

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

An English Department student should master four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four language skills are integrated to make the communicative competence. Therefore, each of the skills should be considered as equally important to be mastered. Slightly different from two other skills of English, speaking and writing enable people to voice out them in a communication. This is a very fundamental reason of why they should be presented in appropriate sentence structure, based on the situation where the communication occurs and the main interest of the speaker or writer expressing their ideas in order to give comprehension towards the speakers or listeners on what they intend or emphasize to convey listeners or readers towards a situation and context of the utterances that will help them get a comprehension.

Therefore, in learning a language someone should know how language works (language usage) and how to learn to use it (language use). It is the same case as learning musical instruments. A student who has been taught a lot of grammar but cannot use the language is the same case as a musician who has learned a lot about keys of guitar but cannot play the guitar.

The English Department students are demanded to master four language skills, those are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students should also

enrich vocabularies and understand the grammar. Speaking and writing involve a language production; therefore, they are referred as productive skills. Listening and reading involve receiving messages; therefore, they are referred as receptive skills.

From these four language skills, writing is the most difficult one for all language users whether the language is the first, second, or foreign language, because writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity. Richards and Renandya (2002:303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The skills involved in writing are highly complex.

In line with Richards and Renandya, Hamp-Lyons in Nunan (1991: 91) state that it is true that writing is commonly a difficult activity for most people, both in mother tongue and in a foreign language. It is because the writing skill requires capabilities more than other language skills and it needs a special preparation. Writing is clearly a complex process. Therefore, it is acceptable that students often make errors or mistakes in writing and produce low quality of writing product.

Writing abilities are taught to the students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Kristen Indonesia. It is taught from the second semester to the fourth semester. The three subjects which are Essay Writing, Academic Writing, and Critical Essay Writing are taught to the students gradually so that the students are supposed not to have difficulties in writing.

In reality, in the process of acquiring English in writing, the students make errors. Dulay in Brown (1994:205) states that an error is a deviation from the

adult grammar of a native speaker. Although an error that is made by the learners may give contribution in understanding the process of second language acquisition which is English. As foreign language learners, other students and I also experience this. It makes me interested in analyzing errors made by students of the second semester who take Essay Writing subject at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI.

The students' achievement therefore cannot be only judged through how much they know but also how well they can perform it in public. Based on the observation conducted at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI especially in Essay Writing subject, it was found that common problems happened to the students in writing English properly. Actually, the students are required to master English grammar well, so they continue into Essay Writing. Contradictory with the expectation, it is found that there are still several aspects of writing skill which become the obstacles for the students, such as grammar, vocabulary, and appropriateness.

The reason why I take the Essay Writing subject is because I would like to know the capability of the students in the second semester. I consider that by knowing it, it may help to determine which grammatical features should be more stressed than others. It may also give some contributions in writing English just like another goal of the second language research as well. By seeing this fact, an analysis is needed in order to know in what language aspects the students make errors and in what aspects they make errors most frequently.

In addition, the result of the analysis can be used for researching language acquisition and learners' strategy in language learning. By analyzing students' errors, teachers can examine the most common errors so that they can decide the ways to treat and minimize errors.

Dulay (1982: 77) states that errors are classified into some types of category taxonomies namely linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. Those errors can be made by any learner. A question may arise from this. What errors are often made by the students of English Department, Faculty of Letters UKI? Whereas this research will analyze the learners' errors based on linguistic category taxonomy, especially on grammar category.

As second semester students in English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI, they are at the beginning phase of writing that later will be expected to have a good writing competence. According to Hyland (2002), writing competence includes a good ability concerning grammar, arrangement, and punctuation. However, a good grammar will result a good writing so that it makes a writing becomes readable and the meaning will be conveyed easily. For the reason, it can be concluded that they are supposed to practice their writing competence from the beginning. In second semester, the students exercise their writing skill in the form of composing paragraph. A paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main idea (Oshima and Hogue, 1991). Writing effective paragraphs are required to fulfill writing aspects as already mentioned above. However, the truth is the students make some

grammatical errors while composing a paragraph. For example, they sometimes forget to add be, misuse of tense, wrong choice of preposition, the singular subject which does not agree with plural verb and the other grammar items need to be classified soon with the valid data. Furthermore, the students in English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI are intended to write thesis as their last project. Consequently, they have to eliminate the grammatical errors from the beginning phase of writing in order to be able to compose a good thesis writing. It is also essential for the students to minimize grammatical error since they learn to write a paragraph in second semester. In accordance to eliminate it in writing paragraph, English lecturers need to recognize students' common grammatical errors. Therefore, I will conduct the study entitled **“An Analysis of Grammatical Errors of Second Semester Students' Writing Texts of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI”**.

1.2 Research Questions

This research is done to analyze the use of grammar in Essay Writing classroom done by the second semester students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI, using the questions as follows:

1. What are the types of the errors made in writing texts of the students in the Essay Writing classroom at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI?
2. What are the sources of the errors?
3. What are the causes of the errors?

1.3 Limitation of the Study

In conducting the research, I concern the application of grammar usage in the Essay Writing classroom made by the second semester students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI. I will analyze grammatical errors in the Essay Writing classroom made by the second semester students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI viewed from the types of errors that are made by the students, the sources of the errors, and the causes of the errors. This limitation is made to make clear that I conduct the research just focuses on the grammatical errors including the subject-verb agreement, tense, word order/function and the sentence construction in the Essay Writing texts only. It is clear that I focus the study of grammatical errors in the Essay Writing texts by the second semester students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI. The source of data will be taken in the Essay Writing classroom at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To find out the types of errors which are made in writing texts of the second semester students in the Essay Writing classroom at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI.
2. To find out the sources of the errors.
3. To reveal the causes of the errors.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this research is expected to give some contributions for learning English as follows:

1. For the Writer:

The result of the research is hoped to give the answers of my research questions as stated in the research questions which the answers to the research questions are to find out the types of the errors which are made in writing texts of the second semester students in the Essay Writing classroom at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI, to find out the sources of the errors, and to reveal the causes of the errors so that I will be able to obtain many new findings related to grammatical errors in writing texts of the second semester students.

2. For the Students:

The research is expected to be useful for the students of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI. The study is also expected to give the students the information and increase their knowledge about grammatical errors found in writing texts and the application of grammar usage in the community and the reason why people do the grammatical errors.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides the procedure how I conduct the project. It consists of the nature of the research, the focus of data, the subject of the research, the source of data, the data the collection technique, and the data analysis.

A. The Nature of the Research

The method of the research is a qualitative research. Catherine (1999: 2-3) states that qualitative research is an approach to the study of social phenomena; its various genres are naturalistic and interpretative, and they draw on multiple methods of inquiry. Some characteristics of qualitative research are; takes places in the natural world, uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic, it is emergent rather than prefigured and fundamentally interpretive. Cohen (2007: 168) states that qualitative research has some purposes which are describing and reporting the creation of key concepts, theory generation and testing. Sugiyono (2008: 8) states that the term of naturalistic shows that the research is natural, on the normal situation without manipulates the condition empathized on the natural description. The process of taken data or phenomena called as “taking of the data naturally”.

B. Focus of Data

Sugiyono (2008: 208 - 209) defines that a focus refers to a single cultural domain or a view related domains. This research is focused on analyzing of grammatical errors made by the second semester students who take Essay Writing subject at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI.

The participants of the research are the second semester students of Essay Writing class.

C. Subject of the Research

The second semester students who take the Essay Writing subject of the English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI are as the subject involved in the research. In this research, I take the second semester students of the Essay Writing subject at English Department Faculty of Letters, UKI as the population. The number of the students in Essay Writing class of English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI of the second semester is approximately twenty students. As I mentioned earlier that the method of the research is a qualitative research. Furthermore, the sample of the research is ten percent from the population which means ten percent from twenty which is two. I choose two writing assignments and add two more writing assignments of the second semester students because the population is not too big.

D. Source of Data

The source of data is the subject where the data can be obtained in detail. That data are the field data, and they are all the compositions of the Essay Writing subject at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI. The data sources in this study are the college students' documents in Essay Writing texts. Therefore, related to the data sources, the data I used are informations found in writing or so-called documents. I take two

documents and two more documents of the second semester students' assignments who take Essay Writing subject.

F. Data Collection

Cohen(2007: 394 – 397) says that observation enables me to gather data on: the physical setting, human setting, interactional setting, and program setting. By doing observation, I can see and collect the students' writing compositions.

The data are collected from two compositions written by twenty students who take the Essay Writing subject at English Department, Faculty of Letters, UKI. As I have mentioned earlier that the sample of the research is ten percent from the population which means ten percent from twenty. Furthermore, I chose two of the compositions written and add two more compositions by the students who take the Essay Writing subject as the data source because the students who take the Essay Writing subject are mostly considered of having lack of ability in expressing their ideas in written form since they are still freshly graduated from high school. As a result, their compositions would have certain more errors rather than any other compositions written by the students of higher writing classes. Moreover, the final correction of students' errors in writing will assist them in learning and understanding of English.

The data needed in this research are the grammatical errors made by four of the second semester students in their writing assignments. After

having all compositions made by the second semester students who take Essay Writing subject, I start collecting the data. I collect the students' writing assignment papers to be documented and read carefully. After collecting four data, the next step is data classification and analysis. The following are steps for classifying and analyzing grammatical errors in writing:

- (1) Identify the errors which are found on every word, phrase or sentence.
- (2) Classify the data into the sub category of surface strategy taxonomy.
- (3) Interpret and describe the data which have been classified systematically.
- (4) Analyze the data to infer the causes and sources they commit errors.

G. Data Analysis

The procedure of error analysis proposed by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) comprises the following five steps:

- (1) Collection of a sample of learner language,
- (2) Identification of errors,
- (3) Description of errors,
- (4) Explanation of errors,
- (5) Errors evaluation.

The data of this research are analyzed by using several steps. Firstly, I collect the students' writing assignments to be analyzed according to Dulay's theory. They are studied carefully. Secondly, the errors are classified into four subcategories of surface strategy taxonomy by selecting and identifying the errors that belong to grammatical structure in students' writing. The errors found in

clauses and sentences. A sentence may contain one error or more, and then they are analyzed separately. Thirdly, the data are interpreted and described systematically according to the types of errors. The procedure is expected to show the problem of students' writing in constructing clauses and sentences in English grammar. The higher count indicated the prominent difficulties which are faced by the students in constructing clauses and sentences. The final step is making conclusion based on the research findings by describing the results of this research.

1.7 Structure of the Project Paper

Chapter I: This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, limitation of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and research methodology which includes the method of obtaining and analyzing the data.

Chapter II: This chapter is review of related literature used in this project paper, including the definitions and theories of writing, process of writing, error analysis, mistakes and errors, sources of errors, grammatical errors, and the common problems students find in writing.

Chapter III: This chapter is the research and findings of this project paper. The writer will report the data classification of grammatical errors. In this chapter, the four data from writing compositions are classified. They are categorized

grammatical errors. Grammatical errors involve subject-verb agreement, tenses, and word order/ function and sentence construction.

Chapter IV: This chapter is the final chapter of this project paper which consists of conclusion and suggestions. The writer will conclude the findings of the research and propose some suggestions in order to avoid the errors that the students make in their writing.