

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English has increasingly solidified its role as an indispensable global medium in educational contexts (Crystal,2020). A significant portion of academic materials, textbooks, and scientific research publications worldwide are written and distributed in English across both print and digital platforms (Rahmatika et al.,2023). Furthermore, English remains the dominant language utilized in global scientific communication and academic reference literature, making proficiency in this language crucial for global engagement (Richards,2022).

As a consequence, English is taught as a compulsory subject in Indonesia from lower secondary to tertiary educational levels (Riadini & Cahyono,2021). To ensure successful instructional outcomes, selecting an appropriate pedagogical approach is essential (Criado, 2023). Among various instructional frameworks, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) remains widely applied in foreign language classrooms (Piantaggini, 2020; Roviandini et al., 2023). Originally developed as the Classical Method for teaching ancient languages, GTM is a traditional methodology that emphasizes the systematic analysis of grammatical structures, sentence translation, and vocabulary retention to facilitate structured language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2018).

Teachers typically require students to translate sentences or passages accurately and memorize explicit grammatical rules along with vocabulary lists when utilizing this approach (Al-Maamari, 2021; Lestary, 2021). The Grammar Translation Method provides a detailed examination of target language structures and applies this knowledge to transfer meaning between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) (Yi, 2021). In EFL

learning contexts, GTM simplifies complex grammatical concepts, thereby assisting learners in systematically analyzing sentence structures and enhancing their comprehension of written texts (Wardany et al., 2022).

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most critical yet complex language skills in English Language Teaching (ELT). Unlike receptive skills such as listening and reading, writing requires learners to actively produce language by generating ideas, organizing thoughts, and transforming them into grammatically accurate and coherent text (Harmer, 2020). For EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, acquiring proficient writing skills is essential not only for academic success but also for effective international communication. In the secondary school curriculum in Indonesia, particularly within the English syllabus for junior high schools, students are required to master various text genres, one of which is the Recount Text. Recount text aims to retell past events or experiences in chronological order, requiring students to demonstrate mastery over specific linguistic features, primarily the Simple Past Tense (V2).

However, despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging tasks for foreign language learners. Mastering writing involves the simultaneous coordination of several analytical components, including content, text organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Hughes, 2003; Weigle, 2020). In many junior high schools, students often struggle to express their ideas accurately in written English due to limited grammatical knowledge and vocabulary deficiencies.

Based on preliminary observations and interviews with the English teacher at SMPN 4 Kupang, particularly regarding the second-grade (eighth-grade) students, several major writing problems were identified: Grammatical Inaccuracy: Students faced significant difficulties in using the Simple Past Tense. They frequently used base verbs (V1) or present tenses when describing past experiences (e.g., writing "I go to beach

yesterday" instead of "I went to the beach yesterday"). First Language (L1) Interference: Students relied heavily on word-for-word translation from Indonesian into English without considering English syntactic rules and sentence structures. Limited Diction and Vocabulary: Learners lacked sufficient lexical resources to describe past events vividly and organize their paragraphs logically. Low Achievement: These ongoing difficulties resulted in low student performance scores in writing assessments, falling below the Minimum Mastery Criterion (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal/KKM). To address these persistent pedagogical issues, an appropriate and structured teaching strategy is urgently needed. One classical yet highly effective instructional method to bridge the gap between structural accuracy and vocabulary mastery is the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). GTM emphasizes explicit grammar instruction, deductive rule learning, and systematic sentence translation between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Although some modern communicative approaches advocate for L2-only immersion, recent empirical studies have re-evaluated the cognitive benefits of GTM in EFL contexts. Explicit grammar teaching provides learners with a strong analytical foundation, enabling them to understand structural rules explicitly before applying them in sentence construction (Yi, 2021).

Furthermore, translation exercises serve as a cognitive bridge that helps students perform contrastive analysis between Indonesian and English structures, thereby reducing L1 interference and enhancing syntactic precision in written compositions (Arjun, 2022). By integrating GTM into writing instruction, particularly in drafting Recount Texts, students are guided through explicit rules of the Simple Past Tense, bilingual vocabulary lists, and structured sentence construction exercises. This systematic scaffold is expected to reduce grammatical errors, expand vocabulary range, and ultimately improve overall

writing proficiency. Considering the contextual problems observed at SMPN 4 Kupang and the theoretical advantages offered by explicit structural instruction, the researcher is motivated to conduct an empirical study entitled: "The Use of Grammar Translation Method in Improving Writing Skill of Second Grade Students of Junior High School at SMPN 4 Kupang."

1.2 Research Problem(s)

Does the use of the Grammar Translation Method improve the writing skills of second grade students at SMPN 4 Kupang?

1.3 Aim(s) of Study

The aim of study is to investigate whether the use of the Grammar Translation Method improves the writing skills of second grade students at SMPN 4 Kupang.

1.4 Significance of Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide meaningful contributions both theoretically and practically (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

- a. Theoretical Significance: This study is expected to enrich existing literature and reinforce theories regarding the application of the Grammar Translation Method in improving students' writing skills, particularly in constructing recount texts.
- b. Practical Significance:
 - For Teachers: To provide EFL teachers with an effective alternative teaching strategy to facilitate students' understanding of English sentence structures in writing.
 - For Students: To assist students in building confidence, expanding vocabulary,

and improving their accuracy when writing English texts.

- For Future Researchers: To serve as a valuable reference and foundation for further research on teaching methodology and writing skills.

1.4.1 Implication

This research provides meaningful contributions regarding the application of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in improving students' writing skills. The implications of this study are categorized into three main aspects:

a. Theoretical Implication:

This research reinforces the pedagogical theory that the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) remains a relevant and effective strategy for foreign language learners. It confirms that explicit grammar instruction combined with sentence translation provides junior high school students with a structured foundation to master simple past tense rules and sentence patterns required in writing recount texts.

b. Practical Implication:

Practically, the findings demonstrate that English teachers can utilize GTM to address basic writing difficulties, such as incorrect tenses, lack of vocabulary, and poor paragraph organization. By integrating guided translation exercises and sentence structuring practice, teachers can enhance students' accuracy and confidence when composing written texts.

c. Implication for Future Research:

This study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of GTM in a pre-experimental context. Future researchers can use these findings as a reference to explore the application of GTM across different text genres (e.g., descriptive or

narrative texts) or investigate its long-term impact using experimental designs with control groups.

1.4.2 Application

This research can be applied and used by :

1. The writer :
 - a. This writing can be a good source of information to enrich the writer's knowledge, especially in improving students' writing skills using grammar translation method.
 - b. Findings from these studies can inform instructional practices, guide curriculum design, and contribute to the broader understanding of the relationship between in grammar translation method and writing skill.
2. Teachers :
 - a. Teachers attend training sessions or workshops on implementing grammar translation method to support the development of students' writing skills.
 - b. Teachers also explore ways to integrate writing skill development across curriculum, ensuring is students have ample opportunities to practice and improve their writing skills.
3. Students :
 - a. Students make research on scientific topic, formulate questions, and present their findings to the class.
 - b. The process of preparing and delivering these presentations requires students to organize their thoughts, use appropriate scientific language, and engage audience effectively.
 - c. Receiving feedback from the teacher and peers allows students to reflect on their speaking performance and develop strategies for improvement.