

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about (a) the background of the study, (b) problem of the study, (c) hypothesis of the study, (d) limitation of the study, (e) objective of the study, (f) variables of the study, (g) significance of the study, (h) assumption of the study, (i) definition of key terms. For detail information as follows:

A. Background of the Study

English is a very important role in Indonesia. In Indonesia it is becoming of the foreign language. In English there are four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and writing involve language production, so they are regarded as productive skills. On the other hand, listening and reading involve receiving message, so they are regarded as receptive skills¹. Based on Jeremy Harmer, Indonesian students are expected to be able to fulfill the four language skills, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are integrated and related to each other. Therefore, it must be learnt by the students from elementary school until university level. In this study, it focuses on the correlation between the students' grammar mastery to writing ability. To study about linguistic components and one of

¹ Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (New York: Longman, 1989), p. 16.

the language skills, it is proved that in MTs An-Nur has been taught writing subject from the first year till the third year. The writing subject is about the students should write narrative text by using simple past tense.

There are some definitions about writing related to this study; Sheridan Baker states that, “Writing is one of the most important things to do. It helps us to catch our ideas, realize our thoughts, and stand out as fluent persuasive people both on paper and on our feet in front of the meeting or the boss”². Based on Sheridan Baker, it can be concluded that writing can help students to express their ideas, feeling, condition and purposes to the others.

Based on the observation, there were some students of MTs An-Nur got problems in writing in narrative text because they did not understand about English grammar especially simple past tense. Furthermore, some students got problems in expressing their ideas through writing. There were some sentences from the students as follows:

(1) *My grandfather **come** here last week.

(2) *I **am sleep** all day yesterday.

Based on the students’ writing above, it was very clear that the students really got problems in writing especially in using simple past tense. For example in the first sentence, the students got problems in applying the main verb (come). It should be

² Sheridan Baker, *The Practical Stylist*, (New York: Harper & Row Publisher, 1987), Sixth Edition, p.1

used the past tense form (came). Besides that, the students did not understand about English tenses. The second sentences were from the students, it was very clear that the students did not understand how to use to be and the main verb in past tense form correctly. The grammatical sentences should be: (1) My grandfather came here last week. (2) I slept all day yesterday.

It could not deny that writing is considered as the most difficult skill for the students. It is line with Jack C. Richard's statement, "Writing is the most difficult skills for second language learner to master of putting together strings of grammatically correct students"³. Based on the statement above, it is consistent with the real students' condition of MTs An-Nur.

There are some elements of teaching writing that is needed to be known by the English teachers, namely grammar, vocabulary and many others. These elements are needed in teaching learning process especially writing skill so that the students are expected to be able to write narrative text. In writing narrative text, grammar is one of the language aspects which should be learnt by the students. Because of that, grammar concerns about the rules.

In MTs An-Nur, English grammar is thought to provide the basis for a set of language skills. In the context of writing, grammar allows learners to put their ideas into coherent sentences so that they can communicate in a written form successfully.

³ Jack C. Richard, *Methodology in Language Teaching: an Anthology of Current Practice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.303

In other words, by learning grammar, learners can transfer meanings in the form of phrases, clauses and sentences⁴. Mochida states that the ‘grammatical knowledge’ is the overall ability to apply the second language based on some points: appropriateness, meaningfulness, accuracy, and fluency. Mochida also described the dual characteristics of grammar knowledge as follows: ‘Declarative grammatical knowledge (explicit knowledge)’ is the knowledge about grammar rules, and ‘Procedural grammatical knowledge (implicit knowledge)’, on the other hand, is the knowledge about how to use grammar rules properly, meaningfully and automatically⁵.

Based on the description above, it assumes that grammar is one of language components which takes a role in writing ability. Having strong of writing and grammar, it allows the writers to deliver their message to their readers. One the contrary, ungrammatical writing makes the readers confused. It is important to use words properly in order to get the point directly, and to practice good basic grammar to add credibility in writing.

Realizing that grammar is inescapable in writing process, especially English teachers could encourage the student to study and practice in good writing. That is why, they should get guidance to become effective writers. Effective grammar instruction begins with what students have already known about grammar, and it

⁴ Doff in Jack C. Richards, *Methodology in Language teaching: an Anthology of Current Practice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.303

⁵ Mochida in Jack C. Richards *Methodology in Language teaching: an Anthology of Current Practice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.3

helps them to use this knowledge as they write. By connecting the grammar mastery concept to writing ability, the student can know that grammatical concept give effect in their ability to write effectively.

Based on the background of the study, it is interested to investigate about the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability especially (simple past tense) to narrative text (writing).

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, there is one problem that should be investigated in this study as follows:

Is there a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability?

C. Hypothesis

Hypothesis is a tentative explanation of certain observed facts and it is formulated as a guide further investigation in other words. Hypothesis tested as crucial tests of the validity of the theory⁶. The hypotheses of this study as follows:

Ha: There is a significance correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability at the Ninth grade students of MTs An-Nur Palangka Raya.

⁶ Roger Sapsford and Victor Jump, *Data Correlation and Analysis*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, Second edition publish 2006, P.239

Ho: There is no significance correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability at the Ninth grade students of MTs An-Nur Palangka Raya.

D. Limitation of the Study

Based on the problem of this study, the limitation of the study is focused on the correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability. Grammar mastery related to this study is about simple past tense and writing is about the students' writing in narrative text. The other tenses and another type of writing such as descriptive and argumentative text of this study are not explored yet.

E. The Objective of the Study

Based on the problem of the study above, the objective of the study is to investigate about the correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability.

F. Variables of the Study

There are two variables of this study those are:

- Variable X (Grammar mastery)
- Variable Y (Writing ability)

G. The Significances of the Study

The study has theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, this study could give information and contribution to the development of psychological theories about the correlation between the students' grammar mastery to the writing ability.

Practically, this study could be applied to help the English teachers in improving their priority in teaching learning especially in teaching writing narrative text. Based on the result of the study, the English teachers could pay attention before giving or inviting the students to write a narrative text, the students should be given a special understanding about the formula that should be applied in their sentences.

H. Assumption of the study

The assumption of this study is the influence of grammar has a significance correlation toward the improvement of the students' writing ability.

I. Definition of the Term

The following definitions are giving to make readers have the same understanding or perception for some terms used in this study. They are also intended to avoid ambiguity or misinterpretations. They are as follows:

1. Correlation

Correlation is a technique for determining the co variation between sets of score; paired scores may vary directly (increase or decrease together) or vary

inversely (as one increase, the other decreases correlational research). Research that attempts to determine the extent and the direction of the relationship between two or more variables⁷.

Correlation means a connection between two things in which one thing changes as the other does. In this study, correlation refers to a connection between students' grammar mastery and ability in writing narrative text.

2. Grammar Mastery

According to Eugene. J. Hill, grammar is a description of certain organizing aspects of a particular language. It usually includes phonological (sounds), morphological (word composition) and syntactic (sentence composition) points⁸. Mastery is the great skill and knowledge.

3. Narrative Text

Narrative text is a text that has purpose to entertain the reader with a story that deals with complications or problematic events which lead to a crisis and in turn finds resolution⁹.

4. Writing Ability

Writing ability is specific ability which helps writers to put their ideas into words in meaningful form and interact with the message.¹⁰ In this research,

⁷Donal Ary, Lucy Chesar Jacob, Chris Sorensen, Asghar Razavieh. *Introduction to Research in Education, (Eighth Edition)*, (Canada: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010).p.639.

⁸ Hall. J. E.1992. *Grammar for Use*. Voluted Publisher. P.3

⁹Sudarwati, *Look A head an English Course for senior High School Students Year XI*, Jakarta: Erlangga, 2007, p. 154.

¹⁰SIL International. "What are Writing Skill?" version 4, 1999, p. 1

the text meant is text about narrative. Whereas, an essay is a group of paragraphs about one subject¹¹.

¹¹ Susan Fawcett and Alvin Sandberg, *Evergreen with Readings: A Guide to Writing Fifth Ed.* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1996, p. 136