

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In learning English, four skills should be taken into account. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the four language skills crucial for English students. Bailey (2004:23) states that writing is an important skill in writing academic work. However, writing is the most difficult skill because it requires hard thinking to produce words, sentences, and paragraphs. Writing is not simply writing down what the writers see or feel on a piece of paper. Writing is an essential feature of learning a language because it provides a good means of fixing vocabulary, spelling, and sentence patterns. Therefore, it becomes an important aspect of students' expression at a higher state.

Writing is also not an easy task because it needs to be explored about criteria such as punctuation, paragraph construction, ideas, spelling, word choice, and grammar. Harmer (2004:257) states that in teaching writing, the students could focus on the product of writing or on the writing process itself. Meanwhile, students need to focus on idea, imagination, information, creativity and feeling in writing to make it attractive and interesting. Those steps are crucial for students so that they can practice and improve their writing skills. The students are expected to write as well as possible in various genres for various purposes. In addition, the students' obstacle was in expressing and developing their ideas in written form.

Writing is not easy to learn, especially in making paragraphs. Students must pay attention to the role of writing when they begin to express their feelings and ideas. Students must write paragraph sequences and organize paragraphs well. For well-organized paragraphs, students must master the writing aspects. When

students write, they do more than arrange words to make sentences; they must follow the steps of writing. According to Zemach and Rumisek (2005:3), in the writing process, several steps and processes should be taken to make a good paragraph, such as pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and re-writing. In writing a paragraph, students express and develop the ideas and focus on writing a paragraph structure using appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and correct spelling.

In this research, there were so many problems that the students faced in learning writing, especially in writing a paragraph. They found it difficult to create good words, even for a short descriptive paragraph. The students could not write paragraphs because there were teachers in SMPN 6 Denpasar who only provided a little and asked them to write down a short descriptive paragraph without teaching them how to write a good one. The teaching technique used in teaching-learning progress did not motivate the students in writing, and their writing skill has not improved. On the other hand, the teacher's technique created a boring situation, and the students were not enthusiastic about learning writing.

Based on an interview with one of the teachers in SMPN 6 Denpasar, the teacher used a monotonous teaching technique to teach writing. The teacher explained the material and showed an example, and students were then asked to make their paragraph based on the example given. Sometimes, the students were asked to write a paragraph without guidance on constructing a good paragraph. Moreover, the writing process was not given clear attention and without considering the organization of the paragraph and other criteria. In writing paragraphs, they still had difficulties generating and organizing the ideas into well-written paragraphs which showed the students had difficulties in making a good descriptive paragraph. They should be taught how to write a well-organized paragraph.

Teachers still relied on the lecturing technique as the learning and teaching process focus. This old practice needed to change as the 2013 curriculum required teachers to focus on student-centered learning. This means that students should be more active than teachers and always involved in the teaching and learning process. Teachers tended to ask students to write a paragraph after the explanation. Students were also asked to listen carefully and create a paragraph based on the teacher's explanation. They were not involved in the teaching and learning process, and they would get bored because the learning process was not interesting. In addition, this teaching technique made the students individualistic, making smart students smarter and low-achiever students become much worse.

Kagan and Kagan (2009) state that a simultaneous roundtable is one of the writing techniques that could motivate students in their learning process. Asking the students to work in a group is how simultaneous roundtable works when the learning process. Considering simultaneous roundtable is a cooperative learning which builds the students' creative thinking for writing and communication skills. Using simultaneous roundtable can solve the problem where the eighth-grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 had low writing ability, such as difficulty developing their ideas into a descriptive paragraph and writing them coherently and grammatically following its generic structure.

In addition, the teacher can elaborate the technique with additional media, such as a picture, to make the simultaneous roundtable work well. The students will easily develop their ideas in writing because there are clues in the pictures. Implementing simultaneous roundtable combined with picture can improve the students' writing skills and make them easier to visualize verbal pictures in their heads. Using pictures can help them comprehend the meaning of the words. Pictures

are not just an aspect of the method but through their representation of places, objects and people. The teacher hopes the students can understand more and strengthen their memory from pictures. In addition, the students can learn and write easier by showing pictures as media. This teaching technique promotes team building and writing skills in an enjoyable, fun, challenging, and interesting way. Related to the problems, simultaneous roundtable combined with picture is expected to construct paragraphs according to the prompt given collaboratively.

Based on the background of the study, the researcher tried to conduct simultaneous roundtable combined with picture in teaching writing. The researcher considered that using simultaneous roundtable combined with picture could help the students to create a good writing composition since the implementation of the technique could stimulate them to improve their writing skills. As a result, by looking at the results from the observation above, the researcher was also highly interested and motivated to research “The Use of Simultaneous Roundtable Combined with Picture to Improve Writing Skill of the Eighth-grade Students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in Academic Year 2022/2023.”

## **1.2 Research Problem**

A research problem is a term used to state the problem of the study. Based on the background of the research, the students seemed not interested in learning writing through lecturing technique, and it influenced on their writing skills. This condition must be urgently solved by applying an innovative teaching technique. In the present study, the researcher chose simultaneous roundtable combined with picture which had simple steps in teaching-learning writing. Therefore, the present research problem could be formulated as follows: can writing skill of the eighth-

grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 be improved through simultaneous roundtable combined with picture?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Every scientific research needs an objective to be the guide in getting what is needed. Scientific research is conducted to answer the research problem under the study, which has been previously formulated and determined. Therefore, this study was designed to answer the research problem which had stated before. Based on the research problem above, the current research objective was certainly intended to find a solution to the research problem that has been formulated. The objective of this study is to determine whether writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 can be improved through simultaneous roundtable combined with picture?

### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

Teaching writing has a complex analysis and criteria. There were so many problems in writing. Moreover, many strategies could be used as the solution to fix the problem in writing. Concerning the research objective, this study was focused on using simultaneous roundtable combined with picture to improve writing skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023. In the present study, SMPN 6 Denpasar applied the 2013 curriculum, so the lesson plan and learning materials were based on the curriculum and syllabus of the eighth-grade students. The researcher needed to know the syllabus at the school to make the lesson plans based on the fourth main and basic competency.

The fourth main competency was demonstrating the skills of reasoning, processing, and presenting creatively, productively, critically, independently,

collaboratively, and communicatively, in concrete and abstract domains according to what is learned in schools and other sources from the same theoretical point of view. The fourth basic competency (4.6) was compiling short and simple spoken and written transactional interaction texts involving the act of giving and asking for information regarding the whereabouts of people, and animals, taking into account social functions, text structure, and linguistic elements that are correct and appropriate to the context. In addition, it should fulfil the scoring rubric criteria by Oshima and Hogue (2007), assessment criteria, which focus on format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence structure. In addition, the descriptive paragraph should be completed with an identification, descriptions and a conclusion.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The researcher paid attention to using simultaneous roundtable combined with picture to improve the writing ability of the eighth-grade students in SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023. The research findings were expected to give theoretical and practical information of the importance and useful using simultaneous roundtable combined with picture in teaching writing, especially if the students wanted to describe an object in such vivid detail. Both theoretical and practical were important to make sure that the present study would give beneficial impact. Moreover, the results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical as well as practical significance as the following discussion.

Theoretically, the purpose of the study was to strengthen theories of writing. In addition, it is used to theoretically know the writing improvement using simultaneous roundtable combined with picture. The findings can be used to

support and contribute to the theory in developing students' writing skills. The theories used in this study could enrich the existing references and support the explanation. The current research findings could be used as empirical evidence to inform other researchers in the future when they want to do classroom activities, writing skills and the simultaneous roundtable combined with picture. Thus, the theories could help the teacher to understand and develop the teaching and learning.

Practically, the significance of the study is expected to give a contribution for the teachers in teaching activities in the classroom. The present study was to help teachers solve students' problems in generating and organizing idea into descriptive paragraphs also based on the necessary criteria. On the other hand, the findings were expected to encourage students to improve their writing skills. The teaching technique could be continuously applied in the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes. At last, this study could be used as a reference for other researchers to conduct a similar study using a classroom action-research design and applying simultaneous roundtable combined with picture.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Term**

In conducting the present research, some terms were used in this study. Since the terms in the study were sometimes too broad and explained many things, it was important to specify what the variables of the study would be. The main conditions of this study were divided into two parts. The first was writing skill and the second was simultaneous roundtable combined with a picture. In addition, the key terms used in this study should be operationally and clearly defined to avoid misunderstandings and make the researcher easier to understand the point of the explanations. The operational definitions are important to make the readers

understand the research variables. The definition of key terms used in the present research could be operationally defined as the following explanation.

1. Writing skill

Writing skill is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar in academic year 2022/2023 to write a descriptive paragraph which consists of 6 – 12 sentences and describes a person, thing, or an animal based on its generic structure: identification, description, and conclusion.

2. Simultaneous Roundtable Combined with Picture

Simultaneous roundtable combined with picture is operationally defined as a teaching technique that combines simultaneous roundtable and a picture as a teaching medium, and it is used to improve the students' writing skills by giving a picture to a group of 4-5 students. The first student writes a sentence on a piece of paper. The student then passes their paper clockwise so each teammate can add to the prior sentences until it becomes a paragraph.

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## **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, the theoretical review used in the scientific study is expected to contribute practical significance and has to be conducted on the basis of some relevant theoretical constructs and empirical evidence. Theoretical review limits the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables. As a result, the researcher discusses the theories which are relevant to this study. The present study is based on the following theoretical backgrounds that were discussed as follows: writing skill, descriptive paragraph, simultaneous roundtable combined with picture, and writing assessment.

##### **2.1.1 Writing Skill**

In English, there are four basic skills that students should master. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the most difficult skills to learn among the four skills. Writing is a procedure skill that can help students to transfer their ideas into a piece of paper. Kane (2005:5) states that writing is a complex activity. Furthermore, Richards and Renandya (2002:303) add that writing is the most difficult skill for foreign language learners to master. The difficulty is not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable text so that their writing would be exciting and enjoyable to read by readers so that readers easily understand the contents of descriptive paragraphs.

According to Patel and Jain (2008:125), writing is a skill that must be taught and practiced. Writing is essential to learning a language because it provides a

perfect means of fixing vocabulary, spelling, and sentence patterns. It becomes an important aspect of the students' expressions at the higher stage. Writing is the most efficiently acquired when practice in writing parallels practice in the other skills. Writing provides an excellent consolidating activity. Writing is also useful for setting homework exercises and for some class texts. As a productive skill, English writing has widely been viewed and recognized as a challenging subject and the most difficult language skill by most students.

Furthermore, Graham and Perin (2007:3) state that writing is not just an option for young people but also a necessity. It means that writing, especially in English, is a skill we need to master not only young people but all ages need to master writing. Writing becomes a primary need in life because it is not only for academic purposes but also for entertainment; therefore, it is hard enough to create good writing without mastering it. On the other hand, writing is a bridge to weave international communication. In the modern era, writing is needed to create an e-mail and share information about the writers' point of view about something and get feedback. In a company, writing is done to report financial status. Writing can reflect and introduce their personality as every writer has a different writing style.

Writing is the most difficult skill to be learned because the students will learn how to organize their ideas into a written form and make it easy to be understood by the readers. Good writing is seen in the writing products. The writer needs not only the written text with a systematic idea, but it should also be comprehensible. This opinion is supported by Richards and Renandya (2002:303), who state that writing is the most difficult skill for foreign language learners to master. The difficulty is in generating and organizing ideas and translating an idea into a readable text. Because the better your writing, the more people will easily

understand the meaning of the writing you have made. When the writing is important, the students could be able to express their ideas.

Writing is one of the productive skills that should be learned by students regularly, especially in processing a good paragraph. Writing is a process when the writers use their skills to express their knowledge in written form. Writing is not only focused on how the writers express their knowledge, but they must understand the structure, vocabulary, and punctuation. Writing is the concept of expressing or telling the best knowledge in written form. Taylor (2009:xii) says that writing is not merely a skill that is employed to record our knowledge. But, every moment at which we confront what learning and understanding are all about. In writing skills, they must understand all the writing aspects to create a good paragraph.

Writing is not simple as transferring ideas to written work. It is a complex task to do; moreover, when it is to write in a foreign language. However, writers do not have to be genius to write clear, effective English. Compiling a piece of writing requires linguistic knowledge, vocabulary choice, syntactic pattern, and a cohesive device that is part of the building blocks of texts (Hyland, 2003:3). Also, writing needs time for brainstorming in addition to making sure we choose a good topic, word choices, etc. It is supported by Zemach and Rumisek (2005:3), who argue that writing well is more than just putting words together and made-up sentences; it needs more complicated steps to produce good writing.

Moreover, 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. It involves teaching students about the stages. The goal is to help the students see their stages in the writing process. The role of the teacher is needed as a guide for the students when they are in the writing process. In other words,

through writing, they not only learn how to organize their ideas into the written form but are also concerned with grammar and vocabulary because the learners have to know the meaning of the words used and the structure of sentences correctly to make their writing understandable and easy to read.

In addition, Harmer (2001:80-84) also states that the types of writing the teacher get students to do are based on their age, interest, and level. For example, give elementary students to write postcards and intermediate levels to alter dictation or write their newspaper articles. The teacher can ask them to write a report to advance the level. It can be chosen from their area, like their daily or leisure activities. Harmer (2004:257) adds that there are several different approaches to the practice of writing skill both in and outside the classroom. Some writing techniques propose writing accomplishment. Besides, it has different steps in its implementation in teaching writing to improve students' writing skills.

McDonald and McDonald (2002:7) add writing is usefully described as a process that shows the continuous change in time, like growth in organic nature. Different things happen at different stages in the process of putting thoughts into words and words into paper. The writing process is divided at the point where the "writing idea" is ready for the words and the page: Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) explain that there are five steps in the writing process such as: pre-writing, organizing, drafting, polishing, and writing the final copy. Those steps are learned universally. To be able to write is a must that obstructs the progress of the writing. The writing processes are needed to practice the students' writing skills.

To sum up, writing is an activity of sharing information, ideas, feelings, or thoughts on a piece of written work through three stages: pre-writing, writing, and re-writing. To make a good writing product, the writer should follow the writing

process because writing is a complex skill. Writing focuses on the process rather than on the final product. The purpose is to help students see each stage as important and dedicate time to each of them. The teacher needs to consider students' age, interests, and level of writing. In addition, it is also required to pay attention to the goals of writing and the audience. Therefore, it should be learned and taught properly by the teacher to improve students' capability in writing.

### **2.1.2 Descriptive Paragraph**

A descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that contains the description of an object, which is an animal, place, person, thing, etc. The purpose of a descriptive paragraph is to describe or describe a special object. The characteristics possessed by descriptive paragraphs are that the paragraph contains descriptions that focus on only one object. The sentences should be explained the topic logically in specific detail and explanations. Usually, the description is detailed—for example, a descriptive paragraph about animals. The paragraph can contain various information about physical descriptions, food, habitat, origin, breeding, and unique facts about these animals. Another characteristic of a descriptive paragraph is using the simple present tense to describe the object vividly.

A descriptive paragraph is a group of related sentences about a single topic. A good paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentence, and concluding sentence (Hogue, 2008:4) and should maintain a consistent flow. Students must learn and practice the art of putting words together in well-formed sentences, paragraphs, and texts. There are some kinds of paragraphs in writing. One of the paragraphs is descriptive, which aims to describe a person, place, or thing. The paragraph structure is divided into three parts. The first part is identification, the

second part is a description, and the last part is a conclusion. Identification contains the topic of what object will be discussed. At the same time, the description contains a description of an object regarding the details of the object, such as the physical state of the object, its origin to other unique facts.

A descriptive text has a generic structure that consists of identification, description, and conclusion. Identification of descriptive paragraph names the topic which shows what will be discussed in the whole paragraph. Descriptions are the supporting sentences that give vivid detail to describe the topic. In addition, Oshima and Hogue (2007:65) explain that supporting sentences of a descriptive paragraph provides the details that prove the truth of your topic sentences and make the writing rich and interesting. The conclusion is a part of the paragraph that summarizes the topic stated in the identification and description. Hogue (2008:100) states that the conclusion of the description may repeat the idea expressed in the identification.

Based on Kane (2005:25), description is about sensory experience, which tells about how an object looks, sounds, or tastes. In a descriptive paragraph, writers use an adjective to tell the readers how the thing looks, feels, tastes, sounds, or smells, while preposition is used in writing a descriptive paragraph. The writers must observe and record specific details that appeal to the readers' senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch). A descriptive paragraph develops an image by using precise sensory words and phrases. The goal is to make it easier for readers to imagine things, animals, or people from the characteristics that the author has conveyed in the paragraph to make it easy to understand.

According to Zemach and Rumisek (2005:25), a descriptive paragraph explains how someone or something looks or feels. Furthermore, the central problem is to arrange what is seen into a significant pattern. Langan (2008:179)

adds that when describing a person or a place, writers give the readers a picture in words. A good description is a word picture, meaning that the readers can imagine the person, thing, and animal in their mind. In addition, to make it easier for writers to write paragraphs, the picture is intended so that the author can accurately write the physical characteristics of a thing, animal, or person, so it is easy for readers to understand what is being written by the writers.

Field (2009:44) states that a paragraph can have various lengths but still in one topic and can be seen from the topic sentence. Within the group of sentences, there should usually be a topic sentence. This is the main sentence, and the content of the paragraph is expanded in the rest. Furthermore, Zemach and Islam (2005:9) state that a paragraph 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 writers want to say. In this case, the writer can tell the readers about the writer's critical thinking on something. In addition, to make a good paragraph, it is necessary to express and organize the ideas and set them in chronological order based on what kind of paragraph it is.

There are several kinds of paragraph writing; one of them is descriptive. Folse et al. (2010:154) state that a descriptive paragraph describes how something or someone looks or feels. It gives an impression of something that creates a sensory image in the reader's mind. A well-descriptive paragraph uses words that appeal to some or all the five senses: sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell. In other words, it can be said that in making a great descriptive paragraph, a writer needs to know how to use the words related to the five senses properly. In addition, it makes it easier for writers to write paragraphs. The image is intended so that the author can accurately write the physical characteristics of a thing, animal, or person so that it

is easy for readers to understand what is being described. Writing descriptive should be done by providing a vivid detail descriptions to make the readers imagine.

In addition, Oshima and Hogue (2007:21) define that a descriptive paragraph appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description is a word picture; the reader can imagine the object, place, or person in their mind. A description usually follows a pattern of organization which is called spatial order. Spatial order is the arrangement of things in space. It helps the readers understand the object, person, animal, and thing better than before learning to write descriptive paragraphs. In addition, the descriptive paragraph also aims to make readers understand what is described in the paragraph to the smallest detail. Thus, the readers no longer need to ask because the author of the paragraph has written the ideas in stunning detail.

Furthermore, Savage and Mayer (2005:28-33) state that descriptive writing uses words to build images for the readers. They added that the organization of descriptive text consists of an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. In the introduction, writers give the audience brief details about what is described; in body paragraphs, writers write the details, and in conclusion, writers signal the end of the text. In addition, the format Savage and Mayer insist has a close definition to what is widely used in Indonesia in which a descriptive paragraph consists of identification, description, and conclusion. In identification, the writers generally state or identify the object they want to describe or introduce to the readers. Body paragraph in this part, the writers will develop the descriptions and make them as detailed as possible to make the readers easily picture the object they are trying to describe. The conclusion is the last step after finishing the description. A good conclusion can remind the readers of the writer's important points in the paragraph.



In conclusion, a descriptive paragraph is a paragraph that explains how a thing looks, tastes, sounds, feels and smells. It consists of six to twelve sentences in which there should be an identification, description, and conclusion. In a descriptive paragraph, writers give the readers a picture in words; furthermore, it should be vividly explained, and it can appeal to the readers' sense; thus, the readers can imagine it easily. In addition, descriptive paragraphs should be written in a special order, which means the arrangement of things in space. Moreover, in constructing a descriptive paragraph, the writer should follow three parts of the descriptive paragraph as identification, description, and conclusion. In identification, the writers should introduce their topic generally. In description, the writers develop the descriptions and make them as detailed as possible. In conclusion, the writers conclude their descriptive paragraph using short sentences.

### **2.1.3 Simultaneous Roundtable Combined with Picture**

Students found it difficult when they started writing something, especially a paragraph. They are usually confused about what they are going to write because they have no idea. However, they must manage to write a good paragraph. To improve their writing, especially paragraph writing, it is necessary to find an appropriate teaching technique to facilitate good paragraph writing. Simultaneous roundtable combined with picture is one teaching technique that can be used to help students write a paragraph. This teaching technique was combined with a picture that related to the topic. This would help the teacher solve the problem and make it easier for the students to build their interesting descriptive paragraphs.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:192), cooperative learning is an approach that involves pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. In

cooperative learning, group activities are the major mode of learning. Group activities are carefully planned to maximize students' interaction and to facilitate students' contributions to each other learning. It also can be used in collaboration with other teaching methods and approaches. Furthermore, they add that cooperative learning aims to foster cooperation rather than competition to develop communicative competence through socially structured interactive activities. As language learning allows students to work in small groups, many techniques include applying cooperative learning. One of them is simultaneous roundtable.

Simultaneous roundtable is a cooperative learning strategy that allows students to work in small groups or pairs to actively engage in the learning process and improve their understanding of the content (Kagan and Kagan, 2009). Each team member is responsible not only for their learning but also for helping teammates learn. Simultaneous roundtable strategy is one cooperative learning part where each student writes a response on their piece of paper in teams. Students then pass their papers clockwise so each teammate can add to the prior responses. Simultaneous roundtable will help the teachers improve the students' writing scores, and the students can make descriptive paragraphs properly and correctly.

Based on Kagan and Kagan (2009), one of the techniques in cooperative learning which can be applied to the planning process is roundtable brainstorming. It also can be applied in a while writing stage. Based on Muhammad and Hollie (2011), the students form a group, and each sits around the table. Then they will be given a single sheet by their teacher. That single sheet contains a single question related to the topic of writing. Every group member should share their ideas by writing them on that sheet. After that, they deliver to the person next to him. The person should write their ideas too. This activity will end if all group members have

shared their ideas. Those ideas will help the students arrange the text. By collecting the ideas in a group, the students will not get confused about what they should write because they already have some ideas as references to write. They also can prepare to make it in a good organization to make it interesting.

Another way is the students simultaneously responding to their teammates' descriptive writing, which is called "Simultaneous Roundtable." Suppose that in a group, five students, namely A, B, C, D, and E, are going through the editing stage of a writing task. At the same time, they edit each other's descriptive writing. It works like this: A's descriptive writing is edited by B, B's descriptive writing by C, C's descriptive writing by D, D's descriptive writing by E, E's descriptive writing by A. When it is completed, each student passes the work paper on their hands to a friend sitting next to them to be edited for another time. Accordingly, now A's descriptive writing is edited by C, B's descriptive writing by D, C's descriptive writing by E, D's descriptive writing by A, and E's descriptive writing by B. The simultaneous roundtable is only completed when each writing product has been corrected by all team members except the writer him/herself.

Simultaneous roundtable ensures equal participation among group members and exposes students to multiple viewpoints and ideas. By having students write their ideas as opposed to speaking them, Simultaneous roundtable helps students focus their attention, gives them quiet time to think about their responses, and provides an accumulative record. In simultaneous roundtable, students could build upon each other's contributions. It encourages students to adjust their writing (in areas like content, conventions, style, and vocabulary) as they respond and react to the comment of the researcher that preceded them (Barkley et al, 2005). Simultaneous roundtable provides interesting experience for the students.

According to Nunan (2003:270), students learn best when visual reinforcement, pictures, etc., make the learning environment more pleasant and relaxed and encourage students to concentrate. In this case, the teacher can use the media as a t-chart according to the topic to facilitate students in writing a descriptive paragraph. The picture is one medium that helps students to write ideas. Students can directly see what they are describing using visual media such as a picture. It is appropriate to combine simultaneous roundtable with a picture as a media of communication because their characteristics support more enjoyable learning. McKay (2006:260) states the pictures used should be familiar to students' daily lives to stimulate them during the writing process. Pictures also give some inspiration to students when writing begins to make it easier.

Harmer (2007:330) states that pictures can provide stimulation for writing-habit activities. Students can describe a picture and write the descriptions based on the picture given. It will stimulate their brain to think fast about what they will describe. Teachers have always used pictures or graphics to draw, taken from books, newspapers, and magazines or photographs, to facilitate learning. A picture can be a flashcard, large wall picture, cue card, photograph, or illustration. Some teachers also use projected slides and images from an overhead projector or sometimes draw on the board. The existence of pictures as media in writing descriptive paragraphs will make the students immediately see and think fast without putting the picture in their minds. In addition, they will construct their writing easier as media stimulate them (Harmer, 2007:178)

Simultaneous roundtable combined with picture is a technique of cooperative learning which focuses on group work. Simultaneous roundtable combined with picture also presents new challenges and requires new skill for the

teachers and students. Teachers need to ensure all students maximally participate and work together toward the team goals. Students should learn to trust each other, work together, and resolve conflicts and make team decisions. Therefore, it is highly recommended to be applied in the classroom. Using a simultaneous roundtable combined with a picture and following the steps, the students construct a well-arranged and good descriptive paragraph. The steps of applying simultaneous roundtable combined with picture were carefully adapted from Kagan and Kagan (2009). There are six steps in simultaneous roundtable combined with picture, which is described as follows:

1. The teacher assigns a topic or question and provides think time.
2. All four students respond, simultaneously writing, drawing, or building something with manipulatives.
3. The teacher signals time or the students place thumbs up when done with the problem.
4. Students pass papers or projects one person clockwise.
5. Students continue, adding that it is already completed.
6. Students can do it continuously starting from step 3.

#### **2.1.4. Writing Assessment**

The teacher noticed students' overall writing skills improvement by giving regular writing assignments to the students. However, the most time-intensive part of teaching writing is assessments (Urquhart and Mclever, 2005:26). One of the most important aspects of teaching is evaluating the students' ability after the learning process. One of them is assessing the students' writing ability. Assessing writing is done by giving scores and feedback about students' work in written form

to know their achievements. The assessments are various ways to collect information on the learners' language ability or achievement. The success of writing is categorized at a range of different levels, and it could initiate the level of teaching and learning process especially in writing.

In assessing writing, the scores and feedback about students' work are in the form of writing used to know the achievements of students' writing ability. Hyland (2003:212-213) states that assessment refers to various ways to collect information on a learner's language ability or achievement. It is an umbrella term for students in learning descriptive paragraph writing. Furthermore, it is crucial to tell the students the assessment criteria that the teacher uses to make the students prepare themselves and work their best to get a maximum assessment. Therefore, while the former gives feedback motivation into instruction, the latter provides information on either individual accomplishment. There were five reasons for evaluating learners: placement, diagnostic, achievement, performance, and proficiency.

Brown (2004:4) states that assessment is an ongoing process encompassing a much wider domain. Whenever students respond to a question and then try a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously assesses the students' performance. Moreover, assessment is a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about the students learning and formulation of value judgment concerning the learning process. There are two classroom assessments such as formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment means evaluating students in forming their competences and skill to help them continue that growth process. Summative assessment is an assessment carried out at the end of each unit of time which is intended to determine the extent to which students have been able to move from one learning unit to the next.

Miller et al. (2009:139) state that classroom tests and assessments play a central role in evaluating student learning. They provide relevant measures of many important learning outcomes and indirect evidence concerning others. They make expected learning outcomes explicit to students and parents and show what types of performances are valued. However, the validity of the information they provide depends on the care that goes into planning and preparing tests and assessments. The main of classroom testing and assessment is to obtain valid, reliable, and useful information concerning students' achievement. Then, the required data should be calculated by the researcher to ensure the data is valid.

In assessing writing, the teacher focuses on the content and form of the writing: the language used, the text structure, the construction of argument, grammar, and punctuation. Commonly, the students' writing ability assessment is done only based on the topic or material. The teacher suggested assessing all parts and skills entailed in writing, especially descriptive paragraphs. Barkaoui (2004:104) argues that designing and implementing a writing assessment in an interactive process should consider scoring procedures from the beginning. In the present study, the teacher uses a paragraph construction test to measure their achievement in writing descriptive paragraphs.

According to McCulloch (2007:2), assessment is of the most significant areas of an educational system. It defines what students take to be important, how they spend much of their academic time, and how they evaluate themselves. Students can assess themselves from what they have and positive things that significantly change them after learning. The focus is on the students' learning and the outcomes of teaching. Here, the assessment may become one part of an evaluation. The assessment aims to improve the instruction process for the next

learning process. It means the students hoped that after writing descriptive paragraphs, they would be expected to understand how to write them properly.

In the present study, the researcher focused on assessing students' ability to compose a good descriptive paragraph. The students were asked to make a descriptive paragraph. The students were asked to make a descriptive paragraph based on the topic that had already been given, and they had to submit their work. The researcher analyzed and gave a score for students' work using a rubric adapted from Oshima and Hogue (2007:196). This scoring rubric included some components, such as format, punctuation, mechanics, content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure. It aims to ensure the students write descriptive paragraphs properly, so they do not need to hesitate by showing the results of the paragraphs they have made during their teaching and learning.

In the present research, the researcher focuses on assessing students' skills in writing descriptive paragraphs. The researcher needs to test the students to score them. Therefore, the researcher used the paragraph construction test that was given to students by the researcher to know whether or not they improved students' writing skills. It consists of some pictures that the students could choose. The scores were given based on the scoring rubric, which consists of writing criteria. The scoring rubric criteria are format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar, and sentence structure. The researcher used a scoring rubric which was carefully adapted from Oshima and Hogue (2007).

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

An empirical review is a way to get the information and theories about the previous researcher relevant to the present study. The relevant studies deal with



improving students writing skills through simultaneous roundtable combined with picture, which other researchers in the past had conducted. Furthermore, the empirical review states that observation and measurement drive knowledge from actual experience. The purpose is to support that the present study would be as successful as the relevant study used in empirical reviews. The researcher used two previous studies, which would be conducted in the present study. In addition, it was also used to consider whether the present study could be successful as the relevant studies. The related studies would be used as empirical reviews as follows.

The first research relevant to the present study was done by Leria (2015), entitled “Improving Writing Skill Through Simultaneous Roundtable of the Eighth Grade Students of SMPN 1 Ubud in Academic Year 2014/2015”. The objective of this study was to determine whether writing skills of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 6 Denpasar can be improved through a roundtable. The result showed that the simultaneous roundtable strategy improved the students’ writing skills after two cycles. It showed from the mean score of the pre-test and post-test. It means the researcher successfully adopted the simultaneous roundtable when teaching the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in Academic Year 2014/2015.

The second study that Hariyanti did relevant to this study (2016), entitled “Improving Writing Skill of the Eighth-grade Students of SMPK Thomas Aquino in academic year 2015/2016 can be improved through simultaneous roundtable. The result of the study showed that using simultaneous roundtable could improve students’ writing skills in composing descriptive paragraphs was successful after two cycles. It means the researcher can make sure the students make a good descriptive paragraph in two cycles. Also, the students can understand what the researcher meant when the researcher told them to make a descriptive paragraph.

The result of the previous research showed that the students' writing skills could be improved through simultaneous roundtable.

The researcher above gained the same results in which the findings showed that after conducting two cycles, there were constant improvements after the researcher applied simultaneous roundtable; the students had positive responses. However, there were not only strengths but also some weaknesses. The researchers did not use media such as pictures. As a result, there were no media, such as pictures prepared by the researchers made it difficult for students to apply this teaching technique. Because they need visualization to make it easier for students to describe something such as observing the object's appearance. Indeed, in this teaching technique, the picture is compulsory, but if pictures were added as the teaching media, the students would easily describe the object.

