

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of the international languages. In Indonesia, English is taught as the first foreign language. It also plays an important role in various fields such as in commerce, technologies, politics, and education. Nowadays, English should be mastered by the students of Junior High School until Senior High School. Based on the curriculum KTSP 2007, teaching English to the students at Junior High School and Senior High School aims at gaining the skills of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as the basic components. The students are expected to master those four skills in order to be able to use English communicatively. The aim of KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) will not be successfully achieved if the language teaching does not consider the language components such as grammatical structure, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Therefore, grammar needs to be mastered by the students since it is the basic rule of language.

Based on information obtained from the English teacher at SMPK Sapientia Kupang, it was found that many students still had difficulties in mastering grammar, especially in mastering Simple Past Tense. There are many mistakes made by the students in using simple past sentences as shown in the following:

1. *I talk David about math yesterday (incorrect).*
2. *I talked David about math yesterday (correct).*
3. *He goes to So'e last week (incorrect).*

4. *He went to So'e last week (correct).*

The first sentence is incorrect because the verb 'tell' indicates present situation. While the time signal in the sentence is yesterday. So the sentence should be as the second sentence, the verb should be changed into the simple past 'talked'. The third sentence is also incorrect because the verb 'goes' is for present. It should be went.

Based on the problem above, the writer is interested in making a study with the title "The Ability in Using Simple Past Tense of the Eighth Grade Students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the School Year 2014/2015".

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The topic of the study is specified into some problems. The problems are formulated in the following questions.

1. Are the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 able to use simple past tense in sentences?
2. What is the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 in using simple past tense in sentences?
3. What is the problem encountered by the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 in using simple past tense in sentences?

1.3 Objective of he Study

Going to the line with the problems stated above this study has the following objectives.

1. To know whether the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 are able to use simple past tense in sentences.
2. To find out and to know the ability level of the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 in using simple past tense in sentences.
3. To find out and to know the problem faced by the eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang in the school year 2014/2015 in using simple past tense in sentences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give contribution to the following persons:
the teacher, the students, and the writer.

1. The Teacher of the Research School.

Based on the result of this study the teachers of SMPK Sapientia Kupang will know the ability level and the problems encountered by their students in using simple past tense.

2. The Eighth Grade Students of SMPK Sapientia Kupang.

The result of the study will tell the students themselves about their ability in using simple past tense. They will be encouraged and motivated to improve their skill and knowledge on simple past tense.

3. The Writer

To make the writer more understands about the use of simple past tense and result of this study can be the reference for his teaching later.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is about grammar. The writer only chooses and focuses his study on the simple past tense, because based on the writer's observation and experience, some students still commit errors in the use of simple past tense in sentences. Simple past tense in this study is limited in the use of regular and irregular verbs in positive, negative, and interrogative sentences.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are some terms used in this study that should be defined. These definitions are meant to help readers understand this writing well.

1. Ability

It is a capacity or power to do something using mental intelligence or talent (Richard, et al, 1985: 1). Here the writer means the ability of eighth grade students of SMPK Sapientia Kupangin the school year 2014/2015 in using simple past tense correctly in sentences.

2. Verb

Verb is word that expresses the idea of an action, happening, or being (McGinley, 1997: 544). In this study, the writer focuses on past form of verbs.

3. Past Tense

Hartanto et al (1986: 257) stated that simple past tense is tense used to explain events, activities, acts or tasks that happened in the past, in the simple form and the time signal is known.

4. SMPK Sapientia Kupang

It is a private Junior High School located in Kupangmunicipal. It is located on Nangka Street, Oebobo.