CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significances of the research, research hypothesis, clarification of terms and paper organization.

1.1 Background

Writing is one of four language skills that should be acquired by language learners. It plays a significant role in all stages of life from early education to future employment (The National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). Similarly, Battaglia (2014) also says that strengthening students’ writing ability can make students become successful in school, university courses and further job. Due to this reason, it is not surprising that the government in many countries, both in advanced countries (like Australia, the US) and developing ones (like Indonesia) have put a strong emphasis on the teaching of writing (Emilia, 2010).

In spite of its importance, writing, especially for nonnative learners, is difficult to be mastered. As for this, Widodo (2006, p. 173) says that writing is the most difficult skill to master for foreign or second-language learners. Likewise, Rass (2001, p. 30) says that “writing, an important part of language learning, is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers”. Moreover, Adas & Bakir (2013, p. 254) state that, “Writing is an intricate and complex task; it is the most difficult of language abilities to acquire.”

In Indonesian context, junior high school students are demanded to be able to write various text types, one of them is Descriptive text. Based on a study conducted by Sumarsih & Sanjaya (2013, p. 107), reveals that not all students are able to write descriptive paragraph properly and in accordance with the existing elements in the descriptive text. This may be due to the students having difficulties in expressing ideas into writing, organizing ideas, choosing and using proper words, and last, they get difficulty in using the correct grammar (Supiani, 2011). Besides, Sumarsih & Sanjaya (2013, p. 107) argue that these problems may
occur because the learning strategy that was implemented by teachers does not fit anymore in this day. In their study, they found that the strategy implemented by the teachers reduces the interest and liveliness of the students in the learning process so that students are bored and do not want to continue learning as they ought to do (Sumarsih & Sanjaya, 2013, p. 107).

Considering the problem above, it is important for English teacher to find strategies that can be used to help students to overcome the problems and make them comfortable in writing. Think-Talk-Write strategy can be an appropriate strategy in teaching writing. Think-Talk-Write (TTW) was developed by Huinker and Laughlin in 1996. According to Huinker & Laughlin (1996, p. 82), TTW refers to “the strategy which builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and testing those ideas before students are expected to write”. Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy is a cooperative learning strategy that basically consists of thinking, talking and writing activities (Sari et al., 2014, p. 214). The activities such as thinking and talking are believed can help students to improve their writing. Regarding this, Huinker and Laughlin (as cited in Guthrie, 2004, p. 9) claim that thinking and talking activities can help students to bring meaning to their writing. Moreover, Reid in Huinker and Laughlin (as cited in Sari et al., 2014, pp. 214-215) claims that “by talking to a sympathetic partner, a student can test ideas, explore words, experiment with different methods of organization and not lose valuable thoughts.”

There are several studies that have examined the role of Think-Talk-Write strategy in improving students’ writing ability, for instance Simanungkalit & Silitonga (2014), who investigate the use TTW in teaching spoof, asserted that there was an improvement in score of participants after applying this strategy. Another study conducted by Sari et al. (2014), who investigate the effect of using the Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching writing an analytical exposition text toward grade XI students’ writing achievement, found that Think-Talk-Write strategy gave significant effect toward students’ writing achievement. Maulidah (2013) and Tambunan & Saragih (2012) revealed that this strategy could increase students’ motivation in learning English. Furthermore, a study conducted by Mega
(2015) found that this strategy was effective to teach grammar. Moreover, Sumarmo & Nishitani (2010) found that this strategy could increase students’ self-directed learning.

A number of studies have revealed that TTW is one of the effective ways and a beneficial strategy to improve students’ in learning English especially in developing the students’ writing skills. However, the research about using Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching writing descriptive text in Junior High School level is still less, especially in school that will be researched. Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap related to the effectiveness of using TTW strategy in teaching writing descriptive text. This research is aimed to investigate whether or not the use of Think-Talk-Write strategy can improve students’ ability in writing descriptive texts and to describe students’ responses toward the use of Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching writing.

1.2 Research Questions

This research will be conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Is the use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy effective in helping students to improve their ability in writing descriptive texts?

2. What are students’ responses toward the use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy in teaching writing?

1.3 Aims of the Research

Based on the background above, this research intends to:

1. Determine the effectiveness of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive texts.

2. Describe the students’ responses toward the use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy in teaching writing.
1.4 Scope of the Research

This study focuses on finding out the effectiveness of using Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy in improving students’ writing ability. The analysis will focus on finding out whether or not the use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy is effective in improving students’ writing ability, especially in writing descriptive text. In addition, the context of this study will be limited on teaching writing by using Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy in junior high school.

1.5 Significances of the Research

The present research is believed to have several significances for theoretical, practical and professional benefits.

1. Theoretical benefit
   The research findings can be used as the contribution toward the research about the effectiveness of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive texts.

2. Practical benefit
   The research findings will be beneficially useful to teachers, students and also the readers who are interested in teaching English.

3. Professional benefit
   The research can be useful and helpful source for teachers in teaching English through Think-Talk-Write strategy.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis, according to Frankel & Wallen (2009, p. 20), is “a prediction, a statement of what specific results or outcomes are expected to occur.” This research takes null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis (H₀) states that there is no significant difference between students’ post-test scores in experimental group and students’ post-test scores in control group. While the alternative hypothesis (Hₐ) states that there is significant difference between
students’ post-test scores in experimental group and students’ post-test scores in control group.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity, some terms used in this research are defined as follows:

1. Descriptive text
   Descriptive text is a type of text which is used by the writer or speaker to describe particular thing, person, animal, place or event to the readers or hearers (Gerot & Wignel, 1994; Knapp & Watkins, 2005). In this study, it is a text to describe particular person.

2. Effectiveness
   Effectiveness is derived from the adjective “effective” which means successful or achieving the intended result (Cambridge Advanced Dictionary, 2008). “Effectiveness” in this study is to measure the good result of using Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive texts.

3. Think-Talk-Write (TTW) Strategy
   Think-Talk-Write strategy was first introduced by Huinker and Laughlin in 1996. The think-talk-write strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write.

4. Writing
   Writing is an activity to express the ideas, thoughts or even experiences in the form of paragraph (Wiegle, 2006).

5. Response
   Response can be defined as a reaction after something is done (Yourdictionary online dictionary, n.d.). “Response” in this study is to know students’ reactions after implementing Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching writing.
1.8 Organization of The Paper

This paper will be presented into five chapters as follows:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the paper elaborates the background of the research. It will discuss writing that becomes the focus of the research and why analyzing student’s writing ability is very important. The chapter also states the research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II: THEORITICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter discusses some theories about writing skill, Think-Talk-Write strategy, and descriptive text for the research.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives clear explanation about how the research will be conducted and analyzed. The data analysis will also be briefly explained.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS ANG DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the research and analyze those findings in explanation clearly.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter explains the conclusion and several suggestions of the research based on the analysis in chapter four. The conclusion states the answer to the research questions about the effectiveness of using Think-Talk-Write to improve students’ ability in writing descriptive text. There are also several suggestions for further research related to the Think-Talk-Write strategy.
1.9 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the introduction to the research which involves background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significances of the research, research hypothesis, clarification of terms and paper organization. This research attempts to find out whether or not the use of Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy is effective in improving students’ writing ability, especially in writing descriptive text. Further, this research attempts to find out students’ responses towards the use of Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching writing. This research involves the 7th grade students of junior high school. The next chapter will elaborate some theories and findings from previous research related to the research.