CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are four skills in English, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. As one of those skills, writing plays an important role in English but it is often forgotten or abandoned. That is why many people are not able to write well. Today, people do not only give more attention to writing but they consider it important and necessary to be seriously learnable. They realize that writing cannot be separated from their lives such as in the school and college they have to make essays or journals for their subjects and in the office they have to make business letters or reports for their jobs. Gere (1988) and Weigle (2002) also agree that more and more people learn English for occupational or academic purposes.

The word grammar is connected to the word rule according to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999). Grammar is important because it does not only construct tenses but also conjunctions, subordinations, coordinations, articles, prepositions, etc. Mastering the grammar can be obtained by learning and practicing structure. A lot of learning and practices can be useful to develop the use of grammar. Someone who masters grammar well will be able to write well too.

Writing and reading have the same way of how someone understands comprehension. The way someone understands a text in reading is the same as the way he or she understands in writing. It means the reading schema can be applied

to make a composition or an essay in writing. According to Devine, et al. (1987), there are basically three areas of schema that play a part in the act of reading: linguistic schema, content schema, and formal schema. Devine, et al. say that linguistic schema is everything connected to linguistic areas. In writing, this means the students' ability to construct grammar and to use vocabulary. Students who do not understand much grammar and vocabulary will not produce various sentences which result in a dull composition. Content schema refers to a reader's knowledge about the topic being read or discussed. In writing, students who do not have enough knowledge of the topic which is used to make a composition or an essay will not able to make it properly. For example, the students are given a task to make a composition about the gastritis intestinal. Absolutely they cannot make it because they do not have any prior knowledge about it. Perhaps there are some students who can write about it but they do not write much because the lack of knowledge of the topic given. Therefore, the need to have the knowledge is important to make a composition. The more they know about the topic which is given, the better composition or essay they will produce. Finally, formal schema or the knowledge of the rhetorical patterns in which information is presented. Furthermore, Devine, et al (1987) expresses "Readers who are familiar with narrative structures in their culture may not be able to efficiently process different narrative structures in another culture or language". To understand more, the writer quotes another Devine's words "Familiarity with the way in which information is usually given affects the speed at the readers can process the passage." It means that the way of the composition is written give a big result of

understanding. If a composition is orderly written such as there are an introduction, a body/bodies and a conclusion and neatly written are easier to understand than a composition which does not have those things and poorly seen are difficult to understand and it takes more time to read.

A person who tries to speak in a target language (TL) may often make a fossilized language of mother tongue interference. The speaker performs the linguistic items, rules, and subsystems incorrectly are identified as errors. Selinker (1972) claims that the errors which occur in interlanguage (IL) are a result of the native language (NL) then it is known as the process of language transfer; if the errors are a result of identifiable items in training procedures, it is known as transfer of training; if they are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned, it is known as strategies of second language learning; if they are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers of the TL, it is known as strategies of second language communication; and the last, if they are a result of a clear overgeneralization of TL rules and semantic features, it is known as the overgeneralization of TL linguistic material.

Knowing that the students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya are trained to be teachers, as L2 learners they may often make mistake. In line with this study, the writer conducts an error analysis research to know the students' acquisition of English tenses. From the research, the writer will be able to make a conclusion whether the students' ability in English tenses have already well developed or not. Then she tries to find out what the possible cause of errors

that the students make in constructing the English tenses in their narrative composition and gave the possible problem solutions.

The writer focuses the investigation on the English tenses used by the students in their narrative writing which the students use in their composition. The writer analyzes those things in the narrative composition which is taken from the writing paper final test of the second semester students' academic year 2006/2007 of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. She wants to analyze it because she is eager to know the errors that the students make in constructing the English tenses in the composition, to find the sources of errors and to solve the problem.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

1.2.1 What are the kinds of errors that the second semester students of English Department at Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya English tenses as reflected in their writing?

1.2.2 What are the possible sources of errors that the students make in constructing the English tenses?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problem mentioned before, the writer made the following objective: To find to what extent the student of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya of the second year students acquire English tenses in constructing English sentences in their narrative composition. The writer analyzes

the students' writing to find the possible sources of errors that the students make in constructing the English tenses.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to be useful for those who are concerned with the teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The results are expected to provide the English teachers with useful information about the problems that the teachers may face in teaching a composition. The result of this study hopefully can give some feedback to the teachers to know how to overcome these errors.

1.5   Scope and Limitation

The writer limits the subjects of the research to the second semester students of English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya academic year 2006/2007 who are divided into two Writing I classes namely class B and C, because the writer wants to pick only a few subjects as a sample and for a practical reason the availability of the data for the respective teacher of class B and C. The writer did not include the Transfer of Training in the data analysis because the errors could only be seen in the training. Furthermore, this study is limited to find out the students' extension in acquiring English tenses in the narrative composition. In this study, English tenses here are a verb form or series of verb forms used to express a time relation including Modal (will-would and can-could) only. Therefore, articles, prepositions, gerund, pronouns, to infinitive,

etc. was not included in the analysis. That was why some errors which were out of the tenses were not analyzed including the semantic. The writer analyzed based on the form and function. If there were errors which were not discussed or were wrong, the writer asked apologized to the reader.

1.6   Theoretical Framework

The underlying theories in this study are the theory of contrastive analysis and error analysis.

1.6.1   Contrastive Analysis

Reid (1993) says "Early contrastive analysis research was essentially language-focused". Furthermore, he says "Linguists examined features of native language that contrasted with features of foreign language to determine what areas of second language learning would be most likely to cause difficulty for the students". He also mentioned that the areas of second language learning often became the focus of the early grammar / writing classroom as teachers sought to anticipate errors before they occurred and to alert students to them.

1.6.2   Error Analysis

Selinker (1972) thinks that native speakers often do errors in the second language learning because of the interference which comes from the NL. An inexperience native speaker will say 'the boy play football everyday' instead of 'the boy plays football everyday' to say 'anak laki-laki itu bermain sepakbola

setiap hari'. It is clear that the speaker attempts to say English correctly but he or she omits the -*s* as the mark of the singular subject. Therefore, the interference also leads to the five central processes which contribute to the source of errors.

Furthermore, he explains that there are five central processes of the second language learning; First, language transfer; second, transfer of training; third, strategies of second language learning; fourth, strategies of second language communication; and fifth, overgeneralization of target language (TL) linguistic material.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding in this study, the writer gives some explanation of the key terms which are used by her.

- *Error analysis* is a term which is used to determine what areas of second language learning would be most likely to cause difficulty for the students. (Gere; 1988)

- *Error* is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of a learner or reveals a portion of the learner's competence. (Brown, 2000: 217)

- *Tenses* stands for a verb form or series of verb forms used to express a time relation. (Hornby; 1975)

- *Acquisition* is used to refer to picking up a second language through exposure. (Ellis, 1986; 6)

- *Narrative* is to recount an event or a series of related events in such a way that meaning emerges in them. (Vivian & Jackson; 1961)

- *Writing* is something which is related with written form of language. (Paul Procter; 1978)

- *Narrative writing* is a form of writing which relate an event or an experience. (Winterowed & Murray, 1985; 50)

- *As Reflected* is to be feature or an aspect of something that indicates something about its true nature or qualities. (Hornby; 1995)

1.8 Research Method

This research is a case study and a qualitative research. It intensively describes and analyses of a single unit or bounded system in this case the second semester students at Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya and it will describe the second semester students' errors in English tenses acquisition.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The writer divides the study into five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction of the study which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the theoretical framework, the definition of key terms, the research method, and the organization of the study. Chapter II deals with the review of the related literature which includes the theory of Contrastive Analysis and the theory of Error Analysis. Chapter III discusses the methodology

of the study which includes the design, the subjects, the instrument, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis. Chapter IV is the analysis and the interpretation of the findings which include the data analysis, the frequency of errors occurrence, the summary of errors occurrence, the sources of errors, the summary of sources of errors, interpretation of findings and the solutions of the problems. Finally, the writer concludes her analysis and gives some suggestions in the last chapter–Chapter V is the conclusion and suggestions, then Bibliography and Appendix.