

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background (2) problems of the study (3) objectives of the study (4) significance of the study.

1.1. Background

Education is central to the development and to the improvement of the lives of young people globally (UNESCO). Education is a basic human right and a significant factor in the development of children, communities, and countries (Megaiab, 2014, p. 187). Knowledge and education are key factors to the full and effective participation of youth in the processes of social, economic and political development. In Indonesia, on the basis of the new National Education System Law of July 2003, a national education system should ensure equal opportunity, improvement of quality and relevance and efficiency in management to meet various challenges in the wake of changes of local, national and global lives. National Education means education based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and is rooted in the religious values, national cultures of Indonesia and one that is responsive to the needs of the ever-changing era (UNESCO, World Data on Education, 2010).

English is one of the languages commonly used as a tool of communication across the region. The importance of English as world language and the education reform envisaged through several changes in national curriculum play an important role in the development of English language teaching in Indonesia (Sahiruddin, 2013, p. 567). English courses

can be found in many places in Indonesia, in big cities, small towns and even villages, people are willing to pay a lot of money so that they can join the course and can speak English (Rini, 2014, p. 26). According to Dardjowidjojo in Rini (2014, p. 26). English in Indonesia has never been considered an official language coexisting with the national language, and English is the first foreign language.

In learning English, there are four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Listening and speaking are oral mode of skills and reading and writing are written mode of skills. Listening and reading are receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive skills (Megaiab, 2014, p. 187). Furthermore, in the real life communication, being able to speak in English is not enough. It is because not all communication activities can be held in the form of spoken language, but they sometimes need written form, according to Langnan (2005) that writing can be used as a means of communication (Yulianti, 2014, p. 2).

Writing has different definition based on its needs and purposes. It is supported by Huy, (2015. p. 53) state that writing is an extension of human language across time and space. In line Robinson & Feng (2016, p. 2) claims writing is such a valuable tool for communication, learning, and self-expression.

Nowadays, writing skill is included in main standardised tests worldwide as well as nationwide (Yi, 2009. p. 53). In addition, the ability to write well can have a profound impact on our life. The productive writing skill

is considered a cognitive challenge, because it helps to assess language competency, recalling capability and thinking ability (Javed, Juan, & Nazli, 2013. p. 131).

For senior high school students based on the School-Based Curriculum, the aim of teaching English is to provide students with knowledge and skill to make them to be able to communicate in English either spoken or written. It means, they write about a definite topic, to a particular reader, with a specific purpose in mind, using appropriate language they prefer for that occasion (Tahvildar & Zade, 2013. p. 53). One of the example which writing takes an important role is in the educational setting. In the educational setting, students are expected to be able to write a kind of academic writing.

Based on curriculum 2013 for senior high school students, the objective of English writing is to express various meanings (interpersonal, ideational, textual) in a variety of interactional and monolog text. It is based on the standard of graduate competency, stated in Kepmendiknas No.23/2006, in the writing skill, the graduate of senior high school must be able to write short written functional texts and simple essay in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review in the daily life context. It can be assumed that writing in education world give more influence for teachers and students. Some teachers and students believed that it is better to practice language in simulating real life situations than to study grammatical forms explicitly, it is important not only be aware of students' beliefs about the role

of grammar in language learning but also understand how these ideas about language learning were formed (Pazaver & Wang, 2009, p. 29).

However writing is important for senior high school students, they still have problem in their writing. For example, lack of teachers' monitor on the process of the students' writing activity causes a lot of problems in the students writing skill (Suyanto, A. 2010). Another factors which renders writing more difficult than other skills is the fact that writing is more than an individual effort than speaking, and it is more rule bound and therefore error-prone (Sahin & Genc, 2015. p. 211). In conclusion, writing is difficult for students' because most of them lack of vocabulary and lack of teachers' monitor in their writing activity in the class. It makes students' confuse and afraid when they are beginning to write.

As one of components of writing, grammar takes an important role in writing and clearly it effects one's writing. Muslim (2014, p. 105) has diagnosed several shortcomings which have covered most of the basics of good writing among which are paragraphing, ideas, grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting. In line, Hidayah (2007, p. 4) says 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, sound system, etc. of English language. A good comprehension of grammar makes students write any kind of texts effectively.

Grammar is merely a set of rules to preserve the written word. The grammarians have tried to define grammar in different ways suiting their own

line of thoughts and logic. Grammar is a branch of study of language in a particular somewhere between sound and meaning, that to say grammar is concerned with phonetics and meaning and relates the two (Rajarajeswari & Balamurugan, 2013. p. 61-62). As a matter of facts, grammar provides several rules or forms which must be accepted without trying to break those rules or forms or to create new rules or forms. In learning every language there is a grammar, each language has its own grammar because grammar is a heart of language. The essential elements of grammar instruction can be designed to be flexible within the curriculum structure, and the amount of effort and time devoted to each can be adjusted depending on learners' needs (Hinkel, 2013. p. 4).

The connection between writing and grammar is very important because in translating the ideas into meaningful messages in the form of written language, it requires greater amount of vocabulary and better understanding on grammar. Grammar instruction has the goal of preparing students for academic studies needs to be designed to develop learners' practical and useful skills, directly relevant to producing academic text (Hinkel, 2013. p. 5). The rules of grammar help in determining the mechanics of writing descriptive text, which what makes the connection between grammar and writing is important.

Based on informal interview with the teacher and the Eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang most of the students said that writing is difficult for them because they did not know how to begin the first sentence

and they were also lack of vocabulary. Most of the students did not master the grammar too. Meanwhile, the teacher said they taught grammar without focus on how to use it in the written form.

Some researchers have done the previous research that; Septiani (2014) has done the research about correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability at the 6th semester of English Education Department Students of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. She found that there was no significant correlation between the variables. In line with Septiani, Handayani (2010) in her thesis the correlation study between vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery, and achievement motivation with the learning achievement of chemistry of the first grade students of RSBI of SMA 2 Ngawi in the main subject material of chemical bonds in academic year 2009/2010. She found that (a) there was no correlation between grammar mastery with learning achievement of chemistry (b) there was no correlation between vocabulary mastery, grammar mastery, and achievement motivation with learning achievement of chemistry.

Furthermore, Syopiana (2011) conducted the research about the correlation between students' grammar mastery and their ability in writing narrative paragraph at the second year of SMAN 1 Kuantan Hilir Kuantan Singingi Regengy. She found that there was a significant correlation between student grammar mastery and their writing ability. She found that there was a significant correlation between student grammar mastery and their writing ability. Study conducted by Septarini (2015) in her thesis entitled the

correlation among language learning strategies, grammar mastery, and writing achievement of English study program students of Muhammadiyah University Palembang. She found (a) there was a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing essay achievement, (b) there was correlation among students' language learning strategies, students' grammar mastery and their writing essay achievement but not significant, (c) students' grammar mastery influenced their writing essay achievement.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher claimed that grammar mastery become one of the most important component in writing ability that should be taken into consideration by the students. Because of that reason, the researcher wants to examine the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of the study are formulated in the following questions:

- (1) Is there any significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability in the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang?
- (2) Does students' grammar mastery significantly influence writing ability in the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems mentioned above, the objectives' of the study are:

- (1) to find out if there is a significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and students writing ability in the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang,

(2) to find out if students' grammar mastery significantly influences their writing ability in the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is expected that this research will be beneficial for some parties. Firstly, it is hoped that this research will give students some information to develop of language teaching and learning, especially in understanding grammar and writing, and it is hoped can improve students writing achievement. Secondly, for the teachers can give them more information about the importance of grammar in teaching and learning of English so the teacher will apply more appropriate strategy for the grammar that taught in the class and know if there is a correlation between grammar and students' writing. Thirdly, for the researcher herself hopefully this research can give more understanding about grammar in writing and know if grammar influences writing, enlarge the researcher knowledge in conducting correlational research. The last, it is hoped the result of this study will provide for further studies information about grammar mastery and writing ability for their research.