

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

II.1. Extensive Writing as One of the Essential Courses in the English Department

II.1.1. The Learning of Writing

To communicate ideas is the most widely recognized function of language. We use language in order to exchange information to others. People then may speak or write in any oral or written interaction. In written communication, however, writing becomes the important artificially created symbol for the representation of language (Bright, 1992). Writing then is considered as a visual symbol for communicating information.

As can be seen, people learn to speak without any special training whereas they must be taught to write. The rules of spoken can be acquired through conversation while the rules of written are learned largely through instruction and practice.

Learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process (Richards, 1990 : 100). In order to

produce a good written work, student has to undergo numerous practices. He also has to follow rules of language that base the composed written work. A writing forces to sort out and organize ideas into words. To write more will give chances to practice since those are needed to develop the ability to use the rules of language in an appropriate way. The adjustment of rules takes time to follow because it can be achieved solely through habit so that students are also able to write specific forms of writing such as research or thesis.

Writing passes a problem of fluency activity since the teaching of second language writing has often been synonymous with the teaching of sentence building (Long and Richards, 1990). Writing should not be seen as merely a sentence building because its characteristics and its strategies of production are quite unlike those encountered in sentence building. Each word should be composed based on the rules of grammar and should carry a cohesive relation between its words.

Unlike speaker, writer has enough time to think what he is going to write. Besides, he does not even has to give an immediate feedback to reader. So, writer

can monitor his writing work and it can also be examined and reviewed.

Thus, writing is the symbol of language production and comprehension. Therefore, it can be held if only that student has mastered the rules of language. So, it is important for student to have linguistic competence in order to write well.

Further more, writing is suited for some functions :

- recording facts and communicating ideas
- a medium for distant contact
- social and *phatic* functions such as in a birthday card, wedding card, or Christmas card
- written records are easier to keep and scan. It is to provide an immediate mnemonic written records that can be read often (Crystal, 1989 : 178).

However, a lot of other ideas are providing alternatives to resemble the function of written works these days so that it is not necessary anymore to use a written work as the medium of communication to transfer information. Other development of technology can even change those functions such as : radio, television, cassette, telephone-answering machine, and so forth.

II.1.2. Extensive Writing Course

There are numerous courses that are given in order to support the study in the English Department of Airlangga University. These courses are arranged solely to develop students' skills, including the writing skills. One of those courses is '*Extensive Writing*'.

The Extensive Writing course is a course of writing which is arranged specially to improve students' skills in writing. It is more than connected and concise words but trains how to put thought scientifically and logically in written language so that they are able to write paper, research, or thesis. The written practices given in this course will encourage students to practice specific written language which concerned with the production of accurate written sentences.

From numerous and varied assignments given in this course, students are better provided in organizing ideas and putting their ideas and details in logical way. The students learn to understand language to which they are exposed and to produce language to which they are encouraged to use.

All those practices are conducted systematically:

- a. students are given assignment in class related to a certain topic. It is possible to include experience, letter, demonstration, or mini thesis. There will be no two topics that will ever be used in the same occasion. Students can freely develop the topic according to their individual abilities. This class activity of writing is given once in two weeks.
- b. students write within a specified period of time on a single topic. It is about 100 minutes. The works then collected to the teacher and will be returned the next week after the teacher has already corrected.
- c. each work consists of about three to five paragraphs. During the whole semester, students are given six assignments. The first four works are free writing, except that the teacher gives them a certain different topic in every week in which they have to do the assignment. The fifth assignment is model type writing. Students are given an essay as the model and then the students have to make a writing of that kind. The last work is a home

assignment. This is considered as the final exam. Students do this assignment at home and they are, of course, given more time to do the assignment. It is no more five paragraphs writing since the assignment is to be a fiction.

- d. the teacher corrects every sentence of the writing works. The grammar is to be the criterion by which the works are judged. A grammar correction offers advantages of encouraging and improving grammar skills.
- e. students may also conduct a class discussion, to discuss the assignment that has been corrected. The students can comment on each other works. They discuss each other's work in order to arrive at the best possible solution to a grammar problem.

Thus, the Extensive Writing course is considered as one of the essential courses in the English Department since it will help students to master important features of writing so that they can have full understanding of writing skills.

II.2. Written Language : Grammatically Structured

Language is used for communication among people. People may speak or write to transmit their thoughts to each other. Hence, speaking and writing have an important role in communication because speaking is part of oral communication while writing is part of written communication.

In written communication, however, the writer and the reader cannot make their contact directly. His writing must be clear enough in order to be understood. It is made by the ability to transmit information through the use of language.

Written language used in written communication is primarily transactional or message oriented (Brown and Yule, 1983 : 4). The goal of written language is to convey information accurately and appropriately. To do this, written language has to be more explicit than spoken discourse since both the writer and the reader cannot make their contact directly. So, the writing work must be clear enough in order to be understood. Besides, the writer has much more time to reflect, to rethink, to revise, and to edit as essential ways of obtaining the best expression. Thus, the written text

is made by the ability to transmit information through the use of language.

The written language used in transmission of information must be richly organized (Brown and Yule, 1983 :15). It is structured grammatically. The writer then must be very careful to sort out and organize his thought into sentences since the syntax of the written text is typically more structured.

Spoken and written language display a number of important differences, in spite of the fact that they are obviously different in physical form. The rules that govern acceptable speech and writing are often different (Crystal, 1995 : 291). As can be seen in this example :

" ___ did you wait for? "

This sentence is questioning the object of the sentence. So, 'whom' is used in written text whereas 'who' is used in spoken discourse. In conclusion, the rules of language should be strictly followed in writing since it is more formal than speech.

There are also several differences in language structure. Written language employs a different syntax and vocabulary from spoken discourse. It has a more

elaborated linguistic system characterized by the use of complex rather than simple clauses, a variety of clause types. These clauses in written language are related by the words as *moreover, however, in spite of, besides*, while the spoken discourse largely uses : *and, but, if*, to connect clauses. Rhetorical organizers of larger stretches of discourse like *firstly, more important than, in conclusion*, are used in written language. Written language is also marked by the use of more specific vocabulary, a higher frequency of complex verb phrases and tenses. However, prefabricated 'fillers' like *well, erm, I think, you know, and so on* are not used. Written language sentences are generally structured in 'subject-predicate' form whereas it is topic comment structure in spoken language (Brown and Yule, 1983 : 15-17), as in :

the boys + did you let them play?

Besides, most writing avoids the use of deictic expressions which are likely to be ambiguous (Crystal, 1995 :291).

An incorrect form of a single sound which can differentiate meaning is avoided in written language (Richards,1985). For example, the pairs of voiced and

unvoiced sounds or the --ed ending in the formation of past tense, such as *bet* and *bed*, *stay* and *stayed*, or such sentences like *He knew it; Did he know it?* So, a writer should be very careful in using the structure of the composed words that he must first master the language rules. He must have knowledge of grammar, sound patterns, rules for word and sentence formation, and principles of semantic interpretation, for instance.

II.3. Common Errors Made by Students in Writing

Unlike other basic skills, writing presents a problem for fluency activity since it needs more conscious monitoring rather than, for instance, speech. It is possible for a writer to revise his writing since he has much more time in the process of putting his thought into written language. Thus, the writer can be very careful in producing corrected forms of written text. Further, writing requires a more precisely typical linguistic patterning. In this case, errors are unacceptable.

In writing a composition, students often make some errors particularly when they write in a language outside the native language. It happens commonly in a

second language writing since the nature of the target language is different from their native language.

The students of the English Department of Airlangga University still make errors in grammar when they write. The errors done by those students are varied. Therefore, instead of saying *:People in the cities can hardly find water nowadays* they say *People in the cities can hardly to find water now adays*. Error such as this is fatal because it results in ungrammatical sentence.

Students need more opportunities for working on their writings in order to have good writing skills. So, a lot of practices, controlled and guided writing exercises will make the students skillful if only they should first master the rules of the language. When they have become skillful they will not repeat the same errors.

If we want to talk about all problems faced by the students, it will be too unabridged. The writer then limits the study to only errors of grammar.

Based on the data, students' errors in writing can be classified into :

1. errors in agreement
 - a. *Each ethnic has their own culture.*
 - b. *The last chapter discuss about the conclusion.*
2. errors in using prepositions
 - a. *My father called me as a bad girl.*
 - b. *They went home in the third day.*
3. errors in using articles
 - a. *It has an unique position.*
 - b. *It will become control to our conduct.*
4. errors in using the verb to be
 - a. *The fact that are always exist in Black Society.*
 - b. *The dry season is begins from April to October.*
5. errors in tenses
 - a. *I have received your letter two days ago.*
 - b. *After we have fought, we stopped.*
6. errors in word order
 - a. *It is better to not waste it for worthless thing.*
 - b. *Childhood actually is the most important phase.*
7. miscellaneous errors

due to its small percentage some errors are grouped into one class, miscellaneous errors. Those errors are, for example, errors in word forming, errors in the use of relative pronoun, passive voice, and

degree of comparison. It can be seen as follows:

- a. *Water is easy to be get.*
- b. *The subject of linguistics are more clearer and exact than literature.*
- c. *People in the cities can hardly to find water now adays.*

These are the problems in which the writer happens to be interested in and feels some advantage in analyzing them. The list above is arranged according to the appearance of the number of errors made by the students in writing. Those errors are frequently found each time they are given an assignment of writing. The six classes of errors above are mostly found on students works.