

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is used by people for communication and social interaction. One of the most important language in the world is English. The importance of English can be seen from its function as the key factor in some aspects such as business, industry, politics, economics, and education. Therefore, people should learn English in order to learn the aspect.

Learning a language is learning to communicate. The word “communicate” refers to understanding and sharing information, thought, and feeling and also to develop science, technology, and culture using the language. The ability to communicate has the same meaning with the ability to understand and produce oral and written texts. Recently the teachers are also challenged by the government to use the curriculum 2013. According to Majid& Rochman (2014:1), “The curriculum 2013 is competence-based process to boost the learning process and authentic assessment to attain attitudes, knowledge, and skills”. Then, in English, it is realized in four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides the four skills, the knowledge of grammar is one of the important factors that the students should master, in order to be able to listen, speak, read and write correctly.

Every time that we write or speak, we are faced with a myriad of choices, not only choices in what we say but in how we say it. The vocabulary and grammar that we used to communicated are influenced by a number of factors,

such as the reason for the communication, the context, the people with whom we are communicating and whether we are speaking or writing (Logman, 1999: 4).

English as an international language that is used by many people in entire of world, becomes an essential language subject of educational issues in Indonesian nowadays. Students of elementary school up to collage students of university should learned it. As a matter of fact, many young learners face difficulty to understand English as their second language that definitely different from their mother tongue.

To use language perfectly, one should master the skills in understanding and expressing the language both in oral and written. Nunan (1999: 96) said that grammar teaches us how to make use of words; that is to say, it teaches us how to make use of them in the proper manner to be able to choose the words which ought to be placed, we must be acquainted with certain principle and rules; and these principles and rules constitute what is called grammar.

Grammar is one of linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is one of the important aspects of discourse competence that should be achieved by the junior high school students. If the students want to know about English they must learn about grammar. The fact shows that the students usually face difficulties in learning grammar. They need to learn by heart many rules because grammar means language rules. In addition, a big effort should be made to understand the application of the rules in creating text. Thus, the students can understand a text well and also produce a grammatical sentence.

As language, English has a lot of aspects, which are different from Indonesian language such as cultural background, grammatical aspects, the sound

system, the vocabulary, all these become the important things for the students who want to learn English. To know English grammar, we should start learning grammatical structure such as sentence pattern, tenses, part of speech, etc. Noun, verb, adjective, adverb are parts of speech that are used for building up a structure or pattern of writing a sentence.

One of the difficulties in learning English grammar are countable and uncountable nouns. A noun is the most important part of speech. English nouns are classified into countable and uncountable nouns. Countable nouns have singular and plural, while uncountable nouns have only singular form.

Meanwhile, the plurality in English nouns is more complicated. There are regular and irregular plural. The examples of regular plural nouns are: bag→bags, room→rooms, teacher→teachers, etc. Many rules have to be noticed by students in irregular plural nouns like in man-men, person-people, child-children, etc. In addition, the words fish, deer, sheep have the same form either singular or plural. The students often make mistakes and find difficulties in identifying uncountable noun that is always singular such as “water”, “milk” and can’t change into “waters” or “milks”.

In this study, the writer is interested to carry out a study regarding one aspect of grammar namely nouns especially countable and uncountable nouns. Based on the writer’s experience during the teaching practice, she found that many students faced difficulty in using nouns in general, particularly countable and uncountable nouns.

Based on the explanation above the writer would like to search a problem under the title: **A Study on the Ability in Using Countable and Uncountable**

Nouns of the Eighth Grade Students of SMPNegeri 5 Kupang in the School Year 2018/2019.

1.2 Problem Statements

Problem statement is actually the specification of the problem or topic of a thesis or a research. The problems of this study are presented as follows:

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 able to use countable and uncountable nouns?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 in using countable and uncountable nouns?
3. What kinds of grammatical mistakes might be committed by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 in using countable and uncountable nouns?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Going in line with the problem statements the objectives of this study are formulated in the following statements.

1. To describe and explain whether the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 are able to use countable and uncountable nouns.
2. To describe and explain the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 in using countable and uncountable nouns.

3. To describe and explain kinds of grammatical mistakes that might be committed by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupangin the school year 2018/2019 in using countable and uncountable nouns.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will give contribution to the writer, the teacher of English, and the students of the researched school, other readers or researchers and the English study program students in learning process of English as a whole and understanding countable and uncountable nouns.

1. The Writer

This writing gives some important inputs to the writer's knowledge about English especially how to analyze the ability of the students in using countable and uncountable nouns.

2. The Teachers of English

The teacher of English at the researched school may be informed about the progress of students' ability in English, especially in understanding countable and uncountable nouns.

3. The Students

To inform the students about their ability in using countable and uncountable nouns in sentences.

4. Other Readers/ Researchers

The result of this study can become good information for the readers or the researchers to be the material for the review of related studies of their studies.

5. The English Education Study Program Students

The result of this study can give information to the English education study program students about the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in using English Grammar especially countable and uncountable nouns.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope in this study is about grammar. There are many grammatical aspects of English. Among other things is countable and uncountable nouns. The writer limits herself to study about students' ability in using countable and uncountable nouns, particularly countable nouns which cover singular and plural nouns and uncountable nouns which cover singular nouns.

1.6 Definition of Terms

In this subchapter, the writer gives some definition of terms aimed at helping the reader understand the word comprehensively as a whole.

1. Study

Study is to examine something very carefully (McIntosh, 2013:1562). Study in this research is to examine or investigate the ability of eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 in using countable and uncountable nouns.

2. Ability

Ability is the physical and mental power or skill needed to do something (McIntosh, 2013:2). In this study ability means the physical or mental power

of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 5 Kupang in the school year 2018/2019 needed to master and to use countable and uncountable nouns of English.

3. Countable Nouns

Countable nouns (also known as count nouns) are nouns which have a singular form as well as a plural form (Aik and Hui, 1999: 141), chair→chairs

4. Uncountable Nouns

Uncountable nouns (also known as un-count nouns) are nouns which only have one form and take a singular verb (Aik and Hui, 1999:141). Example: air, sugar, etc.

5. SMP Negeri 5 Kupang

It is one of the state junior high schools located in Kupang.