

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Language is known as means of communication which is used by human. This statement means that language helps people to communicate among human beings in a social community and share information among them.

There are many languages used as a means of communication by people around of the world. One of them is English, which has a role as an international language. English is known as the first foreign language taught in Indonesia. It is started from Elementary school up to university, because basically, everyone who learns English intends to use it properly in communication. Except those mojouring in English. Like other languages, English also has its own system. The fact shows that most Indonesia students encountered difficulties in learning English.

One of the probable cause is that there are differences between Indonesian language and English language. Indonesian students have to master the new language which has different system compared to students language system in Bahasa Indonesia. Although the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are the objective of learning English at Junior and Senior High School, most of graduates are still unable to use English correctly.

There are many problems encountered and one of them is grammar. In order to master the English grammar, the students should start learning grammatical structure such as setence patterns, tenses, etc.

The use of correct grammar is important in communication. One of language systems is the system of expression, which covers grammar. Grammar as one of the English sub skills comprises many aspects such as: tenses, gerunds, and many others. The writer chooses one aspect of the grammar as her study namely tenses specifically simple past tense. The writer is interested in conducting a study of the simple past tense because the simple past tense seems very easy, most verbs end in -ed for the simple past form, but the irregular verb form of the simple past will be vary. Based on the writer observation during the field familiarization program at SMPN 9 Kupang. This might cause the problem for the students.

The simple past tense is taught to the junior and senior high school students. The students should master it without any trouble, but based on the writer experiences and observation, she found that the students made mistakes in the use of the simple past tense in English sentences as shown in the following examples:

1. My father buy this car last year. (wrong)
  - My Father bought this car last year. (correct)
2. I go to Surabaya last week. (wrong)
  - I went to Surabaya last week. (correct)
3. He drink coffee last night. (wrong)
  - He drank coffee last night. (correct)

It is clearly seen from the sentences made by the students that they do not know how to use simple past tense correctly since they still use Verb 1 for past activities.

Based on the example above the writer would like to say that the students still do the errors in the use of simple past tense. Therefore, the writer to conduct a study under the title” **A Study on the Ability in Using Simple Past Tense of the Eight Grade Students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the School Year 2016/2017.**”

### **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

In line with the background above, statement of the problems of this study are as follows:

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 able to use the simple past tense in sentences?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 in using the simple past tense in sentences?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem statements stated above, the writer formulates the following objectives, they are:

1. To find out whether or not the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 are able to use simple past tense in sentences.
2. To find out the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 in using the simple past tense in sentences.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is beneficial for the following persons, as stated in the following.

### **1. The Teacher of the Researched School**

This study is expected to give some information to the teacher of English at SMPN 3 Kupang about the ability of his/her students in using simple past tense so that it can be taken as consideration when teaching English to the students.

### **2. The Students**

Through this study students will know their ability in using simple past tense. They could take benefit from the result they will get particularly for those whose ability is very poor. They could motivate themselves to learn more.

### **3. The Writer**

This study is expected to help the writer know how to conduct a scientific research and learn more about the use of simple past tense.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

This is an ability that the writer would like to assess students' grammar ability level. There are many aspects of grammar that can be analyzed such as tenses, preposition, modal auxiliary, gerund, and so on.

Yet, this study focuses on analyzing the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP N 3 Kupang in using simple past tense.

## **1.6 Definition Of the Terms**

There are some terms in this writing that needs explaining. The definitions are intended to help readers understand the whole of the thesis.

## **1. Ability**

Ability is a potential capacity or power to do something physically or mentally Hornby, 1987: 2). In this study ability means the student's ability in using past tense in English sentences.

## **2. Tense**

It is the form the verbs that may be used to indicate time or actions state expressed by verb (Hornby, 1989:1324). This study, tense refers to time context whether is shows action, activity in this time, in the past or in the future, has happened in the past or going on until now.

## **3. Simple Past tense**

Simple past tense is a tense for an action completed in the past at definition time ( Thomson, A.J and Martined, A.V, 1990: 153 ).

Past tense is form of a verb which is usually used to show that the act or state described by the verb occurred at a time before the present (*Richard, et al.* 1985: 209).

## **4. SMPN 3 Kupang**

SMPN 3 Kupang is one of the public schools in Kupang. It is the same level as the junior high school. It is located in Kenanga Street.