

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Writing is one of the difficult subjects that the students encounter. Students of any subject in university are generally required to produce some writing works during their study. The writings they produce are in the form of essay, paper, or articles. The process of writing stands out in recursive nature in which successful writers continually pass through the planning, drafting, revising, and editing stages (Mutwarasibo, 2013).

The successful students in writing need to practice more because before writing they commonly need several times to muse, thinking about what they want to write or thinking about where they want to start writing. If students have more practice in writing at least they do not need too much time to muse and the idea will come up spontaneously. Actually, the important way in writing is how the students communicate their ideas, feelings, and experiences and draw other people to make meaning. Thus from writing we can see the quality of students' way thinking and learning.

In the English Department, Airlangga University there are some students that still have trouble in writing. Although they get some writing lessons in University such as paragraph writing, basic essay writing, argumentative writing, and academic writing they still find it difficult to start writing. It can be seen when students write thesis. The basic issue in writing thesis is that students often fail to

anticipate the time required to complete their work (Neufville & Frank, 2010). It means that they have some problems with their work. In writing thesis, students need several revisions not only to get a clear topic but also to check their grammar because sometimes they still have a little trouble with their use of tenses. Even if their thesis has been approved to be examined, sometime the board of examiners ask them to recheck their grammar.

According to Wallwork (2011), tenses are used to convince the article's writer statement. To look for tenses, students must focus on the verbs that signal tenses in each sentence. Sentence is a group of words that starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark (Verspoor & Sauter, 2000, p.33). In English there are twelve kinds of tenses, namely Simple Present tense, Simple Past tense, Simple Future tense, Present Progressive tense, Past Progressive tense, Future progressive tense, Present Perfect tense, Past Perfect tense, Future Perfect tense, Present Perfect Progressive tense, Past perfect Progressive tense, and Future Perfect Progressive tense (Celce-Murcia & Freeman, 1999).

Academic writing is related to research since a research paper tends to use academic context. Swales & Feak (1994) suggests that having IMRD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) before doing research is very useful. The contents of research paper are: title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, acknowledgments, and references. Of all those parts, the central of research paper is on the abstract because it is the part of a whole

research. It serves primarily as a screening device to give the readers idea of what the paper is all about.

Paltridge & Starfield (2007) identify that the abstract structures of research consist of overview of the study, aim of the study, reason for the study, methodology used in the study, and finding of the study. Each abstract structure has its own functions, namely: *overview of the study* that is used to explore phenomena of the research, *aim of the study* which to explain about the purpose of article's writer study when they determine the topic research, *reason for the study* that gives explanation why the research must be conducted, *methodology used in the study* that describes what kind of method used in future research, and then *finding of the study* which functions to explore the result of the research. The abstract elements mentioned above can only be composed to an abstract consisting of 100-250 words so it can be a simple writing.

Concerning the twelve tenses in English, Paltridge & Starfield (2007) state that, only three tenses that are commonly used in abstract, namely Simple Present tense, Simple Past tense, and Present Perfect tense. Those three tenses have different functions. Simple Present tense is used to describe the content of the paper; Simple Past tense is often used to describe conclusions, and Present Perfect tense is commonly used in the context of active and passive sentences by article's writer to describe what they have achieved during the research. To give a good example in writing research, students need to read International journal articles as their references to create a good writing and avoid several revisions in doing thesis.

International journal articles have higher readability than the local journals. The *Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level* can be used to measure a text's readability grade. English Department students are recommended to look for related articles of International journal. They frequently use journals published by *Sciencediret*, *Springer*, *Sagepub*, and *Proquest*. Those sources are available in Airlangga University's library and can be accessed for free. Although it can be accessed for free, students only read the abstract to decide whether it is suitable for their studies or not. Abstract can be found before the full article in journals. A good impression is needed in writing abstract because a good opening will affect the image of entire paper. If the opening on abstract is vague, it will make an impact on the rest of the paper. The readers will not be interested in reading all of the research. In addition, abstract can also be called as a brief comprehensive summary of the research articles.

Abstract in the International journal was designed more attractive and informative. *Scienccdirect* has published almost 2,500 journals and 26,000 books. There are around 13,397,561 articles that can be accessed for free since Airlangga University's library is already subscribed many online journals. *Scienccdirect* is trusted partner in the global research community and an essential resource to the success of scientist, teachers, students, and librarians. The publication subjects of *Scienccdirect* are physical sciences, life sciences, health sciences, social sciences and humanities with the highest quality.

There have been several studies conducted using abstract as the object of the study. First, Klimowa & Sarka (2014) analyzed the issue of grammatical

cohesion. They used English-written abstracts of British origin. They took sample of abstracts from the field of tourism that was collected from the British professional articles. They consisted of 45 abstracts (6,852 words), out of which 18 were empirical studies, 16 abstracts about review articles or review of literature, eight abstracts about case studies and three abstracts about methodology papers. Second is Golebiowski (2009) who investigated rhetorical structure in abstract paper published in applied linguistic and education field. The study examined how abstract authors in those two fields emphasize the significance of their research, and how they appeal to their prospective readership. It showed that the writing of an abstract is considerably important to position themselves in their research communities and to communicate effectively. The article's writer also stated that academic writers must be aware of the relevant rhetorical practices in abstract writing. From those related studies, it can be concluded that abstract has several aspects which are interesting to be analyzed.

As the current phenomenon that the student still confused when selecting the tenses use for explaining the overview of the study, the aim of the study, the reason for the study, the aim of the study, and the finding of the study. The future studies should be conducted to figure out the types of tenses such as Simple Present tense, Simple Past tense, and Present Perfect tense in the abstracts International journal articles. Even if the student generally knows that the overview of the study explained by using simple present tense. Then for the finding of the study is unpredictable. Concerning with the abstract should consist

of the tight tenses and some of the abstract structure, it is better if the student how to organize the abstract systematically.

The selected data from *Sciencedirect* were taken randomly by the writer. The titles came from the field of applied linguistics with the publication title of *Journal of pragmatics* and *Lingua journal*. The writer chose them because applied linguistics discusses linguistic subject coming from the field that is similar to the writer's major so that the topic will be easy to be understood.

Additionally, applied linguistic is a branch of linguistic concerned with practical applications of language studies such as language teaching, translation, and speech therapy (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). There are many publication titles in applied linguistics field but the writer has chosen two of them as the sample for the analysis because both journals have the highest total articles of around 1,961 articles for *Journal of pragmatics* and 1,648 articles for *Lingua Journal* (ScienceDirect, 2015). So it is possible that linguistics students take the articles from both journal sources.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the previous explanations related to the phenomenon of students' problem in writing text, specially writing in academic context, this study intends to provide answers of the following research questions:

1. What types of tenses are used in the abstract of *Journal of pragmatics* and *Lingua Journal*?
2. What are the abstract structures found in *Journal of pragmatics* and *Lingua Journal*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statements above, the writer formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To find what type of tenses used in the abstracts of *Journal of pragmatics* journal and *Lingua journal*.
2. To identify the abstract structures of *Journal of pragmatics* and *Lingua Journal*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Based on the writing problem phenomena happening to English Department, Airlangga University students, this study is conducted to analyze the tenses in the abstract there within the abstract structures of International Journal articles produced by *Sciencedirect*. This study aims to give a good example on how to organize abstract section systematically. This study is expected to give both theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical contribution, the writer will expand the knowledge about the use of tenses in the correct order.

After conducting this study, the results will show the type of tenses used in abstract section and also to figure out how the abstract structures are represented in International journal articles. In terms of practical contribution, the writer hopes

that this study will give real information and help to find out the frequent type of tenses used in abstract section. The contribution of the present research will give specific information of which tenses must be drilled by students before they start to write by categorizing the frequency of tenses use beyond abstract International journal article.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There is scope and limitation for this study. This study does not analyze the whole journal articles but only the abstract section because the abstract structure has an important role. This study focuses on the use of tenses and the abstract structure of International journal articles published by *Scimedirect*.

This research only analyzes the tenses and the abstract structure that exist in each abstract of *Journal of pragmatics* and *Lingua Journal*. The number of journal article to be analyzed in this study is 30 abstracts which discuss linguistics field published in 2015, starting from January to April. In addition, this study only chooses the abstracts that have the highest score in the readability, namely above 13 grades as measured by *Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level* because 13 grades represents the class level of students.

1.6 Terms written down in the title

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer defines the following terms:

- a. Abstract : A short summary of a book (Hornby, 1995)

- b. Abstract structures : A case of abstract which contains the overview of the study, the aim of the study, the reason of the study, the methodology of the study, and the finding of the study, but it is not always the case (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007)
- c. Article : A piece of writing, usually dealing with a particular issue or topic in newspaper or magazine (Hornby, 1995)
- d. Journal : A newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity (Hornby, 1995)
- e. Tense : Grammatical term for the form of a verb or series of verb forms used to express a time relation (Hornby A. , 1975)