

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

English is a subject matter in school. It covers four basic language skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing and sub skills are grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Teaching English means teaching the students not only how to speak, how to read, how to listen, but also how to write. Moreover, teaching about English means teaching of how to communicate in English. Communication is not only done in spoken form but also in written form. Most students consider that writing is the hardest skill to master because the ability to write in foreign language is more complicated than the ability to speak, read, or listen. In our notion, the writing skill is one of the skills which is taught from junior high school to university level because it has been included in the curriculum approved by the government.

In junior high school, teaching English is really needed to improve the students mastery in English skills including writing which leads them how to write narrative writing, argumentative writing, expository writing, and descriptive writing. It is hard to teach students how to write because it involves many components such as structure, vocabulary, form, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics.

In addition an appropriate media was made to make the students more motivated to study. The teacher can use some methods in teaching learning process to help the students' understanding about the material being explained. In applying the method, the teachers have to prepare many things like; teaching material,

classroom management, and many other aspects because using inappropriate technique can make the students get difficulties in understanding the teacher's explanation and it means that the teacher may fail in teaching them.

Media must be able to increase the students' motivation in learning English, especially in writing. By using media, the student will be easier to do their writing. Furthermore, the media that is used should be visible,audible, and also readable. Media also enhance student's interest in writing skill. One of media that can be used in teaching writing is picture series.

Wright (1997:2) states that the picture series comprise a sequence of pictures closely related to a narrative text. It is expected picture series can stimulate students to write. A picture can also be defined as a visual representation of something such as a person, scene, produced on a surface, as in a photograph, and painting. Pictures can increase students' sense and make them imagine what they see, write, before analyzing them in their thoughts.

Based on the background above the writer would like to make a study under the title **“THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PICTURE SERIES TO IMPROVE WRITING ABILITY OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 1 ATAMBUA IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014/2015”**.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the above background, the problem of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. Is using picture series effective to improve the writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Atambua ?
2. What is the students' level of ability in writing after being taught using picture series?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study can be stated as follows:

1. To find out wheter the use of picture series is effective to improve the writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Atambua.
2. To find out the level of ability in writing of the eight grade students of SMPN 1 Atambua after being taught using picture series.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for those who have great concern in language teaching or language learning particularly the English teacher of researched school, the writer herself, and the students:

- a. For Teacher

To inform the teacher about the students' ability in writing by using picture series.

- b. For Writer

To improve and enrich the writers's knowledge about writing by using picture series.

c. For Students

To improve students ability in writing by using series of pictures.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

In this study the writer focuses her attention to the descriptive writing text. The writer uses a series of picture to guide the students in writing descriptive text. The analysis is focused on the grammar, vocabulary, and form. And to measure the student's effectiveness in writing using series of picture, the writer uses the analytic method of scoring by Anderson's that is used as the measurement in evaluating the student ability concerning this study.

### **1.6 Definition of Terms**

Concerning with the study, there are some terms that need to be defined.

Those terms are as the followings:

a. Effectiveness

This is a measure of the match between stated goals and their achievement. The term "effectiveness" in this study means students can take advantage of learning effectively in using picture series in describing something. Borich (1991; 56) says that an effective teacher is one who had achievement motivated personality with a strong commitment and rich teaching experiences.

b. Pictures Series

According to Munadi (2008) pictures make it easy for people to catch ideas or information conveyed in them clearly, more than if merely expressed verbally. When the students observe pictures, they are able to speak more, interact with the pictures and their friends, make good relationships among paradoxes and build new ideas. The term “picture” in this study means students can describe some image provided by the teacher. The image is an image associated with descriptive text. A picture can evoke mental images to help second language learners recall a term or concept.

c. Improve

To rise to a more desirable or more excellent quality or condition make better or to increase the productivity or value in Subani (2010). In this research, improving is a process to increase the ability in writing of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Atambua through picture series.

d. Writing

Lexically “writing” means any work done by someone using letters or words and a tool in hand and putting them in piece of paper (Current English Learners Dictionary). Francis (1985) defines the term “writing” linguistically as the systematic visible and permanent representation of the auditory and transient phenomena of speech. In this study “writing” means particularly the activity of the students to convey their ideas concerning the topics chosen concretely and vividly, in order the readers can capture both its details and wholeness.

e. Ability

Ability is a potential or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby, 1987:2). In this sense, ability means the students capability in writing a composition based on series of pictures consisting of at least three paragraphs on the topic given.

f. SMPN 1 Atambua

SMPN 1 Atambua is a state junior high school located on Adisucipto Street in Atambua. It is one of the International standard schools in Atambua.