

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The goal of teaching English is to make students master four basic skills of language; those are listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Nowadays, based on *KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan)*, the current curriculum in use in Indonesia, students are expected to master the four skills in order to be able to use English actively and passively. Those skills are divided into receptive and productive skills. Reading and listening are categorized as receptive skills. While writing and speaking are categorized as productive skills (Rico, 2013: 55). Receptive skills are important because it allow students to understand contents, textbooks, works or documents. Productive skills are significant because it allow students to express their ideas in communicative setting such as oral presentations, public speaking, telling story, written a text , a paragraph, a letter or an email to reports among others. So that, these skills need to be taught and learnt intensively

Writing is considered as a tough skill that is more difficult than other skills to be learnt by some students. Richards & Renandya (2002: 303) claim; “there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master”. It means that writing is not easy and needs longer time for the students who are not native speakers of English to learn it. There are many reasons that make writing difficult for students. One of the reasons is because writing system in Indonesia language is different from English writing system, (Karani,2008: 11) it means that

sometime students get some problem to write their ideas in English because the writing system in English is different from Indonesian system, for example the grammar system.

Grammar is important to make a good piece of writing. According to Yulianto et al. (2013:02), grammar is very important in writing. A good understanding of grammar helps the students produce a good writing. In order to make a good construction and well arrangement in written form, the students have to produce a good and grammatical sentence. To get it they should know the set of rule that must be followed which is called grammar.

English is the language which has grammatical features to indicate the time when an action occurs or when state or process holds. This is called tense. Tense is the form of verb that relates to the time when the events take place, or processes of an action happening (Friedrich: 2014). It means that tense changes because of the time, event, and process of an action. Thus, tense is different from aspect. Comrie (1976: 3) states that aspect is the verb forms which has the perfective and imperfective meaning of actions, events, states, processes or situations. It means that actions, events, states, processes or situations are happening at the present moment or have finished. Therefore, tense is very important to make a sentences, In English, each sentence always contains a tense. Ratna (2013: 159) states, “In making a sentence in English either written or spoken, tense plays a very important role. In English, each sentence always contains a tense”.

Using tenses in English grammar is difficult for young learners because each tense has its own special rules which are different from the others. Especially in

writing text, the difficulties occur when they lack of understanding of what tense should they use in their writing. *Simple Present* is one of many tenses in English grammar. *Simple Present* used to express a habitual action with adverb like usually, always, or often. *Simple Present* often makes students confused. For example, adding the final *-es or -s* for the singular third person like, *she goes to campus every day*.

This study investigates the seventh grade students' errors in using *Simple Present* in writing texts. Based on a pilot study conducted in *SMP Darul Ulum 1*, seventh grade students still have difficulty in using *Simple Present*. For example, they often write "*I am study in the library*" instead of "*I study in the library*". They have no idea of how to use *to be* in sentences. Sometimes, they construct a sentence such as "He take a bath" instead of "He takes a bath". Their English is still interfered by their mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia). In the language system of Bahasa Indonesia, a verb does not need to change to meet the agreement with the subject. This problem might be traced to either the students' L1 or their overgeneralization of the L2 rules.

Based on such phenomena, using simple present seems to be difficult for some students, especially when they apply the rule in writing. Therefore, analysing the students' errors in using simple present and the factors that contribute to the errors is very important to further formulate the right strategy, method, and material of teaching to meet the real needs of the students.

This study would identify the common errors made by the students in relation to their use of *Simple Present*, more specifically the students' use of

copula verb also called linking verb or to be is a verb that links a subject to complement (and *verb forms* in *Simple Present Sentences*. Subsequently, this study will describe the factors of errors either from the perspective of L1 interference or L2 overgeneralization.

1.2 Statement of The Problems

Based on the background above, this study wants to focus on the following problems:

1. What are the students' common errors in constructing Simple Present sentences?
2. What are the factors contributing to the students' errors in constructing Simple Present sentences?
3. What are the impacts of identifying the common errors in constructing Simple Present sentences in teaching strategy?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the above statement of the problems, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the students' common errors in constructing Simple Present sentences
2. To identify the factors contributing to the students' errors in constructing Simple Present sentences.

3. To find out the impact of identifying the common errors in constructing Simple Present sentences in teaching strategy

1.4 Significance of The Study

The findings in this study are expected to be useful both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically;

This study is expected to add information to construct the right strategy, method, and material of teaching to meet the real needs of the students in teaching and learning English process, especially in teaching *Simple Present Tense* in writing subject

Practically;

To teacher: the result of this study can help the teacher to identify the common errors made by the students, so that, they can focus on the considered difficult by the students.

To student: the result of this study lets the students know their weakness in writing using Simple Present, so that, students can learn from their errors. Therefore they will not make the same errors repeatedly.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focused on the discussion of errors in using of *to be* and the subject verb agreement or verb usage in construction of simple present sentences. To analyse the errors, this study used error analysis theory by Ellis, and

Barkhuizen (2005), then, focused on the identification of what are the causes of the errors made by the students in their writing task, more specifically why they make errors as a result of interference then errors as a result of overgeneralization, and find out the impact of the identifying the common errors in constructing Simple Present sentences in teaching strategy

This study conducted in *SMP Darul Ulum 1 Unggulan Jombang* at seventh grade in the academic year 2014-2015. There are 11 classes there, but the study is conducted in VII-11class because they are homogeneous and that class could describe the seventh grade student ability in English grammar.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid a misunderstanding and misinterpretation among the reader, it is necessary to clarify some of the terms used in this study. They are bellow;

1. Error analysis is one of the many sources of information to teacher to know the student problem in the teaching and learning process (Ratna, 2013: 159).
2. Interference is an error resulting from the negative language transfer from L1 (learners' mother tongue) to L2 (target language) (Ellis et al, 2005: 65).
3. Overgeneralization is the use of general available strategy in new position (Richards: 1971: 174).
4. Simple Present is a tense that is used to express a habitual or repeated action and general truth (Uchiyama, 2006: 20).
5. Writing is the way to sharing ideas, feeling, thoughts, desires and experiences to the others in written form (Waris, 2011: 20).