

**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English as an international language is learned in many countries around the world. This is not only in reference to specified English-speaking territories, but also as a mean of international communication across national boundaries among speakers of other languages. This reality puts English as a compulsory language to be learnt by non-English speaking territories, including Indonesia.

In Indonesia, English functions as the first foreign language. This means that English is not used in the official language, nor the political and economic life of the nation and in the daily life activity. As a foreign language, English in Indonesia, especially in Surabaya, has been taught since in the elementary school. Moreover, some children have learnt English at English courses or other informal education even before they go to elementary school.

Derived from this reality many teachers seemed to consider their students in junior high school to be able to produce utterances correctly. In fact, a lot of junior high school students who have already learned English since they were in the elementary school still commit errors in producing words, phrases and sentences. Most of the errors basically concern with the grammar. Like what Harmer (1987:13) said in his book *Teaching and Learning Grammar* that English seems difficult to be studied by other

foreign learners since it is full of exceptions to grammar rules such as in the case of the irregular verb and also the subject-verb agreement.

Those errors can be categorized into three kinds of categories. The first category is the errors that result from the interference of the native language, which is called the contrastive analysis. The second category is the errors, which are the result of the learner in making their own strategies in their learning a new language. The last category is the errors that result from the wrong strategies of learning.

As a language, English functions as a way to communicate with others. In communicating with others, it is necessary for us to be involved in interaction, give and take information. Therefore, if one party does not understand, he will certainly ask questions. Hence, the roles of wh-questions are significant. Wh- questions in this case are a part of the grammar that is one of the important components for EFL learners to acquire, for grammatical mistakes are barriers to clear communication (Kessler 1984: iii-7).

There are several elements in constructing the wh-questions. The elements are: wh-word, 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?", "Where do you live?" 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 necessary to form wh-question except when the

question is the subject of the statement, such as “Who eats the banana?”. In this kind of question, the wh-question word, *who*, replaces the subject, while the rest of the sentence remains the same. However, if the wh-question does not ask about the subject, the subject is put immediately after the auxiliary. The verb, then, follows the subject in the form of *infinitive without to*.

In conclusion, deviation from wh-question’s pattern means an error in producing it. The writer is interested in this study since when she was an extra curricular teacher in Pencinta Damai Junior High School, she observed that a lot of students got confused with this matter. She also observed the same problem occurred in Stella Maris Junior High School when she was having a teaching practice there. She realized that it was her duty to help the students, and she tried to explain it repeatedly. However, it was difficult for the writer to overcome this, since there were no data showing which part of the wh- question became the most troublesome for the students.

Therefore, based on this problem and realizing that wh- question is very important to be learned, the writer decided to conduct a research under the topic of Error Analysis in Wh- question made by the Third Year Students of Stella Maris Junior High School. The writer chose Stella Maris Junior High School as the subject of the study since the writer did her teaching practice in this school.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

With reference to the background of the study, the major problem formulated in this study was “What elements of the wh-question pattern are mostly misconstrued by the students of Stella Maris Junior High School?” and in order to answer the problem, the following sub problems should be answered first:

1. Do the errors of wh-question pattern mostly consist of the wrong use of wh-words?
2. Do the errors of wh-question pattern mostly consist of the wrong use of auxiliary?
3. Do the errors of wh-question pattern mostly consist of the wrong use of verb form?
4. Do the errors of wh-question pattern mostly consist of the wrong use of the subject?
5. Do the errors of wh-question pattern mostly consist of the wrong word order?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to determine the elements that mostly misconstrued by Stella Maris Junior High School Students. To achieve the major objective, the writer divided the major objective into sub objectives that should be achieved first. To learn easily, we should:

1. determine whether the students' errors in the wh- question mostly consist of the wrong use of Wh-words.
2. determine whether the students' errors in the wh- question mostly consist of the wrong use of auxiliaries
3. determine whether the students' errors in the wh- question mostly consist of the wrong construction of subject.
4. determine whether the students' errors in the wh- question mostly consist of the wrong use of the verb forms.
5. determine whether the students' errors in the wh- question mostly consist of the wrong construction of word order.

#### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

Corder (1973:265) says that studying student's error can provide feedback for the foreign language teacher. The writer in this current study would like to investigate the most troublesome element 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 their teaching about wh-questions. The findings of this study are also expected to be able to show what parts of the syllabus which are inadequately learned or taught and therefore need further attention. Just like what Dulay et. al. (1982:138) say that studying learners' errors serves two purposes: (1) it provides data about the nature of the language learning process can be made; and (2) it can locate the part of the target language

students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types distract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively. At last, the writer hopes that the findings can be used to minimize the error made by the learners.

### 1.5 The Assumption

To conduct this study, the writer made several assumptions.

1. The students have been able to construct simple active statements since the writer would ask the students to convert the active statements into wh-questions. These active statements are in past and present with the pattern of:

Simple present:

Subject + Verb (infinitive without to) + Object

Simple Past:

Subject + Verb (in second form) + Object

2. The students have mastered Yes/ No questions, of which the patterns are more or less the same as wh-questions.
3. The students have learned about wh-questions with their own teacher.
4. The students were of the same age and of the same academical competence.
5. The condition of the rooms, air and situations of the class used for this study were the same.
6. The materials (questions) had been well selected to suit the group.

## 1.6 Theoretical Framework

Several theories namely: Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, and Interlanguage are used as the underlying theories.

### 1.6.1 Contrastive Analysis

The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis states that the interference of the native language to the target language is due to the learner's unfamiliarity with the target language, that is, to the learners' not having learned the target grammatical patterns well. Thus according to Contrastive Analysis (henceforth CA) proponents, the structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language learners are studying.

The CA hypothesis also states that when the structures in the native language differs from those in the target language, errors that reflect the structure of the native language will be produced. On the other hand, when the structures of both languages are the same, the automatic use of the native language structure in target language performance will result in correct utterances.

The writer uses CA theory since she underlines Taylor's and Marton's statements in Rod Ellis (1986). Taylor (1975) as quoted by Rod Ellis (1986:24) states that errors produced by the elementary students rely on transfer. Rod Ellis (1986:19) quoting from Marton (1980) points out that interference of the first language will always be present in the foreign language learning.



Therefore, in this study, the theory of CA was used to discuss, whether or not the elements of the wh- question erroneously made by the students had anything to do with the interference of the learner's first language.

### **1.6.2 Error Analysis**

Error Analysis (henceforth EA) considers error as a process for the learners to acquire the language. In line with this, Dulay et al. (1982: 138) state that EA discovered that the majority of grammatical error done by the second language learners do not reflect the learner's mother tongue. Thus, according to them, those major grammatical errors are very much like those young children make when they learn the first language. When one learns the first language, he or she is not equipped with other language pattern. It means when he or she makes errors, those errors are definitely not the result of the transfer or interference from the native language. They assumed those errors are the result of trial and error. By providing and identifying the areas of difficulty for the learner, EA proponents could help teachers of English in determining the sequence of presentation of target language items with the difficult items following the easier ones.

EA has been conceived and performed for its feedback value in designing pedagogical material and strategies. Supporting this, George (1972: 76 – 77) says that in correcting the students' errors the teacher should identify and record the error types that each learner frequently produces.

By identifying the source of errors, first, we can arrive at an understanding of how learner's cognitive and affective competence relates to the linguistic system and then, we can formulate an integrated understanding of the process of second language acquisition. The theory of EA, in this study, was used to analyze the students' errors of the wh- question and superficially to predict the sources of these errors.

### **1.6.3 Inter Language**

As quoted by Croft (1980:85), Sridhars (1978) states that the learner's deviations from target language norms should not be regarded as undesirable errors or mistakes; they are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning process. According to Corder (1973) as quoted by Walz (1982:1), "Learning a new language requires a trial and error approach, and errors are evidence that the learner is testing hypothesis of underlying rules, categories, and systems." In his statement, it is clear that he considers errors as evidences that the learner is testing hypothesis of underlying rules, categories and systems.

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 interlanguage utterances.

## 1.7 Limitation of the Study

In order to investigate the matter carefully rather than exhaustively, the writer limits the discussion in the form of present and past tense. There are two reasons for this. First, these two kinds of tenses are the basic tenses that should be taught before other tenses. Second, they are the foundation for the establishment of other tenses. The writer also limits the wh-questions based on the students' mastery in English. In this case, the writer will use wh-questions, which the students have already learnt, such as: *when, where, what, what color, who, whom, how many, how much, how long*.

## 1.8 Definition of Key Terms

It is necessary to explain briefly the term *error* and *wh- questions* to avoid misunderstanding since they are the center of this study.

### 1.8.1 Errors

Quoting from Forum Magazine (volume 38: p. 21), H. D. Brown (1994, 205) contains that a mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip' in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. According to him, an *error* is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner. However, *error* is different from *slip*, for *slip* is what a learner can self-correct, while an *error* is what the learner cannot self-correct (Edge,

1989: 9 – 11). 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 error which are caused by lack of knowledge of the rules of language.

Corder (1967), as quoted by Dulay et al (1982:139), identifies that performance and competence errors are due to the learner's still developing knowledge of the second language rule system. While Dulay et al. (1982: 139), who does not restrict the term 'error', to competence base deviations identifies that error is any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristic or clauses of the deviation might be. In this study, error refers to deviations of wh-question pattern made by the respective students.

### 1.8.2 Wh-Questions

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*, *when*, *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. The only exception to the second principle is when the Q-word occurs in a prepositional complement. Here, English provides a choice between two constructions, one formal and the other less so. In formal style, the preposition precedes the complement,

where as in colloquial style, the complement comes first and the preposition retains the position it has in a declarative sentence:

*(formal)* On what did you base your prediction?

*(informal)* What did you base your prediction on?

Lester (1971:149) in his book “Introductory Transformational Grammar of English” defines wh- question as a question begins with a question word such as, *where, when, what, who, whom, why, which, whose* and *how*, which asks for specific pieces of information, not just agreement or disagreement. In this study, what the writer means by ‘wh-questions’ are questions which begin with question words which ask for certain information. These following questions will be under the writer’s investigation:

Where does John come from?

What is the title of the reading passage?

Where did John spend the night?

Which book does John choose?

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

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, assumption, the theoretical framework, significance of the study, limitation

of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Chapter II deals with review of related literature and studies, which are relevant to this study. Chapter III presents the methodology, which is used in this study. Chapter IV discusses the data analysis and findings. In Chapter V, the writer gives conclusions and some suggestions.