

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is one of the important devices of communication in any type of human activities. It supports the process of civilization and progresses day after day. Language is used to show thoughts and feelings, wishes and activities and to influence others. One's educational background, association, tradition and sign of family and nation can be explained by a language. Language becomes an important thing and people around the world use it as a gift from God to human beings as adjusted to one of the Holy Koran stated in Al-Hujurat verse 13 as follows :

عِنْدَ أَكْرَمِكُمْ إِنَّا نَتَعَارَفُ أَوْ قَبَائِلَ شُعُوبًا وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ وَأَنْتَى ذَكَرٍ مِّنْ خَلْقِنَا إِنَّا الْبَنَّا

حَبِيرٌ عَلِيمٌ إِنَّ اتَّقِنَا اللَّهُ

It means that Allah created humans from a man and a woman and from different nations and tribes so that people need to know each other, everyone must use the language for communication every day.

The verse proofs us that language has a very important role among human in every nations and tribes. So, the need of learning a language is very important for us to communicate and know each other.

Language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. By using language, we can communicate with each other. The function of language is not only as a lesson to study, but also it is used to express the ideas, mind, opinion, and feeling, either orally or written. Brown (2000, p. 5) states that language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written or gestural symbols that enable members of given community to communicate intelligibly with one another.

English is one of the international languages that are widely used in the world. English has been used by many people from different countries. Most of non-native speakers use English to establish relationship with other people coming from different countries.

Harmer (2001, p. 1) states that,

Although English is not the language with the largest number of native or first language speakers, it has become a lingua franca. A lingua franca is defined as a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native languages are different from each other's and where one or both speakers are using it as a second language.

The information spread may take either in written and spoken form, while English is one of the languages used for communicating the information. Sources of science and technology are also written in English. Because of that, English is called as an international language. Therefore, it is important and even imperative to understand English for people who wish to keep abreast with the development of science and technology.

Considering the importance of English as an international language, the Department of Education and Culture has decided that English should be taught to the students as a compulsory subject for both junior and senior high schools and the students of university.

When students learn a language, there are four skills are demanded to be mastered by them. They are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. But in learning language, they do not only learn the four skills, but also learn the language components such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling. It means that in learning language, learners cannot master directly but it takes a long process from knowing nothing, having simple words of the language until one is able to produce correct utterances.

Writing is one of the language skills that almost every language learner attempts to achieve. Writing might be one of the difficult skills to achieve by language learners. It is because of the students' weakness in grammar ability that makes them have to worry to put their thoughts into their writing. However, not everybody with good grammar ability has good result in writing. They would think about the form of the essay instead of planning the paragraphs that are going to be put in the essay.

In order to avoid misunderstanding the information, the learners should understand the structure correctly. They should study the tenses. It is very important to know the time of activity that is done in sentence, whether it is in the past time, in the present time or in the future time.

Furthermore, the understanding of various tenses will be needed to understand some kinds of text such as descriptive, narrative, procedure, news item, recount, etc. It is often called kinds of text or text types. Agustien (2004, p.31) points out that it is impossible to attain discourse competence if people do not possess linguistic competence such as pronunciation, intonation, spelling, and punctuation, vocabulary, sentence structure, the structure of spoken and written language, connective words, etc. Expressing this in a different way, we could say that in order to be able to communicate effectively in English, either spoken or written, we should master such language components as grammar or structure, vocabulary and the sound system of English language.

Simple present tense is a form of tense that is used to express a work or event which is done or happens now before told. We can say it to express a work or event which is habitual. Many functions of simple present tense, there are to express general truth, to express actions that still happens until now and a description and definition of something. Simple present tense is usually used in writing descriptive text. Simple present tense is one of language features in writing descriptive text. It is because simple present tense is not only used to talk about habit and general truth, but also can be used to describe people or things in general.

One genre of text which has to be learned is descriptive text. In this kind of texts, students must describe, generate ideas and plan their compositions about something or place specifically. The descriptive text

that is studied by the students of junior high school consists of not only a description but also an identification of the writing subject. Because the descriptive text here is to describe something that still exists, so that this text frequently uses simple present tense in its sentences.

Simple present tense has been taught during junior high school and it is more understood in the first year of senior high school. Moreover descriptive text has also been taught in the first year of senior high school. Therefore, it has been assumed that there is a correlation between the mastery of simple present tense and writing skill of descriptive text. The reason of choosing this topic is one of the language features of descriptive text is simple present tense.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in knowing whether or not there is a correlation between the understanding of structure in this case is simple present tense and writing ability, in this case writing descriptive text. So, the title of this study is: **“THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MASTERY OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE AND WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MAN 3 BANJARMASIN ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015”**

B. Statements of Problems

Based on the background of the study as mentioned above, the problem of the study is: “Do the better students master simple present tense the better they write descriptive text ?”

C. The Hypotheses of Study

According to Toendan (2008, p.49) that the hypothesis is a conjecture or a guess at the solution to a problem or the status of the situation. Toendan’s statement shows that the hypothesis consists of the probability answers of the research problems. It also contains the operational definitions of variables involved: Independent variable (the mastery of simple present tense) and Dependent variable (writing descriptive text). The hypotheses that tested in this study are:

Ha : There is correlation between the mastery of simple present tense and writing descriptive text of the eleventh grade students of MAN 3 Banjarmasin.

Ho : There is no correlation between the mastery of simple present tense and writing descriptive text of the eleventh grade students of MAN 3 Banjarmasin.

D. Objective of the Study

In line with the problem of the study above, the objective of the study is obviously to investigate the correlation between the mastery of simple present tense and the students' skill in writing descriptive text.

E. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be significant to help the English teachers to help the students to understand simple present tense first, and then it really helps them to comprehend the descriptive text. Accordingly, it is also significant to help the students to get more information about simple present tense and the correlation to writing the descriptive text.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation of the terms in the title above, the writer clarifies the terms used in this study as follows:

1. Correlation: It is the mutual relationship between two variables: the mastery of simple present tense as independent variable and writing descriptive text as dependent variable. It is measured by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.
2. Mastery of simple present tense: It is defined as an ability to blend skills and as a fact of students' success in learning simple present tense. It is indicated by the score of the test that has been answered by the students of the eleventh grade of MAN 3 Banjarmasin.

3. Writing descriptive text: It is defined as the ability of the students in writing descriptive text. It is indicated by the score of the test that has been answered by the students of the eleventh grade of MAN 3 Banjarmasin.