CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Language is needed as a communication instrument, to transmit thoughts and ideas. According to Devitt (1999:5) "Human language is a system for expressing or communicating thought." Further he says that language is used to greet, question, command, joke, and so on. It indicates that language does its function as an information and communication instrument. The writer or speaker will attain this function if only the listener or the reader can grasp the information that is delivered.

Wherever we go in this world we find that there is a language, which can unite peoples. It is English. Hundreds of years ago, English was the native language of England only. From there, as quoted from French (1963:1), it spread to other parts of Great Britain and to North America and Australia and New Zealand where the British people settled. It still is the vernacular of those countries and peoples. By accidents of history and by the rapid spread of industrial development, science, technology, international trade, and by something like an explosion in the speed and ease of travel and by all the factors which have broken down frontiers and forced nations into closer independence, English has become a world language. It is the means of international communication.

1

English is now taught as the 'second language' in schools in nearly every country in the world: east, west, north and south. Every advance in science: in engineering, in trade, in politics, in every branch of human thought is discussed, printed, disseminated and made available in English. That is why we have to learn English as a second language. Learning English can mean learning all the skills of the language. They are Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. And in understanding English there is Grammar. Reading is the skill of understanding of written symbols in the form of passages. Listening is the skill of understanding the spoken symbols. Speaking is the skill of communicating by using the oral symbols. Writing is the skill expressing thoughts, ideas or feeling by using written symbols. And grammar holds the role in guiding the language usage. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1988:17) the grammar includes everything speakers know about their language --the sound system, called *phonology*; the system of meanings, called *semantics*; the rules of word formation, called *morphology*; the rules of sentence formation, called *syntax*. It also, of course includes the vocabulary of words --the dictionary or *lexicon*. This study is relate to sentential comprehension, as the informative and communicative function can be represented by sentences.

A good sentence should be complete, consisting of at least a subject and a predicate. But there are also some sentences which have their elliptical constructions. Some people sometimes use incomplete sentences in delivering their thought. To read such elliptical constructions, many Indonesian students still have difficulties and this may cause misunderstanding or even inability to

understand the language, in this case English. Here in this study the writer is curious to know what kinds of errors students made in understanding the English elliptical constructions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In line with the background of the study, the question investigated is formulated as follows: "What kinds of errors did the students make in completing the elliptical constructions?"

This problem statement can be further formulated in the following sub problems:

1. What kinds of errors were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences using elliptical pro-forms?

2. What kinds of errors were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences in isolated clausal ellipsis?

3. What kinds of errors were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences based on dialogue contexts?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to find out kinds of errors made by the students in completing the elliptical constructions. To achieve the major objective, there are some sub-objectives:

1. To find out the kinds of errors that were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences using elliptical pro-forms.

2. To find out the kinds of errors that were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences in isolated clausal ellipsis.

3. To find out the kinds of errors that were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences based on dialogue contexts.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be of some uses for English teachers in high school in knowing kinds of errors that were mostly made by the students in completing elliptical sentences, what the difficult constructions are and how to improve their ways of teaching sentence constructions. To students of English department this study can be an input to have a deeper knowledge about building a good sentence. In general, this study can contribute knowledge about elliptical sentences to students, teachers and researchers in the field of linguistics related with the teaching English as a foreign language for Indonesian students.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Knowing that elliptical construction is a broad topic, here the writer finds it necessary to limit the topic.

1. The subjects of this study are the students of classes C, D and E of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, academic year 2003/2004. The writer chose the subjects based on the consideration that those students were fresh graduates from senior high

school. Besides that, this study is also conducted to know the readiness of the students who chose to study in English Department as future teachers.

2. The elliptical pro-forms used in this study are the word *too, so, either* and *neither.*

3. The English elliptical construction in this study are the patterns of elliptical sentence using elliptical pro-forms: ..., *and so ...; ... and ...too; ..., and neither ...; ... ,and ... either* also elliptical phrase, clause and sentences as these patterns commonly found in informal situations (Carter et al, 2000:166).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

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

1.6.1 Contrastive Analysis

According to Romaine (1988:206), contrastive analysis was developed as a means of comparing two languages in order to pin point the areas of differences and similarities. While Dulay et al (1982:124) say that contrastive analysis treats of errors based on comparison of the learner's native language and target language. Differences between the two were thought to account for the majority of a second language (L2) learner errors, so the most second language learners' errors would result from their automatic use of first language (L1) structure when attempting to produce the L2 (Dulay, 1982:118)

Brown (1980:148) says that contrastive analysis which is deeply rooted in behaviorisms and structuralism, claims that the principle barriers to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system.

1.6.2 Error Analysis

According to Romaine (1988:206) error analysis was used to predict and or account for the problems and errors likely to research in the learning of particular language by a learner with a given language background.

1.6.3 Ellipsis

According to Locke and Downing (1992:240) ellipsis is a means that we can leave out that part of the message, which is known, and in this way concentrate on the new information, to make the text more cohesive. While ellipsis is conversation, according to Carter et al (2000:165) is a natural part of conversation, but is mainly used when the speakers do not expect or want a strong focus on what they are saying.

A theory about elliptical constructions by Quirk et al (1985:883) says that ellipsis may be more strictly described as "grammatical omission", in contrast to other kinds of omission in language. Further the writer applies Locke's theory and Quirk et al's, deliberates the ellipsis about the types, criteria and classification. There are also some supporting theories about the types of ellipsis by using patterns of *so* or *too* and *neither* or *either* as these forms are taught in high school based on the curriculum.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer finds it necessary to define the key term used in this study. A major term defined in this study is ellipsis.

1. Ellipsis

Locke and Downing (1992:240) sates that ellipsis is a means that we can leave out that part of the message, which is known, and in this way concentrate on the new information, to make the text more cohesive, while Bibber, et al. (2001:156) defines ellipsis as the omission of elements which are precisely recoverable from the linguistic or situational context. In this thesis, ellipsis is a clause or phrase, a part of which has been omitted. The omitted part is obviously understood and should be supplied to make the construction of the sentence or phrase grammatically complete.

2. Erroneous sentences

Erroneous sentence in this thesis are sentences which are informal sentences, incomplete sentences, have improper grammatical structures and contained erroneous word/s.

3. Misused word

Misuse word in this thesis is word that grammatically wrongly used.

Example: a) She *ate* an apple everyday.

It is incorrect as it should be: She *eats* an apple everyday.

Example: b) *Were* you finished the exam?

It is incorrect as it should be: *Have* you finished the exam?

1.8 Research Method

This study is a descriptive study on the students' elliptical constructions comprehension. It is also can be considered as a case study as it holds only in an institution, English department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University. This method uses qualitative research as it assumes that all knowledge is relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, and that holistic, ungeneralisable study is justifiable.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the introduction of the study which covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, research method and organization of the thesis. Chapter two deals with review of the related literature, which discusses about the underlying theories and the previous study. Chapter three is about the research method that presented in details. The next chapter talks about the findings and the discussion of findings. Finally the last chapter gives the conclusion and suggestions from the study.