

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is a tool that is used for daily communication, both spoken and written (Felicia, 2001:1). It is through language that we are able to interact with others in our world (Derewianka, 1993:3). A language makes people easier to communicate and also in expressing their ideas, wishes, thought, and desires. In other words, a language plays significant role to communicate with one another.

As we know English has become an international language that is widely used by people all over the world as a means of communication. Although English is not the language with the largest number of native speakers, it has become a lingua franca. A lingua franca can be defined as a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native language are different from each other's and where one or both speakers are using it as 'second' language (Harmer, 2001:1).

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is taught from junior high school to University level. According to Richard (2002, 10) TEFL (Teaching English

as Foreign Language) is presented as a practice using them as the basis for written and spoken communication. If someone wants to learn English, there are four skills which are taught in teaching and learning English. They are receptive skills; listening (understanding the spoken language) and reading (understanding the written language), and productive skills (speaking and writing) (Haycraft, 1978: 8). These skills will not be perfect without some aspects to support them, namely grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.

Among of the four skills, writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master (Richards and Renandya, 2002:303). In line to the statement, Harris (1969: 68-69) also stated that writing as a part of productive skill is considered as the most difficult skill which involves some components. The components include central idea, organization, supporting material, style, and mechanics. Central idea involves focusing on a clear, manageable idea, argument, or thesis around which to organize your material, it includes selecting subordinate ideas that support and reinforce central idea. Organization relates to coherent arrangement of material. While supporting material includes explanations, examples, statistics, and quotations make the ideas and information presented meaningful and memorable. Moreover, style relates to the choice of structures and lexical items to make sentences are free of wordiness and ambiguity. And the last component is mechanic which correlates with grammar, spelling, or punctuation, this component counts only when it is wrong.

Writing is a process of communication which uses conventional; graphic system to convey a message to reader. For many of foreign language learners, writing is considered as the most difficult skill because in writing they have to combine the correct grammatical and also the coherence of the paragraph (Siahaan, 2003:3). Thus, the correct usage of grammar is important in writing a text in order that the readers can understand the content of the text. As the example if someone construct a written text, they will not produce a good English text unless their grammar mastery is good.

Based on the researcher's experience when joining internship program in SMP N 3 Purwokerto, the researcher taught simple past to the eight grade students. To improve their ability in understanding simple past tense, the researcher also taught the students to write recount text. Based on the phenomena, the researcher found many problems that faced by students in writing a recount text. The problems include errors in grammar, organization, content, vocabulary and spelling. Besides that, most of the students also faced difficulties in expressing their ideas and lacking of vocabulary.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to conduct a research entitled "*A Correlation Between Mastery of Simple Past Tense of Grade VIII students and Their Ability in Writing Recount Text.*"

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher would like to present and formulate the main problem of the study as follows:

Is there any correlation between mastery of simple past tense of grade VIII students and their ability in writing recount text?

C. Objectives of The Study

The objective of the study as follows:

To find out the correlation between students mastery of past tense and students achievement in writing recount text.

D. Reasons for Choosing The Topic

The researcher's reason in choosing the topic are as follows:

- a. The newly researcher's experience in joining internship program in one of educational institution took the researcher to know the correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and their achievement in writing recount, because when the researcher joined internship program, the researcher chose simple past tense and recount text to be taught for VIII class students. Although simple past tense have been familiar among the students, but the students still found difficulties in mastery past tense.
- b. Among of the four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult one especially for english learners because in Indonesia english is as a foreign language. Students still find difficulties in constructing a written text although they tried to write in their native language and then translate it into English. Thus, based on the researcher's internship program experience, the researcher want to know if there is

correlation between students' mastery of past tense and their achievement in writing recount text.

E. Significants of The Study

This research have 2 functions, theoretically and Practically.

a. Theoretical Benefit

This research is expected to give information to the readers about the correlation between students' simple past tense mastery and their writing recount text achievement at SMP N 3 Purwokerto.

b. Practical Benefits

a. For The Researcher

By doing the research, this research help to increase researcher's understanding to think in a scientific way and the researcher hopes get more knowledge in identifying the problem in both grammar mastery and writing ability. As a candidate of teacher in the future, this research will be very useful for the researcher.

b. For Other Researchers

The researcher hopes that the research will be useful for the future researcher as a reference and additional information to make a further research in the same field.

c. For Educational Institution

The research result can help the institution to determine what the students' need in grammar in order to improve the students writing recount text achievement.

d. For English Teachers

The reseach result can be as a feedback on teaching writing recount text and simple past tense and also as a guidance when their students facing some problems in mastering simple past tense and writing recount text.

