

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

English is used widely all over the world today. Most countries on the world use English as their official language, their first language, foreign language and second language. English books are available almost in every bookstore and stationary.

Moreover, the use of English has been largely supported by the presence of television station that has listed a lot of sciences, news, and entertainment in English associated in their daily broadcast-programs. So, it is not exaggerated to say that “No single day passes by without English”.

Considering circumstances stated above, the use of learning English becomes real in the real life among the students’ of Senior High School. The students realize what they can do if they know English in their future life. In this case, English will be considered by them as a subject that meets the need of their future life.

English as a subject or skill challenges and interests not only the students but also the teachers. Teachers’ role as the facilitator, takes a very important position in the teaching – learning process. Teachers must be able to design

their instructions in such ways to meet the students' need. The instruction must touch every aspect of language and students' weaknesses should be given priority of attention to set instructional planning.

A noteworthy condition of students' activity happens when they are asked to speak or to comment generally, they eagerly seek the chance to have a turn to express their ideas. It is contradictory to the situation when they have writing work, where they usually get low scores.

Writing is commonly seen as the most difficult of the four skills in English namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Hence, the problem of mastering writing well has no easy solution. This phenomenon happens to many students of Indonesia. When the writer carried out his teaching practice (PPL) in SMAN 10 Bandar Lampung in July – September 2007, he found that the students get problems in Writing. Many of them were confused around ten minutes in getting the ideas of the theme given by the teachers such as the title, the content, the main sentence, the supporting sentences and even the worst it is hard for them to start writing. This condition has also been met by Muksin (2000:2) who states that the students get much difficulty to understand how to write sentences well because the students have to think a lot how to write the ideas. He also states that the students are bored and lazy to practise writing because it is difficult to do, besides that the students are lack of vocabularies, structure and the steps for good writing, the way to formulate the main ideas, the supporting sentences and conclusion. Hence, the Engage is really beneficial for students in guiding them to handle those cases discussed

above. The weaknesses of their composition in general are low quality of writing fluency, structure construction, and unorganized flows of ideas.

Basically they are interested in the given theme but since they are lack of self-confidence and the way to improve their writing, then those drive them become less excited and effected their mood in writing, for example they write slowly and they can not finish it until the time is up and also they tend to write as they want without considering the good construction. Evenmore in KTSP syllabus for Vocational High School students especially on the second grade who is related to this research, are expected to be able to describe daily activity of people.

It is known that writing is a process of communication which uses a conventional graphic system to convey a message to readers. Hence, writing deals with graphic symbols, that is unit of symbols of written language, that can be used to convey ideas to readers.

Seeing this condition, the researcher is interested in solving this problem by giving ESA experience to the students since ESA has an appropriate technique to solve the problem and writing can be an exciting activity when the students can dig more ideas inside the composition.

According to Jeremy Harmer, one of the ways in improving students' ability in writing a paragraph is through ESA (Engage, Study and Activate : Harmer 1998) which will be experimented in this research. **Engage** is the point in a

teaching where the teacher tries to arouse the students' interest and engage their emotions. **Study** activities are those which focus on language (or information) and how it is constructed. **Activate** means the students can learn writing which will be wrapped in a whole package for the sake of improving their writing skill.

ESA in group work refers to learning activities including doing tasks that are done by students in groups. In this case there will be five persons in every single group in assumption that this amount is the ideal one where every single group member will partly involved in running the activities without any group member left.

Furthermore, it is supported by the eagerness of the students to deal with writing especially related to the interesting themes given that can stimulate students' eagerness. This ESA is also almost similar to the research done by Muksin in 2000 that by warming up students' thought in doing writing, such as providing them a given theme, engaging their ideas through some supporting sentences and let the students think further about the paragraph writing they are dealing with, are good for their writing skill.

Realizing the students' difficulties in learning Writing skill such as the grammar pattern, paragraph construction and flow of ideas that they have to deal with, teacher as a facilitator has responsibility to help their students in order to be interested in the lesson given. Then, teacher should be able to look

for alternative way in teaching writing so that the teaching of writing will be useful and can enable the students to write better.

Thus, SMKN 2 Bandar Lampung was chosen based on the condition that it has similar problems to what happened in SMAN 10 Bandar Lampung since SMKN 2 Bandar Lampung, where the research has been held was the school where the writer studied in his high school level. In the last 5 years the condition of teaching – learning not improved, especially in writing. Therefore, the students needed a set of treatment to increase the students' ability in writing. The writer chose the treatment by teaching writing through ESA in group work, since ESA in group work was expected to arouse students' eagerness to write well.

1.2. Formulation of the Problems

Referring to the research background above, the following problem arises:
Is ESA in group work able to improve the students' writing ability especially in writing a descriptive paragraph at the second grade of SMKN 2 Bandar Lampung?

1.3. Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is:

To find out whether ESA in group work is able to improve the students'

writing ability especially in writing a descriptive paragraph at the second grade of SMKN 2 Bandar Lampung.

1.4. Uses

This research is useful both practically and theoretically:

1. Practically

a. The teacher

Through this research, the vocational high school teachers can apply ESA as one of the writing activities that can improve the students' writing ability.

b. The students

The implementation of ESA in this research will make the students get accustomed to using the language in written form so that it can improve the students' writing ability.

c. The school

The result of this research can be used as a consideration whether the school will implement ESA for all grades of students so as to improve their writing ability or not.

2. Theoretically

The result of this experimental research is expected to support the theory about the implementation of ESA that can be used to improve the students' writing ability.

1.5. Scope of the Research

The research was conducted at the second year of Vocational High School 2 (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri 2) Bandar Lampung. There were five meetings included, namely one pre-test meeting, three treatment meetings and one post-test meeting.

They were chosen since the syllabus of descriptive writing in KTSP curriculum is intended for the second grader. The materials that were used for this research were all taken from the student's book that commonly known as general English themes. Those themes have been conducted through the ESA as what this research aims to conduct ESA in improving students' ability in writing.

Here, ESA has been implemented as a whole as what the concept of teaching writing through ESA which uses the type of ESA Straight Arrows sequence. Specifically the material was about daily activities pictures of people where the students ought to deal with describing those in a paragraph. The class grouping has been done in a random group work, where the students could work together to support their writing ability.

In this research the writer has conducted one pre-test, three treatments and one post-test. The test was writing test. The test in post-test used the same topic as what the pre-test had. The focus of this research was on improving the students' writing ability especially in composing a paragraph.

1.6. Definition of Terms

- Writing is a process of communication which uses the graphic symbol to send the message.
- Paragraph is the smallest part of composition that contains a group of sentences that used to express one main idea.
- ESA (Engage, Study, Activate). **Engage** arouses the students' attention and engage their ideas. **Study** focuses on language (or information) and how it is constructed. **Activate** describes the exercises and activities which are designed to get students to use the language as communicatively as they can.
- Group work is a cooperative activity: five students, perhaps, discussing a topic, doing a role-play or solving a problem.
- Descriptive paragraph is a paragraph used to make the readers see, or to feel a verbal picture.