

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It includes (1) background of the study, (2) research questions, (3) purposes of the study, (4) theoretical framework, (5) significance of the study, (6) scope and limitation of the study, (7) assumptions, and (8) definition of the key terms.

Background of the Study

Writing, especially at the present moment, is complex and difficult to define. It is used for multiple purposes and is addressed to many different audiences. The twenty-first century demands that literate people possess a wide range of writing skills and varying approaches to writing tasks.

A writer must have ideas to write. The ideas may come from her experiences or others, such as written texts, experts' opinions and their experiences. The writer should also take into consideration the purpose of their writing. The content will be different when the writing purpose is different. For example, when the writing purpose is to describe, the content will be different from one with the purpose to inform or persuade.

Writing needs a coherent, coordinated, and extended effort (Graham, et.al, 2001: 745). Once a writer has ideas to write, he or she should brainstorm to generate ideas for writing. It includes using webs or graphic organizers to make a word list for writing, deciding the type of writing and the targeted audience, and determining the purpose of writing. This mainly deals with gathering information and experimenting ideas.

Then he or she should organize the ideas well in order that the text is easy to follow. This process is concerned with ordering the ideas and attempting to write them in a continuous text. To write them, the writer should produce correct sentences with appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. In addition to this, the writer should consider the tone which reflects the writer's feeling. This feeling may affect his or her sentence structures and word choices. Next, the writer may revise or improve the first draft in terms of content and accuracy. Then he or she may write the

text again along with the improvements. The success of the text is dependent on the accuracy of the writing and the appropriateness of the content.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, writing gives students a great opportunity to find ways of expressing their ideas in a foreign language, i.e. English. It also gives a great chance for teachers to identify and diagnose grammar and vocabulary problems, and the learners' progress. In this context, the students are required to produce a particular writing genre which helps them establish a repertoire of rhetoric and relevant language forms of different genres (Al-Khasawneh, 2010).

Similarly in EFL context in Indonesia, as reflected in the 2006 School-Based Curriculum currently applied, popularly known as KTSP, the EFL instruction has applied the Genre-Based Approach. The word "genre" refers to more specific classes of texts. Through the Genre-Based Approach, teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres of texts. Furthermore, studying different types of written texts will benefit the students as this literacy approach facilitates clear links to the student' purposes for writing beyond the writing classroom (Lin, 2006).

According to the previous curriculum, there are eleven genres or types of the texts that should be taught at the senior high school level. For grade X students, genres that should be taught are Narrative, Procedure, Spoof/Recount, Report, Descriptive, and News Item. For grade XI students, the genres to be taught include Narrative Anecdote, Exposition (Analytical), and Exposition (Hortatory). For grade XII students the genres that should be taught are Narrative, Explanation, Discussion, and Review (Depdiknas, 2004).

In "X" Senior High School, *English for a Better Life* is used to teach General English consisting of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The four language skills and language elements are taught integrative. Every chapter of *English for a Better Life* always starts with listening part. The topics are special expressions such as the expressions of giving suggestions, giving instructions, apologizing, etc. The speaking part will be about those topics. They are followed by reading section. This section deals with a certain text genre. For example, in chapter one of Grade Twelve, it is about narrative. The writing section is in line with the reading section. Therefore in this chapter, the writing section is about writing narrative.

In this section, the students must write based on the theory of the text type. The basic competence of writing skill as stated in the curriculum is writing paragraphs

and articles related to themes by identifying the topic, main ideas and supporting ideas. The achievement indicator of one of the topics reveals that students should be able to complete various forms by using appropriate structure and vocabulary. This is one of the reasons why structure is taught in the writing section. Unfortunately the structure materials are not available sufficiently in *English for a Better Life*. The materials of structure are taken from the Supplementary Grammar Unit, the book that is written by the English teachers.

One of the text types that is taught in Grade Ten of “X” Senior High School is Narrative Text. This type of text can be identified from the three characteristics, namely, objectives, generic structure, and language features. The objective of narrative text is to tell a story and, in doing so, entertains or informs the readers. It is composed of its generic structure starting with orientation (scene setting and introduction), a complication (a chain of events that influence what will happen in the story, resolution which resolves the crisis, and ended with re-orientation (Anderson and Anderson, 1997:8). The last is language features. The language features comprises uses of sentences containing action verbs, nouns to name people, places, and things, past tense, conjunctions, and adverbial phrase.

From the writer’s everyday observation of her students, the students of “X” Senior High School are usually good at speaking. They can speak fluently and independently. Many of the students have graduated from international or bilingual schools. It seems they have no problems in reading comprehension as well. Evidence from that preliminary study also showed that the major problems the students encounter were problems in writing. They include sentence construction, tenses, or word choice. Their errors in their writings may be caused either by their lack of knowledge about correct usage or by his lack of concern for correctness. This has made them difficult to accomplish their writing tasks. These difficulties have led them to lose motivation in writing. As the writer interviewed some students who had difficulties and made errors in sentence structures and tenses, they responded that it was difficult for them to write with good sentence structures.

A study concerning the students’ difficulties needs to be conducted. The writer would like to conduct a research to examine grammatical errors and their sources in students’ narrative writing. The purpose of conducting the study was to help the students identify and correct problems in sentence structure and usage so that students

can write with greater competence and confidence. In addition, Fellowes (2007) suggests that grammar is only one element of the English language system. It is one resource available to the writer for effectively achieving the social purpose of a text. Observing the grammatical conventions of writing and being able to manipulate words and clauses in a text is beneficial to the meaning-making function of writing. Knowledge of grammar allows the writer to more confidently and adeptly add, delete, substitute or combine words and clauses in sentence as a text is constructed with intention.

Research Questions

With regard to the previous background, this study attempts at answering the following problems:

- (1) What grammatical errors are found in the students' narrative writing?
- (2) What sources of grammatical errors are found in the students' narrative writing?

Purposes of the Study

In line with the previously-formulated research questions, the purposes of the study are:

- (1) To describe grammatical errors found in the students' narrative writing
- (2) To describe sources of grammatical errors found in the students' narrative writing

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study covers the areas of Error Analysis of EFL narrative writing in the sentence level. The narrative writing is limited to ones created by the students of Grade Ten of "X" Senior-High School in Surabaya in the 2012-2013 of school year. Moreover, the study limits itself to the students' errors in the use of grammar in their narrative composition and in the sentence level.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the writing theory (Oshima and Hogue, 1999) and the theory of Contrastive Analysis (Lado, 1957), theory of Error (Dulay et al. 1982)

theory of interlanguage suggested (Selinker, 1972). Writing must be transported by flashes of creativity in order to be understood by the readers. After getting the topic and narrowing it to be more specific, the writer can start his/her creativity to develop the first draft consisting of paragraphs. A good paragraph has five elements: (1) a topic sentence, (2) supporting sentences, (3) concluding sentences, (4) unity, and (5) coherence (Oshima and Hogue, 1999). Learner's language can be regarded as a distinct language variety or system with its own particular characteristics and rules. While learning a second language, learners build up a system for themselves which is different in some ways from learners' first language and second language systems. The system which the learners build up for themselves has been called interlanguage (Selinker, 1972).

Knowing how to apply grammar rules correctly and appropriately is essential in writing. There are three types of sentences: simple, complex, and compound sentences in which subject and verb must agree in numbers (singular and plural) and gender (feminine, masculine, and neuter). In constructing a good sentence, appropriate tenses must be considered. Learning grammar rules is therefore critical components of learning to write. Having strong skills in writing and grammar allows writers to get their message or story to their readers in a clear and understandable way. It is important to know the rules of grammar and how to use them properly.

The learner who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features, such as grammar that is sometime quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. Predicting learning difficulties on the basis of comparing the native language with the foreign language being learnt, and also with the study of bilingualism and language contact phenomena will make the process of foreign language learning easier for the learner (Lado, 1957).

As language learners, EFL students experience trial and error in which they establish a hypothesis, and later on prove it, adjust it, or abort it. Error Analysis therefore aims to examine a learner's errors in a longitudinal way to reveal a learner's hypothesis and indicate the learner's progress. Learners' errors can also "provide the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language (Dulay et. al, 1982).

Studies which focus on the analysis of ESL/EFL errors in the speech or written materials have showed that there are several common errors made by ESL/EFL learners: (1) use of words, (2) use of phrases, (3) grammar, (4) rhetoric, (5) use of punctuations, and (6) spelling.

The possible sources or errors made by EFL learners can be predicted. Richards and Sampson (1974) identifies six sources of errors: (1) interference, (2) overgeneralization, (3) performance errors, (4) markers of transitional competence, (5) strategies of communication and assimilation, and (6) teacher-induced errors.

Definition of the Key Terms

The following is the operational definitions of the key terms used in the present study:

- (1) Grammar is the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) that explain how words are used in a language.
- (2) Error is language deviation from the target language norms, i.e. language rules and standard usages.
- (3) Grammatical error is an instance of faulty, unconventional, controversial, or incorrect usage dealing with sentence construction, i.e. the forms of words and their relationships within a sentence.
- (4) Narrative writing is a piece of writing that serves the purpose of describing telling a story that is intended to entertain or inform the readers.
- (5) Error Analysis is concerned with the study and analysis of errors made by second or foreign language learners as a means of understanding the phonological and semantic components of language, interactional processes, and speakers' discourse strategies.

Significance of the Study

Since the study of language is an enterprise with both a practical and a theoretical side, the present study is expected to have some significance both theoretically and practically as described as follows:

- (1) From the theoretical perspectives, the study is beneficial to give contribution to theories of Error Analysis of EFL writing, notably grammatical errors in EFL students' narrative writing.
- (2) In terms of practical significance, the study gives some benefits for:
 - a. Teachers as a means of discovering the learners' learning process and learning strategies, as insights for them to avoid the students' occurrences of the errors, and as feedback for them to provide appropriate teaching strategies and remedial teaching, and assessing teaching materials.
 - b. Students as feedback for them to reveal their progress and provide better learning strategies to avoid the errors from occurring which ultimately facilitate their learning.

Assumptions

This study was conducted based on the following assumptions:

- (1) The students have studied how to write sentences in English.
- (2) The students are still in the developmental process of learning the text type and English grammar.