CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Language is a meaningful system of sounds used to communicate. Language is as prime foundation of communication becomes very important in human life. Language is very needed in human daily conversation to build a good social interaction such as; greeting, arguing, delaying, bargaining, entertaining, etc. Language likes a thread which connects among people with different aspect of human life such as; age, race, countries, etc. Different background of human life has been created different language background so it creates many kinds of language too, such as; Indonesian, French, Dutch, etc.

English is an international language, it is learned as a first language, second language and foreign language. In Indonesia it is used as foreign language, our government has entered English subject into Junior High School and Senior High School curriculum. In learning English there are four skills that should be mastered by students. Writing is one of the four basic skills: reading, listening, and speaking. Reading and listening as the receptive skill; speaking and writing as the product skill. It is a way of thinking and learning. Writing is an activity to explore ideas and put it into written form, which is done by the writer to the reader.

Writing is also one of the important skills that are taught in Junior High School. Writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use and
because they think as they write, it will trigger the language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their mind (Hammer, 2007: 31). The basic competence of writing ability is that the students must be able to express their ideas into a text by combining letters and using particulars linguistics aspects which consist of words, spelling, sentence, structure, punctuations.

Based on the junior high school syllabus, there are some typical texts that should be learned by the students especially in the seventh grade. Those are descriptive, narrative, procedural, report, and recount texts. The purposes of learning those texts are to make students able to express their ideas in a simple written form such as functional text and essay, and can use those texts in students’ daily activities.

Descriptive text becomes the first text which is learned by the students. It is because this text has the closest relation with the students’ lives. When the students want to describe something in a writing form, they have to write it in a descriptive text, even in the simplest way. Descriptive text is the form of text that aims at telling characteristic and adjective for the purpose of informing. It is also defined as a text tells the readers about the specific information. Generic structure of descriptive text are, title, identification and description.

Writing is important for the student. The student should know how to write in a good structure and content, because most of the exam to measure their knowledge focus on writing ability, for example math subject, sains subject. Harmer (2004: 3) states that most of exam, whether they are testing foreign language ability or other skills ofen rely on the students’ writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge.
It can be concluded that writing determine students’ success in learning English. All of the students Junior High School should be mastered writing skill, included SMP PGRI Sumbang.

B. Reason for Choosing the Topic

There are two reasons for choosing the topic, those are:

1. Writing is important.
2. Knowing students' competence, necessary to find the suitable teaching learning method.

C. Research Problems

The problem of this research is whether students of SMP PGRI SUMBANG have competence in writing descriptive text.

D. Aims of the Research

This research is aimed to know students’ competence in writing descriptive text at grade eight students of SMP PGRI SUMBANG in academic year 2015/2016.

E. Clarification of Terms

1. Writing

Nunan (2003: 88) states that writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraph that will be clear to reader. There are some aspect that can be evaluated, such as content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics.
2. Descriptive text

A descriptive text is a text that describes the features of someone, something, or a certain place. (Wardiman, 2008:46)

F. Contributions of the Research

The contributions which are expected from this research are useful:

1) For the teacher
   To show students’ competence and help the teacher showing the result.

2) For the reader
   Giving knowledge and be an input to the reader especially who will conduct a research about descriptive writing.