

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is used as a means of communication with other people through sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, idea or thought (Daulay, 2019: 10). Language is a communication tool used in everyday life. In general, Language is a vehicle that is used to interact with others, exchange knowledge, and learn from others. Thus, the main function of language is to communication (Santosa, 2017: 18). In addition, language is a tool used to convey human desires and human feelings encountered. There are many languages spoken worldwide, whether they be regional, national, or international. English is the most common international language. Due to the large number of nations that use English as their national language, the majority of people worldwide use it to communicate with people from other nations, making it the sole international language. According to Septiyana et al. (2021: 68) in Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, starting from elementary school to university levels. Learning English is one of the foreign languages that must be mastered by students. In the 1989 Law, Chapter IX, Section 39, Verse 3, "English is specified as a compulsory subject, as part of the Basic Curriculum" (Lauder, 2008).

Learning is a method or process carried out by an individual with the aim of changing the behavior of various materials that have been studied as an experience both in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes and positive values (Djamaluddin & Wardana, 2019: 6). Learning here aims to change in a more positive direction. Djamaluddin and Wardana also explained that the characteristics of learning are marked by changes that occur consciously. The success of students' learning is marked by student achievement. Learning achievement according to Ginting (2021: 37) is a measure of the quality and or the quantity of the success one has in the mastery of knowledge, skills, or understandings. Similarly, Horn in Ginting (2021: 37) also stated that achievement is a thing done successfully, especially with an effort and skill. Students' learning achievement can be observed from students' mastery of a

subject. To see student mastery of learning subjects, teachers at school carry out lesson evaluations. Evaluation is carried out with the aim of seeing how far the student understands the lesson. Usually the evaluation is observed by looking at the student's report scores while participating in learning in one semester. In addition, students are required to achieve a certain level of English proficiency to advance academically and professionally. People need to be able to speak English in order that they can share their information from one person to another at the same time or at different times. Hence, English language proficiency is an essential skill for success in today's globalized world. However, in reality the English subject is one of the subjects that is hard to learn. It is because the grammar or rules structure. Another reason is, most of the students' do not realize that English is important. As a result, students' will have low English learning achievement.

In studying a language particularly English, of course, we are required to understand the structure in and the arrangement of sentences correctly. One of the important aspects of English language proficiency is mastery of grammar. The ability to master grammar is very important in building a sentence that is correct and can be understood by readers or listeners. In studying grammar, one of the skills that must be mastered are the ability to understand and master sentence structure or sentence mastery. The ability to use grammatically correct and coherent sentences is one of the key components of English language proficiency. In accordance with Fromkin, et. al states that sentence is included into a part of language. In achieving the technical knowledge needed to understand language system, such as sentence of language (Daulay, 2021: 342). Therefore, it is important for students to know the rules for constructing a sentence and the components needed to do so when they want to learn the language.

Peter Hubbard also stated that “ in learning language there are three types of language items, which are introduced to learners; phonological items, lexical items, and structural items”. Structural items include the rules of constructing sentences (Ismiyati, 2015: 100). Furthermore, if the students who want to master English, they have to learn many grammatical aspects include sentence, because

sentence is the fundamental organizing principle of language. In grammar, a sentence is a basic grammatical unit (Christina, 2021: 48) A sentence consists of at least subject (S) and predicate (P) which has punctuation marks and intonation. Discussing about the elements which create a sentence should be understood first. The elements of sentences are sentence subject, predicate, an object, and adverb of time, place, or manner. Sentence is an important point for English actively communicating whether orally or written. Sentence mastery is defined as the ability to use sentence structure correctly whether speaking or writing. It is an essential component of English language learning and affects students' communication skills. Students who have a good understanding of sentence structure are more likely to be able to express their ideas effectively and communicate with others in English (Imaniah, 2022: 58). It is clear that mastering the English sentence is important. If students master the rules of English sentences, students can arrange, produce, or organize the English sentences well.

Based on the results of the pre-research had been done by the researchers at SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan there are still a number of students whose learning achievement were not maximal, one of them is in English subject. There are some students who think that English lessons are difficult to understand, unlike other subjects such as Indonesian, geography, mathematics and others. Besides, some of the students at the eighth grade of SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan having less abilities in understanding English sentences. They are still confused in producing sentences such as nominal sentence, verbal sentence, with the form of the sentence such as, positive sentence, negative sentence, interrogative sentence. Sometimes they're confused how to produce or organize a correct sentence with the patterns of the sentence that is includes the elements of sentence, such as subject, verb, adverb and etc. Those can have an impact on students' ability to use English effectively and accurately, both orally and in writing. As a result, it will influence on students' achievement in English.

There are several previous studies that examined the importance of sentence mastery in learning English. Previous studies have shown that students' sentence mastery is highly correlated with their English learning achievement. As formerly investigated by Muzdalifah (2022), Christina (2021), (Mustaqim, 2021), Loly

Novita & M. Sabri (2019), Virginanda (2019). Based on the background of the problems above, the researcher having interest to raise quantitative research with the title "The Correlation Between Students' Sentence Mastery and Their English Learning Achievement" at SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan.

1.2 The Identification of the Problem

Due to the background above, the researcher identified the following problems:

1. Learning achievement in English subjects at SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan has not been maximized.
2. There are some students during the learning process have difficulties in understanding the subject matter.
3. There are some of the students are not able to arrange or produce sentences properly.
4. There are some of the students were note able to produce or organize a correct sentence with the patterns of the sentence.
5. There are some of the students were not able to deliver their ideas in English.
6. There are some students have low ability when arrange the sentence using the tense of present simple.
7. There are some students still confuse in producing sentences simple sentence, negative sentence, and interrogative sentence.

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

By diagnosing the issues mentioned above, thus, the writer needs to limit and to focus the problem of this research on the correlation between students' sentence mastery and their English learning achievement at the eighth grade of SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan. The researcher limits this research on grammatical features of simple present such as simple sentence, negative sentence, and interrogative sentence. This grammatical rule is considered to be the primary component of simple present that was studied. If they were wrongly applied, the meaning of the sentence will be unclear.

1.4 The Formulation of Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions that formulated to guide this research is : Is there any significant correlation between students' sentence mastery and their achievement in learning English at SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan?

1.5 Research Objectives

According to the question given in the previous section, the goal of this study is to determine whether there is any significant correlations between students' sentence mastery and their achievement in learning English at SMP Pahlawan Nasional Medan.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this study are supposed to be able assist in the learning process by helping students understand a sentence that has English written in its structure as a foreign language.

1. Theoretically

The results of this study can add and enrich new theories by using the tests method given to students, to see the correlation between students' sentence mastery and their achievement in English.

2. Practically

- a. For teachers or educators, the findings of this study can be used as a guideline and reference in improving learning achievement in English and students' sentence mastery.
- b. For students, this research can provide awareness that the importance of sentence mastery in learning English.