

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the writer would like to present the background of study, problem statements, the objectives of the study, significance of study, scope of limitation and the definition of terms.

### **1.1 Background of Study**

English in Indonesia is taught at various levels of education, such as primary school, secondary, junior college and universities as a first foreign language. It is considered an important language as it has an international language status. However, many Indonesian learners of English still find it difficult to learn as it has many rules to obey.

One of the rules in English language is the use of tense. Tense is the expression of action in time. Tense is any of the forms of verb which show the time at which an action happened (McIntosh, 2013:1619). English has three main tenses i.e Present Tense, Past Tense, and Future Tense. This phenomenon is different from Indonesian language that does not have tense in its grammatical system. This reality many times becomes the source of errors for Indonesian learners of English.

The focus of this study is to identify the ability of Indonesian learners of English in using Simple Past Tense. Many previous studies have provided evidence that Indonesian students committed errors in using simple past tense. For instance, Ganut (2016:2) reported that the eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Kupang in the

school year 2016/2017 violated the rule of Simple Past Tense when they produced sentences in English. Some examples are presented as follows :

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)*

Jawa (2012:28) reported that the second year students of SMP St. Pius X Lewoleba in the school year 2011/2012 violated the rule of Simple Past Tense when they produced sentences in English. Some examples are presented as follows :

1. *Did Alice happy yesterday? ( wrong)*  
*Was Alice happy yesterday? (correct)*
2. *Did they busy yesterday? (wrong)*  
*Were they busy yesterday (correct)*
3. *Where did Mery drove her car last night? (wrong)*  
*Where did Mery drive her car last night? (correct)*

I assume that this phenomenon might occur in other schools, including at SMPN 2 Kupang.

There are several reasons as the bases of this assumptions. Firsrtly, both students and English teachers of this school have Bahasa Indonesia as one of their languagerepertoirs. This means that Indonesian language exposure may influence the process of teaching and learning of English whereby the Indonesian grammatical system may interfere the acquisition of the English grammatical rules.

Secondly, English is not used as a daily language whereby the learners may forget what they learnt in the classroom. Of this account, the present study is conducted.

### **1.2 Problem Statements**

The problems of this study are formulated in the questions that should be answered in the data analysis. The problem statements in detail are presented below:

1. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kupang in using simple past tense in sentences?
2. What are the difficulties encountered by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kupang in using simple past tense?

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

In line with the problem statements, the objectives in detail are presented in the following:

1. To find out and to know the level ability the eighth grade students SMP Negeri 2 Kupang in school year 2018/2019 in using simple past tense.
2. To find out and to know the difficulties encountered by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kupang in using simple past tense.

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

The study will be expected to present some valuable contributions to the following persons:

1. The Writer

This study will enrich his knowledge of grammar and in particular in using simple past tense.

2. The Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Kupang

The writer would like to inform the students about their ability in using simple past tense.

3. The English Teacher

By this study, the English teachers will know about their students' ability in using Simple Past Tense.

4. The English Education Study Program

This study also gives contribution to English Education Study Program of FKIP of Widya Mandira Catholic University Kupang.

### **1.5 Scope of Limitation**

According to Haryono (2002: 63) English has 16 tenses. They are: Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, Present Perfect Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Past Perfect Tense, Past Perfect Continuous Tense, Simple Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Future Perfect Tense, Future Perfect Continuous Tense, Future Past Tense, Future Past Continuous Tense, Future Past Perfect Tense and Future Past Perfect Continuous Tense. In this study the writer focuses his study only in the use of simple past tense.

## 1.6 Definition of Terms

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

### 1. Grammar

Grammar is the set of rules that describes how words and group of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language. (Cowan, 2008: 3).

### 2. Ability

Ability is the power or skill to do something or act in certain way (Hornby,2008:2). Ability in this study is the capacity of the second year students of SMP N 2 Kupang in using Simple Past Tense.

### 3. Simple Past Tense

Simple Past Tense is used to talk about activities or situation that began and ended in the past. Azar (2003:25)

### 4. SMP Negeri 2 Kupang

SMP Negeri 2 Kupang is one of regular junior high schools in Kupang, it is located in Tompelo street,Oebobo, Kupang- East Nusa Tenggara.