

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Writing is an important skill to master. It requires students who want to produce a piece of writing the knowledge about its process. They should learn how to develop an idea into a kind of composition. This composition contains some information about what they think about the world and what they do about their problems in life. Writing makes them think more logically because they must be able to argue why they state a reason for doing something. For instance, they can describe how they experience a certain event which is meaningful in their life.

The students of the Junior High School are required to write a narrative text which contains a fable stories. This is included in the syllabus of studying English as a foreign language. This type of text is very interesting because in fable stories, animal characters can think, act, and behave like humans, so that readers can takes the moral message conveyed by the author.

Naturally, the students will have problems in writing a narrative text in English because there is a difference of grammar between their native language Indonesian and English as a foreign language. The differences will lead to the making of errors in their composition. One clear difference is in in the concept of time. English uses certain different verb forms according to the aspect of time. The sentence *You go to school* denotes the habitual activity whereas *You went to school* denotes an activity performed in the past. The ordinary verb “go” must be changed into “went” because of the past time. However, time and tense must be

differentiated. In fact, the sentence *You go to school* contains the concept of past time but not past tense. This sentence even contains the past, present and future time but the form of the verb is in the present tense. In the sentence *I went to school*, the verb form “went” is in the past tense.

The awareness of using the right verb forms to express the past activities must be intensified by asking the students to write narrative texts. The students are given a chance to see the correction of the errors they have made in describing the past events. Through the error analysis, they can see and realize what various errors are made in the composition. The narrative texts in other words are useful materials for the discussion of error analysis in order to show the students the correct verb forms for the past events.

The researcher believes that the Junior High School students are prone to make errors in writing narrative texts. It is clear that English past tense system is different from that of Indonesian due to the grammatical differences. In the narrative texts, past tenses will be used to describe the past events.

From this observation, it is logically acceptable that the students most probably make errors in writing narrative texts because they may ignore the application of the different verb forms such as the irregular verbs with “-ed” and the irregular verbs which are formed without definite rules. In this case, the students may also forget the correct forms that are needed in the texts.

The researcher’s attention is directed to the errors in the use of Simple Past Tense because this is the basic past tense. The Junior High School students very often are ignorant of the conjugated verbs in expressing the past events. She thinks that by identifying the errors of the Simple Past Tense, she can understand

more about the writing problems faced by the students. The study will be an important point to discuss for the teaching of writing as the most difficult language skill. With the analysis of the errors, the researcher hopes that she can find the way to prevent the making of the errors of Simple Past Tense in writing narrative texts. In this case, the writer will use the error analysis based on the theory by Dulay (et.al.1982) in which errors can be categorized according to *surface strategy* as the focus in this study in identifying the types of errors and causes of errors by Richards (1973).

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems can be stated in the following questions:

- 1) What types of error in the use of Simple Past Tense are made by the students of SMP Negeri 3 Air Putih in writing narrative texts?
- 2) What causes such error of the Simple Past Tense in writing narrative text?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at finding out :

- 1) The types of error in the use of Simple Past Tense are made by the students of SMP Negeri 3 Air Putih in writing narrative texts.
- 2) The causes such error of the Simple Past Tense in writing narrative text.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to analyze error in the use of the Simple Past Tense in writing narrative text by the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Air Putih based on surface structure taxonomy and the causes of such error by applying the theory of the causes of error.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to see theoretical and practical significances.

A. Theoritically

- 1) For English teachers who want to investigate further about the causes of the ignorance of using the right verb forms of Simple Past Tense in writing the narrative texts. The theories of language acquisition can be involved in further research on the error analysis.
- 2) For language researchers who may propose other theories related to the occurrence of such errors in narrative texts from the cognitive process of writing.

B. Practically

- 1) For English teachers who can use the error analysis as the aid to correct their students' common errors in writing the narrative texts. They can explain more about the awareness of using the right verb forms to describe past events.
- 2) For students who want to learn more about the English grammar. The errors can be used to guide the students to a better understading of the grammar of the language in focus.