CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Indonesia, English is used as a foreign language or second language while people in the country itself use Indonesian or ethnic language as their first language. In term of first language acquisition, Indonesian or ethnic language is used as their mother tongue which is obtained naturally from mother and environment around them while second language acquisition like English is the language which is obtained by learning after acquire first language. Ortega (2009:2) says, “Second Language Acquisition is the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages other than first, during late childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, and once the first language or languages have been required.”

Nowadays, English language is not a strange matter for everybody because using English can be perceived all over the world. Due to those reasons, Indonesian government applies English as a core subject from elementary up to university. People also join English course (informal education) to improve language skills or language ability. In globalization era, language users force to learn English. It needs ability for Indonesia people in using another language other than their native language for making them ready to deal with competition in the global era. English is really important for Indonesians in order to be able to compete with other nations.
In learning English, language ability needs to know to prove whether the individual has been able to understand the language lessons he/she learned or not. As it has been known that language ability has a great influence in increasing motivation to learn English. As Allison (1999:43) says, “Language users with the modest scores on tests of system knowledge were sometimes perceived to be more effective and accomplished than other language users who still scored higher on these test.” In addition, Allison (1999:42) says, “Language was taken to consist of a number of levels, including the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis. In language testing, efforts were made to sample language items for each level: for example, to test command of phonemic contrast, or grammatical structures, or vocabulary items. Demonstrating knowledge of these items, and of distinction between them, was taken as sufficient evidence of language ability on the part of test taker.” Then, language testing is needed to know how the language ability of students is as Lado (1961:20) says, “The same basic understanding of the facts of language learning applies to language testing. What the student has to learn constitutes the corpus of what we have to test. Since the student has to learn the language, it is the language that we must test.”

The important thing in learning English which it cannot be forgotten is using grammar as well as structure to make sentences. Folsom et al. (1838:1) says that “Grammar is the art of rightly expressing our thoughts by words” and Graham (1996:3,4) says that “Grammar includes two aspects: (1) the arrangement of words and (2) the internal structure of words.” Although grammar is not actually used in everyday life but it is often used in English test such as TOEFL, IELTS, employee recruitment, and student enrolment.
One of the topics in an English test is conditional sentences. Conditional sentences or *if clause* is modality sentence which is used to express that the action in the *main clause* (without *if*) can only take place if a certain condition (in the clause with *if*) is fulfilled. Therefore, it can be concluded that conditional sentences consist of *if clause* as the requirement and *main clause* as the purpose.

As the researcher has observed some students at SMA Cahaya Medan, the researcher found that they are confused to discriminate tenses which are found in three types of conditional sentences. Then, the researcher wants to describe and analyze students’ ability in using conditional sentences at SMA Cahaya Medan.

Based on syllabus of SMA Cahaya Medan, conditional sentences are studied in grade XI. Conditional sentences divide into three; they are future conditional (conditional sentence type 1), present conditional (conditional sentence type 2) and past conditional (conditional sentence type 3). Future conditional is used to express events that have not happened so it is likely to occur if the conditions are fulfilled. Present conditional is used to declare that events may not occur because the condition may not be fulfilled. Past conditional is used to express events that may not be fulfilled because it happened in the past so that the event could not have happened.

**The example of Conditional Sentences in sentence:**

*Future conditional (Conditional Sentence Type I)*

If he invites me, I will go to the party.

I will go to the cinema if I have enough time.
Present conditional (Conditional Sentence Type II)

If he were in Jakarta today, he would come to my house.
I would send him the letter if I knew his address.

Past conditional (Conditional Sentence Type III)

If you had gone by car, you would have arrived in Bandung.
You would have spoken English well if you had studied English seriously.

This research analyze student’s English ability of using conditional sentences in grade XI at SMA Cahaya Medan that located on Jl. Hayam Wuruk No. 11, Medan which has 3 classes of Natural Science and 3 classes of Social Science. It tests 60 students at random. The location is chosen as object of research because the terms of accessibility and the same research are never conducted in this school. Students of grade XI SMA Cahaya Medan is chosen because conditional sentences are learned at grade XI.

1.2 Problems of the Study

In analysing student’s ability of using conditional sentences, there are two questions that are needed to lead the researcher to explain and solve the problems. The questions that are relevant to the problems are:

1. What is the ability of SMA Cahaya Medan students in using conditional sentences?
2. What are the problems of SMA Cahaya Medan students in using conditional sentences?
1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the ability of SMA Cahaya Medan students in using conditional sentences.

2. To find out the problem of SMA Cahaya Medan students in using conditional sentences.

1.4 Scopes of the Study

In writing this thesis, limitation of study should be made due to time limitation. It focus on the analysis of tenses which is found in conditional sentences; future conditional, present conditional and past conditional. This research chooses 60 students of grade XI who are studying English as one of their core subject at SMA Cahaya Medan as the baseline data.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This significance of this study is expected be useful for the researcher to understand the concept of language ability as evidence of learning outcomes, the students who want to increase knowledge about conditional sentences and for those who are interested in analysing the same kind of study. Another significance of this study, it is expected that this thesis be useful for the English teacher who want to evaluate the ability of the students in grade XI SMA Cahaya Medan especially in understanding conditional sentences.