CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is very important as a part of human beings that could differentiate human beings and other creatures on earth. Through language people all over the world can communicate to each other. Also, language is the main tool to help people to be able to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Since globalization emerged, English has become a global language which people over the world use to communicate.

Learning a language means learning its four skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students should master those four skills if they want to be able to deliver their ideas, opinion, feeling, and so on. However, the mastery of these four skills is influenced by the mastery of language components.

One of the language components that affects the mastery of language skills is grammar. According to Andrews (2006, p.42) Grammar covers word order, clause and phrase structure, and the classification of part of speech (e.g. noun, verb, predicate, clause, etc.). Grammar can be both descriptive which describes the pattern of sentences, also generative transformative which can generate grammatically acceptable sentence. These are the basic foundations for students in studying English. For example in speaking, grammar can help students to produce grammatical utterances. A second language speaker will not have a good performance in speech and will not be able to deliver his/her idea because of the lack of grammar knowledge especially in rules and tenses.

The lack of grammar knowledge makes it difficult for students to express their ideas in writing appropriately. Thus, learning grammar is necessary for students to make their

writing well understood. By learning grammar, students will be able to make a grammatically correctsentence in writing. Fellowes (2007) says that "Writing is an expressive mode of communication and involves the construction of texts in ways that ensure specific purposes are realized and that clear messages are effectively conveyed to the reader/s."

Based on the explanation above, when the first-year students of senior high school learn about recount text, they learn grammar, that is the simple past tense, which can be used to express past events or experience. Also, they have to consider the time signal in applying the simple past tense into their composition. Meanwhile, recount text is a text which tells something that happened in the past, which means the simple past tense will be used often.

However, in a real situation, the first-year students of senior high school who have learned the simple past tense still have difficulties in applying the tense to their writing

composition that is recount text. It happened because they still do not understand and master the use of the verb form of simple past tense yet. As a result, they do not know how to change the infinitive form into the regular and irregular verb in positive, negative, and interrogative form.

On the other hand, since the simple past tense is related with recount text, the students have to master the simple past tense itself; not only the rules but also the use of the simple past tense in writing context. If they make a mistake in using the simple past tense, it means that they are not capable in writing their recount composition. As a result, the readers may get confused while they read the composition and also they may have difficulties in understanding the content of the composition. Therefore, in order to master grammar which is the simple past tense and writing which is a recount text, the students need a lot of practice in their learning.

Being interested in finding out how far the students' grammar achievement, in this study the simple past tense, has a relationship with their recount writing achievement, the writer decides to make a study entitled "The Correlation Between The Simple Past Tense Achievement and Writing Achievement in Recount Text of the First-Year Students of Senior High School."

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The question of this study is:

Is there a positive relationship between the simple past tense achievement and writing achievement in recount text of the first-year students of senior high school?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to find out whether there is a positive correlation between the simple past tense achievement and writing achievement in recount text of the first-year students of senior high school.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study might be expected as following:

- For the teachers

  This study is expected to give the English teacher clear explanation about writing genre to the students. For example, *in recount text, the students have to use the simple past tense on their composition*.

- For the students

  This study is expected to make the students aware that grammar does play an important role in writing. As they learn recount text, they have to master the simple past tense.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to the correlation between the simple past tense achievement and writing achievement

in recount text. The subjects of this study are limited to the first-year students of YPPI I Senior High School Surabaya. The reason why the writer chose this school is that she has already done her teaching practice at this school and been familiar with the students and the English teacher. The writer chose the simple past tense and recount text because they are stated in English syllabus and taught by their English teacher in the first-year

1.6 Theoretical Framework

There are some theories underlying this study, namely the theories of grammar, theories of the simplepast tense, theories of writing, and theories of the relationship between grammar and writing.

In the theories of grammar, Annandale et al (as cited in Fellowes, 2007, p.1) point out that grammar refers to the relationship of its rule and

system which has function to organize a language and its meaning. Grammar has an important role In making meaning during reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing.

According to Cowan (2008, p.359), the simple past tense is used for activities or situations that began and ended in the past, and frequently occurs with expressions that indicate a specific point in time when the action was carried out, such as yesterday, a week ago, last Monday, and so on.

Anderson (2003) states that a recount text is a piece of text retelling past events, usually in the order in which they happened. The purpose of a recount text is to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred.

In the theories of relationship between grammar and writing, Noguchi's (as cited in Chin, 2000) tells that grammar choices affect writing style. Grammar has an

important role in writing. Thus, in writing, the students have to be able to use the tense appropriately, for example they use present tense to write a descriptive composition, or past tense to write a recount text, report, etc.

1.7   Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

- The first-year students of YPPI senior high school had been taught how to write a recount text by the teacher, so there is no try out for writing test.

- The writing instrument is considered valid and reliable so the time to do the try-out test is not given by the school teacher.

- The mastery of simple past tense will affect recount writing achievement.

1.8   Hypothesis

Alternative Hypothesis:

There is a positive relationship between the simple past tense achievement and writing achievement in recount text of the first-year students of senior high school.

Null Hypothesis:

There is no relationship between the simple past tense achievement and writing achievement in recount text of the first-year students of senior high school.

1.9   Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding, the writer considers it is necessary to provide the definitions of the following key terms,

- Correlation

    According to David P. Harris (1969, p.142), correlation is a statistical term which expresses the degree of relationship between two sets of score or other variables. If it ranges from value of +1.00, which means a

positive correlation; 0, which means no correlation, and down to -1.00, which means negative correlation. Positive correlation means that an increase in one variable is accompanied by an increase of the other variable, while negative correlation means that an increase in one variable is accompanied by a decrease of the other variable.In this study, the two variables are two sets of scores, which are grammar score and writing score.

- Grammar

    Annandale et al. (as cited in Fellowes, 2007, p.1) point out that grammar refers to the relationship of its rule and system which has a function to organize a language and its meaning. In this study, the grammar which is used is the simple past tense.

- Recount text

    Anderson (2003) states that recount text is a piece of text retelling past events, usually in the order in which the events occurred.

- Achievement

According to Goldenberg and Coleman (2010, p.73), achievement is the levels of students' ability. In this study, the students' score of grammar and writing are seen as the achievement.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis contains five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, which discusses background of the study, statement of the problem , objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework, assumptions, hypothesis, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II discusses literature review and previous study. Chapter III presents research methodology which is divided into four parts: research design, subject of the study, research instrument, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis. Chapter IV discusses the result of

the study and hypothesis testing, and in the last chapter, Chapter V, the writer draws a conclusion and gives some suggestions.