

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

Grammar is the way in which sentences are structured. Grammar is considered as the important aspect of communication because it is about how people are able to express their ideas or thoughts properly. It is important to construct words and sentences properly in order to convey the points effectively. In addition, Baleghizadeh & Gordani (2012: 162) reveal that the application of accurate grammar is an important aspect of any good piece of writing. Without correct grammar, clear communication is nearly impossible. Proper grammar prevents people from being misunderstood while expressing the thoughts and ideas. It can be said that it is hard to ignore grammar accuracy in writing because grammar is considered as one of the important aspects to avoid misunderstanding between the writer and reader.

Indonesian learners who learn English as a foreign language frequently make mistakes in grammar while writing texts. Concept misunderstanding, lack of English knowledge or limited grammar practices may lead to the causes of grammatical errors in writing. To the writer's concern, the tenth grade students of X Senior High School also often make

mistakes in grammar when they were asked to write texts. Grammatical errors are the major problem in the tenth grade student's writing. As an English teacher in X Senior High School, the researcher found some problems in students' writing that their writing scores are not satisfying although they gained high scores in reading.

When the students were asked to write an English essay, the researcher found many mistakes in their writing. For example, when they were asked to write a recount text, they did not write the correct form of past tense. They wrote "I was go to beach" instead of "I went to the beach". Another problem was the students did not remember that past form of irregular verbs. For instance, they wrote "bayed" for "bought". Another problem, as they lacked English grammar and did not know parts of speech very well, they did not put any verb in the sentence which made the sentence nonsense. For instance, they wrote "I speaking test with my partner about give opinion" for "I did speaking test with my partner about giving opinion". In writing, grammar is considered as one of the important aspects in constructing sentence; the students should master certain grammar in order to be understood by the reader. If they do

many mistakes in grammar, it will inhibit their communication with the readers.

Grammar cannot be ignored in teaching and learning English since it influences the students' abilities in writing, speaking, as well as understanding English. Hence, they cannot communicate effectively if they do not master the principle of English grammar. Without grammar, it is also hard to communicate orally. Speaking is oral communication which involves the speaker and receiver. If needed, the receiver can request clarification and repetition from the speaker until the meaning of a message is clear. However, in writing, the case will be different. Written communication is indirect communication so there is no possibility for the receiver to demand verification directly. Therefore, writing depends on the correct use of grammar in order to ensure that messages are immediately comprehensible to the reader and not ambiguous.

Considering the importance of grammar in writing, moreover the increasing need of preparing Indonesian learners' English competence in this MEA era, the researcher proposes consciousness raising approach (CR) as one of the approaches of teaching grammar to improve students' grammar accuracy. CR is considered as inductive approach which requires the

learners to detect, to notice patterns and to work out a ‘rule’ for themselves before they practice the language. According to Ellis as edited in Richards and Renandya (2002:167), CR task is an activity where certain grammatical feature is given to the learners and they are required to perform an analysis on that data in order to gain explicit understanding. It means that CR task involves activities to equip learner to be aware and notice certain grammatical feature and work on that data autonomously.

There are significant benefits in using CR tasks in the classroom. According to Roza (2014: 4), first, CR tasks can direct learners’ attention to grammar features they might not notice on their own. It means that it can help learners to aware and notice certain features. Second, CR tasks can make learners more autonomous by developing their analytical ability. It helps learners to foster their curiosity and their analytical skills needed to work on language autonomously. Third, it can help learners acquire conscious knowledge which can be used to understand input and monitor their own output. Therefore, the researcher proposes Consciousness Raising as a strategy to improve the students’ grammar accuracy. The

researcher would like to know whether Consciousness Raising can improve the students' grammar accuracy in writing or not.

Statement of the Problem

In line with the background explained before, the research problem is formulated as follows:

Will consciousness-raising activity help students to improve their grammar accuracy?

Theoretical Framework

Grammar cannot be ignored in teaching and learning English since it influences the students' abilities in writing, speaking, as well as understanding English. Hence, they cannot communicate effectively if they do not master the principle of English grammar. Without grammar, it is also hard to communicate well.

Based on the preliminary study, the tenth grade students of X Senior High School also often make mistakes in grammar when they were asked to write texts. Grammatical errors especially the use of simple past tenses are the major problem in the tenth grade student's writing. Considering the importance of grammar in writing, the researcher proposes

consciousness raising approach (CR) as one of the approaches of teaching grammar to improve students' grammar accuracy. CR is considered as inductive approach which requires the learners to detect, to notice patterns and to work out a 'rule' for themselves before they practice the language.

There are significant benefits in using CR activities in the classroom. According to Roza (2014: 4), first, CR activities can direct learners' attention to grammar features they might not notice on their own. Second, CR activities can make learners more autonomous by developing their analytical ability. It helps learners to foster their curiosity and their analytical skills needed to work on language autonomously. Third, it can help learners acquire conscious knowledge which can be used to understand input and monitor their own output.

In order to implement CR activity, the researcher conducted CAR (Classroom Action Research) consisted of planning, action, observation and reflection. In this research, she conducted a CAR based on Kemmis and McTaggart's model. While conducting the research, she referred to the theories of CR activities purposed by Ellis as edited in Richards and Renandya (2002:16) which had some steps

namely Isolating Specific Language Features, Providing Language Feature, Utilising Intellectual Effort, Clarification, Articulating the Rule. In conclusion, by doing this research, it was expected that the students' accuracy in using simple past tenses could increase.

Significance of the Study

The data and information obtained from this study are expected to give a somewhat clear picture about the teaching strategy to improve the students' grammar accuracy in writing. It is expected that the students can improve their grammar accuracy and master more about grammar. Furthermore, the students can understand well certain grammar and apply the knowledge for the next grade.

Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to improve the students' grammar accuracy through Consciousness Raising approach. It is a classroom action research within a delimited scope of subject using tenth grade students of X Senior High School academic year 2016-2017 which consists of 14 female and 17 male

students. The study itself is limited to improve the students' simple past tense grammar accuracy in writing narrative text.