

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Language is essential in every aspect and interaction in our everyday lives. We use language to communicate effectively with our words, gestures, and tone of voice in a multitude of situation. By using language people can communicate each other, could make statements, and convey facts and knowledge explain or report something. These indicate that by means of language, people can express their ideas, feeling, information etc. It means that communication can be effective if people are able to use the language well. On the other word, if the listeners and speakers are not able to use the language well, the communication cannot reach the goal. Language also plays an important role in teaching and learning. Without a language this process, learning cannot be effective well.

There are many languages in the world, one of them, English, is a foreign language in Indonesia that has been taught from elementary school as a local content, and junior high school until senior high school as a compulsory subject, up to University. People realize that learning English became very important now and needs much concern. Many school in Indonesia, English is determined

as compulsory subject in national curriculum. The curriculum that progresses now what it is called Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) or issued in 2006 curriculum.

In this English curriculum of KTSP, each skill has *Standard Kompetensi* (SK) and *Kompetensi Dasar* (KD). Standar Kompetensi (SK) becomes global explanation and Kompetensi Dasar (KD) as specific explanation of Standar Kompetensi and Matery (Pokok/Pembahasan).

Dalam Kepmendiknas No. 22 Tahun 2006: Bahasa Inggris merupakan alat untuk berkomunikasi secara lisan dan tulis. Berkomunikasi adalah memahami dan mengungkapkan informasi, pikiran, perasaan, dan mengembangkan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, dan budaya dengan menggunakan bahasa tersebut. Kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam pengertian yang utuh adalah kemampuan berwacana, yakni kemampuan memahami dan/atau menghasilkan teks lisan dan/atau tulis yang direalisasikan dalam empat keterampilan berbahasa, yaitu menyimak, berbicara, membaca dan menulis. Keempat keterampilan inilah yang digunakan untuk menanggapi atau menciptakan wacana dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. (Depdiknas, 2009)

On the educational context, English is means to communicate orally and written. Communication is to understand and express information, thought, feeling and to develop knowledge, technology and culture. It means that students must have ability in communication and able to understand the text such as ability to listen of English sound, the ability to speak English, the ability to read and understand English book, and the ability to write English. Those are Abilities of language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Besides the four skills, the students have to master language components; they are

grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. One of the aspects necessary to master in English is its grammar. Grammar is an important element to be learned in learning a language because it should be improve one's formal knowledge of a language. It should be an experience in enrichment. Language without grammar can cause confusion in comprehending the ideas, opinion, feelings of the person who expresses oral or written and this factor has caused difficulties for students. English grammar is different from our second language structure, Indonesian. There are many rules used to correlate or to combine parts of speech for making good sentences or phrase, just like concord, subjunctive, articles and determiners, pronouns, direct and indirect sentences, prepositions, passive voice, etc. In this study, the writer would like to focus more on the rule of English grammar, the use of prepositions.

Preposition is one of an important part in English especially in grammar. It must be learned by student because it takes an important role in four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Prepositions are abstract words that have no concrete meaning. They merely show the relationships between groups of words. According to Falls (2008) prepositions are frequently used in English to relate a noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence. They express a number of relationships, including time, position, direction, manner, instrument, possession, and condition. Prepositions have been called the biggest little words in English. There are

usually quite short and insignificant looking, but they have very important functions. It is caused by most English preposition have several different functions. According to Lou (2011), there are fourteen function of *on*, and these may correspond to several different preposition in another language. At the same time, different preposition can have very similiar uses (in the morning, on Monday morning, at night).

Althought preposition has been taught in school, university or even English course about how to use it, to know the function and kind of preposition, but in reality, many students especially in junior high school still make mistakes and have problems of the use of preposition. For example: essentially, the majority of prepositions in English have a variety of meanings depending on context. Thus, students often have problem, when trying to determine prepositional meanings and when trying to use them appropriately, for example in sentence ‘at instead of in’: A man and a woman are siting in the garden. But in reality some students still make mistake and find difficulty in identifying preposition. Here some examples of wrong sentence that are often made by students in using English preposition.

- I live **at** Jerusalem. (It should be “I live **in** Jerusalem”)
- The old man was **on** the car. (It should be “The old man was **in** the the car”)
- I am **in** cinema. (It should be “I am **at** cinema”)

Felice (2009) added that prepositions such a challenge to learners because they can appear to have no easily definable pattern. Oliveira (2012) asserted prepositions are one of the most difficult things to master in the English language. They provide the “links” between the main words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives), but many English students have a hard time knowing which preposition to use in each situation.

According to the explanation about preposition above, it leads the writer to focus her research to find out the students’ mastery of English preposition and the problems that are faced by seventh graders at SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius, and the title is “STUDENTS’ ABILITY IN DOING ENGLISH PREPOSITION TEST (A CASE STUDY AT SEVENTH GRADERS OF SMP STRADA SANTO FRANSISKUS XAVERIUS II)”

One of the studies found on Case Study has been conducted by Mus (2012) “*The Students’ Ability in Using Preposition ‘A Case Study at Faculty of Letters of Hasanudin University*” which reveals that the students’ ability in using preposition is “very poor” with total score is 52%. The difficulties level of the questionnaire are low. There are two students get “good” according to the criteria that used by the writer namely 76- 85% and three students get “very poor” namely 0- 55%.

B. The Problems of the Study

There are two problems to be addressed in this study:

- a) How high is the students' ability in doing English preposition test?
- b) What problems are faced by seventh graders of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius II in doing English preposition test?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- a) to find out the students' mastery in doing English preposition test
- b) to describe students' problems in doing English preposition test

D. The Significances of the Study

1. for the students:

- a. The research increases the understanding of using preposition.
- b. The research increases the student's knowledge of using preposition.
- c. The research provides more information about preposition and problems faced by the students in choosing preposition.
- d. The research intends to show how far the students' knowledge of preposition.

2. for the teacher

The research increases the teacher to explain preposition.

3. for other writers

This research can be additional reference for those who are interested to learn more about preposition.

E. The Scope of the Study

The participants in this study will be limited to the seventh graders of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius II only. In addition, the data will be collected through a test focuses on English preposition (Preposition of time, Preposition of Position, Preposition of Direction). Therefore, the findings may be valid only to Seventh graders in this school. It cannot be generalized to others students in other schools or institutions.

F. The Operational Definitions

To avoid some confusing understanding about this topic, the writer explains the definitions of some main terms:

1. Student's ability is the student's quality of being able to do English preposition test.
2. English prepositions are the words denoting the relation or connection between words, i.e. between nouns following them or other words in the sentence which consists of (1) preposition of time which refers to preposition that is used to clarify a specific place, (2) preposition of position which refer to

preposition that is used to clarify a specific position, and (3) preposition of direction which refers to preposition that is used to clarify a specific direction.