

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Nowadays, many people are interested in learning English for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that English as the primary foreign language that many people use English to communicate each other. For instance, some people want to study English because they live in target language community so they have to learn it in order they can communicate with others. Therefore, Indonesia also tries to learn English well so that they are able to speak English when they have relationship with the foreigners.

As we know that there are four skills in English learning writing, speaking, reading and listening, but some students feel that writing skill is the most difficult compared to the others because in writing the writer should combine and express what she/he would like to convey in good written forms. Harmer (2004: 79) states writing is a form of communication to deliver thought or to express feeling through written form.

Moreover, mastering writing skill is not easy for student because there are so many components that should be mastered by students to be a good writer. Students also think that writing is difficult when the students have to establish the subject, verb (either transitive or intransitive), object, tense, active and passive voice, also logical thinking. Besides, the basic component of language which must be learned by students is structure or grammar so that they are able to write in English using accurate grammar.

Gerot and Wignell (1994: 2) state that grammar is theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works. However, the Indonesian students often face the difficulty in using the correct structure because the Indonesian students are still affected by their mother tongue while students learn English as a result; the students make some grammatical errors in their writing.

In fact, grammar is the most important part of English to communicate with others so that the people understand what we say. Harmer (2004:12) defines grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. Therefore, there are many part of grammar that cannot be neglected such as articles, parts of speech, modal auxiliaries, tenses, etc. In English, the verb will show the time orientation, and there is regular and irregular verb that in Indonesia does not have those rules. Furthermore, since Indonesian language does not have a past tense form, the students were confused with the past formation, especially for the eighth graders of junior high schools

A recount texts is to retell an event that happened in the past. Therefore, in writing recount text, the students have to pay attention about simple past both the regular verb and irregular verbs. In other words, the students have to know the list of regular verb and irregular verb because the past form is commonly used in writing recount text. In conclusion, the mastery of the past verb form is the student has to memorize the verb form both the regular and irregular verbs so that the students can write recount text when they are asked to tell their past experience.

Based on the researcher's experience, there are some causes that make students do many errors on the use of simple past tense like when the students are asked to tell what they did in the past, they still use the presents tense for example "He go to school yesterday," instead of "He went to school yesterday." The verb form has to be changed from *simple present* into *past tense*. It shows that In Indonesian language, there are no verb changes that affect the language and the students do not have any knowledge of the past tense to apply in their writing. Therefore, when the students are asked to change the verb into regular and irregular verbs, they still confused to change it.

From this explanation, the researcher is interested to analyze the students' errors in the uses of simple past through recount text because writing a recount text should be clear, vivid, and concrete. In addition, the researcher wants to know the possible causes of errors and to find a good solution to the problem are made by eight grades in writing recount text using the simple past tense.

1.2. The statements of the Problem

1. What types of verb errors found in recount composition in the use of the simple past of the eighth grade students of a Junior High School in Surabaya?
2. What are the possible causes of verb errors in the use of simple past tense in recount text that are made by the eighth grade students of a Junior High School in Surabaya?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the types of verb errors found in recount text in the use of simple past tense made by eighth grade students of a Junior High School in Surabaya
2. To find out the possible causes of verb errors in recount text in the use of the simple past tense made by eight graders of a Junior High School in Surabaya

1.4 Assumptions

1. The students use simple past tense verbs in writing their recount text
2. The students are familiar with the use of irregular verbs and regular verbs in writing

1.5. Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Writing

1.5.1.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is not an automatic process because competent writing comes from plain hard work from determination and hard work. The skill of writing can be mastered if one is ready to work, learn what she/he needs to know. According to John Langan states that writing is a process of discovery that involves a series of steps, and those steps are very often a zigzag journey. On the other hand, writing is a long process. There are many steps in the writing process that should be mastered by the writer. Writing is a skill and practice is needed.

1.5.1.2 The Writing Process

According to John Langan in his book, *Basic Principles of Effective Writing*, there are four steps in writing processes; prewriting, writing first draft, revising and the last is editing. The first step is prewriting. With this step, the learner is hoped to think about and create material what the learner is going to write. After thinking about the idea of the writing, the learner can start to write the first draft, revising, and editing the writing, so the errors can be deleted in this last step.

1.5.2 Recount texts

1.5.2.1 Definition of Recount Text

According to Anderson, recount is a piece of writing that retells past events usually in order in which they happened and the purpose of a recount is to give the audience a description of what occurred, who did it, where it occurred, when it occurred, and how it occurred.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

From the result of this study, the writer hopes there will be benefits for English teacher and students. The teacher is expected more practices to improve the English ability of the students and teacher will be able to learn the students' points of difficulties among students on the use of simple past tense and the teacher will able to overcome the troubles. Besides, for students they will able to study the simple past tense more easily and improve their English grammar especially in writing.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses on the verb errors in the use of the simple past tense made by eighth grade students of a Junior High School in Surabaya in recount composition. The reason why the researcher only takes the eighth grade students of a Junior High School in Surabaya is they had already been taught the simple past tense. Besides, they have already been learnt about recount text that is given in that grade, and it is also included in the school syllabus. The writer hopes that this research can help the students be aware of the importance of grammar and tenses in writing, so that they can improve their writing skill and they can also be good writers.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

In order to help the readers understand the key terms that are used in this study, the writer needs to explain them as follows:

1.8.1 Error Analysis

According to Brown (1980) states error analysis is the study of observing, analyzing, and classifying the errors made by the learners. Moreover, Corder (1981) states that error analysis have two functions. The first is a ‘theoretical’ and the second ‘practical’.

1.8.2 Errors and Mistakes

According to Brown, mistake is when the people are learning a new language; they may “fail” to produce the target language or TL. Moreover, Brown (1980) states an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult

grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner.

1.8.3 Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Dulay, et al. (1982) defines that “contrastive analysis (CA) takes care of errors by comparing the learner’ native language and target language which to find out the distinction of the structure in L1 and L2. In this comparison of the two languages the process is known as “transfer”. Therefore there are two types of transfer: positive transfer and negative transfer.

1.8.4 Causes of Errors

Brown (2000: 224) finds “there are several causes of errors which are produced by learners.”

1.8.4.1. Interlingual Transfer

Brown (2000.224) states that interlingual transfer is the beginning stages of learning a second language are characterized by a good deal of interlingual transfer from the native speakers.

1.8.4.2. Intralingual Transfer

Brown (2000.224) is defined intralingual transfer is one of the sources of error that must be recognized in second language learning.

1.8.5 Surface Strategy Taxonomy

According to Dulay et al., (1982, p.150) “A Surface Strategy Taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures are altered; learners may

omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones, they may misform items or misorder them.

1.8.6 Simple Past Tense

Simple past tense is one of the English tenses which functions to describe an event that happened and finished in the past. According to Azar (1989, pp.18-24), the simple past tense indicates that an activity or situation began and ended in a particular time in the past. Moreover, Murphy (1998), verbs in the Simple Past Tense are divided into two kinds; regular and irregular verbs.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter consists of the introduction, which contains the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, the theoretical framework, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study.

The second chapter consists of error analysis which contains of definition of error analysis, contrastive analysis, the definition of writing, definition of recount text, definition of past tense, and previous studies.

The third chapters consist of research methodology and findings which contains research design, the subject, the instrument of the research, the procedure of data collection, the procedure of data analysis, and technique of data analysis.