

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Problems**

Nowadays, English as a foreign language has been taught from elementary school until university level in our country. In English, there are four major skills that should be mastered by students. Those major skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. One competency standard that needs to be achieved by the students is the ability to communicate both in oral and written form by using appropriate, fluent, and accurate language in form of descriptive, narrative, anecdote, analytical exposition and hortatory exposition discourse.

One of the goals of writing at the second year refers to the goal stated in 2005 SMA English curriculum that the students can express their ideas and feelings by writing the paragraph. The ability of writing will help them in expressing their ideas, or in sharing information by sending written language to other people.

Talking about paragraph writing, Chakraverty and Gauntum (2003) state that writing, an important part of language learning, is essentially a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to

analyze and to classify any background knowledge. Then, the writers need suitable language to structure these ideas in the form of a coherence discourse.

One of the reasons appears from failure that students still find difficulties to express their ideas into words or sentences especially expressing ideas through written form. This assumption is denoted by Zamel (1995: 2) that foreign language learners' difficulty in writing is that the students know or have ideas of what they are going write but they do not know how to do it.

The material of writing at school is various. It is constructed to make the writing process more interesting. On the contrary, many students feel that writing is a hard work to do.

Writing plays an important role in formal communication, together with speaking as productive skills. Writing, like speaking is an important means of communication. In fact, sometimes the written word is the only acceptable way to communicate. If someone wants to apply for a job in a company for example, he/she needs to make a letter before entering the company and the officer will check his/her application letter. So, though we are able to communicate in spoken well, we also need the ability in written form.

Realizing the fact above, especially concerning writing subject, Badudu (1995:7) says that writing should be developed through good planning and practice. The teacher should pay more attention to the students' writing ability

that what he/she used to do in his/her previous teaching since writing is considered as the most difficult skill to be mastered by almost everybody. Therefore, teacher should focus more in writing rather than other skills.

Beginner writers often feel a great frustration when they are asked to compose a piece of writing because they know quite a bit grammar and vocabulary and are not able to formulate complex thoughts in English. They also have a difficult time translating the information onto the writing page. Therefore, as teacher, we should find solution on how to overcome the problem.

The students may have writing classes but the students sometimes feel confused of what will be done after finding a topic. Based on the researcher's experiences when doing PPL in SMU Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung at XI IPA 2 and XI IPS 2 in year 2009, although the students have been given a topic to write, they cannot automatically start their writing assignment. This fact supports Crimmon' statement (1995: 7) who states that the students still need a long time to figure out how to organize the idea to build a good paragraph and to make their paragraph readable and effective. They still have problems to relate all sentences in the paragraph to the main idea.

In other words, although they have started writing, they naturally found difficulties on how to continue their writing. These will frustrate the students and as the effect, they tend to stop practicing their writing. Another problem

faced by them could be happened because they don't have specific technique to guide them in developing their ideas and put them in written form.

As a matter of fact, most of the students of senior high school can not express their ideas in written form since they found writing is difficult to learn. Kennedy (1997: 2), he figures out the difficulty of foreign language learners in writing is that students do not know how to do it. It indicates that the students found it difficult to get start even though they have got idea on their mind and it seems that they could not elaborate their idea in written form.

Based on the explanation above, the writer would like to know the students' proficiency in descriptive writing and the difficulties of mastery the writing components. The writer chose Descriptive Paragraph because the writer expected that the students would be easier to express their mind in writing. They could describe anything based on what they have ever seen, heard, even touched. Since descriptive paragraph is a series of sentence that develops the main idea that makes the reader see or point a verbal picture. It also conveys the physical or abstract image of person, place and objects Sullivan (1976:85). It means that when students write description, they describe their impression of a certain object or even into words. It is also supported by McKay (1985:4) who states that when we want to describe something, we must be able to make the readers understand what we mean. Furthermore, Crimmon (1983:163) adds that descriptive paragraph is a strategy for presenting a verbal portrait of a person, a place, a thing. Therefore, the writer can conclude that in writing a

descriptive paragraph students must be able to bring the readers' mind to the situation where they can imagine the things describe although they have never been there. In this research the writer was analyzed proficiency and difficulties in making paragraph based on the ninth-grade students' proficiency of Ohio, Columbus.

### **1.2 Formulation of Problems**

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates research problems as follow:

1. How is the SMA students' proficiency in descriptive writing in each components of writing?
2. What writing components do the students find it difficult to master?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Research**

In line with the problems previously stated, the objectives of this research are as follows;

1. To know the SMA students' proficiency in descriptive writing in each components of writing
2. To find out what writing components do the students find difficult to master.

### **1.4 Uses of the Research**

The uses of this research are:

1. Theoretically: to give an illustration to English teacher about the students' ability and their difficulties in descriptive writing itself.
2. Practically: to encourage the English teacher to increase the students' ability in writing.

### **1.4 Scope of the Research**

This descriptive qualitative research was conducted at SMA Tri Sukses Natar. The subject of this research is the second class, which is class XI IPA 1. The researcher has chosen this class because he assumed that they had been taught about the material. And then, the students' writing proficiency was the variable of this research. The students were said to succeed in paragraph writing if their paragraphs have fulfilled the outcomes of the ninth-grade Students proficiency test in writing of Ohio, Columbus. The material given to the student was taken from Bahasa Inggris 2. The topic which had given to the students was about My House.

### **1.5 Definition of Terms**

#### **1. Writing**

Writing is one of language skills in which the writer gets ideas and

Expresses the ideas in written form.

## 2. Paragraph

Paragraph is basis unit or organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develop one main idea.

## 3.