

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is a means of communication among human beings. People can communicate, cooperate and get along with each other. One standard definition of language, it is stated that a language is a system of arbitrary that relates sounds and meanings that enable member of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another.¹ Language is a system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feeling by speaking, writing or making signs in a way that can be understood or any of different system of communication that is used in particular region². Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication³.

From the definitions of language above we can draw some basic characteristics of human language that language is systematic, arbitrary, spoken and complete. Language contains two systems rather than one, a system of sounds and a system of meaning.

Nowadays, language as a means of communication and social control has many functions and advantages in the daily life context, such as greeting, asking something, command, reporting, giving ideas, etc. Language has central role in the intellectual development, social, and students' emotion and as a key to be success. By using language we can communicate, express our feeling and share informations with other people around the world.

Language has two forms, written and spoken one. Both are used to express our feeling by using sequence of words which are arranged into understandable sentences. When it is conveyed in written form, someone who

¹ Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, *An Introduction to Language*, 3th Ed., (New York: CBS College Publishing, 1978), p. 5.

² A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 662.

³ Ronald Wardhaugh, *Introduction to Linguistics*, (University of Michigan: Mc Graw-Hill book company, 1972), p. 3.

read the sentence can understand and respond it. On the other hand, spoken language is done by someone orally. Both written and spoken languages have different roles and difficulty level.

In this global era, the World has no limits in communication, and technology develops very fast. This condition forces people around the world to master language that is used for international communication. Communication is very important in human life. It is used by human in order to know and understand between each other. As we know that God creates human in different condition and character, so they need to interact among people that make them understand each other. Allah has explained this instruction in Al-Qur'an at Surah Al-Hujarat⁴ as follows:



Meaning: “Hi, Human, Actually We created you from a man and woman and becoming you in different nations and tribes in order to know between each other. Actually the most lofty people in side of Allah are they are who have a pious between them. Actually only Allah, the God omniscient and Almighty. (Al-Hujarat: 13)⁵

This statement shows that people have been instructed by Allah to make friend and understand each other, although they are different in sex, tribe, country, and language.

⁴Departemen Agama, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*, (Semarang: CV. Asy-Syifa, 1992), p. 847.

⁵ Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, *The Quran*, (UK: London Press, 1981),p.1123

At present, there are many languages which are used all over the world. However, English is the most spoken in international communication since it has become an international language. English is commonly used in many fields such as science, business and education. Many books about those fields are written in English. To master or at least learn those fields, we have to master English. Hence, learning English is very useful for everybody to survive in this competitive era.

In our country, English becomes the first foreign language which is taught to the students from elementary school up to university. Even, some of kindergartens and even play groups have taught English to their students. In junior high school and senior high school, English has become the only foreign language which is examined in national examination.

The main objective of English teaching is that students master English communication which covers language components: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, with the basic competence skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

From four major skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing above, they can be divided into two kinds of skills, receptive skill and productive skill. Listening and reading are included in receptive skill, while speaking and writing in productive skill. From those productive skills, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to master. When someone is speaking, the most important thing is to make his listener understand what he is talking about. Grammar is not the main point here. Wrong grammar is not a problem when the speaker uses the right intonation and accent that make his listener what he is talking about. On the other hand, writing is different. Everybody has to use the right grammar, spelling and punctuation since it will not be helped by the existence of intonation and accent.

Learning English, especially in writing has never been easy as the learners find a lot of difficulties. One of the difficulties found by the learners is caused by their native language interference. The influence of the native language in learning a foreign language is certainly indispensable. This influence can be either positive or negative. When the relevant unit or structure of both languages

is the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production called “positive transfer”. However, language interference which is most often discussed as a source of errors is known as “negative transfer”. Negative transfer occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. The greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected, and the more errors can be found.

That is why in this research, the researcher tries to identify grammatical errors found in students’ composition and conducts a research entitled IDENTIFYING GRAMMATICAL ERRORS AS THE RESULT OF NATIVE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE IN STUDENTS’ COMPOSITIONS (A Study at Writing III Class at ELT Department of IAIN Walisongo Semarang in the Academic Year 2010/2011). Through this research, the researcher tries to analyze the errors because by learning the errors, the learners are not only able to recognize the errors but also explain why the errors happen and they are able to correct the errors.

B. Definition of key terms

a. Grammatical Errors

Grammar is the rules of a language that show how sentences are formed, or how words are inflected. The grammar of a language consists of the sounds and sounds patterns, the basic units of meaning such as words, and the rules to combine all of these to form sentences with the desired meaning. When we say that a sentence is grammatical, we mean that it confirms to the rules of grammar; conversely, when we say that a sentence is ungrammatical, we mean that it does not confirm to the rules of grammar.⁶ Hence, grammatical error is a part of conversation or a composition that deviates from some selected norms/rules of grammar

b. Native Language

⁶ Victoria Fromkin, et.al., *An Introduction to Language*, (Massachusetts: Thomson-Heinle, 2003), p. 14.

The term *native language* is used to indicate “a language which a person acquires in early childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of the country where he or she is living.”⁷

c. Interference

Interference is a term used in sociolinguistics and foreign language learning to refer to the errors as a speaker introduces into one language as a result of contact with another language; also called negative transfer of contrastive. It is also the most common source of errors in the process of learning a foreign language, where the native language interferes the foreign language.⁸

d. Error and mistake

Error is the use of linguistic item in a way in which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. A distinction is sometimes made between an error, which results from incomplete knowledge and a mistake made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention.⁹

From those definitions above, it can be concluded that a mistake is just a slip that the learner forgets the right form. While, an error is a deviation which is made by the learner because he does not know the rule and he /she will make it repetitively.

e. Composition

The term of composition is defined as a writing practice which deals with texts longer than a single sentence, such as paragraphs, essays, and reports. There are two types of composition which are commonly used; free composition in which the students writing is not controlled or limited in any way and controlled composition, in which the students writing is controlled by

⁷ Jack Richards et.al., *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*, (England: Longman Group U.K Limited, 1985)p. 188.

⁸David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*:4th ed., (U.S.A.: Blackwell, 1997) p.199.

⁹ David Crystal et.al., *op.cit.* p. 95.

various means such as by providing questions to be answered, sentences to be completed, or words or picture to follow.¹⁰

f. Writing III Class

It is the highest class of writing courses at English Department of State Institute for Islamic Studies Walisongo Semarang. Before entering this class, the students have to pass Writing (Intensive Course), Writing I and Writing II.

C. Reason of Choosing the Topic

Grammar is one of the most important components of a language. It is impossible to learn or use a language without knowing the grammatical rules of the language. Language without grammar causes some communicative problems, like grammatical errors in writing which can trigger a misunderstanding. That is why; learners need to know the grammatical system of a language so that they can communicate properly.

However, learning language is not easy as the learners find a lot of difficulties. The difficulties that are encountered by every learner will vary according to their native language. Because of this, there will be errors that can be found in their learning. These errors will influence their communication. Therefore, it is important to analyze the errors because by learning the errors, the learners are not only able to recognize the errors but also explain and know the right one.

The writer chooses the students of Writing III class at English Department of IAIN Walisongo Semarang as the subject of the research because they are expected to make writings which are correct in grammar since they have learn English for many years. Hence, it is important to know whether the students make grammatical errors or not and what kind of grammatical errors that students

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.53.

make. The writer hopes the result of the research will be useful; not only for the students of Writing III class, but also for the lecturers and the other students who are learning English.

D. Research Questions

Based on the explanation above, the research question will be about;

- a. What kinds of grammatical errors as the result of native language interference which can be found in students' compositions?
- b. What are the possible causes of the errors?

E. Objectives of Study

In line with research question, this study has purposes as follow:

- a. To identify grammatical errors as the result of native language interference in students' compositions.
- b. To describe the possible causes of the errors.

F. Pedagogical Significance

Since this research is another issue in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), its results are theoretically and pedagogically important for researcher, students/readers, Lecturers, policy maker in the institution and for the other researchers.

This research will give reference for lecturers especially for structure and writing lecturers. It will be useful as a reference, self-reflection and evaluation to improve their teaching after knowing the errors made by their students.

For the students/readers especially at English Department, the analysis of the grammatical Errors can be used as a reference for them so that they will not make any errors resulted by their native language interference.

For the policy makers in the institution, the analysis of the errors in this research is significant to determine the material, textbooks or handbook chosen and the way the lecturers teach.

Finally, it is hoped that this thesis will help other researchers to do the some related researches in deeper, further and better techniques.