

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the research questions, the purposes of the study, and the significance of the study.

#### **Background of the study**

English is an international language used by all countries in the world. The used of English signifies that English is an essential language in the current globalization era. Indonesia, as a developing country that has inevitably to face the global world, so she must prepare her citizens to master English. Thus, Indonesian students must learn the English language to be able to interact with other students from other nations for developing science, technology, and culture.

The Indonesian government has made a policy that students have learned English starting from elementary school to university, although English for primary schools is not compulsory. It is undoubtedly beneficial given the importance of having the ability to speak English. In this respect, English has been an essential part of the school curriculum, which is learned as the main subjects by the Indonesian students to develop science, technology, and culture. The students should be able to master four skills of English. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing as the macro skills. Meanwhile, English components such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as micro-skills are necessarily learned.

Grammar is a set of rules that should be learned in learning the English language. Grammar is a subject that must be learned to master the four skills of English. By mastering grammar, the students can build up sentences and can deliver their thoughts for communicative purposes. Besides, they can also enhance their ability in understanding reading texts. These are

among the advantages the students obtain through learning English grammar. Meanwhile, English grammar is different from Indonesia language.

Hsu (2013) stated that grammar is regarded as a whole system and structure of a language. It consists of syntax, morphology, and sometimes also phonology and semantics (Hsu, 2013). Grammar has a significant role in students' acquisition in English. One of the grammar aspects is tense. In making a sentence in English either spoken or written, tense plays a vital role. In English, each sentence always has tense.

Tense is a primary concept of English grammar. Learning tenses is necessary for learning the English language. Tense is "grammatical category that is realized by verb inflection" (Greenbaum&Quirk, 2003). Swan (2005) said that "tense is a grammatical system for showing time relations through changes in the form of verbs". Maclin (2001) defined that tense is grammatical, which is used to the bond of time, situation and the form of the verb. In other words, tense is the way of using a form of the verb in a sentence to express the time or state of an action. The verb commonly expresses the time of the action. The verb can show the difference between the past, present and future by a change in the verb form.

The importance of tenses can be seen from their frequency of use (Dang, 2013). The students definitely use tenses in their writing, speaking, listening and reading activity. Tense guides us for making a correct sentence and communication. By using tense, there will be a clear communication because there is good classification on the time of action. Tense is also prevent misunderstanding in communication.

There are three major tenses in English. They are past, present and future. Each of these tenses can explain an event that occurred in the past, an event that occurs in the present, and the event that will occur in the future. These tenses divided into four types making total is twelve types. Past tense covers simple past tense, past continuous tense, past perfect tense, past

perfect continuous tense. Then present continuous tense involves simple present tense, present continuous tense, present perfect tense, and present perfect continuous tense. Future tense covers simple future tense, future continuous tense, future perfect tense, and future perfect continuous tense. To understand those tenses is not easy, especially for Indonesian students because English is very different from Indonesian tense system.

As we know, there is no tense in the Indonesian language. In Indonesian, we will not find any form change of verb that indicates time when the action is done. We may take a look of the differences between Indonesian and English, especially about tense. In Indonesian "*Saya pergi ke sekolah setiap hari*", it shows habitually. Then, "*Saya sedang pergi ke sekolah sekarang*", it shows progressive event. And then "*saya pergi ke sekolah kemarin*", it shows pass event. Based on three sentences, the Indonesian language does not need to change the verb, although the sentences have different time indicators.

Meanwhile, in English "*I go to school every day*," it shows habitual activities. Then, "*I am going to school now*," it shows progress event. And then "*I went to school yesterday*," it shows past event. Based on three sentences, the English language needs tenses to change the verb based on time indicators. In short, it shows students difficulties to understand tenses in English by using Indonesian paradigm.

The Indonesian students often make error or mistake either in oral or written in using English tense. In English learning, the students will be faced by the tense and grammar. These two components cannot be separated in English learning process. There are sixteen tenses in English. Some of those tenses are simple past tense, simple present tense, and simple present continuous tense. The students usually make error or mistakes on tenses usage in verb forms, the use of vocabulary, and the use of time signals. These problems may influenced by some factors such as the lack of understanding of the grammar. The students sometimes do not

understand how to arrange the verb form into a past tense, present tense or future tense. Many students find the error in using English tense because they have a lack of understanding in using tense, especially the difference between a regular verb and irregular verb. It is proved by researchers who studied about tense. As mentioned in some studies on "*an analysis of students' difficulties in using the simple present tense*" by Solahudin (2011). And the similar finding was also indicated by another study entitled "*an analysis on students' difficulties in learning simple past tense*" conducted by Setiawati (2010).

Based on the above description, the researcher has the intention to investigate tenses in Yogyakarta context focusing on the analyses of the students' error in using the simple present tense, simple present continuous tense, and simple past tense. As the writer knows that many students find some difficulties in understanding simple present tense, simple present continuous tense, and simple past tense. Therefore, the researcher would like to discuss it in his study under the title "*An Analyze of Students' Error in Using English Tense*".

### **Identification of the problem**

Tense is one component of the grammar in English. In English, each sentence always contains tense. It is a fundamental factor needed to be mastered by the students in building the sentences in English either spoken or written. As we know, English needs tenses to change the verb based on time indicators. Meanwhile, in the Indonesian learning context, we don't need tense to modify the verb, although the sentences have different times indicators.

English tenses consist of various types. They include the simple present tense, simple past tense, and simple future tense. Simple present tense may be changed into a simple present continuous tense, simple present perfect tense, and simple present perfect continuous tense. Simple past tense can be transformed into a simple past continuous tense, simple past perfect tense, and simple past perfect continuous tense. Simple future tense can be formed into simple

future continuous tense, simple future perfect tense, and simple future perfect continuous tense. Some other types of tenses can be constructed based on the previously mentioned tenses. These tenses may pose Indonesian students in difficulties due to the different natures of the tense in Indonesia language.

Most junior high school students in Indonesia face difficulties in learning language especially on grammar (Netanel, 2017; Sa'diah, 2017; Putri, 2014; Komala, 2014; Maisari, 2011). The researcher has an experience of teaching English as practice in one of junior high school in Yogyakarta. During the teaching practice period, the researcher observed that some students found some difficulties in using the correct form of English language, such as in structure and tenses. However, there has not been a specific research on this issue. The researcher assumed that these problems can be influenced by some factors such as the differences between English and Indonesian, especially about tense. The others can be affected by the lack of the students' knowledge in using tense and grammar.

Thus, a research focusing on students error, especially on the school, is going to be very beneficial for the school as they would understand the reality and where they could fix the error. Accordingly, the researcher would identify the specific difficulties of these students in using English tense.

### **Delimitation of the problem**

The researcher delimits the tenses to be researched into three tenses only. They are simple present tense, simple continuous tense, and simple past tense. This focus is conducted due to several reasons. Firstly, from the researcher observation, these three tenses are among the tenses that are frequently used by Indonesian learners. Making research on these areas are then potentially contributing more benefits for learners as they commonly use them. Secondly, constricting into three tenses enable the researchers to finish this study faster because the less

number of the research variables most likely requires less time to study. Thirdly, focusing on the three tenses allows the researcher to spend less budget to conduct the study as this focus enable the researcher to use papers, and other needed facilities more economical.

### **Research question**

The research questions of this study are as follow:

1. How are the errors made by the students in using the simple present tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?
2. How are the errors made by the students in using simple present continuous tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?
3. How are the errors made by the students in using simple past tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?

### **Purpose of the study**

The purposes of this study are:

1. To identify the errors of students in using the simple present tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?
2. To identify the errors of students in using simple present continues tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?
3. To identify the errors of students in using simple past tense in one of Junior High Schools in Yogyakarta?

### **The significance of the research**

The researcher would like to figure out errors faced by the students, the types and causes of them for the second grade at one of junior high school in Yogyakarta. The researcher also expects that this research will be useful for himself, English teacher, students and other people in general. For the researcher, this research can improve and increase his analytical skill. For English teacher, this research may help them to know how well their students' ability in understanding simple present tense, simple present continuous tense, and simple past tense. For the students, this research may assist them in improving their understanding in the simple present tense, simple present continuous tense, and simple past tense. For other researchers, this research can be a resource for their research in the next time.