

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

English is popular through the entire world; people have to acquire English in order to communicate in the global society. English has been the most important and popular foreign language so it has been made a compulsory subject in schools. It is taught to students since they are in Elementary School, even nowadays it is introduced when they are in Kindergarten. English plays numerous roles in our daily activities, both written and oral. Therefore, English proficiency becomes one of the most significant requirements in many job vacancies.

People realize that the only way to master English proficiency is by learning which will take a long process. It starts knowing nothing or a simple world of that language until being able to produce correct utterances or sentences. In the process of learning the target language, the learners face problems resulting from the language system differences between the target language and his or her native language. The term learning applies to a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of a language (Yule, 1985: 151). Grammar involves the study of analysis of the structure found in a language. The fundamental components of the English language system also include the way we change words, called morphology (Katamba, 1993: 19). The definition of this

aspect can be seen in The Macquire and in the Longman dictionary (cited in Burns, 1999: 3):

the features of language (sounds, words, formation and arrangement of words, etc) considered systematically as a whole, esp. with reference to their mutual contrasts and relations: *English grammar. (The Macquire dictionary 1991)*

[the study and practice of] the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. (*Longman dictionary of contemporary English 1978*)

In learning English morphology, learners must learn the bits and pieces of words as well as the words themselves and how the words fit together in sentences. For example, they must learn to produce and manipulate the morphemes of the language. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a language. For example, in the word *books*, there are two morphemes: *book* and suffix *-s*. The morpheme *book* is a free morpheme in that it can stand by itself. The suffix *-s* is a bound morpheme in that it must always be joined to another morpheme. In this case, the suffix *-s* indicates number (more than one), which is a grammatical feature. Yule (1985: 62) states that bound morpheme categories are divided into two types, namely, derivational morphemes and inflectional morphemes. The inflectional morphemes are not used to produce a new word in the English language, but rather to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of a word. Inflectional morphemes are used to show if a word is plural or singular, if it is past verb form or not, and if it is a comparative or possessive form. The examples of inflectional morphemes can be seen in the words *loved* and *boys*. The word *loved* is composed of two units, namely the free morpheme, *love* + suffix *-d*.

The first unit refers to feeling; the second unit refers to past time. The word, *boys* is also composed of two units, namely the free morpheme, *boy* + suffix *-s*. The first unit refers to boy and the second unit refers to the number of boys (more than one boy). Other examples of inflectional morphemes usage are in the sentences, Linda is *singing*, she *sings*, she is *smaller*, *the smallest* and *Myrna's* house.

English has seven inflectional morphemes, namely, plural morpheme, genitive morpheme, agreement morpheme, present-participle morpheme, past-tense morpheme, comparative and superlative morpheme (Katamba: 1993: 51). Plural morpheme indicates the plural number in most nouns; the genitive morpheme indicates the genitive case in most nouns. The agreement morpheme indicates the third-person singular, present tense of verbs. The present-participle morpheme is used to show the present-participle forms of verbs; the past-tense morpheme is used to show past many verbs. The comparative and superlative morphemes respectively indicate degree of adjectives.

A learner inevitably makes countless of errors in learning a target language (Brown, 1994: 164). Errors are significant in the process of teaching and learning. Errors tell the teacher how far the learner has progressed and provide the researcher with evidence on how language is learned. Hendrickson (1979: 44) stated when the learners use a foreign language creatively, they produce many errors. These errors occur naturally in spontaneous communication. In addition, Corder (1981: 138) stated that many language educators have proposed that foreign language teachers should expect errors from their students, and should accept those as natural phenomena in the process of learning a second language.

Teachers are reminded that people make mistakes when learning a new skill, but those people learn from their mistakes when they learn English periodically. Furthermore, he states that not only do all language learners necessarily produce errors they are signals that actual learning is taking place; they can indicate students progress and success in language learning. Studying students' errors also has immediate practical application for foreign language teachers. The learners' error in learning and using a second or a foreign language has also been a source of concern to language researcher.

The learners' error in learning a foreign language has also been a source of concern to James Hendrickson. James Hendrickson has done the study about error analysis. The title of that paper is *Error Analysis and Error Correction in Language Teaching*. This study wants to find out the difficulties and errors made by foreign language students in English composition. He analyzed errors based on Burt and Kiparsky's classification theories of error analysis. Some definition of errors and error analysis by Corder, Valdman, and Richard are also used in this study. A student of Petra Christian University has conducted another study that analyzed inflectional morphemes. The title of the thesis is *An Error Analysis of the Inflectional Morphemes produced by Speaking I Students of English Department of Petra Christian University* and it is written by Iis Verawati. The thesis writer wants to find out the types of errors in inflectional morphemes produced by the Speaking I Class students of English Department of Petra Christian University. This study used the William T. Littlewood's error analysis

theory. This study also used the definition of error by Littlewood and definition of inflectional morphemes by Godby's theory.

Indonesian learners of English also face problems because of the different linguistics systems between Indonesian and English. In this study, the writer is interested in analyzing some errors in the inflectional morphemes. The writer focused her study on error analysis in the inflectional morphemes. The inflectional errors that will be analyzed are the plural morpheme and genitive morpheme in nouns, the agreement morpheme, present-participle morpheme, and past-tense morpheme in verbs, the comparative and superlative morpheme of adjectives. Furthermore, she chose the students of the first-year of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik randomly.

I.2 Statement of the Problem

1. What are the types of errors in inflectional morphemes made by the first-year students of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik in their written work?
2. What is the most frequent inflectional errors made by the first-year students of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik?

I.3 Objective of the Study

1. To find out what types of the errors in the inflectional morphemes made by the first-year students of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik in their written work
2. To find out the most frequent inflectional errors made by the first-year students of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik

I.4 Significance of the Study

This study is aimed to giving description about errors in the inflectional morphemes made by the first-year students of SMA Nahdlatul Ulama I Gresik. The writer hopes that the findings will give valuable contribution for linguistics students who are interested in knowing the study about errors in the inflectional morphemes. This study might also help the students to recognize errors they have made and will motivate them to improve their knowledge about the usage of English inflectional morphemes. Hopefully, this study will help the English teachers in teaching English inflectional morphemes to their students, so they can emphasize those parts in teaching.

I.5 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid any misinterpretation in understanding the study, the writer gives some key terms which are acquired.

Error : failure in using the appropriate rule of the language, in which will help us to see how learners the second language and develop underlying system of rules.

(Littlewood, 1984: 22)

Morphemes : the smallest difference in the shape of a word that correlates with the smallest difference in word or sentence meaning or in grammatical structure. (Katamba, 1993: 24)

- Error analysis** : the system of observing, identifying, and classifying of learners' errors. (Brown, 1994: 166)
- Inflectional morphemes** : bound morphemes that are used to produce new words in the English language, but rather to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of word. (Yule, 1985: 62)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW