**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. **Background**

Fincchiaro states that “language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbol which permits all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture to communicate or to interact” (STAIN Tulungagung, 2007: 2). Language is not a single system, but system that is built by a number of subsystems that are phonology, syntax, and lexicon. This language system is a symbol system. The symbol system here is like traffic symbol system. However contrasted with the traffic symbol system that is picture, the language symbol system is vocal that is orally produced by human (Chaer, 2003: 30). These symbols are arbitrary. It means that there are no correlations between the symbol and the thing, situation, or phenomenon that the symbol presents. There are no reasons why something to sit on is called chair; something to drink is called water; and taking another’s money is called steal (Dardjowidjojo, 2005: 17).

Language is divided into spoken language and written language. Spoken language is language produced orally. Spoken language is generally used when talking to someone; giving speech; singing a song; etc. While written language is language produced in written form. People use written language when they are producing writing such as letter, paper, announcement, etc. Both spoken language and written language are important in communication.

Every country has its own language, such as Spain has Spanish, France has French, England has English and Indonesia has *Bahasa Indonesia*. Because of the various languages, people need a language can be universally used that is called international language. The language that acts as international language is English. In many countries in the world that do not have English as the mother tongue study English as the second language.

Indonesia is one of countries that studies English as the second language. In many schools there, students from pre-elementary school until university level study English. The students study both spoken and written English.

Nowadays, written English that is taught in schools in Indonesia focuses on text genre. The text genre or kind of text is studied by students in junior and senior high school. One of text genres that are studied is descriptive text. The descriptive text is studied by the first year students of junior high school in their second semester.

The descriptive text is used to describe someone, something or place specifically. The descriptive text that is studied by the students of junior high school consists of not only a description but also an identification of the writing subject. Because the descriptive text here is to describe something that still exists, so that this text frequently uses simple present tense in its sentences.

Simple present tense is one of language features in writing descriptive text. It is because simple present tense is not only used to talk about habit and general truth, but also can be used to describe people or things in general, not now.

Because simple present tense is one of language feature in descriptive text, then this study investigates whether there is a correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text.

1. **Research Problems**

The problems that are related to the correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text can be presented as follows:

* 1. How is the students’ simple present tense mastery?
  2. How is the students’ ability in writing descriptive text?
  3. Is there any correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text?

1. **Objectives of the Study**

According to the research problems above, the objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

* 1. To know the students’ simple present tense mastery.
  2. To know the students’ ability in writing descriptive text.
  3. To know if there is correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text.

1. **Significance of the Study**
   * + 1. Theoretically

The result of this study is expected to give a description about the correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text. This description can be used to predict the students’ achievement in the using simple present tense and writing descriptive text.

* + - 1. Practically

1. The English Teacher

The result of this study is as a feedback to make the teaching instruction better.

1. The Students

The result of this study is as a feedback to motivate the students to improve their English achievement.

1. The Researcher

The result of this study is as a feedback to enrich the researcher’s understanding about English, especially the simple present tense and the descriptive text.

1. **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study is quite broad in scope. In order to be more specific and to avoid misunderstanding, the researcher would like to give the limitation of the study. The researcher limits this study on the students’ simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text, especially describing something that still exists, that is scored based on the style, sentence formation, and usage criterion only.

1. **Definition of the Key Terms**

In order to avoid the ambiguity and misunderstanding of the terms that is used, the researcher gives the definition of the terms as follows:

* 1. Conceptual Definition

1. Correlation

Correlation is a measure of the strength of the relationship between two sets of data (Richard, et. al., 1992: 89).

1. Simple present tense

Simple present tense is a tense that is used when we would like to express something that we usually, often, always do every day; or in our daily activities; or something true according to all or most of people around us (Herman, 2011).

1. Mastery

Mastery is complete knowledge (Hornby, 1995: 721).

1. Writing

Writing is the activity or occupation of writing, for example books, stories or articles (Hornby, 1995: 1383).

1. Descriptive text

Descriptive text is a text that is used to describe someone, something, or somewhere (Djuharie, 2007: 24).

* 1. Operational Definition

The correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text is an investigation to know if there is a correlation between simple present mastery and ability in writing descriptive text.

1. **The Research Hypothesis**

According to Suryabrata (2008: 21), Hypothesis is temporary answer of research problem, that its truth must be still empirically examined. The hypotheses of this study are:

1. Ho (null hypothesis) : there is no correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text.
2. Ha (alternative hypothesis) : there is a correlation between simple present tense mastery and ability in writing descriptive text.