positive response. However, the lesson plan of his studies did not mention the implementation of clustering technique in detail. In the lesson plan, the researcher only mentioned about clustering technique generally without mentioning the implementation of clustering technique step by step, so it made the students confused about the activity and they were difficult to develop their ideas. Regarding the weaknesses above, the present study stated the implementation of clustering technique in the lesson plan clearly. In the present study, the researcher used the theory of Oshima and Hogue (2007) in explaining the steps of clustering technique. It was used because the theory had detail and clear explanation about the steps of clustering technique, and it could make the students easier to understand what they would learn in the teaching and learning process especially writing.

The second research was conducted by Dembo (2019), entitled "Improving Writing Ability of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP PGRI 6 Denpasar in Academic Year 2018/2019 through Clustering Technique". This study was conducted in the classroom action research design. Moreover, the objective of the study was to find out whether or not writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMP PGRI 6 Denpasar in academic year 2018/2019 can be improved through

clustering technique. Furthermore, the research showed that the clustering technique improved students' writing ability. It could be shown from the post-test cycle I and II, and it was found the implementation of clustering technique could be improved through implementing clustering technique.

The researcher has already provided some expert theories related to support the study. The teaching technique was effective for the students because the researcher could improve the students' writing ability by giving different topics. However, in the lesson plan especially in the learning material, the researcher did not give an example of clustering technique for teaching the students. Students might be confused what they should make in their clusters. Concerning the weaknesses above, in the present study, the researcher gave an example of descriptive paragraph in clustering technique. Furthermore, it could help the students to avoid misunderstanding in making their clusters. Therefore, the present classroom action research applied clustering technique as the way to help the students in developing and generating ideas.