

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the writer discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the theoretical framework, the hypothesis, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, the key terms used in this thesis, and also the organization of this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Grammar plays an important and crucial role in learning a particular language. It is because the meaning of the word combinations (phrases, clauses, or sentences) depends on the grammar or structure. According to Newkirk (as cited in Suthiwartnarueput et al., 2012), grammar is a combination of contents, including grammatical rules and terms, and methods, including the memorization of the rules and definitions as well as sentence analysis.

Many students also think that learning grammar is important for them. Male (2011), for instance, conducts a study in Universitas Kristen

Indonesia (UKI). He finds that 70% of his respondents agree that grammar plays an important role in the study of English. Pazaver and Wang (2009) also support this idea by conducting a similar study and their participants believe that grammar is so important in learning a language since lack of grammar knowledge may cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

In the English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, there is a series of Structure classes which deal with English grammar. They are Structure I, II, III and IV. In these subjects, students learn English grammar from the basic to the complex ones.

However, grammar as a subject is considered difficult for many students. Crystal (as cited in Ronnå, 2012) says that it is one feature of the English language classroom that few love and many hate. Estling Vannestål (as cited in Ronnå, 2012) also supports this idea by stating that only mentioning the word *grammar* could rise up bad memories for some students, from their own experience of grammar teaching. Students' achievement on grammar is also unsatisfactory. It also happens in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. Many students fail in Structure subjects.

Due to these reasons, Structure lecturers in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya think of different ways to help students in mastering grammar. One of the ways is through an independent learning. According to Moore (1973), independent learning is “an educational system in which the learner is autonomous, and separated from his teacher by space and time, so that communication is by print, electronic, or other non-human medium.” There are lots of different terms used for independent learning, such as autonomous learning, autodidaxy, self-directed learning, self-education, self-planned learning, self-study, and so on (Candy, as cited in Leach, 2000). The grammar independent learning was conducted by the Self Access Center (SAC).

Interested in finding out the correlation between SAC independent learning and students’ Structure achievement, the writer conducts a research by analyzing students’ scores.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem described above, there is one problem which needs to be answered:

Does the students’ independent learning at the SAC significantly correlate to their achievement in Structure?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out whether students' independent learning at the SAC significantly correlates with their achievement in Structure subjects.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The underlying theory of this study is the theory of grammar and the theory of independent learning.

According to Newkirk (as cited in Suthiwartnarueput et al., 2012), grammar is a combination of contents, including grammatical rules and terms, and methods, including the memorization of the rules and definitions as well as sentence analysis.

Moore (1973) defines independent learning as “an educational system in which the learner is autonomous, and separated from his teacher by space and time, so that communication is by print, electronic, or other non-human medium.”

Another definition comes from Leach (2000) who states that self-directed learning or independent learning is “learning in the way we want

to learn.” She also adds independent learning means: (1) having choices, taking control and making decisions; (2) freedom; (3) learning on my own; (4) learning with others.

Kesten (as cited in Meyer et al., 2008) states that independent learning is ‘that learning in which the learner, in conjunction with relevant others, can make the decisions necessary to meet the learner’s own learning needs’.

Meyer et al. (2008) also offers Pintrich’s definition of independent learning in his study. Pintrich defines self-regulation or independent learning as ‘an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, and guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment’.

1.5 Hypotheses

There are two hypotheses formulated:

(1) The Alternative Hypothesis (HA)

There is a significant correlation between SAC independent learning and Structure achievement in the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

(2) The Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant correlation between SAC independent learning and Structure achievement in the English Department students of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya.

1.6 Assumption

This study is based on the following assumptions:

- a) The students do the exercises in SAC independently
- b) The students' scores on their Structure tests are reliable and valid
- c) The students' scores on their SAC independent learning are reliable and valid
- d) All Structure lecturers and SAC counselors of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University are qualified

1.7 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that the data and information in this study can reveal whether or not there is a positive correlation between SAC

independent learning and Structure achievement. The results of this study will give a lot of benefits to the Department, SAC and students.

First, this study will benefit the SAC to know that SAC Independent Learning is important for students. So, they can improve the program and the counselors can motivate the students to conduct the independent learning seriously.

Second, it will be beneficial for the students who are taking Structure subjects and the lecturers, as it shows them that independent learning at the SAC will help them master their English grammar better. So the lecturers could encourage the students to learn independently to improve their achievement in Structure.

1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the correlation between SAC independent learning and Structure achievement. The population of this study is all students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, who take Structure subjects. However, the writer only takes students of 2013 academic year who are taking Structure I because they are taking this subject in this semester and it is their first time conducting independent learning. Variables such as the students' attitude, motivation,

home environment and intelligence are, therefore, beyond the scope of the study.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, the key terms to be defined are as follows:

Self Access Center (SAC)

Self Access Center (SAC) is one of the laboratories in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. This laboratory provides grammar materials for students and some programs to help students learn grammar, such as Structure Independent Study, Structure Group Tutorial and Structure Independent Tutorial.

Independent Learning

Independent learning in this study refers to SAC independent learning conducted in the English Department, Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya that concerns to grammar learning.

Independent Learning Achievement

Independent learning achievement refers to the students' average scores of all the SAC individual tasks. The tasks are taken from Structure Workbook entitled *Grammar Dimensions*.

Structure

Structure is a series of subjects taught in the English Department, Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. They are Structure I, II, III and IV.

Structure Achievement

Structure achievement refers to the students' scores of Structure Midterm and Final term test.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which covers the background of the study, the problem statement, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the definition of key terms, the scope and limitation, and the organization of the study. The second chapter consists of the review of related literature and review of related study. The third chapter presents the research method. While in chapter four, the data analysis, interpretation of the findings and also discussion are presented. In chapter five, the writer gives conclusion and some suggestions that hopefully will be useful for the SAC and students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University.