CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of seven sections: the background of the study, research questions, aims of the research, the significance of the research, scope of study, definition of terms, and the last part is organization of the thesis.

1.1. The Background

English is a foreign language taught in Indonesia starting from the elementary school to universities. The English teaching and learning cover the four language skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing (Brown, 2001:232). In the research and practice of English language teaching, these four skills have been identified as very important in teaching English as a foreign language.

Writing is a form of communication and a process of transferring ideas into a product of writing; translating out into language. Through writing as White and Arndt (1991) say, we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince other people. We are able to discover and articulate ideas in ways that only writing makes possible. Learning writing does not only involve learning to use orthographic symbols, but also learn how to select and organize experiences according to a certain purposes. In fact teaching students about writing must be different. The writer believes that mostly Indonesian people still neglect the habit of writing. They usually write only if it is necessary to write something on purpose, instead of trying to be creative in developing their writing ability by finding out method that makes writing process become joyful and
easier with the result of satisfactory writing for her/himself or other readers (Byrne, 1987).

In connection with writing, Byrne (1978) also mentions that writing requires some conscious mental efforts. Although we write to use graphic symbols, that is, combinations of letters which relate to the sound, actually writing is more than just the production of graphic symbols. Byrne further says the symbols have to be arranged according to a certain convention, to form words, and words have to be arranged into sentences. Writing is one of the senders of the message, the product of writing is the message and the reader is the receiver of the message. The act of writing initiates when the writer needs to inform or to send messages to others, to impart knowledge or to express ideas.

The writing skill is often reported as the most difficult skill to acquire for some reasons by the students from elementary to graduate school, even for the teachers, compared to other three skills. As what Alwasilah (2001) cites that writing is perceived by teachers and students as the most difficult skill to teach and to learn, and unfortunately it has long been neglected in Indonesian schools. Nunan (1991) adds that many children from non-English speaking background, who can produce well structured and reasonably grammatical oral texts are much less successful when it comes to writing. Essentially writing subject is still considered as the tough subject to master despite being relatively easy for some people (Nunan, 1991).

One of the reasons why writing is difficult to acquire is the difficulties in generating, developing and organizing ideas into a good writing. Most people consider that the hardest part in writing process is that we have to find out what we are going to
write, to find out the idea, the topic and to find out the right way to start to write. Whereas in fact, idea is the most important key of a good writing because the first step in writing is usually finding ideas. College teachers are stunned at the students’ inability both to express ideas clearly and to use the conventions of correctness in conveying those ideas. When students read the assigned textbooks in school to improve their writing, they are frustrated to write what they know in English and begin to get away from English. The frustration affects students’ attitude and abilities on their English writing. In the past, the conventional teaching approach primarily focused on vocabulary learning and grammar drills in the classroom (Gould, 1989). Alwasilah (2001:12) points out that students and college graduates do not know how to write because their school teachers and college professors failed to provide them with writing skill. (Alwasilah, 2000:12)

Moreover he states that teachers tend to teach students topics on spelling, word formation, vocabulary, grammar and theories of writing and thus ignoring the practice of writing. He concludes that the present education system has failed to provide students with writing skill. Since college students feel frustrated and are afraid of learning English, it is necessary to make the change of college teachers’ instructional methodologies beyond traditional textbooks in order to increase their ESL writing skills.

The students of English Language Education Program at Bale Bandung University (UNIBBA) learn writing subject from the first semester until fifth semester in writing I until writing IV and the task focuses on descriptive writing, expository writing, In formal letter writing, procedural writing, a short report writing, recount writing, persuasive writing, a business letter writing, personal recount writing and narrative text writing. Based on the researcher’s observation In doing the task, the students usually
face some problems. Sometimes they face the problem of finding the ideas to write. From writing I until writing IV their ideas are always the same, and their style of writing is always the same too. They have difficulty to improve their writing skill. Therefore, it is important for teachers to facilitate students with some teaching techniques and interesting materials that can help them generate ideas. Some interesting techniques can be used to generate college students’ ideas in a writing process. One of the way is by using a picture book as one of the visual aids to improve students’ writing ability.

Picture speaks thousands of words, it can be very effective way of teaching and learning the English language especially in teaching and learning writing, as Heaton (1988:142) says that a picture or series of pictures are very useful. It is not only used as the basic materials for students composition but also it effectively stimulates students’ imaginative power. So that pictures can be very effective way of teaching and learning the English language especially in teaching and learning writing.

In line with the writing activity, since the genre-based approach is applied in the English curriculum, students are more demanded to produce their own texts. One kind of texts that students learn is narrative text. Narrative writing tells a story that can be a fiction or non-fiction. The social function of narrative text is to amuse and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways (Gerot and Wignell, 1995:204). According to Kaswanti and Rogers (2005:26), the general structure of this kind of text involves orientation, complication, and resolution.

As narrative writing tells a story that has a beginning, middle and end, the pairing of visual with the written word is an excellent tool for helping students construct their stories. It enables students to explore and identify story elements which are very
important in starting writing narrative text. Here, a series of picture can be used as a means for developing ideas that is eventually hoped to facilitate students produce a better narrative writing. The previous study investigating the effect of using visual aids in teaching conducted by Adawiyah (2002) has proven to be effective. Students who are taught using visual aids get better writing achievement than those using the conventional method. Since a series of picture or picture book is categorized as the visual aids, it is hoped that it can give the same effect to the students’ writing skill.

A number of studies (Anderson and Lapp, 1998; Henry, 2003; Salminen, 1998; Huang, 2006) supported the use of picture books that is a wordless picture book as an effective way to improve students’ writing skills. “Wordless picture books can be used to encourage the development of writing skills, not only with young children who are beginning writers, but also with older students who already possess some skill in writing” (D’ Angelo, 1979, p. 913). Salminen (1998) also mentioned that wordless picture books are gift to ESL students as well as an ideal medium for initiating writing activities because wordless books actively stimulated readers’ imagination and thoughts which stimulated students’ creative writing. And Huang (2002) also said that using picture books showed that students improved their visual literacy and oral to written expression, promoted their creative writing and thinking skills, and enhanced the enjoyment of the writing process.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a research for improving students college writing skill by using picture book. The investigation is carried out to find out the effectiveness of using picture book in writing class. It is believed that pictures are very useful for language teaching and learning, this can be a very effective
way of teaching and learning the English language especially in teaching and learning writing (Heaton, 1988:142).

1.2. The Research Questions

The research questions are formulated to provide the researcher guidance to conduct this study. She wants to get the answers of the following questions:

1. How do the students respond toward the use of the picture books as a visual aid in writing narrative text?
2. How do the students develop their writing abilities as shown in the text produced by the students over the program?

1.3. The Research Aims

Considering the problems above, this study attempted to:

1. To find out the students’ responses toward the use of the picture book as a visual aid in writing narrative text.
2. To investigate the development of students’ writing abilities as shown in the text produced by the student over the program.

1.4. The Significance of Study

There are some contributions that the study may offer. The result of this study are expected to:

1. Provide additional informative input to conduct other investigation in the same field as the interest for other researchers to do the same endeavor.
2. Become a basis of policy making in education which can lead to the betterment of the quality in teaching English generally and in the teaching and learning of writing specifically.

3. Provide useful information for the reader especially English teacher about the technique of teaching writing and teaching English generally.

1.5. **Scope of The Study**

This study will attempt to find out the use of the picture book as a visual aid in writing classes, especially in the narrative writing. The study is limited only to the area investigated and to those involved in the research.

1.6. **Definition of Terms**

The operational definitions of the terms used are as follows:

**Writing** is the act or art of forming letters and characters on paper, wood, stones, or other material, for the purpose of recording the ideas which characters and words express, or of communicating them to others by visible signs.

**Narrative** is derived from the word to narrate, which means to tell story. Narrative tells about the action of the characters or their reaction to events.

**Pictures** are painting, drawing, that influences the students to writes something.

**Picture books** is an art form that combines visual and verbal narratives in a book format. A true picture book tells the story both with words and picture.

1.7. **Organization of the Paper**
The general outline of the thesis is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I  INTRODUCTION
This chapter explains briefly about the Background of the Problem, The Research Questions, The Research Aims, The Significance of the Study, Scope of the Study, Definition of the Terms, and Organization of the Paper.

CHAPTER II  THE THEORITICAL FOUNDATION
This chapter explores the literary review added with some references.

CHAPTER III  RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
This chapter conveys the method that the writer used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER IV  DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION
This chapter is to analyze and interpret the data.

CHAPTER V  THE CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
This chapter consists of conclusions and suggestions drawn from the data presentation and theoretical background.