

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background of the problem**

Language, as a means of communication, plays a crucial role in conveying meanings. Human beings in the world use language, both oral and written, to express ideas, feelings, and opinions. Using language, human beings are also able to deliver messages. In the English language, speaking and writing are the two productive skills that we use to deliver a message through speech or written text (Hosain, 2015).

Writing is one of the communicative products to express meanings for a purpose. In addition, Hyland (2019) states that writing is a way of communicating personal messages to readers, emphasizing individual's skill to construct ideas on his/her views. It can be seen that people communicate in their daily lives through writing. People are relatively close to writing. Writing is used not only for academic purposes such as scholarly pursuits, but also writing is necessary in everyday life, in business, work field, and in creativity (Kestha & Harb, 2013). It can be assumed that writing is one of the crucial ways of communication that cannot be separated in life.

In the academic context, writing is one of the language skills taught to the students as a basic skill to master. Students learn writing since they are in elementary school. Students learn how to write in steps, until they are able to compose an effective writing. Then, in the high school level, students are expected to be able to compose some kinds of texts, according to Indonesian Curriculum. Therefore, we can conclude that in Indonesia, students are expected to be able to compose effective writing as writing is the basic skill that they should acquire.

In order to compose a good and comprehensible writing, several components are required to build whole meanings. According to Nurgiyantoro (2001, as cited in Basonggo, 2016), there are five aspects evaluated in writing; they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. As informed, one of the crucial

aspects is grammar. Grammar is related to rules in language. “Grammar is a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints” (Larsen-Freeman in Mart, 2013). Another citation stated by Larsen-Freeman (in Celce-Murcia, 2014) is that “grammar is about form, but more than form, it is about what forms mean and when and why they are used.” From these quotations, grammar plays the essential role in conveying meanings. The correct rules of grammar enables the reader to acquire what the writer wants to convey. Without the correct usage of grammar, the writer is unable to compose meaningful sentences. Grammar ignorance will produce ungrammatical sentences, which might result in the readers’ confusion and misunderstanding on the meaning. Thus, students should have the knowledge about the correct usage of grammar.

Based on the explanation above, it can be assumed that grammar mastery is one of the important aspects in students’ writing ability. Having a strong understanding of grammar and syntax can improve one's ability to communicate effectively through writing. By understanding the rules of language, writers are better able to construct coherent and well-organized sentences and paragraphs, which can in turn enhance the clarity and persuasiveness of their writing. In addition, Pinker (2014) also states about the importance of understanding grammar and syntax in order to write clear and effective prose. He argues that by following the rules of language, writers can avoid common errors and produce writing that is easy to read and understand.

To dig out more about this problem, there are several studies that the researcher has reviewed. Those studies showed various degree of correlation, some of them are high, moderate, and low. In the study done by Putri Z. Et al (2016), it could be seen that there was high correlation of grammar mastery and writing ability with the correlation coefficient of 0.96. Then, Purba and Indriyani (2021), in their study, showed that there was moderate correlation with the correlation coefficient of 0.50. Then, a study done by Helmiati et al (2019) showed that there was low correlation with the correlation coefficient of 0.34.

After seeing different results of those studies, the researcher is interested to conduct a research entitled “*The Correlation between Grammar Mastery and*

*Writing Ability of the Eleventh Graders*". The researcher conducts this research in the purpose of finding out whether there is a correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of students at the eleventh grade of private senior high school in Surabaya.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

According to the background of the problems above, the research problems in this research can be formulated in the form of questions as follows: is there any significant correlation between grammar mastery and writing skill achievement?

## **1.3 Objective of the study**

The objective of this research is to find out the significant correlation between students' grammar mastery and their writing ability at the eleventh grade of a private senior high school in Surabaya.

## **1.4 Hypothesis**

- Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ):  
There is no positive correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability.
- Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):  
There is a positive correlation between students' grammar mastery and writing ability

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the theoretical perspective that grammar knowledge and usage are essential components of effective writing. Writing is one of the communication ways in written form, in which people deliver messages or ideas from one person to another. Good writing should be comprehensible, readable, and acceptable by the readers since the purpose of writing is to communicate ideas in an effective manner. Effective writing is a complex process that involves the use of multiple skills, including grammar mastery, to convey a clear and coherent message

to the reader. Hyland (2019) mentioned that writing is regarded as an extension of grammar – a way of reinforcing language patterns to produce well-formed sentences. To support that, there are five aspects evaluated in writing; one of them is the grammar aspect (Nurgiyantoro, 2001, as cited in Basonggo, 2016).

Grammar is the a form of language used to make meaning, presenting the way the writer wish to be seen (Larsen-Freeman in Celce-Murcia, 2014, p. 236). Grammar is seen as a way to develop learner’s ability to communicate meaningfully for specific purposes such as to emphasize or to connect information. Therefore, in order to develop effective written communication skills, it is necessary to construct grammatically correct sentences to convey coherent meanings to the readers. Grammar knowledge is seen as an important aspect of this context to accurately express ideas and communicate in proper English.

Taken together, learners’ ability in writing is affected by their ability in mastering grammar. These theoretical perspectives suggest that there is a strong correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability. The current study seeks to explore this correlation by examining the relationship between students' grammar knowledge and their ability to produce effective writing. By investigating this relationship, the study aims to contribute to understanding of the role of grammar in the writing ability.

## **1.6 Limitation and Scope**

After identifying the problems above, the researcher focuses the research only on the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of eleventh grade students at private senior high school in Surabaya. The researcher chooses the eleventh grade students because the researcher wants to focus on measuring students’ writing ability of recount text, where the participants have studied previously according to Indonesian Curriculum. Additionally, the researcher limits the grammar mastery on nouns and pronouns, past tense, conjunctions, adverbs to show place and time, action verbs, and adjectives to describe nouns. These grammar features were regarded to be the language features of recount text.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study hopefully will give some advantages for the writer, English teachers and learners, and other researchers for the teaching and learning of English.

- The research is expected to give benefits to the researcher as a novice researcher. Additionally, the research findings can show the extent to which grammar mastery affects the writing ability of the students.
- For the English teachers, the findings of the research are expected to give information about the relations between grammar and writing. Hopefully, this information will become a good input in teaching English too.
- For other researchers who are interested in conducting similar research, they can obtain practical and theoretical information about the correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability from this research.

## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

For the purpose of this research, the following of key terms are defined as:

### **1. Correlation**

According to Creswell (2012), correlation is a statistical analysis which attempts to measure the degree of relation between two or more variables. This analysis is the non-experimental quantitative method. The number expressed as the result will show whether one variable has association to another variable, or one can predict another. In this study, the researcher is measuring the degree of correlation between the two variables: grammar mastery and writing ability in the eleventh grade students of a private senior high school in Surabaya.

### **2. Grammar Mastery**

Thornbury (1999, as cited in Oktavinanda et al, 2023) stated that grammar comprises a set of guidelines for constructing sentences that convey specific meanings. It encompasses an explanation of how these forms are created. Mastery refers to a level of proficiency or skillfulness in a particular domain. It involves a deep understanding of the subject matter. In this study,

grammar mastery is specified into students' knowledge and comprehension about grammar features of recount text.

### **3. Writing Ability**

Writing ability is the ability of students to communicate and express their message, feelings, opinions, or ideas through written products. Theoretically, writing is one of the productive skills in which people deliver messages for a purpose to the readers (Hyland, 2019). In this study, writing ability is specified into students' ability to demonstrate ideas in recount text based on the writing aspects.

## **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is written in five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction. It consists of background of the problems, research problem, objective of the study, hypothesis, theoretical framework, limitation and scope, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter II is the review of literature. It consists of the underlying theories about writing, grammar, and their correlation, as well as the review of previous studies.

Chapter III is the research methodology. This chapter discusses the methodology used in this research. To be specific, this chapter presents the research design, time and location of the research, subject and object of the research, population and sample, instruments of the research, validity and reliability of the research, procedure of collecting data, and the technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV is the research findings and discussion. The researcher presents the data and result of correlation calculation, as well as the discussion on the research findings.

Finally, chapter V presents the conclusion of the study regarding the correlation and suggestions based on the research findings.