CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

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.

The recognition of English as international language cannot be separated from the history of English developing itself. Broughton explains that, "It may be seen, then, that the role of English within a nation's daily life is influenced by geographical, historical, cultural and political factors, not all which are immutable".² These factors effectively develop English to be the most language used in the world. The history of English expansion and colonial has been spreading over the world. It took a significant role for mid-twentieth century as an official or semi -official language by some countries. For instance, over seventy countries such as India, Malaysia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Singapore use English as their official language.

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

²Geoffrey Broughton, et.al., *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 1980), 7.

English spread in many fields; such as political, cultural, commercial trading, business, economy, advertisement, entertainment, education, and many other fields. Wherever we go, we will easily find the words that are written in English. On the street we will see billboards that contain English words. In the restaurant, we will find the menu that already used English. English is also performed in a variety of communication tools, such as television, radio program, newspapers, films, recordings, magazines, literatures and books. Therefore, Broughton says, "English is often the only available tool for twentieth-century learning".³Based on this statement, we can see how important English is as a medium to present the knowledge over the world to the people.

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."⁴That regulation states that there are six subjects in national examination which areIndonesian language (*Bahasa*), English, Math, and Science (Biology, chemistry, and physics) for natural science mainstream

³Geoffrey Broughton, et.al., *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: Second.....* 3.

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

students. It shows that English becomes one of the important subjects in Indonesia since English is the requirement for junior high school students to pass their school to continue their study to the higher level.

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.

Talking about those skills, writing is categorized as a productive skill which concerned with the production of language. Writing as a productive skill is more difficult than any other skills for foreign language learners. It is still hard to conduct, even for those who can comprehend what they read and listen well. As the the matter of fact, most native speakers of the language have to make their efforts to write in their own language correctly. It means that writing is even more difficult for non-native speakers since the native speakers consider writing as a difficult skill.

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

⁵Penny Ur, *A Course in Language Teaching*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 161.

this requirement, the writer are demanded to carry all the meaning in which he/she can deliver his/her message to the reader. The writer should know the level of knowledge of the reader in order to send the message properly. The writer also needs to know how to organize and formulate their composition in a good way since writing is typically bounded by grammatical rules. These parts will cause the writer in a bit pain in that the writer is required to reveal organizing number of variables at once.

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

⁶Rod Ellis, *Currents Issue in The Teaching Grammar: An SLA perspective*, TESOL Quarterly, (New Zealand: University of Auckland, 2006), 86.

register.⁷ In the study held by Min in 2013, it can be assumed that having grammar knowledge may be helpful in creating a good writing. This is the same to what Veit says that, "By studying grammar, the students would learn to makeup of the language and so be able to apply what they learned as a better speaker, writer, and reader".⁸ Thus, it would be reasonable to choose grammar case that does not stand alone but have significance in meaning, function, and purpose as they merge into the entire writing process.

Students encounter grammar problem when they write narrativeessay. 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

⁷Kyung Eun Min, *How grammar Matters in NNS Academic Writing: The Relationship Between Verb Tense and Aspect Usage Patterns and L2 Writing Proficiency in Academic Discourse*, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2013), ii.

⁸Richard Veit, *Discovering English Grammar*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 252. 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.

The complexity of narrative also happens to the eighth graders of SMPN 5 Surabaya. Based on the diagnostic test which measured students' ability in understanding the narrative text, the result shows that the score average is 73. It is below of the graduation competence standard in that school which is 85. This result of diagnostic test is also supported by questionnaire that was held in preliminary research, writing becomes the most difficult skill for eight graders of SMPN 5 Surabaya with percentage of 42.5 % and 77.5 % students dislike writing. There are many factors why writing becomes difficult. There are 35% students answer that the most difficult thing in writing is to write with correct grammar. While there are 30% students get difficulty in writing because they lack of English vocabulary. These data conclude that most the eighth graders of SMPN 5 Surabaya get difficulty to write narrative with the correct grammar. Thus, the research is conducted in SMPN 5 Surabaya by examining that problem. Besides the problem occurring in SMPN 5 Surabaya, another reason to carry out the research in SMPN 5 Surabaya is the school can represent all schools in Indonesia since SMPN 5 Surabaya is a national standard school. So, the result of this study can be generalized to other school in Indonesia. While the sample of the study will be the eighth grade of SMPN 5 Surabaya. It is because at the level of 8th grade, students should be able to write functional text and essay in the form of narrative. This requirement is stated in content standard or commonly called Standar Isi as a base of educational curriculum of Indonesia.

Based on the problems stated earlier, the researcher limits the case of the study only in grammatical aspect in narrative. The researcher focuses on students' understanding of grammatical feature in English narrative writing. Considering this problem, the researcher proposes color contrast text as an alternative media to teach narrative writing and analyze whether it can improve the students' understanding about grammar or not. Color contrast text here means that there are some different colors in a text which has functions to give signs based on the color. Each color has different meaning, e.g. Iplayed game online yesterday or Shewent to Jakarta last month (red as a subject, green as regular verbs, yellow as irregular verbs, etc). The signs itself are expected to help students to identify the formula of the sentence within text. We can find this kind of signs in the Quran with tajweed which help people to learn *tajweed*. *Tajweed* means improvement and perfection. This term is technically used to refer to the science concerned with correct recitation and pronunciation of the *Our'anic* words and verses. By learning tajweed, it helps people to read Quran correctly. That is what on the researcher's mind that color contrast text has similar principal with Quran with tajweed. Therefore, this is the reason of why the researcher assumes that color contrast text can be applied in narrative writing in order to improve students' understanding on grammatical feature. In short, while looking at the colors as well as reading the text, the students will also learn the grammatical feature of narrative.

There are fundamental reasons why the researcher take colors contrast text as the way to improve students' understanding of grammatical feature in narrative text. Firstly, the researcher takes the statement from Harmer as a basis for the use of color contrast text. He states that "good presentation of new grammatical structure should include both form and meaning".¹⁰ In this theory, a color contrast text seems to be acceptable for teaching writing which is integrated with grammar. The form and the meaning are presented by color contrast text. Here, the colors are representative of the form that delivers the meaning. It is not only those elements but also color contrast text has *use* of language since there is context in which it might be used.

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.

Based on explanation earlier, there is relevancy between the problem and the suggestion that the researcher gives. Considering the significance of the role of color contrast text that expected in helping the understanding of grammatical feature in English narrative writing, the researcher will conduct a research entitled "IMPROVING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF GRAMMATICAL FEATURE IN ENGLISH NARRATIVE WRITING THROUGH COLOR CONTRAST TEXT AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 5 SURABAYA"

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

¹¹Peter Knapp and Megan Watskin, Genre, Text, Grammar, (Sidney: UNSW press, 2005), 39.

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 enhancestudents' 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.
- 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:

- 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

common set of grammatical feature.¹² For this case, the grammatical feature will be focused on the pattern of the sentence which uses past tense in narrative that includes subject agreement, regular verb, and irregular verb.

- 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.

G. The Outline of The Thesis

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 2 presents review of related literature which is divided into two parts. They are theoretical background and review of previous study. These parts are explained into sub parts.

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

¹²Richard Nordquist, Grammatical Category, <u>http://www.grammar.about.com</u>, accessed on August 18, 2014.

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

research, the procedures of the research, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data.

Chapter 4 will give interpretation of the result of the study which discusses the analysis of the first cycle and the second cycle.

Chapter 5 will present some conclusion and suggestion

