CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, hypothesis, research methodology, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Writing is one of the productive skills that has to be learned by students. However, it seems that they face difficulty in understanding theory of writing and practising it into their writing. It might happen because of the teaching process that merely focuses on delivering material in which the students are not getting involved in the learning process actively. Therefore the students are not accustomed to expressing their mind and sharing their ideas.

Alwasilah (2001) also states that writing is considered as the most difficult subject because teachers tend to emphasize on teaching theory but ignoring the practice. In addition, a study conducted by Kusuma (2009) indicated that this difficulty was reflected in students' writing scores that were dissapointing.

Students can only master writing skill by practicing (Alwasilah, 2001). On the contrary, the teaching writing method used in many schools tends to focus on teaching the theory than how to write itself. Liang (2002, cited Hamm & Adams, 1992; Liang, 1996; Wei, 1997) states that teacher usually uses lecturing method in teaching process, so that the students merely sit in the classroom and listen

passively to what is being taught by the teacher. Consequently, students might not be interested in material that is delivered.

As explained above, it seems that the practice of teaching writing is likely to be teacher-centered instruction in which teachers play more roles in learning activities than the students. In language learning, this teacher-centered learning might not be effective because it can restrict students' creativity and chances to use their English language (Brooks & Grundy, 2000 as cited in Yu-Jiao, 2007). Meanwhile, it is important to focus on process than the result in the teaching-learning activity (Lie, 2008). Instead of dominating the class, teacher has to let their students apply the theory they got into practice.

It is important to apply an appropriate methods for teaching in order to achieve better learning in the classroom; a teaching process that makes students as the center of learning. It is because when student-centered learning occurs students are allowed to think for themselves and discover meaningful learning (Harmer, 2007).

One of the teaching methods that considers students as the center of learning is cooperative learning. According to Slavin (2005), cooperative learning is a method in which students are stimulated to think, solve problem, integrate and apply their own competences and knowledge. Every student has their own responsibility in doing the task. They have to work together to learn and they are responsible for their group members' learning, so do their own.

This method is considered appropriate to teach English, because it focuses on students' learning. Vygotsky (1978, cited in Pinter, 2006) asserts that learning

process resulted from social interactions between students and people from environment, and between their peers. It can be related to Brown's statement (2000) that people will learn to write easily if they learn with people who do the same thing, that is writing.

In this case, cooperative learning facilitates the learning process because this method requires the existence of small group that makes students interact, help and learn from each other. By applying cooperative learning in class, students will have more chances to put forward and share their ideas with their group mates.

Based on the explanation above, this research investigates the use of cooperative learning method in improving students' skill, particulary in writing recount text. It is conducted to find out whether cooperative learning improves students' skill in writing recount text and how students perceive the use of this method.

1.2 Research Questions

1. Does cooperative learning improve students' skill in writing recount text?
2. How is cooperative learning perceived by the students?

1.3 Aims of the Research

1. To find out whether cooperative learning improves students' skill in writing recount text.
2. To find out how students perceive cooperative learning.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on investigating the use of cooperative learning in the English classroom. It aims to find out the effect of the method towards students' writing skill, particularly writing recount text.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research is expected to produce findings related to the implementation of cooperative learning in English class particularly in teaching writing skill.

Furthermore, the research will give a contribution to the practice of teaching learning process in the school. Teachers need to have concern about the teaching method that is used in the classroom. It has to facilitate every students' needs in order to engage students into meaningful learning activity. By knowing the cooperative learning, teachers can apply an alternative method in teaching English, particularly writing skill.

This research can also be used as a reference for the next researchers who are interested in conducting research in the same field.

1.6 Hypothesis

The research takes null hypothesis (H_0) in which the hypothesis is: there is no significant difference between the posttest means of control and experimental groups after the treatments. The formula are stated below:

$$H_0 : \mu \text{ control} = \mu \text{ experimental}$$

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

The research deals with effect of cooperative learning method towards students' skill in writing recount text, therefore it employs experimental study. Nevertheless, this research uses quasi-experimental design because it is difficult to conduct the true experimental study. The research design is presented as follows:

Table 1.1
Quasi-experimental Design

Sample	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group (G_1)	T_1	X	T_2
Control Group (G_2)	T_1	-	T_2

T_1 : students' writing skill in pretest

X : treatment

T_2 : students' writing skill in posttest

1.7.2 Population and Samples

The population of this research is tenth grade students of a public senior high school in Bandung. The samples of the research are two classes; the first class is the experimental group and the second one becomes the control group. This research uses nonprobability sampling because the random sampling cannot be conducted.

1.7.3 Data Collection

1.7.3.1 Research Procedures

There are some procedures in conducting this research. First, trying out the instrument to one class that is in the same grade as the control and experimental groups. Then administering pretest to both control and experimental groups. After that analyzing pretest scores to determine whether the initial ability of these groups are equal. Afterward, designing lesson plan and material of teaching writing. Then, giving treatment to the experimental group by applying cooperative learning in teaching writing. In the end, administering posttest in those two groups to find out whether there is any significant difference or not. Next, delivering questionnaire to the experimental group to figure out how students peceive cooperative learning. After that, analyzing the data that is gained at the end of the research. Finally, interpreting the results and drawn them into conclusions, whether or not cooperative learning improves students' writing skill and how students perceive the method.

1.7.3.2 Research Instruments

Instruments that are used for collecting data in this research are as follows,

a. Pretest; to find out initial abilities of the control and experimental groups. It is also used for comparing the pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group.

b. Posttest; to find out whether there is a significant difference of the results between control and experimental groups.

c. Questionnaire; to find out how students perceive cooperative learning method in learning writing.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative approach is used for analyzing the data obtained. The results of pre-post tests from the two groups are analyzed by determining *t*-test value to find out whether the means of those groups in pre-post tests are significantly different or not. Afterward, the normalized average gain is computed to find out whether cooperative learning really works in improving students' skill in writing recount text. Then, the results of the questionnaire are analyzed by calculating the frequency and converting the numbers into percentage. Last, the data gathered is interpreted and taken into conclusion.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

1.8.1 Writing Skill

Writing is a means of developing ideas, reformulating knowledge and discovering personal experience (Aridah, 2003). In this research, the term of writing refers to writing in English.

The skill of the students in writing recount is assessed by scoring profile proposed by Jacobs et al.'s (1981, cited in Weigle, 2002). It covers content, organization, vocabulary and language use aspects.

1.8.2   Recount Text

Recount is a piece of text that retells past event, usually in the order in which they happened. The purpose of the recount is to give audience a description of what occured and when it occured (Anderson, 1997).

1.8.3   Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a learning method that focuses on students' learning activity. Students spend much of their class time working in small groups with heterogenous group members and are expected to help each other to learn (Slavin, 1983). In this research, cooperative learning refers to the method that is used in writing learning process.

1.9   Organization of the Paper

This research report is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is introduction which presents background, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, hypothesis, research methodology, clarification of terms and organization of the paper. Chapter two is theoretical review, it discusses theories which are relevant to cooperative learning method, writing and some related studies that are in accordance with this research. Chapter three is research methodology. It covers the methodology of this research to answer the research questions. It explains the procedures of the research, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four is findings and discussion. It presents the findings from the research and discussion of the data, resulting from data

analysis. Chapter five is conclusions and suggestions which describes the results

of the research and suggestions for further research.