

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are four basic skills that students need to be master in English, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Harmer, 2007: 265). Listening and reading are receptive skills, meaning that students need to have the ability to receive information by hearing or reading. On the other hand, speaking and writing are productive skills, meaning that students need to produce words, sentences, or paragraphs orally or in written form. Writing skill has become one of the most important English language skills. As a productive skill, writing skill requires students to produce a piece of written text (Harmer,1998: 44). However, the process of producing the written text does not happen instantly. It is because there are several steps that students need to go through in order to write a well-structured writing piece.

According to Brown (2001:335), writing skill is an ability to write naturally, coherently, grammatically, fluently, authentically and purposively. In this definition, it indicates that writing skill is the ability of a writer to write with fluent, as natural as possible with the accuracy of grammar, the coherent and authentic ideas and has a clear purpose of writing and reader in mind. Writing is not a simple activity because there are a lot of aspects that must be mastered. This preparation can make it possible for words that have been used receptively to come into productive use.

Writing involves transferring messages from our thoughts to a flat surface (written form) using language. Brown (2001:336) defines writing as the process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thoughts into words, to sharpen your main ideas and to give them structure and coherent organization. However, out of four basic skills in English, writing is considered to be the most complex skill to master. Richards and Renandya (2002:303) state that writing is the most difficult skill to master because the learners should be able to organize the ideas and turn it into a readable text. The product of writing that the writer creates eventually will be read by other people. Therefore, the writer needs to be able to organize it into a readable text that will be understandable to the audience. Heaton (1988:135) states that the product of writing also needs to be interesting in order to attract the interest of the audience to read the product. Writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements.

The need for grammar mastery in writing is particularly emphasized. Studies by Putri (2018) and Cahyaningrum (2021) indicated that there was a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing skills. This result further suggested the importance of mastering English grammar in order to perform well in writing. Grammar has become an important role in writing. According to Collins (2009) grammar is important in learning English as a foreign language and grammar guides the students in constructing English sentences to communicate with other people correctly. Without the correct usage of grammar, the written text will not be understood by the reader because in writing form the students do not have direct interaction with the reader like the

students usually do in speaking. Therefore, mastering English grammar was very important in writing text, especially in writing descriptive text. Jackson (2005:4) also adds that grammar is an essential component of both spoken and written language. It means that mastering grammar is very important in learning English since it is the essential component of English language.

It clears that grammar gives students knowledge about how to put words in different order and convey the intended meaning. Grammar mastery can help writers create a good descriptive text. The relationship between both writing and grammar is very important. Grammar helps students in writing a good descriptive text. As we know, descriptive text usually uses present tense formulas. The simple present tense refers to action or situation that does not change frequently. It is used to describe habits or routines, to express opinions, or to make general statements of fact, the simple present can also be used to refer to the future. Means that simple present tense is one kind of sentence that is used to express daily activities and general statements. This sentence is used in descriptive text. Some people may be good at writing descriptive text with lots of good ideas to express but if they lack of grammar knowledge, they will have such a trouble in communicating those ideas to other people. As a result, some students may get bad marks in school, or for some writers they may not get anything published. After that people begin learning grammar, they start speaking and learning tenses, gerund and so on. The rules of grammar help to determine the mechanics of writing descriptive text, which what makes the connection between grammar and writing is important. A good comprehension of grammar makes students write any kind of texts effectively.

Simple present tense is one of the tenses in English grammar that is used to tell about general truth or fact and habitual actions. Descriptive text usually focuses on only one object, this type of text is written using the simple present tense. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing skill. As mentioned previously, study by Putri (2018) found that there was a correlation between grammar mastery and writing descriptive ability. Cahyaningrum (2021) also showed that there was a positive correlation between grammar mastery and their competence in writing descriptive text. In addition, studies by Putri (2018) and Cahyaningrum (2021) both indicated that there was a correlation between students' grammar mastery and their ability in writing descriptive text.

It can be seen that most of the previous studies investigated grammar as a whole, general knowledge covering the 16 tenses. Only few studies investigated the correlation between students' grammar mastery of certain tenses with certain writing text. Therefore, considering the importance of mastering English and the urge of having a good writing skill, this study aims at investigating the correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing skill in descriptive text. Grammar mastery is chosen as the variable as it expresses truth or fact and habitual actions, something that students will use a lot in their daily life. Further, simple present tense is also the first tense that students learn in English. On the other hand, descriptive text is chosen since it uses simple present tense in the structure. This study will be conducted by taking the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Ubud as the samples. It brings novelty in the terms of discussion as the grammar tense is specified and also in the terms of setting.

In accordance with the background above the researcher is highly interested in conducting a study entitled “The Correlation between Grammar Mastery and Writing Ability of the Eighth Grade students of SMPN 3 Ubud in Academic Year 2022/2023.”

1.2 Research Problem

A scientific investigation begins with a problem. Moreover formulating a research problem in doing investigation is important and useful for the researcher before doing the research. Based on the background of the study, the researcher was interested to know about the correlation between students’ grammar mastery in simple present tense in writing descriptive text. There is one research question that can be formulated for this study. The research question is as follows: Is there any significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Ubud in academic year 2022/2023?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The research problem portrays the formulation of the objective of the study as it indicates what this study tries to investigate. Therefore, based on the research problem, the objective of the study can be formulated as follows: To investigate the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Ubud in academic year 2022/2023.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

To keep the discussion of this study focus, the study is limited to the

discussion about the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability in descriptive text. The researcher focuses on students' descriptive text writing ability that uses simple present tense on its structure as it is used to describe the topics about best friend, tourism place, idol, and pet. The participants or students that are being studied are also limited to the sample size which consists of the eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Ubud.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Through this study, there are several positive contributions that are expected to be given to several parties, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to add into the literature related to the correlational study, specifically the one related to students' simple present tense mastery and writing ability in writing descriptive text.

Practically, the results of this study are expected to give positive contribution to the English teachers and other researchers. For the English teachers. Through this study, the English teachers, especially the ones at SMP Negeri 3 Ubud, are expected to have more insights about the aspects that contribute to students' achievement in writing descriptive text so that the best teaching strategies can be designed. Other researchers who are interested in investigating studies related to the topic of the correlation between students' simple present tense and achievement in writing descriptive text are expected to have more literature to refer to.



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1.6 Definition of Key Term

Since broad definition of terms can cause confusion, the key terms used in this study are defined in advance. The definition of this study key terms is presented below.

1. Grammar Mastery

Grammar mastery is defined as the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Ubud to use grammar correctly. Grammar mastery is the mastery of formal rules concerning word forms and application of words in a sentence to create correct and meaningful sentences. In the present study, the researcher highlighted the grammar mastery of simple present tense. Simple present tense is one of the tenses in English grammar that is used to tell about general truth or fact and habitual actions.

2. Writing Ability

Writing ability is the successful effort and courage that the students do in constructing a piece of writing based on given criteria. Writing Ability is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Ubud in constructing general information, specific information, and textual meaning to make a descriptive text.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Theoretical review is a set of concepts and terms from experts used and needed in this research. Therefore, the theoretical study used for scientific studies is based on the theoretical background and empirical evidence. It would need some foundations and related references that could lead this scientific study. Some of the important theories from the experts which mentioned below would be related to the theoretical background. The foundation of thought deriving from the theories needed as a demand to solve problems in research to the theoretical. As a result, this study discusses the theories which are relevant to this research. It is discussed as follows: 1) grammar mastery, 2) writing ability, 3) descriptive text.

2.1.1 Grammar Mastery

Grammar mastery is the mastery of formal rules concerning word forms and application of words in a sentence to create correct and meaningful sentences. Grammar mastery is the understanding of sentence structure, sentence element, and also includes the understanding of simple clause and complex clause. In this research, the researcher discusses grammar as the system of rules of forming words and combining them into sentences.

Harmer (2001: 12) defines the term grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that

language. Grammar is the study of how words are combined to form sentences. It provides us with the terminology we need to talk about language in an informed way, it also enables us to describe our own use of language, as well as that of other people. According to Nelson (2002:1) in writing, a mastery of grammar enables us to evaluate the choices that are available to use during the composition. On the other hand, Richards and Schmidt (2002:251) states grammar is a description of the structure of a language and how language units like words and phrases are formed into sentences.

One of the important things in writing grammar is tenses. In sixteen forms of tenses which indicate the certain time of action in English, there is simple present tense. According to Murphy (2004: 4) the simple present tense is used to talk about something that is true in general and it happens all the time or repeatedly. Sargeant.H, (2007:58) defines that simple present tense is used to tell the facts and events of a story that is happening now or in the future. Simple present tense is using the pure form of a verb or by adding -s or -es to the end of a verb depending on the subject. If the subject is either I, You, They or We, the verb that is used in simple present tense is the pure or original form. On the other hand, if the subject is either She, He or It, the verb that are used simple present tense is followed with s or-es at the end

According to Hewings (2001: 2) we use the present simple to describe things that are always true, or situations that exist now and, as far as we know, will go on indefinitely. We use the present simple to talk about habits or things that happen on a regular basis. We often use the present simple with verbs that perform the

action they describe. Considering this usage, simple present tense is essential to be mastered by students, especially by the students in Indonesia who learn English as a foreign language. The students should be aware about these rules that they learn as a target language, however, these enable them to communicate with each other without creating misunderstanding and misinterpretation. They should not learn it deeply because when they communicate to other people, especially in spoken English they just need to know how people understand what they say. Considering those definitions and explanations, the writer shows that grammar is a set of rules derived from a language that enable people to understand what they read or what they construct in sentences or expressions when they communicate. Grammar is the way of the spoken and written language to be organized. It is concerned with the order of word groups, clauses and sentences and morphemes in words. It is closely related to generic structure and cohesion.

2.1.2 Writing Ability

Writing ability is the students' ability in expressing their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in writing that is measured by a writing test. Writing is considered to be one of the important language skills in learning English. However, many students still experience difficulties in writing simple paragraphs. The difficulties are about the linguistic and rhetorical problems entailed in writing. According to Jones in R. Cooper and Odell (1977: 33) writing was synonymous with discourse, and discourse was discussed in terms of its aims, it related to the function of language, and in terms of its features, which are the separate elements, devices, and mechanism of language. Therefore, writing ability is the students' mastery in

writing or performance by students in learning writing. The writing ability defined as the students' ability in achieving English writing ability through a certain learning process. The result of this achievement presented in a list of students' writing scores in one of instructional objective of writing skill from syllabus senior high school to write a simple paragraph

Harmer (2004: 3) mentions that writing is a skill, unlike speaking which may be acquired naturally by children through exposing the language to them, which requires some learning. Then, Torrance et al. (2007: 2) define writing as a higher mental process involved in creating a permanent and extended text, which is adapted to an absent reader's needs and which satisfies the writer's communicative goals. While according to Mora-Flores (2009: 12), writing is a process by which we transfer our thinking, our ideas, and our experiences into written form. It is not only the combination of letter, which relate to the sounds when people speak, but writing is more than the production of these graphic symbols. In writing the students are expected to acquire, requiring the mastery of a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies (Barkaoui, 2007: 35).

2.1.3 Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is the activity of transferring feeling or experience into the writing. According to Keraf (2000) the writer transfers the images, the feeling that writer experienced to the reader. The writer tries to convey the image, feeling and experiences to the readers so that they can imagine. In line with Keraf, Kane(2000: 352) adds that descriptive text is description about sensory experience, how

something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception. The purpose of descriptive text is to describe and reveal a particular person, place or thing in detail or specifically to make the reader be able to visualize the description.

Descriptive text is a part of factual genres. Its social function is to describe a particular person, place or thing (Wardiman, 2008: 122). Description in writing is the process of creating visual images and sensory impression through words. More often, description is a part of another piece of writing and is used to inform an audience about how something or someone looked or to persuade an audience to see something from the writer's point of view. As it gives visualization to the readers, it usually uses descriptive writing elements that appeal to the senses, describing how the thing looks, smells, feels, sounds, or tastes (Oshima & Hogue, 1998). In the structure, descriptive text is usually written in simple present tense

By understanding the opinions about definition and the purpose of descriptive text, it can be concluded that descriptive text is a text which says what a person or thing is like. In addition, the writer can use the feeling to transfer the images from experience. Furthermore, the description should be so unique that the description of one thing should be different from a description of another thing.

2.2 Empirical Review

Several studies have been conducted previously which were investigating similar topic with the one discussed in this present study. The first study was conducted by Putri (2018) aimed to find out the correlation between students'

grammar mastery and their writing ability on descriptive paragraphs of the tenth-grade students of SMAN 2 Tapung in 2017/2018 academic year. The research design was correlational research consisting of five classes; the number of the population was 122 students. The sample of this research was 50 students taken from 5 classes using random sampling. The data were collected using test to collect data. The results indicated that there is a correlation between grammar mastery and writing descriptive ability. Based on the data analysis, the researcher concluded that there is a correlation between grammar mastery and writing descriptive ability at the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Tapung.

Cahyaningrum (2021) conducted the second study that aims to find the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their competence in writing descriptive text at the tenth grade at SMKN 1 Bandung in academic year 2020/2021. The research design was correlation research. The population consisted of 35 students. The instrument of this research used a test for grammar and writing. The data were collected using test to collect data. The researcher concluded that there was a positive correlation between grammar mastery and their competence in writing descriptive text. The result showed that there was any significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their competence in writing descriptive text.

There were many similarities both of previous studies and this research. These studies collected the data using grammar and writing test. The difference between those previous and this research was the sample and population. Those previous studies was conducted in senior high school student as the sample and this research took junior high school student as the sample. The population of the

first studies was consisted of 50 students and the second study was 35 students. This research consisted of 76 students.

Considering the result data, those two studies were already good in presenting the data and finding the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability in descriptive text. The sources of the material that the researchers used was good. However, in writing test, the first studies did not give clear instruction about how many sentences which should be written by the students. In order to make the instruction clearer in this study, the researcher limited the sentences in a paragraph for the writing test. The researcher asked the student to write 6-12 sentences in a paragraph to describe about place or person.

Additionally, descriptive text may be defined as a group of sentences that are closely related in thought and which serve one comment purpose often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like. Furthermore, Pardiyono (2007:34) states that descriptive text was a type of written text, in which has the specific function to describe an object (living or non-living things) and it has the aim of giving description of the object to the reader clearly.

2.3 Hypothesis

A Hypothesis in the research is a basic assumption of how the result of the research will be. It is a prediction of a phenomenon. Moreover, in formulating hypothesis, the researcher has to ensure that the hypothesis is real or based on fact. Based on the theories and related studies presented on the theoretical and empirical reviews, two hypothesis were drawn for this study. The hypothesis were

alternative hypothesis and null hypothesis. They are as follows:

- Ha: There is a significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Ubud in academic year 2022/2023.
- Ho: There is no significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Ubud in academic year 2022/2023.

