

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language is the first foreign language in education. Therefore, English has been made a compulsory subject in the primary especially in junior high school. It is taught in Indonesian schools particularly in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school.

In the past English in Indonesia was taught in Junior High School only. But, since the end of the century along with the development of globalization of the world, which demands English language skills for all people from the various nations of the world, then the rules have changed: English has been taught in elementary school especially in Surabaya. In Indonesia, students start learning English tenses when they are in Elementary school. For the first time they learn about simple tenses that in the sentence it has minimum a subject and a verb, there are simple present tense and simple past tense. In the junior high school they continue to learn present continuous, present, and future tense. In the next education level, they learn more complex tenses which is in the sentence it has two subject and two verb.

We know that in English teaching, sentence structures are introduced in elementary school. We can assume that all students of junior high school in Indonesia have already been familiar with the sentence structure.

In Elementary School, the students have been taught how to make a good sentence which consists of a subject and a verb. English taught in the first grade students of junior high school includes reading, speaking and writing. Writing is one of basic language learning skills that should be learnt by the learners. There are kinds of writing taught in the junior high school especially in the first grade are descriptive and procedural text.

When the writer did a teaching practice at SMP 39 Surabaya, she noticed that many students did not seem to realize that what they wrote was not a sentence but a fragment. For example, they wrote *"Studying very hard on weekends"* that is not a sentence but a sentence fragment. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It usually lacks either a subject or a verb, or both, or contains only a dependent clause (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002). A dependent clause is like a main clause in that it must have a subject and verb, but it cannot stand alone as a sentence because it begins with a subordinating word such as *if, when, because, since, who, that, after, or before*. For example, *"After Maria bought the biology book"*. The correct is *"After Maria bought the biology book, she began studying for her exam"*. And then for the sentence *"Studying very hard on weekends"* should be *"Studying on weekends is very hard"*. That phenomenon makes the writer interested to conducting this study.

The writer has been interested in conducting a study on writing because writing is one of basic language learning skills that should be learned by students. In writing English students usually still make mistakes. Writing English is not easy to

junior high school students moreover English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Thus, this study needs to be research. By analysis the writings made by students, we will know how far the ability of junior high school students in English writing especially descriptive text. In English writing, grammar is very important to make a good sentence because; if we write incorrect grammar then it can make different perception to understand the sentence. The writer did not make the study about speaking skills because in the first grade students, their learning not focused in speaking and according to the information from the teacher of grade seven at SMPN 39 Surabaya, it is not easy to make a research in speaking skills because we have to record all of the students' said. Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) stated that spoken sentences do not have capital letters and full stops. So, it is more difficult to determine the limits of sentences in spoken. And if in the reading, there is no written evidence that produced by the students. Reading skills is the ability of understanding text. Therefore, the writer chooses writing skills in this research.

The English teacher informed the writer that the error that is mostly found in students' writing is that the sentence they write does not have a subject, does not have a verb, does not have the capital letter in the beginning, and does not end with a full stop (.). In the sentence structure, we should know about sentence elements such as subject, verb, complement, object and adverbial. The condition was known to the writer when she did a teaching practice in one of junior high schools in Surabaya. The errors mostly found in the students of Junior High School in writing are the errors

about subject/verb agreements, adjective or adverb and capital letters. The sentence structure investigated in this study is the sentence structure in the descriptive texts written by first grade students of junior high school. For example, the students write *"In the canteen, can buy meatball, soto, and fried rice"*. This sentence is incorrect because there is missing elements of the sentence. According to Greenbaum and Nelson, a simple sentence must have a subject and a verb. In that sentence there is no subject. We do not know who are doing this action. The correct sentence must be *"In the canteen, I/you/they/we can buy meatball, soto, and fried rice"*.

We know that students in junior high school have learned to write descriptive and procedural text. In this study, the writer chose a descriptive text, which is to describe a particular person, thing, animal or place. The writer chose descriptive text, not procedural text, because descriptive text has complete sentence structure than procedural text which does not have a subject. In the descriptive text, we can make complete sentence structure like there is a subject (S) and the predicate (P), but in the procedural text the sentence used is imperative sentence. Imperative sentence does not have a subject (S) written explicitly, so it may consist of a verb only. (Kirsznier & Mandel, 2008)

Making errors for most of language learners is something that cannot be avoided, especially in learning foreign language. Whenever language is learned or acquired, one is faced with the problem of errors. According to Brown (2007), errors that are made by foreign or second language learners in the process of constructing a

new system of language show the understanding of the process of foreign or second language acquisition.

There have been many studies about errors in writing. For example, Utomo (2001) examined kinds of grammatical errors and the most common errors found in Thesis Writing Design assignment of literature program students. He divided the types of errors analysis based on Jack Richard (1974). The finding showed that most errors in his study are errors in the use of verb. And the example from Mahardika (2008) find out the most common grammatical error that happen in the work of students in Writing II in regular class at the English Department of Airlangga University. She showed four ways to identify learners' error: omission, overgeneralization, misinformation, and misordering. The last example, Aprillia (2011) analyzed grammatical errors produced by twelfth grade students of Tour and Travel Services Department of SMK Pariwisata "Satya Widya". She divided the types if error based on Caroline Mei Lin Ho (2005). The findings showed errors regarding nouns and noun groups, verb and verb group, preposition, and sentence structure.

The second is errors analysis in sentence structure, for example from Ahmed Mohammad Saleh Alduais (2012), he compared the simple sentence structure in the form of statement of both standard Arabic (SA) and English (SE). The finding indicated that Standard Arabic (SA) allows four types of simple sentence in the form of statement with some restrictions and rules for each case (nominal, verbal,

equational, and non-verbal). Whereas English allows only one type which is nominal. And then the example from Linuwih (2004), she found three groups of syntactic errors made by the respondents in their writing, namely noun phrase, verb phrase and order word. Those three groups of errors are divided into eleven types of errors. Those types errors from the most frequently produced to the least one are number, determiner, agreement of subject and verb form, use of pronoun, use of verb, use of prepositions, use of the verb pattern, word order in question sentence, word order in embedded question, use of present tense, and use of past tense. Based on the frequencies of types the most common type of errors committed by the students is error in number. The theory that she used is from Politzer and Ramires about classified the errors based on the linguistics category of syntactic errors. The last is from Gustilo (2009) who found that the most frequently errors are related to punctuation usage (comma), vocabulary (word form and word choice), verb usage prepositions, run-on and fragments, noun endings (plural/singular and articles), and even as basic capitalization usage. The result showed that the most frequent error found in that study is the comma usage and punctuation error. The theory that she used is from Yates & Kenkel (2002) about troubling errors as a product of the developing linguistic competence of the learners.

Most of the studies emphasize more on word and phrase level. In other words, research into errors in sentence level is limited. Therefore, this study is focused on errors in sentence level, especially sentence structure.

In this study, the writer investigated sentence structure in descriptive texts produced by first grade students in SMP 39 Surabaya. This study is necessary because research about sentence structure in English writing of junior high school students in Indonesia is still limited. Sentence structure is the important aspect in writing therefore knowledge about sentence structure is important not only for teacher but also for students. By conducting this study, the writer expects to obtain identification and description of errors in sentence structure which are frequently made by the students. So it is possible to identify which sentence structure errors are most frequently made by the students.

The aim of this study is to find out kinds of errors sentence structure that the first grade students of Junior High School made in writing descriptive text. The writer chose the first grade students of junior high school as the participants because they start to write a paragraph especially descriptive text, so it is important to know whether or not the students make errors in sentence structure and what kinds of errors in sentence structure that students make. The writer hopes the result of this study will be useful, not only for the students, but also for the teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

What kinds of error in sentence structures are found in English descriptive texts produced by the first grade students of SMP N 39 Surabaya?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

To find out the kinds of error in sentence structures are produced by the first grade of Junior High School in writing descriptive text.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to give contribution to linguistic research particularly about errors in sentence structure. Moreover, the result of the study could be useful for English learners and teachers, especially in junior high school. The writer also hopes that the finding in this study may be used as a consideration for designing a syllabus of teaching writing for students of junior high school. Besides that, the writer also hopes that the readers especially the teachers could use the finding to create alternative strategies to teach writing in Junior High School students. As stated Ellis (1997), there are some good reasons for focusing on learners' errors. First, it is useful for a teacher to know what error learners make. Second, it is possible that making errors may actually help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The data of this study are descriptive texts written by 72 students of first grade junior high school in SMP 39 Surabaya. The students wrote the texts with the topic "My Family" or "My School". The writers limited the analysis to the omission of sentence elements, incorrect use of the sentence elements, word order, and subject-verb agreement. As Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) point out, the structure of a

sentence is determined by rules that decide the elements and the order of the elements in the sentence.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- **Error** : a deviant structure from the standard language reflecting interlanguage ability of the learner (Brown, 2007)
- **Sentence Structure** : the arrangement of words in sentences that include elements and word order. (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002)
- **Descriptive Text** : a descriptive text communicates how something looks, sounds, smells, tastes or feels. The arrangement of details in a description usually reflects the way you actually look at the person, scene, or object. (Kirszner & Mandell, 2008, p.68)
- **Word order** : word order deals with the arrangement of words into a phrase, clause, or sentence (Quirk et al., 1990)

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW