CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background of the Study

Writing is one of the courses that the students are obliged to take during their study in the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University (Widiati, 2011:26-27). Students of second, third, fourth, and fifth semester have to take Writing 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Widiati, 2011:39,49,60,70). It is an obligation from the university to take these courses during their study. The goals of this course are to present the basic concepts of various genres of text such as recounts, narratives, descriptives, explanations, expositions, discussions, and reviews and to let the students pour their perspectives out into a piece of writing (Widiati, 2011:39,39,60,70). However, the process of writing is not easy because it needs many aspects to produce a writing composition (Santosa, 2011:151-152).

To make a good composition, one does not only need the prior knowledge about the topic, but also requires a rich vocabulary, knowledge about generic structure of a composition

and knowledge about grammar rules to make the composition comprehensible. The prior knowledge about the topic means understanding what is happening and bringing it into a piece of writing; therefore, the prior knowledge is the first requirement before writing a composition. The other things such as a wide vocabulary, knowledge about generic structure and grammar rules also play a role in making a good composition. Being rich in vocabularies can be obtained through reading books. The more books people read, the more vocabularies people will get. Besides, knowledge about generic structure of a composition can be directly obtained through the composition itself while knowledge about grammar rules is deducted from sentences. It means that the students are introduced to all genres of text and grammar rules before they compose a piece of writing. Presenting all text genres to the students makes them have an idea of what must be in each text. Meanwhile, grammar rules also equip the students for making a good composition. Grammar rules are important, considering the text must be understandable. In other words, the students have to be familiar with the generic structure of all text types and master all the grammar rules to make a good composition.

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Because this subject needs those three aspects which are not easy for all students, mistakes or errors often appear in the students' own composition. The mistakes or errors can be word choice, order of words, or grammar. It means that although students have already read lots of books, they might still choose wrong words or use words in a wrong order in their own writing. Moreover, the grammar rules, which students have already learned theoretically, cannot be easily applied by the students in their own writing as well.

From those errors which often appear in the writing composition, the writer wants to focus on the grammar errors. The reason why the author chooses grammar errors as her focus is because she attempts to know the students' mastery to the grammar rules which have been taught in another course called Structure. In Structure class, the students are only taught the rules and given some exercises to check if they really understand the material. However, the problem is that even though they know the rules and can do the exercises well, sometimes they do not know how and when to apply the grammar rules when they make a composition on their own. For this reason, the writer wants to

know how well the students' mastery to grammar rules is when they compose a piece of writing.

Another reason why the writer wants to focus on grammar is that the grammar rules which students violate in their composition can be directly recognized and analyzed. Actually, errors of word choice and order of words can also be analyzed but the problem is that the students are not specifically taught how to choose the suitable words or how to order the words correctly before constructing a writing composition. As a result, it is difficult to analyze why the students make errors of word choice and order of words. Whereas, that grammar rules are explicitly taught to the students makes the writer able to recognize what grammar rules are violated and to analyze why those rules are not used correctly by the students. Here, these two things are the reasons why the author wants to analyze the grammar errors. Through those two reasons, the author opines that the students have not been aware enough of grammar rules taught even though they are able to perform well in Structure Class.

More specifically, the writer wants to analyze the grammar errors found in students' compositions of Writing 3. Most students, who are taking Writing 3, have already taken and

passed Structure 1, 2, and 3. As stated above that the students learn the grammar rules and do exercises relating to the grammar rules in Structure Class. Logically, those who have taken and passed Structure 1, 2, and 3 should have mastered all the grammar rules. Here, the writer would like to know the students' mastery of grammar rules through their own writing. In short, the writer wants to see if the Writing-3 students are aware enough of applying grammar rules correctly in their own writing composition.

In Writing 3, explanation and exposition are introduced to the students. The purpose, generic structure, language features and models of explanation and exposition text are explained before the students practice to write each kind of text. In the end, those students taking Writing 3 must be able to produce a piece of explanation text and two pieces of expository text. From those two kinds of text, the writer chooses explanation text as the data source in her study. It is because the writer would like to focus on passive voice construction. As we know that explanation text requires passive voice construction. However, passive voice construction is difficult enough for students to apply in their composition. What makes passive voice difficult is the form of all

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tenses which students have to master first in order to apply the passive voice rules in producing an explanation composition on their own. Based on those reasons, the writer is interested in conducting an analysis on the errors of passive voice construction found in the explanation composition of English Department students at Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University.

1.2.   Statements of the Problem

This study is intended to reveal the types of errors of passive voice construction which are found in the students' explanation composition. Further, the writer is also interested in finding out the possible causes of the errors found.

In line with the background above, the writer conducts this study to answer the following questions:

1. What types of errors of passive voice construction are found in the explanation composition?

2. What are the possible causes of those errors?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the statements of the problem above, the purposes of this study are to find out the types of errors of passive voice construction in the explanation composition and to determine the possible causes of the errors.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

This study is viewed from the theory of contrastive analysis and error analysis which is summarized as follows:

1.4.1. Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Contrastive Analysis is a comparison of a learner's L_1 and L_2 (Dulay et al., 1982:97). CA took the position that a learner's L_1 "interferes" with his or her acquisition of a L_2, and that it therefore comprises the major obstacle to successful mastery of the new language. Terms of 'interference' and 'transfer' have been used to refer to two very distinct linguistic phenomena. The CA hypothesis states that 'interference' is due to unfamiliarity with the L_2, to the learner's not having learned target patterns. Further, it is manifested in the language the learner learns, not the first language of the learner.

Whereas, 'transfer' is used to refer to a process described as the automatic, uncontrolled, and subconscious use of past

learned behaviors in the attempt to produce new responses. In this sense, transfer may be of two types: negative and positive. The CA hypothesis held that the automatic "transfer" of L_1 structure to L_2 performance is "negative" when L_2 and L_1 structures differ and "positive" when L_2 and L_1 structures are the same. Negative transfer would result in errors, while positive transfer would result in correct constructions (Dullay et al., 1982:101). Errors that reflect on the learner's first language structure have been labeled '*interlingual errors'* (Dullay et al., 1982:102).

1.4.2. Error Analysis (EA)

Error analysis is an analytical tool, as are the specification of transitional constructions, the computation of acquisition orders, and the delineation of special utterance types (Dulay et al., 1982:145). Descriptive taxonomies assume that the accurate description of errors is a separate activity from the task of inferring the sources of those errors. It means that classifying errors according to some observable surface feature of the error itself, without reference to its underlying cause or source. According to descriptive taxonomies, there are four major types of errors presented. They are linguistic category, surface category, comparative analysis, and communicative effect. Two major

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purposes which guide these descriptive taxonomies are to present error categories which rely solely on observable (rather than inferred) characteristics for their definition and to report the findings of research conducted to date with respect to error types observed.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Through the findings of the study, the teachers will know the students' most difficult areas in constructing passive voice and it gives the invaluable inputs to teachers to emphasize the crucial things found in this study when teaching passive voice construction. It also makes the students' understanding about passive voice construction much more complex so they can construct passive voice correctly and know when to use passive voice construction.

1.6. Assumption

The explanation composition is taught in Writing 3 and the students are obligated to compose their own explanation text. Passive voice construction is used in the explanation composition of English Department students.

1.7. Limitation and Scope

This study focuses on the errors of passive voice construction found in an explanation text which is composed by English Department students who are taking Writing 3 in academic year of 2014/2015 at Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and/or misunderstanding, it is necessary to define the key terms that are used in this study. Those key terms are as follows.

Passive voice construction is a series of transformations that are triggered by Case and thematic-role (Theta-role) requirements (Chomsky, 1981 as quoted in Thompson & Scheepers, 2013:74).

Explanation text is a text which tells processes relating to forming of natural, social, scientific and cultural phenomena (Wahidi, 2009:11).

Error is the use of linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning (Erdoğan, 2005:263).

1.9.   Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I discusses the reasons why the writer brings the problem, states the problems, the objectives, and the significance, provides theoretical framework, assumes things related to the study, limits the scope, and defines the key terms used in this study. Chapter II provides review of related literature and previous studies. Chapter III presents the research methodology which consists of research design, data source, instrument, and the technique of data analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings and discussion. It answers the problem questions which are stated on the statement of the problem and relates the findings with the theory and the previous studies. Chapter V, the last chapter, is about conclusions and suggestions.