

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

School as one of partners in learning, education and training agent, collaborates with others institution like family, media, peer group, and church in the educational process (Knight, 2006, p. 11). Therefore, with those varied educational agents, sometimes it is hard for the school to maintain the same message about reality, truth, and value as every other educational agent might not adopt the same message (p. 12). Van Brummelen (1998) said that with those different responsibilities, school and family should cooperate and recognize each particular responsibility in children's development, in which school is responsible for educating the students to develop their concept, cognitive, abilities and skills. Through those responsibilities that the school has, it can be seen that school is playing an important role in educating the students.

Christian school is a place where Christian characters are taught so that the students can have Christ-like life (Tong, 2006). According to Van Brummelen (1998), Christian school helps and guides the students become responsible disciples of Christ who carry out the vision of God's Kingdom. However, Christian school that promotes Christian education is not merely about teaching using Christian books and curriculum by the work of teachers who are Christian. Christian education is about the process of education itself that fulfills the implementation of biblical principles on the purpose of education, the nature of

the learner, the person and offices of the teacher, the learning process, and the conceptualization of subject matter (Graham, 2009).

As stated in the book *Walking with God in The Classroom* (1998), “Christian teachers are knowledgeable stewards of God’s gifts within themselves and of those of the students God entrust to them”, as well as what is written on Proverbs 4:11, a teacher has to guide the students in the way of wisdom means that the competence that the teacher has becomes the instrument to make the students competent, discerning, responsive disciples of God. Moreover, teaching christianly not only about modeling, encouragement, a good environment, and restorative discipline, but through the subject that the teachers teach, it reveals the greatness of God in His creation and shapes them to be the agent of reconciliation (Van Dyk, 1997). Thus, it can be concluded that teaching christianly means using the competence that teacher has to guide the students develop their intelligence capacity so that they can use it to serve God.

In Christian teaching, even with the foundation of God’s truth does not mean that the teacher can neglect students’ cognitive development. As already mentioned before that Christian teacher guides the students in the way of wisdom, it can be concluded that intellectual is one important aspect of Christian education. John Van Dyk (1997) explains that cognitive development cannot be neglected as it can be one of ways to equip students to serve God. It is strengthened by the reality that human created differently from other creations, human created in God’s image and have mind. God created human’s mind and put laws of being that reflects God’s revelation in it, so that human are able to know and think about the truth (Van Til, 1969).

Grudem (2000) stated that man as the image of God has mental aspect which enables them to think logically, learn and develop greater skill in all area including in complex language system. Language becomes the central role of human life not only because it related with human's daily activities needs language, but also because language is the gift from God (Poythress, 2009). Everyday human communicates using language either in spoken or written language, thus language become so important. This becomes the basic why language is learnt in school, because the students need to learn to use the means of communication in proper way. Writing become one of the language skills that need long learning process as this skill required complex process of deeper thinking (Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdahl, & Holliday, 2006). Winch et al., state that writing complexity not only enough with thinking for the ideas, there are many aspects to be considered in writing such as word choice, mechanics or conventions, organization, voice or style, and sentence fluency.

During the observation in English lesson for grade VIII in one of Christian schools in Tangerang, Banten, the researcher concluded that the students have high ability in English, especially on their speaking skill. Yet, based on the written test, it can be seen that the students have writing problem. First, most of the students were confused of how to start their writing and how to put their ideas into writing. Second, based on the students' previous written test, many students did not include the essential elements that they had to put in their writing. Third, the students did not give clear introduction in the beginning and enough conclusion in the end of the writing. Fourth, the students were confused between the usage of simple present tense and simple past tense on their writing. This

identification were taken from three different observations, which show the same issue. Thus, it can be concluded that grade VIII students have a writing problem.

In order to help the students improving their writing skill, the researcher decided to use Four Square Writing Method to solve the problem. The researcher used this method because the method is applicable for any level that students has (Gould & Gould, 1999), as the students are fluent in English speaking skills and has high vocabulary knowledge. Four Square Writing Method helps the students in prewriting and organizational skill through graphic organizer, thus it would be suitable for students to increase their writing organization. This method is not only about using a graphic organizer to write, but also about the writing process that the students need to go through in order to produce a good writing.

1.2. Statement of Problem

The research problem of this research is the low writing skills of students in grade VIII that tries to be improved by implementing Four Square Writing Method. The research questions are as follow:

1. Does Four Square Writing Method improve grade VIII students' writing skill?
2. How does Four Square Writing Method improve grade VIII students' writing skill?

1.3. Purpose of Study

The main purposes of this research are as follow:

1. To find out whether Four Square Writing Method improves grade VIII students' writing skill.
2. To find out how Four Square Writing Method improves grade VIII students' writing skill.

1.4. Definition of Terms

1.4.1. Writing

Writing is not only about inscribing words into a code but it involves complex process of arranging idea into good composition that can be understood by reader (Omaggio, 2001). In line with that statement, Maggie Sokolik in Practical English Language Teaching (Sokolik, 2003), defines “writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader”. Furthermore, Ron White and Valerie Arndt (1991, p. 3) define writing as a thinking process that requires intellectual effort to communicate ideas and transcribes the idea into written symbols. Thus, writing is an act of communicating ideas into written symbols that requires complex process of thinking in order to produce comprehensible paragraph for the reader.

There are six indicators of students' writing skill taken from six traits of good writing developed by Diederich, French, and Carlton (Bellamy, 2001) as follow:

1. Ideas: the core of the writing that convey the message, thesis statement, and information about the concerned topic.

2. Word choice: the use of various, creative, precise language that can impress and educate the readers.
3. Conventions: the writing mechanics that involves spelling, paragraph formatting, grammar usage, punctuation, and capitalization.
4. Organization: a logic pattern of writing structure that makes the text more understandable for the readers.
5. Voice: writer's own characteristics that expressed his or her emotion and conviction through the writing.
6. Sentence fluency: the writing rhythm, flow of the language and the sound of word brings contentment to the reader in the writing.

1.4.2. Four Square Writing Method

Four Square Writing Method is a method of teaching basic writing skills suitable for various levels and subjects that able to help the students to organize focused writing with detail information through the of graphic organizer (Gould & Gould, 1999). Related with its name, Four Square Writing Method is a method that helps the students to organize their writing by using graphic organizer consists of four main squares. However, Four Square Writing Method does not merely work as an graphic organizer where the writing begin, but through this method writer can be helped to focus with the appropriate ideas and provide details (Gould & Gould, 1999).

Below are the stages of Four Square Writing Method used by the researcher according to the writing process supported by Gould and Gould (1999, p. 81):

1. Brainstorming: the students generate the ideas by thinking about the things to be put on the writing and searching for any information related with the topic that the students are going to write.
2. Organizing: the students arrange the ideas and information found in the brainstorming stage according to text structure (introduction body and conclusion) and the type of the information or the time order through the use of Four Square graphic organizer.
3. Drafting: the students start to write the text based on the organization of the ideas.
4. Revising: the researcher checks students writing result then give proofread mark for the part that the students need to improve and also feedback on it.
5. Editing: the students improve their writing based on the researcher's revision.