

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of the languages which is broadly used by the people nearly all over the world. The Indonesian students are expected to be able to use English well. In Indonesian education system, English is taught as a compulsory subject at all schools from the primary level up to the university. The main goal of teaching English in Indonesia is to help the students obtain science and technology as much as possible through sources written in English.

The fact shows that English is viewed as one of the difficult language for Indonesian students. The students, in general, still face difficulties in learning English. This condition might be caused by the difference in language system (Lado, 1957). Facing this condition the students are expected to master the whole system of English language including phonological system, grammatical system, and lexical item.

Grammar as a part of language system plays a very important role in language. The ability of using grammar is very helpful for the students, they will be delivering their ideas, message either to the listeners or readers. Language without grammar would be disorganized and causes some communicative problems. "The grammar of a language is the set of rules that govern its structure. Grammar determines how words are arranged to form meaningful units" Coghill

and Stacy (2003:16). One of the grammatical units that should be mastered by students is modals.

In the 2006 curriculum, it is stipulated that the modals are taught to the eighth grade students of senior high school at the first semester. So it is expected that the eighth grade students should have been able to use the modals.

Based on the writer's informal observation on the students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang it was found that some of the students were not able to use the modals correctly, for examples:

- a. When was young I can play volleyball.
- b. I must go the bank yesterday to get some money.

The use of modals as shown in the two sentences above are incorrect. The two modals should be replaced by modals *could* and *had to*. So the two sentences should be :

- a. When I was young I could play volleyball.
- b. I had to go to the bank yesterday to get some money.

Based on the problems discussed above, the writer is interested to conduct a study under the title: **“A Study on the Ability to Use the English Modals of the Eight Grade Students of SMP Katolik St. Theresia Kupang in the School Year 2016/2017 ”**

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Through this study, the writer find out the answers for the following questions:

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 able to use English modals?
2. What is the level of ability of eighth grade students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang to use the English Modals?
3. What are the areas of difficulties encountered by the students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang to use the English Modals?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To find out whether the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang in the school year 2016/2017 are able to use the English modals in sentences or not.
- b. To find out the eighth grade students' levels of ability in using the English modals in sentences.
- c. To find out the eighth grade students' areas of difficulties in using the English modals in sentences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be beneficial for the teacher, the students and the writer:

- a. For the English teacher.

The result of this study will inform the English teacher of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang regarding the ability of the students in using modals

- b. For the students

The results of this study will be used as information for the students about how far they have been able to use the English modals both in written and in spoken as well as to motivate them to study the English modals.

- c. For the writer

Through this study, the writer know more how to used modal auxiliary and find out the areas of difficulties faced by students in using modal auxiliary which can give general picture, to the writer as a prospective teacher regarding the ability of the students to use modal auxiliary so that she might provide a good way/method of teaching grammar especially modal auxiliary.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are many elements related to grammar. Since grammar is a broad study, the writer only chose the modal auxiliaries. The modal auxiliaries cover two types namely the present form and past one. Modal auxiliaries are as follows : *can, could, may, might, shall, should, had better, ought to, , will, would, must, have to, have got to*. For this study the writer limited it only on modals: *can*,

could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, had to both in present and past that are used in affirmative, negative, and interrogative sentences. The writer chooses the modals because the students often used the modals to study speaking and writing activities.

1.6 Definition of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding among the readers, the writer would like to clarify the following terms :

a. Ability

Ability is a positional capacity or power to do something physically or mentally (Hornby 1987 : 2). In this study, ability means the power and the skill of the eighth grade students of SMPK St. Theresia Kupang in use the English modals correctly.

b. Modal Auxiliary

Modal Auxiliary is one of the sets of English verb including *can, could, may, might, shall, should, had better, must, ought to, will, would*. In general they express a speaker attitude or moods (Azar, 1986;68).

c. SMP St. Theresia Kupang

It is one of the private junior high schools located in Kupang city, especially at Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 52 Kota Lama.