

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study as the general overview as well as the research questions and the purpose of the study. It also elaborates the significance of the study followed by the scope of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper

1.1 Background of the Study

Errors, the mistakes that cannot be corrected by students themselves (Edge, as cited in Harmer, 2007, p.137), are seemingly unavoidable in second language writing. Based on the researcher's experience as an English pre-service teacher in a junior high school in Bandung last year, the researcher found that most of the students committed errors in their writing and they tended to repeat the similar errors if they were not informed about the errors they had made before. Besides that, the idea that errors are unavoidable in second language writing is supported by the notion that writing in the second language is a very complicated skill because the students must fulfill all the formalities over the second language rules of writing for their text can be comprehensible (Sarfaz, 2011, p. 30). However, Raimes claimed that making errors is beneficial in learning a second language as long as the students are informed about the errors they made (Raimes, 1983 as cited in Zawahreh, 2012, p. 280; Mustafa, Kirana & Bahri, 2015, p.2). Therefore, the students' errors should be analyzed for they can be informed by their teacher about the errors, and avoid the similar errors later.

Since finding the students' errors is very essential for the students' improvement in learning a second language, many language researchers have been analyzed and categorized students' errors in speech and writing. Two of them are Corder (1981) and Ellis (1997). They classified students' error in a general classification, namely *omission*, *addition*, *misordering*, and *misselection*.

Some studies have been conducted by analyzing and classifying students' errors into the classification proposed by Corder and Ellis. One of them is a study

conducted by Mustafa, Kirana, and Bahri (2015). In their study, they analyzed the errors of recount texts written by 19 students studying in the second year at a middle school in Banda Aceh. They reported that the most dominant error in the students' texts was *misselection/misinformation*. It was followed by *omission*, *addition*, and *misordering*. They also stated that the errors were caused by both interlingual and intralingual factors.

The other study was done by Habibullah (2010). In his study, Habibullah analyzed the errors found in the third chapter of three students' thesis of department of English and letters in a state university in Jakarta. As the result, he reported that the most dominant error in the students' thesis was *omission*. It was followed by *misselection/misinformation*, *addition*, and *misordering*. He also reported that most of the errors were caused by intralingual error.

As Touchie (1986, p. 79) and Ferris (2011, p. 88) stated that the high-frequency errors should be corrected more often than less-frequent errors, this study intended to analyze the most dominant error type made by students in descriptive texts based on the error classification presented by Corder (1981) and Ellis (1997). The descriptive texts were chosen because it is one of the texts that must be written by the junior high school students in Indonesia. It is also considered as the simplest and easiest writing form compared to other text types, especially for the beginning writers (Ellis et. al, 1989 as cited in Fadilah, 2015, p. 11). This study also aimed to investigate the sources of errors based on the students' point of view which was not conducted by the previous research mentioned.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are formulated as follows.

1. What is the most dominant error type made by students in writing descriptive texts?
2. What are the sources of errors based on the students' point of view?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the research questions above the aims of the study are:

1. To investigate the most dominant error type made by students in writing descriptive texts.
2. To find out the sources of errors based on the students' point of view.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is considered to contribute to either theory or practice. Theoretically, the findings of the study can give the theoretical information for further research in error analysis to classify the students' errors in more specific classification, and to serve more specific questions in investigating the source of errors. Practically, the findings of the study can: 1) help teachers to improve their teaching and give their students remedial teaching, especially in descriptive texts. This study can be used as prior investigation by teachers to detect students' error in writing descriptive texts and help them to design lesson or teaching strategies to treat their students' errors. The result of the study can show what type of error the students mostly committed in writing descriptive texts. The next step, teachers can give the remedial teaching in the type of errors found the most, and give the students feedback for they can avoid the similar errors later, 2) help students finding their errors. So that, they can get feedback and explanation from their teacher, and can avoid the similar errors later through exercising and learning. Therefore, the accuracy of their writing can be improved.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing errors in students' descriptive texts. It aims to investigate the most dominant error type. The analysis of error type is limited on the general classification of errors presented by Corder (1981, p. 36-37) and Ellis

(1997, p. 18) which are: *addition*, *omission*, *misselection*, and *misordering*. The descriptive texts in this study refer to the descriptive texts written by thirty-one junior high school students in two writing tasks. In addition, this study also aims to investigate the sources of errors based on the students' point of view.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in this study, some terms need to be clarified. The terms are as follows.

Second Language: In this study, second language refers to the definition of second language in the context of second language acquisition. It is the language learnt by individuals or groups subsequent to learning their first language as young children. Commonly, it is called as a target language (TL), any language that is the aim or goal of learning.

Error: Error is the mistake which cannot be corrected by students themselves and therefore needs explanation.

Error Analysis: Error analysis is a second language acquisition approach which emphasizes on identifying, describing, and explaining students' errors. This analysis can be used by the teacher as an investigation to detect students' error. In this study, the errors investigated are the general errors (which include: *omission*, *addition*, *misselection*, and *misordering*) found in junior high school students' descriptive text.

Descriptive Text: Descriptive text is a kind of text used to describe a specific animal, place, person or thing. Its generic structure consists of introduction and description.

1.7 Paper Organization

This research paper consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter I Introduction. This chapter presents an introduction to the study. It includes the background of the study, research questions, research purposes, significance of the study, the scope of the study, clarification of terms, and paper organization.

Chapter II Literature Review. Theories and literature related to this study are elaborated in this chapter.

Chapter III Research Methodology. This chapter explains the method of the research used by the researcher. It includes research design, site and respondents, data collection, data analysis, and establishing validity.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion. In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented, described, interpreted and discussed by referring to the theoretical framework presented in chapter two.

Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions. This chapter presents the conclusions of the research, as well as the suggestions for the parties that are related to this study.