

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Writing is one of the skills which is very important to learn. It is because writing is a tool of communication to communicate the writer's ideas to the readers. In a good writing, the readers can get across information in a clear and concise manner (Checkett & Feng-Checkett, 2004). Thus, when a writer writes, he/she has to make sure the readers understand what he/she intends to convey their ideas and thinking to make the readers understand the message of the idea and thinking.

Although writing skill is important, especially in an academic field, many students still get difficulties in completing their writing tasks. Writing is not the basic language skill which is easy to acquire. Writing is the skill that is considered the most difficult (Trible, 1996). In writing, the idea that the writer writes must be clear from the beginning to the end. Furthermore, writing requires not only the ability to create words and idea of the writer but also the ability to decide which word and idea to use that is readable for the reader.

However, it is undeniable that writing skill is difficult to master and composing a piece of writing still become a problem students. To support this statement, Checkett & Feng-Checkett (2004, p. 5) also stated that there are two obvious problems arising from a poor piece of writing. The first problem is the reader's understanding. It could be occur because of poor writing so that the meaning of a sentence can be confused and unclear. For example, the sentence "The taxi crashes the motor cycle, and it needs to repaired." is ambiguous. The

pronoun “it” does not refer clearly to either taxi or motor cycle, so the reader cannot know which of the two is needed to repair. The second problem arising from poor writing is the reader’s perception. When the readers read a writing that is difficult to understand or it contains punctuation errors, they think the mistake is from the writer. Another example:

e.g. Stop Bill!

e.g. Stop, Bill!

Oshima and Hogue (1991)

In the first example, the writer tells someone to stop Bill. Meanwhile in the second example, the writer tells Bill to stop.

Mastering writing skill is necessary especially in academic field, it is because many exercises use essays or other written tasks. To master this language skill, it needs more and more practice in order they can produce good writing and the result will be seen when they write in a written task.

In writing tasks, the students tend to be less aware of the punctuations whereas the punctuation errors will affect the meaning of the sentence become ambiguous and the punctuation errors can make bad impression of readers. Therefore, the students need to pay attention in using the appropriate punctuations in order to produce a good writing and to make the reader understand what they want to say through their writing.

Punctuation is a crucial aspect in writing, but using punctuation marks appropriately is not easy. Learning how to use punctuation marks may be difficult because there are rules in it. For example, sometimes the learners use a comma into a sentence when it is not needed or sometimes the learners forget to use a comma into a sentence when it should be there. Even, the learners use a comma when they should use another punctuation

mark such as period or semicolon. Therefore, the learners should learn more about the use of punctuations because a single punctuation mistake may end to a different concept.

There are some studies about the effect of using good and bad punctuation. Meyer (1985) founds that educators see punctuation accuracy as the difference between “good” writing and, “bad” writing. He added that writing in an easy to read style, requires students to use various punctuation marks correctly to help the reader construct the intended meaning of each sentence appropriately and meaningfully. Rumki (2005) added that wrong punctuation can interrupt the flow of ideas and change meaning, but properly used punctuation helps readers understand writers meaning. Additionally, Robinson (2002) stressed that good punctuation makes a lot for clean thought. As a result punctuation has important role, without it many sentences are mere jumbles of words.

In some researches show the use of punctuations in inappropriate way. Khalil (2000) mention that the most common frequency errors made by Palestinian EFL students in their writing is comma. The most common errors are categorized into comma splice and superfluous commas. Superfluous comma error occurs in over punctuating sentences by inserting commas in the wrong place. Gaines (2002) affirmed that the most common errors the learners of English make could be arranged to frequency of error according to the following order. The misuse of comma often occurs when it replaces the semicolon. Comma is probably the most frequently used punctuation mark, and comma errors come up frequently in student writing. The most common error that students make when using comma is thinking that a comma goes wherever one hears a pause in a sentence.

Due to those reasons, the writer is interested in investigating the use of punctuations in English writing because misused of punctuations may influence readers' perceptions. This study showed the use of punctuations in students'.

1.2 Research questions

This research is focused on finding the answer to the question:

1. How is the use of punctuation in students' descriptive texts in SMA IT Darul Hikmah Bekasi?

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study was aimed at investigating how is the use of punctuations in in students' descriptive texts in SMA IT Darul Hikmah Bekasi. To describe how the students used punctuations, this study describes the occurrence of the punctuations in the students' writing.

1.4 Significance of the study

The result of this study may provide useful bases for future research. Also, there will be a benefit for all EFL high school students, English teachers, and SMA IT Darul Hikmah (YAPIDH) Bekasi. For EFL high school students, through this study, they will know about the importance of punctuations in English writing. For English teachers, through this study, they will know that punctuations are important to teach to their students. For SMA IT Darul Hikmah (YAPIDH) Bekasi, this study is a kind of report that describes the ability of their students in using punctuations in English writing.