

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Each individual living within a society has the need to communicate with others through language. Hall (1968 p 158) as quoted by Lyons (1981 p4) claims: “Language is the institution whereby human communicate and interact among each others by means of habitually used oral auditory arbitrary symbols”. Language as a communication means is necessary to be mastered. In the era of globalization the need of mastering foreign languages, especially English as an international language, is very urgent for Indonesia as a developing country to communicate with others countries that use English language.

Nowadays, English becomes an essential language subject in Indonesia. Indonesian government admits English as the first foreign language that is taught to Indonesian students. They learn English from elementary school up to university. Most English students especially in Indonesia learn four the English skills namely listening, reading, writing and speaking and three language components vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Grammar plays such an important role that students have to master it in order to acquire the target language. Grammar which has to be mastered by the students covers tenses, phrases, clauses, conjunctions, prepositions, etc. this study deals with tenses, especially Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect Continuous Tense.

In English, the different tenses are signaled by verb endings or by auxiliary verbs. Peterson (1980) said that “The English tense system is

quite complicated, but the most common problem is not how to form tenses but decide which tense to use in a given situation". Therefore, it is not surprising that even though the students start from the easiest tense, they get difficulties in learning English, especially when they have to memorize all kinds of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and auxiliaries. It will make the students bored and difficult to comprehend English grammar.

Through this study, the writer tries to find out the types of errors made by the fourth semester students of structure III at the English Department of Widya Mandala University make in using Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect Continuous Tense in Structure test.

1.1 The Problem Statements

With reference to the background of the study, this proposed study has been conducted to answer these problems:

1. What types of errors do the students make in constructing English sentences using Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect Continuous Tense in Structure test?
2. What is the percentage of students who:
 - a. know the form but not the function?
 - b. know the function but not the form?
 - c. know both the form and the function?
 - d. know neither the function nor the form?

2.1 The Objectives of the Study

Derived directly from the question above, this study is intended:

1. To find out the English tense errors which are mostly made by the fourth – semester students' structure III of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, academic 2008-2009 in their structure test?
2. To see the percentage of students who:
know the form but not the function
know the function but not the form
know both the form and the function
know the neither the function nor the form

2.2 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be useful for the lecturers to improve the teaching technique in teaching tenses and also for the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University to make a better syllabus in Structure Course. The results of this study are expected to give some help for the students to minimize making errors of using tenses in English and to have a better understanding on applying the correct use of tenses in test.

2.3 Assumptions

This study is carried out under the assumption that:

1. The students have already learned tenses in Structure II, especially the eight common tenses in English namely: Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous

Tense, Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect Continuous Tense in Structure test.

2. The students have passed Structure II.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

To support the study, the writer has chosen the theory of Error Analysis.

Error Analysis is a procedure which involves collecting sample of learner's language, identifying the error in the samples, describing these errors, classifying them according to the hypothesized causes and evaluating the seriousness of the errors, (Ellis;1986 p296).

Error analysis, in this study, is the way used to find and identify the types of learners' errors in using tenses in English.

2.5 The Definition of the Key Term

To make a clear view of this study, the writer felt it is necessary to explain some of the key terms in this study, namely error, mistake.

Errors reflects gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because, the learner doesn't know what is correct. (Ellis; 1997 p 17)

Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. (Ellis; 1997 p 17)

English Tenses: Any of the forms of a verb that may be used to indicate the time of the action or state expressed by the verb. (www.wikipedia.com, free encyclopedia)

2.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

- 1 The subjects are the students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University who took Structure 3 in the even semesters of the academic year of 2008/2009.
- 2 The analysis will focus on the applying eight English tenses, such as: Simple Present Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Simple Past Tense, Past Continuous Tense, Future Tense, Future Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense, and Present Perfect Continuous Tense in Structure test in Structure test.

2.7 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, assumptions, theoretical framework, definition of the key term, the scope and limitation of the study. Chapter II deals with Review of related literature. Chapter III presents research methodology of this study. Chapter IV discusses data analysis and finding. Chapter V is about conclusions and suggestions.