

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The role of English as the first foreign language in Indonesia has made English one of the compulsory subjects at school. The students are expected to master the language skills and have the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in the language being learned, i.e. English.

Whenever we talk about language, there is always one most common subject that we cannot just forget to discuss, and that is grammar. Grammar seems to play a big role in the process of learning a language and it does the same thing to the learning of English language.

Realizing that the systems of grammar in English and Indonesian are different, often the Indonesian students are assumed to find difficulty learning English grammar. They manifest the difficulty in the form of errors produced.

Based on her educational experiences in studying English, the writer has found that teachers take most of their time teaching grammar. This implies that grammar plays a very important role in the teaching of English and this is why the writer is interested in choosing grammar as the topic of the study.

According to John R. Muma as quoted by Gunawan, to be able to communicate well in English, one should have among others a wide range of vocabulary and master its grammar: a set of rules for coding one's thought, ideas and emotions for the purpose of conveying one's intention to someone else. One of the rules Muma discusses is the use of "to-be," which is the focus of this study.

In English, the use of "to-be" covers a very wide range of functions, as it can be used as an ordinary and an auxiliary verb. This is the more specific reason why the writer chooses this topic to be discussed. She assumes that there are many students, not only in the Senior High School, but even at the English Department, who still cannot use "to-be" in a

correct way related to the functions. Examples of the incorrect use of "to-be" are as follows:

*I am agree with you.

*They playing football.

These two types of errors will be discussed further in Chapter IV where the first error belongs to error of addition and the second one belongs to error of omission.

Interested in studying this topic further, the writer would like to find out whether or not the lack of ability using "to-be" stated above would appear in the students' writing work.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

With reference to the background of the study, the major problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Do the second-semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, academic year 1993 - 1994 have difficulty using present "to-be" in Simple Present and Present Progressive Tenses applied in their writing work?

2. Are there any specific causes underlying the above condition?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to find out whether or not the second-semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, academic year 1993 - 1994 have difficulty using present "to-be" in the Simple Present and Present Progressive Tenses applied in their writing work. It is also intended to determine the specific causes underlying this condition.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some contribution to the teaching and learning of English grammar and writing. The writer hopes it will be useful for both English teachers and students at the English Department of Teachers Training Faculty to minimize making errors of present "to-be" and to have a better understanding on applying the correct use of "to-be" in writing.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

To support her study, the writer has chosen five major theories that are described briefly below. They are Second Language Acquisition, Error Analysis, Writing, Grammar and "to-be."

Second Language Acquisition

Krashen (1981:1), in his book Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning says that language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second language. It requires a meaningful interaction in the target language natural communication in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding.

It is also what the writer believes that students often have or use the same pattern of translating their ways in acquiring their first language and the foreign language they are learning.

Error Analysis

Error analysis is a procedure which involves collecting samples of learner's language, identifying

the errors in the samples, describing these errors, classifying the errors according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating the seriousness of the errors (Abbot and Wingards, 1981:212).

That procedure is used as a guidance to analyze the students' errors in terms of collecting data where the writer prepares the tool for it, identifying and describing errors according to their types of errors, and classifying the errors according to the surface feature of the errors itself.

Writing ✓

Writing involves spelling and building the correct forms for words, and words are part of grammar (Walpole, 1980:6-7).

This theory explains how important for the students to understand how to use and apply grammar properly in order to build a good and meaningful writing performance.

Grammar ✓

Dykes (1992:7) says that grammar is about knowing how to put words together correctly to make sense. It

is about knowing the part that each word plays in a sentence so that we can both understand it in reading and use it correctly in writing.

This underlined theory emphasizes the background of the study explained in the beginning, which tries to find out the correlation between mastering grammar and being able to write well in English.

To-be

One of the most popular theories of "to-be" is written by A.J. Thompson and A.V. Martinet (1969:59) in A Practical English Grammar which says that the principal parts of "to be" are: *am, is, are, was, were, been*. According to them "to-be" can be used as an ordinary and an auxiliary verb. As an ordinary verb, "be" is used to denote the existence of or to give information about a person or thing. As an auxiliary verb, "be" is used in continuous active forms and in all passive forms.

In this study, the theory of "to-be" is used to see the incorrect form of "to-be" the students use in their writing work.

1.6 Assumption

This study is carried out under the assumption that the students have already learned enough vocabularies, especially common verbs in English since they have been taught English from the first year of Junior High School until the third year of Senior High School. It is also assumed that the teachers who teach structure and writing subjects at the English Department of Teaching Training Faculty of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya are qualified because they have been teaching these subjects for at least three years. That means they have fulfilled the stated standard for qualification in Indonesia (this information is based on the writer's knowledge as one of the students of that department where she had great chances to be taught by some of them).

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Concerning the limited time, energy and funds available to do this research, the writer decided to choose the second-semester students at the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, academic year 1993 - 1994, Jl. Kalijudan No. 37,

Surabaya, as the sample and population of this research.

This thesis deals with the influence of "to-be" in the English writing skill. The reason of choosing "to-be" as the topic is because it is the first subject taught to the students.

The scope of the study covers only the analysis of "to-be" in the Simple Present and Present Progressive Tenses which functions as an ordinary and auxiliary verb applied in the students' writing work.

1.8 Research

This study uses the action research, which consists of the following steps:

1. Plan

Here the writer prepares this study to find out the difficulty in applying the correct functions of "to-be" in Simple Present and Present Progressive Tenses in the students' writing work.

2. Population and Sample

The writer took only the second-semester students of the academic year of 1993-1994 at

the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. The numbers of samples are 127 students.

3. Observation

The writer analyzed the errors found in the students' writing work and classified the errors according to the type of errors.

4. Procedure for the Data Collection

The writer asked the permissions of the Head of the English Department and the respective teachers of Writing I to administer her study.

5. Procedure for the Data Analysis

Here the writer counted the total number of each type of errors, classified them according to their errors and found the possible causes of each type of error.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I, Introduction, is divided into ten subtopics: (i) Background of the Study, (ii) Statement of the Problems, (iii) Objective of the Study, (iv) Significance of the Study, (v) Theoretical Framework, (vi) Assumption,

(vii) Scope and Limitation of the Study, (viii) Research, and (ix) Organization of the Thesis. Chapter II, Review of the Related Literature, is divided into two subtopics: (i) Previous Study and (ii) Theoretical Framework. Chapter III, Research, is divided into five sections, (i) The Nature of the Study, (ii) Subjects, (iii) Instrument of the Study, (iv) Procedure for the Data Collection and (v) Procedure for the Data Analysis. Chapter IV, Findings and Discussion of the Findings, is divided into two sections, (i) Findings, and (ii) Discussion of the Findings. The last is Chapter V, Conclusion and Suggestions. It is also divided into two sections: (i) Conclusion and (ii) Suggestions.