

# **CHAPTER I**

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### 1.1 Background of the Study

The Indonesian government had decided English as a subject to be taught in formal education since English functions as the first foreign language. That is why, most schools in Indonesia, especially in Surabaya, put English as a significant lesson to be taught since children sit in the elementary school. Even, there are some courses or other informal educations offer an English program for all ages of students. As a result, some children have learnt English at English courses or other informal education before they go to elementary school.

In learning foreign language materials, there are two strategies that can be used. First is *Structural syllabus*, of which characteristic is learning the grammar of the foreign language from the easier to the more difficult. Second is *Functional syllabus* which can be described as the backbone of a language course based on language functions or speech acts rather than on units of grammar or situations with a grammar focus (Dobson, 1988:33). Here, the effectiveness of communication is more significant than grammatical correctness. In other words, the primary target of the structural syllabus is to build language competence through what Widdowson terms USAGE – knowledge of linguistic rules (Widdowson, 1978), whereas the primary target of the functional syllabus is to build language competence through USE – the

ability to use this knowledge for effective communication (Widdowson, 1978).

Since English is a language for communication, the Functional syllabus is practiced in Indonesia today in order to equip the learners with the ability to communicate in real situation. However, there is still a weakness of this syllabus; there is no detail explanation in grammar since the focus of learning is the rules of communication. Moreover, Language-teaching methodologist Alexander (1976) in Dobson (1988:33) argues that “functional syllabus is based wholly on functions (which would undoubtedly fail to present essential grammar adequately because there would be no basis for control)”.

As a result, many students, including the second semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, who have taken tenses in Structure 1, still commit grammatical errors in producing words, phrases and sentences including in asking questions. They will certainly ask questions, specifically Information questions, which are familiarly known as Wh-questions, when the given information is not understood. However, the roles of Wh-questions are significant. Wh-questions in this case are a part of the grammar that is one of the components for ESL learners to acquire, for grammatical mistakes are barriers to clear communication (Kessler, 1984: iii-7).

There are several elements in constructing Wh-questions. They are: wh-words, auxiliary verb, subject and verb. Wh-words – such as where, when,

what, why, who, whom, whose, how and which, etc – are put immediately in front of the auxiliary as in “What are you doing?” The auxiliary ‘be’ such as am, is, are, was, were and auxiliaries such as do, does, did are put after the wh-question words. Auxiliary inversion or ‘do’ insertion is required to form wh-question except when the question is the subject of the statement, as in: “When did you go to Kediri?” versus “Who stole my pencil?” In this question, the wh-question word, who, replaces the subject, while the rest of the sentence remains the same. The verb, then, follows the subject in the form of infinitive without to, as in: “Where did you go yesterday?” In conclusion, the deviation from wh-question’s pattern means errors in producing it. Therefore, based on this problem and realizing the importance of wh-question to be learned, the writer decides to conduct a research under a topic of Errors made by the second semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. She chooses the second semester students of The English Department as the subject of the study since they had learned about Yes/No questions and Wh-questions when they were in Senior high school and had mastered the tenses in Structure 1 lesson when they were in the first semester of college.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

The major problem that should be answered in this study is:

- What kinds of error are mostly made by the second semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in constructing Wh-question?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study is to determine kinds of error, which are mostly made by the second semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in constructing Wh-question.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

In this study, the writer would like to investigate kinds of errors that the students make and why most of them make those errors in constructing wh-questions. The findings of this study are expected to be used by the English teachers as one of the sources to improve the effectiveness and the techniques of teaching wh-questions.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The underlying theories of this study are Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Inter language, since these theories are dealing with errors of second or foreign language learners.

### **1.5.1 Contrastive Analysis**

James (1980:3) states “CA is a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive, not comparative) two-valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a pair of languages), and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared.” While, the Contrastive Analysis (henceforth CA) hypothesis points out that the interference of the native language to the target language due to the learner’s unfamiliarity with the target language, that is, to the learners’ not having learned the target grammatical patterns. It also states that the structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language learners are studying.

Rod Ellis (1986:19) quoting from Marton (1980) states that “interference of the first language will always be present in the foreign language learning” Thus, the writer used this theory of CA to discuss since she wanted to analyze the interference of the learner’s first language in constructing wh-questions.

### **1.5.2 Error Analysis**

Error Analysis (henceforth EA) considers error as a process for the learners to acquire the language. It means that the errors are definitely not the result of the transfer or interference from the native language but the result of trial and error. The learner’s cognitive and affective competence will be identified by investigating the sources of

errors. Then, we can formulate an integrated understanding of the process of second language acquisition. In this study, the theory of EA was used to analyze and predict the sources of the learner's error of the wh-questions.

### **1.5.3 Inter Language**

Inter Language is a branch of linguistic which is likewise not primarily concerned with languages in the conventional sense but it is interested in the emergence of these languages rather than in the finished product (James, 1980:3). According to Selinker (1972) in Jack C. Richards (1980:37-41), there are five processes which are central to language. They are language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization of target linguistic material. Each process forces error material upon surface Inter Language utterances. That is why, the theory of Inter Language also significance to discuss in this study.

### **1.6 Assumptions**

The writer has several assumptions in conducting this research study. This study is accomplished under the following assumptions:

- a. The learners have mastered yes/no questions.

- b. The learners have learned about wh-questions with their own schoolteacher when they were in the senior high school.
- c. The learners have mastered all kind of tenses since they have passed Structure 1 in the first semester.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitation**

In this investigation, the writer limits the scope of the discussion in the form of The Simple Present Tense, The Present Continuous Tense, Simple The Past Tense, The Past Continuous Tense, The Future Tense, The Present Perfect Tense, and The Perfect Tense, which the second semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya have learnt them all in Structure 1 in their first semester. The writer also limits the wh-questions based on the learners' mastery in English. In this case, the writer will use wh-questions: what, what time, who, where, why, how, how often, how many and how much. Moreover, the writer will analyse the other errors that occurs on the students' work besides the wrong construction of Wh-question's elements.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

It is necessary to explain the significant terms *errors* and *wh-questions* to avoid misinterpretation, since they are the center of this study.

### 1.8.1 Errors

According to Corder (1973) in Walz (1982), "Learning a new language requires a trial and error approach, and errors are evidence that the learner is testing hypotheses of underlying rules, categories, and systems." Meanwhile, Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary states an error as an act that through ignorance, deficiency, or accident fails to achieve what should be done.

Based on what cause errors, Chomsky (1965) as quoted by Dulay et.al (1982:139) classifies them into two as follows:

1. Performance errors which are caused by the fatigue and inattention.
2. Competence errors which are caused by lack of knowledge of the rules of language.

Dulay (1982:146) classifies errors according to the linguistics category into two: Surface Strategy Taxonomy and Comparative Taxonomy. He also explains that in Surface Strategy Taxonomy, errors are categorized into *Omission* in which the learners omit necessary items, *Addition* in which the learners may add unnecessary items, *Misformation* in which the learners may misform items, and the last is *Misordering* in which the learners misorder items. On the other hand, the classification of errors in a Comparative Taxonomy is based on comparisons between the structure of second language errors and certain other types of construction.

### **1.8.2 WH-Questions**

Wh-question is also called information question. It means a question that asks for information by using a question word. According to Quirk (1992:394-395), “Wh-questions are formed with the aid of one of the following interrogative words, such as who, whom, whose, what, which, where, how and why”. He also states that (1) The Q-element generally comes first in the sentence and (2) The Q-word itself takes first position in the Q element. Therefore, errors in wh-questions are deviations from any of the Wh-questions elements such as misuse of subject, verb form and word order.

### **1.9 Organization of the study**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, the significance of the study, theoretical framework and so on. Chapter II deals with Review of Related Literature, while Chapter III presents Research Methodology of this study. Next, Chapter IV discusses Data Analysis and Findings. Finally, Chapter V is about Conclusions and Suggestions.