

INTRODUCTION

Janet Holmes states that, “Over half of the world’s population is bilingual and many people are multilingual”.¹ It means that many people master other languages besides their mother tongue. In this case, English is one of the languages that are widely used by people all over the world as their second language or foreign language. It can be seen by looking at the role of English in the world. English plays a central role as a medium of communication in the world since English is recognized as international language.

¹ Janet Holmes, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 73.

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Considering the important role of English for international affairs, English is not only as a tool for twentieth-century learning but also as a compulsory subject in some areas. In Indonesia, English has become one of the compulsory subjects in secondary school. It has been introduced from play group, elementary school, secondary school, tertiary school, to university. Besides, English has been chosen as one of the test subjects in the national examination (UN). According Ministerial Decree of National Education in 2009 no 75 clause 7, “the subjects for national examination of *SMP/MTs* and *SMPLB* includes; Indonesian language (*Bahasa*), English, math, and Science.”⁴ That regulation states that there are six subjects in national examination which are Indonesian language (*Bahasa*), English, Math, and Science (Biology, chemistry, and physics) for natural science mainstream

⁴Direktoral Jenderal Pendidikan, Depdikbud., *Permendiknas No 75 Pasal 7 Ayat 7*, (Jakarta: depdikbud, 2009).

Basically in English teaching and learning process, the students are expected to be able to master the four skills in English. English teaching in Indonesia is aimed to develop spoken and written communication capability of students which is reflected in the four skills. The four major skills in communicating through language are often broadly defined as listening, speaking, writing and reading. Those basic skills are integrated into one another. They have different difficulty based on their characteristics but they are taught equally. As a basis skill of learning English, those skills must be taught in English classroom.

In addition, writing needs more demands than other skill. Ur states, “A written text is usually organized and carefully formulated, since its composer has time and opportunity to edit it before making it available for reading”.⁵ In

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In the process of writing, the writer cannot avoid the existence of grammar. Whatever we write, there is grammar within the text. But nowadays grammar teaching is still debatable as a part of curriculum. According to Ellis, “There is no convincing direct and indirect evidence to support the teaching of grammar.”⁶ That statement describes that the effectiveness of teaching grammar in the development of language have been questioned. The question usually about whether teaching and learning grammar is necessary for language learning or not. Instead of asking that question, the question should be whether grammar knowledge helps students in learning language or not. Min in her study entitled “*How grammar matters in NNS academic writing: the relationship between verb tense and aspect usage patterns and L2 writing proficiency in academic discourse*”, the findings suggested that patterns of using English verb tense and aspect was relevant to the students’ L2 writing proficiency because higher level students were able to incorporate their grammatical knowledge to the paper’s purpose, contents, and discourse

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Students encounter grammar problem when they write narrative essay. In order to write good narrative essay, students are demanded to understand the features. There are two features in narrative text which are generic structure and grammatical feature. The generic structure is about a sequence of events while grammatical feature concerns in grammatical aspects. These features make students stressed out. It is supported by Jeremy Harmer statement, "Some students can write a simple story but they are not equipped to create a complex narrative".⁹ It can be said that narrative is categorized in complex story. However, Narrative is one of text genre that are commonly read. It is read mostly by all ages. Especially, for the children who like reading stories like fable. Narrative also provides types of story, such as fairy stories, science fiction, legends, historical narratives, personal experience that students may already know. They are not just only entertained by the story but also they will get some moral values. Narrative also drives students to write naturally. Therefore, the complexity as well as the amusing of narrative

⁹Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English*, (Harlow: Longman, 1998), 80.

that I explained earlier becomes the reason to choose narrative to be the material in this study.

Secondly, Knapp says, “grammar needs to be taught and used primarily in the context of reading and writing.”¹¹ In this study, the students are asked to read narrative text which has different colors before writing that the researcher calls color contrast text. So the students are exposed to a lot of comprehensible new language which the grammar are induced from the color contrast text. In this case, color contrast text can facilitate the collaboration of writing and reading. This is suitable for teaching grammar that should integrate with other skill.

¹⁰Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English*.....82.

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B. Statement of The Problem

This research comes up with the problem of narrative writing. The problem is the difficulty to write narrative essay with the correct grammar . Considering the problem and those theories above, the researcher intends to explore whether color contrast text could improve students' understanding of the grammatical features in English narrative writing for 8th grade students in SMPN 5 Surabaya. Based on the background of the study, the study is aimed at seeing the effectiveness of color contrast text to enhance students' understanding of grammatical feature in English narrative writing for 8th grade students in SMPN 5 Surabaya. The study would answer the following questions:

1. Can color contrast text improve students' understanding of grammatical features in English narrative writing for students of the 8th grade in SMPN5 Surabaya?
2. What are the 8th grade students of SMPN5 Surabaya responses to the implementation of color contrast text?

C. Objective of The Study

Related to the statement of the problems there are also two objectives of the study pointed here. They are:

1. To know the effectiveness of color contrast in dealing with the implementation of color contrast text in English narrative writing.
2. To know the responses of 8th grade students of SMPN 5 Surabaya in the use of color contrast text in English narrative writing.

D. Significance of The Study

As the target of study is for pedagogical purposes, the result of the research can give information about the use of color contrast text as the alternative media for teaching. The result of the research is also expected to give information for other teachers or researchers who want to conduct the study that relates with this study. The result of the research also can be references for the teachers who face the problem in teaching narrative writing, especially in a case of understanding the grammatical feature of narrative.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Study

The scope of the study is to discuss about examining the effectiveness of color contrast text in English narrative writing. The research limits the study only for VIII H students of SMPN5 Surabaya by seeing their understanding in grammatical feature of English narrative writing through color contrast text. The grammatical feature itself is limited to the simple past tense pattern that includes subject agreement, regular verb, and irregular verb.

F. Definition of Key Terms

The most important things that I have to explain here from some operational definitions of key terms of the studies are:

1. Students' understanding is the ability of student to comprehend something. In this study, students' understanding is described as the ability to understand and write sentences in form of past tense in narrative.
2. Nordquist defines grammatical feature as a class of units (such as noun and verb) or features (such as number and case) that share a

3. Keraf states that “narrative as a story tells or describes an action in the past time clearly, so narrative is tried to answer the question: What had happened?”¹³ In this case, the narrative that will be examined is English narrative writing for junior high school students that measure the students’ ability in writing narrative essay.
4. Color contrast text is a writing work that is written in different colors text. This color contrast text will be the teaching aid to enhance students’ understanding of grammatical feature in narrative.

This thesis is divided into five chapters that can be presented as follows. Chapter 1 gives the introduction that contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of key terms, and the outline of the thesis.

Chapter 3 deals with research methodology which discuss place and time of the research, research subject, research method, model of action

¹³Gorys Keraf, *Argumentasi dan Narasi*, (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1987), 136

Chapter 5 will present some conclusion and suggestion