CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Written communication always exists in daily life even the simplest thing of it. In various forms such as a monologue text, dialogue text, or functional text, these kinds of written communication are involved in life around us. Since it has a big role in the everyday communication, written communication is included in students’ syllabus of language curriculum as writing skill of English for instance. This consideration is based on some experts’ argument claiming how important writing is.

Raimes (1983: 3) states that writing is important since writing helps students learn. She elaborates how writing develops into an aid for students. Firstly, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that the teacher has been teaching in the classroom. Secondly, in writing students have a chance to explore what they have just learned by language. Thirdly, when students are writing, they are involved with the new language. Their effort to express ideas and the role of their senses involved in learning are good ways to reinforce learning.

Nation (2009) proposes that writing, as one of English skills, is essential. Writing covers the great range of styles a student will perform in his daily lives. It may include filling forms, making lists, writing letters, note-taking, or academic writing. It does not need to be questioned if writing as one of the four language
skills forms parts of the syllabus in English learning. Students of college or university require it as knowledge to express idea in written form.

Writing, as a productive skill, needs student’s ability to express ideas by occupying some language aspects. Harmer (2004) mentions some factors that affect writing skill such as grammatical structures, vocabulary, and organization of the writing. Nunan (1998) adds content of writing, style of writing, and mechanic as writing aspects to be mastered. Grammatical structures show students’ skill in the correctness of sentence building in expressing the idea in learned language. Vocabulary shows students’ reservoir of words in the target language and how they choose the uses words. Organization of writing reveals the way the students arrange their ideas into written text; how they systematize thought in a good order. Writing content shows students’ quality in designing a piece of writing while style of writing expresses how students differentiate the function of the idea they write. All aspects are, then, completed by mechanics of writing which makes students’ writing meaningful. Those aspects influence on students’ writing process. Students may miss one of them, but many students miss the whole aspects.

Based on some informal observation and students’ interview toward writing learning in SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta, it is indicates that English writing is a difficult skill for most students especially for the seventh grade as the beginners. It is realized that the students have weaknesses in writing skill. First, students still lack in vocabulary. Second, students have difficulty in constructing sentences with good grammatical structures. Third, students cannot organize their writing well.
Fourth, students are not able to optimize wholly their writing content. Last, students cannot use spelling and punctuation appropriately.

The researcher’s experiences also reveal that students’ low skill in writing occurs due to some external factors. It comes from the way of teaching learning, students’ motivation, students’ first language, and class condition. In teaching learning process, the teacher does not teach vocabulary and grammar optimally. Besides, the teacher does not encourage students to use spelling and punctuation optimally by providing less writing practices so that students do not have enough writing skill. From the students’ factors, the students have negative attitude toward writing as time-consuming activity, demanding a lot of concentration and thinking, and lack of motivation to conduct activities of writing. They have fossilized thought that writing is really hard to do so that they are not encouraged to try. In line with previous factors, students still have complexity on their own first language. They are still confused in constructing sentences by using right subject and verb even the simplest one. This term is, then, brought to the use of new language. Those three factors are, then, wrapped by unconducive class condition. Many students do not pay attention fully on classroom activities. They tend to be busy to chatting or others that makes the class noisy.

To reduce the factors causing students to have low skill in writing, it needs a class condition that supports students’ writing teaching learning. McDonough (2013) suggests that it will rather be good when the classroom is structured in such a way to provide positive intervention in order to support students’ development in writing skill. Although the writing process offers the students
freedom and time to explore their individual strategies, it needs a writing learning technique which is suitable for students’ writing process.

Free writing technique is used in the previous class to explore students’ writing. The students are required to write as many words as possible in certain time without stopping. In applying this technique, students face many obstacles in conducting writing. The students usually stuck in mind in exploring the ideas in the paper. Time after time, the students always lose the ideas and do not know what they must write. Individually, they do not demand any help from others. Consequently, they are not motivated and discouraged to learn writing more. Brown (2001) argues free writing is lack of writing form such as spelling, punctuation, or grammar. In line with that, Friedlander (2003) adds that free writing has weaknesses the same as brainstorming does which is unpredictable result. Sometimes, students may fill the page fully; sometimes they find nothing they want to work with.

To minimize the obstacles, the researcher needs to implement a different technique for the seventh grade students. The technique is team sentence technique. Kagan and Kagan (2009) define Team Sentence as a team activity in which teammates build sentences using sentence chips Team sentence is considered to be one of several good writing techniques. This technique helps students to explore their ability in constructing sentences within a team. The students can freely discuss what they have known before in order to be able to finish writing something. Team sentence technique is effective to develop students’ skill in writing. This technique may help the students develop prior
knowledge by sharing among the team members. This technique can also be used to empower students’ knowledge they already have. Moreover, the procedures proposed by Kagan and Kagan (2009) support the class environment where students’ motivation is enhanced, students’ risk-taking is explored within the group, and the class’ noise is under teacher’s control. In carrying out this technique, the teacher serves as the guide or facilitator to his students who construct their own knowledge within the group.

Besides the techniques, teaching learning process is also affected by students’ psychological factors, one of them is students’ self-concept. According to Mercer (2011) self-concept refers to what one believes about oneself and one’s ability and how one evaluates his beliefs. In other words, self-concept is what students believe about their ability and how they evaluate their ability. This power of self-belief may influence students’ behaviour, motivation, and attitudes towards foreign language learning since these beliefs provide the students with a sense of continuity and help them to maintain the relationship of their position. That is why within psychology, it is widely acknowledged that self-concept plays a central role in learning situations. In the context of education, the students’ construct of the self may have important implications on the learning experience.

Dealing with psychological factor, Trilestari (2013) mentions that writing activity involves students’ inner feeling since the inner feeling helps them to generate novel ideas. One of inner feeling is students’ self-concept. In a learning process, the students with high self-concept who have high self-confidence, optimist, and active will be able to come up with unexpected ideas and have no
hesitation to make mistakes better than the students with low self-concept. As a result, students with high self-concept will express his ideas in a written form better than the students with low self-concept.

The result of writing achievement will be more optimally supported by the technique applied in the classroom, Team Sentence. This technique requires the students to be more active in sharing ideas and have higher willingness to take risks for new experiences. Team Sentence supports the class environment where the students’ motivation is enhanced and the students’ risk-taking is explored within the group. As a result, the students with high self-concept will reach more improvement on writing skill.

Based on the elaboration above, a teacher should create a suitable, powerful, and motivating technique in encouraging and building students’ writing skill in learning activity. This research will be conducted to the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta.

B. Identification of Problems

By looking at the background of the study, the researcher tries to identify the problems of this research. The problems can be identified as follows:

1. Do the students believe that English writing is difficult to learn?
2. Is writing a complicated language skill according to the students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta?
3. Do the students tend to be bored in learning writing in the class?
4. Do the students often have difficulty to express their idea difficultly related to English writing?

5. Does the teacher dominate the learning activity?

6. Does the teacher conduct writing teaching learning in monotonous style?

7. How is students’ self-concept toward writing?

8. Which technique is most suitable for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta who have high self-concept and low self-concept in learning writing, team sentence or free writing?

C. Limitation of Problem

This research is proposed to find out the effectiveness of team sentence to teach writing viewed from students’ self-concept. Therefore, the research is limited to recognize the significant difference of students’ writing skill between those who are taught by using team sentence and those who are taught by using free writing viewed from students’ self-concept.

D. Statement of Problems

Considering the background and identified problems, the researcher states the problems to be researched as follows:

1. Is team sentence more effective than free writing to teach writing for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014?
2. Do the students having high self-concept have better writing skill than those having low self-concept for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014?

3. Is there any interaction between the teaching techniques and students’ self-concept in teaching writing for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014?

E. Objective of Study

In accordance with the stated problems above, the research is intended to find out:

1. Whether team sentence is more effective than free writing to teach writing for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014.

2. Whether the students having high self-concept have better writing skill than those having low self-concept for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014.

3. Whether there is interaction between the teaching techniques and students’ self-concept in teaching writing for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Surakarta in the academic year of 2013/2014.

F. Significance of Study

The result of the research is expected to provide valuable contribution to the researcher, other researchers, teachers, students, and school both theoretically.
and practically. Theoretically, this research supports the theories of language teaching and learning, especially those related to this research. Practically, the contribution of this research is intended to some intentions as follows:

1. The teachers

This study is expected to be able to provide the teachers with current theory of teaching writing, lesson plans, teaching materials, and also writing teaching learning process in junior high school level. This research provides a description on how to teach writing theoretically by using Team Sentence and Free Writing. This research also attaches the lesson plans where those techniques are employed in the classroom. The teaching materials, which is descriptive text, are expected to be able to enrich the teacher’s English material sources. Besides, the result of this study can be used as a starting point of measuring the teachers’ teaching technique, whether the applied teaching technique is suitable or not. It is expected to encourage them to always develop their creativity in teaching learning writing process. Deeply, the teacher can take benefits from this research about the lesson plan, teaching materials, and also the teaching learning process.

2. The students

The result of this study can be used as a basic way to improve the students’ writing skill. Team Sentence is a simple and fun technique in which it encourages students’ participation in learning so the students’ writing achievement is improved optimally. Through the elaboration of
Team Sentence procedures, the students are able to implement it and train themselves outside the class. It can also be used as a starting point to encourage students’ self-concept so the students will have good confidence in learning something especially in written language.

3. The school

Due to the better achievement of its students, the result of this study can be a basic consideration which assists the school in creating an effective program for teaching and learning process, language particularly. The positive side of a teaching technique can be adapted while the negative side can be minimized through some evaluations. Besides, the school may provide the teachers opportunities to conduct innovative teaching and learning activities by supporting them with many sources books in the library or holding workshop/seminars.

4. Other researchers

The result of this research can be used as a reference or additional information for other researcher who conduct the same field of research. Besides, it can also be used as a thinking framework of finding out another solution to solve students’ problems in expressing ideas in written English.