CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problem, hypothesis, significant of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a tool for communication. By using language, people can develop interaction with others. English is one of the universal languages. In Indonesia, English language becomes L2 language that requires Indonesian to learn it. So, all of Indonesian should study English from Elementary school until university.

In English language, there are four skills that should be mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the four language skills which are very important to learn. As known, among four skills, writing is the most difficult skill to be learnt, because it needs hard thinking in producing words, sentences, and paragraph at the same time, and also paying attention to the capitalization, punctuation and spelling (Rooney :2010).

Nowadays, writing is needed in some sectors, such as in business and education. If one works as a secretary in one international company, she/he should have ability in writing letter, proposal, and any others. In educational sector, especially scientific communication, students will find many forms of writing, likes journals, reports, conference papers and abstracts, thesis,
dissertation, review papers, proposal, popular science and newspaper articles (Malmfors, et.al. :2004). All of them are written in English.

Writing has some aspects that should be learnt, one of them is about mechanics (Belmont & Sharkey :2011). It is about how to use the correct punctuation, capitalization and spelling. If we know all of those aspects, it will improve our writing. Even, native speakers still have to pay attention to those aspects if they want their writing correct, because common errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation and word choice often happen.

Therefore, all English teachers should use good technique to make the students keep paying attention and know how to use the correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. One of good techniques that can be used to teach Junior High School students is Running Dictation. Running Dictation is one of the activities done in groups of 4-5 students. In a group, there are writer and runners. They have to work together to answer the right sentence dictated by the runner.

By using Running Dictation, the teacher can teach writing happily but it may be quite noisy because the students have to run around the class. As said by Amy (2014), Running Dictation asks the students out of their seats and engages their language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. Running Dictation is designed in order to make the students in the group feel challenged to reach the goal. So, this technique is suitable to apply in the intermediate level.

Running Dictation can be applied in all English skills, not only writing skill but also speaking, reading, and listening skill. All skills take the same portion in doing Running Dictation, especially in Dictation activity. First, they
have to listen carefully to the sentence, and then speak it in order to make them remember the sentence but it depends on the individual. After they remember the sentence, they write it on the paper with correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. If they think that the sentence they write is right, they can read it.

Many previous studies showed their successes when they applied Running Dictation in teaching English skills for their students. A research done by Widayanto (2005) found that the students in experimental group taught by Running Dictation reached high point in listening skill significantly than control group taught by traditional method. Another finding by Harisah (2013), that the students who were taught by using Running Dictation showed better ability than without Running Dictation in speaking ability. Mutmainnah (2012) who focused their research in writing spelling skill collected the information that the students understood the language more easily by using Running Dictation.

As previous study conducted by Mutmainnah which focused her study in writing spelling skill, so in this research, the researcher wants to focus in mechanical writing, because mechanical writing is still minim attention from the teacher and the students. As happened by eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu when the researcher did Teaching Practice (2014), the students faced many difficulties when they produced writing. It could be seen from their writing with many errors like punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. It seemed that those aspects did not pay attention seriously, so it made the students confused what they should do with capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
From that case, the researcher wants to observe this research of The Effect of Running Dictation Toward The Students’ Mechanics in Writing Skill at The Eighth Grade of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu because, the researcher thinks that Running Dictation is very useful technique to teach mechanical writing for Junior High School students, which is the English teacher who taught eighth grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu has never applied Running Dictation to teach their students. So, Running Dictation technique is suitable to be applied in teaching mechanical writing at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background of the study above, this research determines the following research question, that is: “Does Running Dictation give effect on the students’ writing mechanics at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu?”

1.3 Hypothesis

From the statement of the problem above, there are two hypotheses appeared in this research, they are:

H0 : Running Dictation does not give effect on the students’ writing mechanics at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu.

H1 : Running Dictation gives effect on the students’ writing mechanics at the eighth grade of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu.
1.4 Significance of the Study

From the explanation above, the result of this study is expected to be useful for students, teachers, and the general education, as follows:

1. This research is useful for the students to help them in learning English and improve their writing skill especially about capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in writing through fun activities. So, they can feel happy when they are learning English.

2. This research is useful for the English teachers to help them solve the students’ problem in writing skill especially about mechanics in writing and to get an alternative teaching technique to improve the students’ writing skill through fun activities.

3. This research is useful for the general education to be one of good references in which writing skill can be taught by using fun activities, such as Running Dictation.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is the effect of using Running Dictation toward students’ writing skill. The topic that is used to observe is mechanics in writing, such as, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. This study is limited at the eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu. The classes that are selected to be control and experimental group in this research are 8-5 class, and 8-6 class.
1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, this is some definition of key terms:

1. Writing skill is an activity or productive skill that produces writing, like: narrative, descriptive, recount, and procedure text, which has the aims, to show the feeling, to inform news, or to entertain (Fachrurrazy, 2011).

2. Teaching technique is the way how the teacher can handle their students and deliver the material, so the teacher’s expectation can be reached successfully (Celce-Murcia 2011).

3. Running Dictation is one of activity which is done in group consist of 4-5 students. This activity asks one student as a runner dictates the sentence to their friend then write it down, and whose group’s answer is right will get the point (Harisah 2013).

4. Mechanical Writing is one of the writing aspect needed in producing a piece of writing, such as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (Raimes 1983)