CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

English has become a foreign language in Indonesia. Especially in school, English has become a subject that has to learn. It has been studying from elementary school until senior high school and even becomes an important subject in university. English has components that are important to learn, namely vocabulary and grammar. One of these components, grammar, is most difficult to learn. Grammar will affect language skills, especially writing. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010: 251-252), grammar is a description of the structure of a language and how language units such as words and phrases are formed into sentences. Grammar does not only affect how the words and phrases formed into a sentense, but also affect the meaning of a sentence. Besides that, grammar is one important element, as a part of language, and there is no language without structure.

Grammar has some rules to make a correct sentence. According to Rudy Hariyono and Robert Burnley (2013:16), grammar is a science that teaches how to arrange certain types of words precisely in a sentence. Students are giving grammar rules and examples, told to memorize them, and then asked to apply the rules to other examples. The students have been studying this technique in school, and even taught in university. But, the students still make grammar mistakes when they write a sentence. The students probably being confused because of a lot of grammar laws. It probably sometimes makes the students being confused to choose the right one word that compatible with the sentence based on the grammar laws. So, a lot of students thought that grammar is a difficult subject. They do not like to learn grammar and then they cannot have a good achievement in learning grammar.

The simple present tense is the basic tense in grammar that is often used in learning. The simple present tense is one of the tenses that should be mastered by the students because it is commonly used in daily life. According

to Taslim (2016:155), they understand that simple present tense is important in learning English because it is used in daily life, either in writing and spoken language. If they can understand, so they could be mastering it. Even becomes a part of tense that is commonly used in learning, students still have problems in learning simple present tense. There are so many factors that influence students in learning simple present tense. For instance, they have less interested in learning it. In addition, the teacher probably gives them materially through monotonous technique so they are passive and bored.

Before conducting this research, a pre observation was done by the researcher by asking the English teacher of SMPN 15 Pontianak. It was known that most of the eighth grade students had problem in learning English, especially in simple present tense. The teacher said that the students sometimes still make errors in their sentence, especially in changing the right verb when the subject is changed. After asking the teacher, the researcher got a chance to ask some questions to the eight grade students in order to know their understanding about the simple present tense. The researcher asked the students to translate the word "*saya cantik"* and *"Saya bermain bola setiap hari"*. A lot of students answer "I am beautiful" and "I am playing ball everyday" they always put "to be" in front of the verb. It means that they still confuse in differentiating the verbal and nominal form in simple present tense.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to analyze and find out the things that caused students being difficult to understand and mastery in the simple present tense of eighth-grade students in SMPN 15 Pontianak.

B. Research Problems

According to the background above, the research problems of this research are:

1. How well are the students in mastering simple present tense?
2. What are the students' difficulties in mastering simple present tense?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the questions above, the purpose of this research aims to find out:

1. How well the students in mastering simple present tense.
2. To describe the difficulties of the students in mastering simple present tense.

D. Scope of Research

1. Research Variable

In research, there is some variable that has to determined by a researcher. According to Sugiyono (2017:39), a research variable is an attribute or characteristic or value of someone, objects, or activities that has a certain variation whichdetermined by the researcher to learn and then make conclusions.

In this research, two variables have been determined. There are independentvariable "Difficulties" and dependent variable "Mastery Simple Present Tense".

2. Research Terminology

a. The students' difficulties

The students' difficulties mean the students who have difficulty understanding the materials of learning explained by the teacher.

b. Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense is the basic tense in grammar that is often used in learning that refers to daily life.

c. The Eighth Grade Students

The eighth-grade students of SMPN 15 Pontianak as population and sample of this research.

E. Significance of Research

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research provide good information and knowledge for the teachers about the students' difficulties in the mastery of simple present tense.

2. Practical Benefits

   a. For Teachers

        The information in this research probably can help the teachers to know the difficulties in the mastery of simple present tense. In addition, this research probably can give an inspiration for the teacher to develop the form of techniques or methods that are more interesting.

   b. For Students

        This research is expected could be useful for the students which could make them easier to understand simple present tense, and then they can master it as soon as possible. So, they can improve their ability grammar. In addition, this research probably can motivate the students in learning grammar especially simple present tense.

   c. For the researcher

        This research applied what the researcher get from university, and also add some experiences.