

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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### 1.1 Background of the study

In the 1984 English Curriculum for Senior High School, there are five topics. They are structure, reading comprehension, vocabulary, speaking and writing. From those five topics, reading comprehension should get the highest priority in the teaching-learning process. As it is said in the curricular objective of teaching English that "students possess the interest and working knowledge of English especially reading" (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1987). Thus, the English teaching at senior high school is emphasized on the development of the students' reading skill, the ability of the students in comprehending passages. In reality, however, it does not happen.

As the writer's experience when she conducted her teaching practice, she found out that the English teachers emphasized the teaching of grammar more than the teaching of reading. Automatically, they used most of the teaching-learning time for grammar. They were possibly influenced by the 1975 English Curriculum in which the teaching of grammar was the most important thing.

The importance of grammar in learning English had been stated by Paulston (1976: 1). According to her, grammar permeates all language skills. This statement tells that grammar is considered as the basic element of learning English. Besides, the order of discussion in the 1984 English Curriculum shows the discussion of structure (the term structure is preferable to grammar) precedes the discussion of reading comprehension. It proves the teaching-learning of structure has more priority than the teaching-learning of reading.

From the description above, the writer concludes that the students have more chance to learn English structure. Nevertheless, they still have difficulties and make errors in it. This can be proved when the writer herself experienced in her teaching practice. She checked the students' formative tests and found out that most of the students got poor marks in their structure tests. From her observation she knew the students really had problems in certain items. Using the English modal auxiliaries is one of the problem faced by the students.

The 1984 Senior High School English Curriculum states that modal auxiliaries is one of the sub-topics of English structure which the first year students should master. The modal auxiliaries introduced are can, could,

will, would, shall, should, may, might, must, and ought to.

With this reference, the writer is encouraged for making a careful study on the errors in the English modal auxiliaries made by the first year students of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School Surabaya to describe the errors in using modal auxiliaries.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Based on the background of this study, that is the difficulties which are faced by the first year students of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School Surabaya in using the English modal auxiliaries, the writer does this research to find out :

1. What kind of errors do the students of the first year of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School make in using the English modal auxiliaries?
2. Which modal auxiliaries do the students of the first year of St. Louis I Catholic Senior high School Surabaya find most difficult?

### 1.3 Objective of the study

Derived from the problem statement formulated above, the objectives of this study are to find out:

1. What kind of errors the students of the first year of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School make in using English modal auxiliaries.
2. Which modal auxiliaries found most difficult by the first year students of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School Surabaya are.

### 1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of this study is hopefully to give some help for any readers, particularly the English teachers of St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School Surabaya, to guide their students overcoming the difficulties in learning the English modal auxiliaries and help them minimize making errors in using the English modal auxiliaries by providing the information about the high frequency of occurrence of errors.

### 1.5 Scope and limitation of the study

Analyzing errors in learning English grammar is chosen to be the topic of this study. Because of the limited time the writer has, she feels necessary to limit

the topic to a certain scope, that is merely about the English modal auxiliaries (**can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, and must**).

In the background of the study (see section 1.1), it is stated that modal auxiliary **ought to** is discussed in the 1984 English Curriculum for the senior high school. However, it has only one use which merely the same as **should** and can be used interchangeable with **should**. Therefore, the writer did not include it in this study.

The population of this study is the first year St. Louis I Catholic Senior High School students in Surabaya. Nevertheless, due to the limited time, the writer takes only four classes ( $I_1 - I_4$ ) from eight classes as the sample of this study.

### 1.6 Theoretical framework

The theory underlying this study is the theory of Error Analysis.

Ellis (1986: 51-52) states that Error Analysis is a procedure which involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying the errors according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating the seriousness of the errors.

The classification of errors used in this study are the ignorance of rules restrictions and the false concepts hypothesized which are proposed by Richards as quoted by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1980: 122).

### **1.7 Assumption**

This study was carried out under the assumption that the students had already been taught the English modal auxiliaries used in this study.

### **1.8 Definition of key terms**

It is necessary to include the definitions of some terms in order to enable the readers to understand the presented ideas. The terms are:

#### **1.8.1 Error**

According to Dulay et. al. (1982: 139), error is any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics or causes of the deviation might be. In this study, errors refers to the deviation of using an English modal auxiliary in a sentence made by the respective students.

### 1.8.2 Error analysis

Ellis (1986: 296) stated that error analysis is a procedure used by both teachers and researchers. It involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness. The error analysis in this study is the procedure used by the writer in studying the errors in using English modal auxiliaries made by the respective students.

### 1.8.3 Modal auxiliaries

In Webster's Dictionary, modal auxiliary is defined as a verb or a grammatical form resembling a verb that is characteristically used with a verb of predication and expresses a modal modification (as can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, ought to, need, dare) (Merriam-Webster Editorial Staff, 1986). The writer chose can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, and must for her study.

### 1.9 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I discusses the introduction of the thesis which includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objective, the significance, the scope and limitation of the study, the theoretical framework, the assumption, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

The next chapter, that is Chapter II, concerns about the review of the related literature and studies which are relevant to this study. Then, Chapter III explains about the methodology used in the writer's research. After that, Chapter IV discusses the result of the study, that is the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings. In Chapter V there are some suggestions for the teaching-learning process concerning the study and the conclusion of the study.