



CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a means to transfer a message from a person to other persons. It can be done through writing or speaking. Irmischer (1969:29), in his book "Ways of Writing", states that speaking and writing, which have important roles in communication, have at least three differences: speaking involves a lively sense of communication, animation, and flexibility in its strategies and language. In speaking, the message is transferred verbally to others. In other words, the message is transferred in spoken words, not in writing. The message will not be able to be understood clearly if the people do not know how to express their ideas, especially in writing, in a systematic way. Therefore, a composition should have an obvious topic, and the topics should have a reasonably clear connection with each other so that the readers are able to understand the message expressed by the writer.

There are five kinds of composition: narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and argumentative (Kakonis and Scally, 1978:1). Narrative, which is the basic of writing a composition, needs to be learned first by a student before learning other kinds of composition. Simple narrative which involves one or two participants is mostly used by a student who begins to

learn how to write. The student can write a participant in the beginning of his narrative to show who gets involved in the story to readers. However, it is possible for him to add other participants in the composition. In this case, the narrative would be very complex when involving many participants with many different events or settings, because the use of many participants and settings will make the students find difficulties in using the referents.

Because narrative is a written discourse, the sequence in which events are told matches the sequence in which the events actually happened (Grimes, 1975:34). There must be cohesiveness within and between sentences and paragraphs. The involvement of many participants would create difficulties to make a good narrative. Therefore, there probably would not be cohesiveness within and between sentences and paragraphs.

There are many ways to study cohesiveness. One of them is to see how old and new information is presented in a narrative composition. Old information is the information that is already known, and what is new conveys New information. Old information has the same meaning as Given information. Hence, "the information unit is a structure made up of two functions, the new and the given" (Halliday, 1985:275).

It is expected that the students of the English Department are able to write their narrative compositions in English so well that the narratives, when read, show a solid unity and flow smoothly. According to the writer's

experience during his study at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, Old and New information was never taught before learning narrative writing. That is why the students including the writer found difficulties in making a good narrative composition. Therefore, it should be taught before the students of the English Department learn how to write. Concerning this, the writer is interested in observing the ability of Writing C students in applying Old and New information in their narrative. Writing C class was chosen because the students of that class were assumed to have mastered the theory of narrative and been able to write a narration.

That is why “Old and New information in the Writing C Students’ Narrative Composition” becomes the topic of this study. This study will discuss the writing ability of the Writing C students of the English Department in using Old and New information in the narrative composition.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background of the study above, the research problem can be stated as follows:

How did the Writing C students express the Old information in their narration?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem above, the objective of this study is to find out how the Old information was expressed by the Writing C students in their narration.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Since this study is concerned with the Old and New information in narrative composition, it will help English practitioners, especially the Writing ones, to begin teaching Old and New information theory to their students before they teach how to write a narrative. Besides, this study will also help English learners, especially students of the English Department, to understand and use Old and New information, so they will be able to write cohesive and coherent sentences and paragraphs in their narrative compositions.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The subjects of the study were the S-1 students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, Surabaya. The students were Writing C class in the academic year of 2002 – 2003. The linguistic properties investigated are limited to the use of pronouns/nouns and adverbials, especially place and time. Phrases and sentences are excluded.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In narrative, the sequence in which events are told matches the sequence in which the events actually happened (Grimes, 1975:34). A narrative should be well organized so that it reveals a solid unity in its intra- or intersentential relationship between participants, events, and time. To produce a solid unity, there must be a cohesiveness within and between sentences and paragraphs.

Cohesiveness and coherence is usually achieved by establishing clear relationships among parts of the sentence themselves. According to Winkler and McCuen (1988:506) in his book "Rhetoric Made Plain", lack of coherence in the sentence is frequently caused by faulty subordination and coordination, dangling modifiers, misplaced parts, lack of parallelism, illogical constructions, needless shifts, and pronoun reference. The use of noun and pronoun reference in writing is one of the factors that creates Old and New information.

What is already known conveys Old information, and what is new conveys New information. Hence, "the information unit is a structure made up of two functions, the new and the given" (Halliday, 1985:275).

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, the terms “narrative”, “old information”, and “new information” need to be defined so that the terms can be well understood in the course of reading this study.

“Narrative” in this study simply means a composition that tells a story about a true or an imaginary happening. A story can have one paragraph, or it can have many paragraphs. Narration demands chronological order, the order in which events happen from the beginning to the end (Brooks and Warren, 1972:187).

“Old information” is an information that ought to precede New information in sentences (Glatt, 1982:88). Concerning the topic of this study, the writer then defines an old information as an information that has been given before. “New information” can be defined as the part of the sentence that is not presupposed or Given (Shir, 1979:446). In a sentence, New element comes after a Given element. For example: ‘Tania went to the market yesterday. *She bought two kilos of chilly and some sugar.*’ The first sentence is the New element, and the italicized word in the next sentence, ‘She’, replaces the noun, Tania. Therefore, the word ‘She’ is the Old or the Given.

1.8 Research Method

The method of this study is qualitative. Qualitative study does not use quantity measurement. Therefore, in the qualitative mode, there will be no statistically testable hypothesis instead guiding research question are made to be subjectively answered by the investigator (Balian, 1988:67).

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. The introduction deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, research method, and organization of the thesis. Chapter two discusses review of the related literature that consists of two parts: review of the related studies and review of the underlying theory. The third chapter is research method. This part discusses the research design, the subjects, the research instrument, the procedure for collecting the data, and the techniques of data analysis. The fourth chapter is data analysis and interpretation of the findings that consists of data analysis, research findings, and their interpretation. Finally, chapter five concerns with the conclusion and suggestions.