

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, research question(s), purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

English teachers as facilitators and models have to be competent and professional in the language he/she teaches in order to help the students in learning English (Pogolian, 2008:53). They also should understand the nature of language or linguistics and develop his/her language skills. Linguistic is one of the required subjects that have been taken by English teachers in their university study. From the subject, they will be aware of the nature of language and how it works (Malkina, 2008:33).

Bachman (1990:96) added that one of the aspects of language proficiency that teachers of English should have is communicative competence. English teaching aims at developing students' communicative competence in both spoken and written through the four language skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading, writing in order to enable learners to use the language for real-life communicative activities. Therefore, English teachers are required to have knowledge and skill of communicative competence, especially linguistic competence which is the concerned to this study.

Canale and Swain (1980:36) said that communicative competence refers to a set of abilities including knowledge about various aspects of language: linguistic or grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategy competence. Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of morphology, syntactic, semantic, phonetic, and orthographic rules. Similar to Canale and Swain, Bachman (1990:68) said that linguistic competence refers to the mastery of knowledge of the language code itself and includes the rules of word formation and vocabulary (lexicon), pronunciation (phonology) and sentence formation (syntax).

Linguistic competence should be possessed by English teachers in order to avoid language error. In existing situation, there are still teachers of English who do not possess a better understanding about the language. A study conducted by Rahman et al. (2013:139) showed that many primary school English teachers in Indonesia are in the category of poor and fair on communicative competence, especially linguistic competence in teaching English to young learners. He found that many teachers did some mistakes in using simple present tense, such as *Karen **does work is** a receptionist in an office downtown, she usually **read** newspaper.* It means that teachers had too little understanding about written language structure.

The problem above makes the writer interested in researching one of the knowledge of linguistic competence. The writer would like to find out syntactic knowledge of some senior high school teachers of English in Jakarta. This

research is conducting to give a picture on how is the teacher of English linguistic competence especially syntactic knowledge.

Andrews et al., (2006:69) argued that teachers who have knowledge about the grammar of sentence construction was effective in helping 5 to 16-year-olds to write more fluently and accurately. Mustafa (1994:56) asserted that teachers who have communicative competence also were helping students of junior high school and senior high school to formulate their ideas into acceptable written English language. To help students construct phrases and sentences effectively and understand the structure of its sentences, English teachers should have syntactic knowledge.

Syntax is the branches of linguistics. Fromkin et al., (2003:106) stated that “syntax is the part of the grammar that represents a speaker’s knowledge of the structures to construct phrases and sentences out of morphemes and words”. Generally, the aspect of syntax is the structure or formation of sentences and concerning of how words combine to form phrases, phrases combine to form clauses and clauses join to make sentences.

Speakers who have syntactic knowledge are being able to decide which sentences are grammatical and ungrammatical, to determine the order of words in a sentence, and also to identify ambiguity or double meaning (Fromkin et al., 2003). English teachers who had been learning in the linguistic subjects in their previous study are expected to have well syntactic knowledge. Discovering syntactic knowledge of senior high school teachers of English in Jakarta becomes the focus of this study.

Syntactic knowledge covers among others grammaticality, syntactic category, phrase structure rules, structural ambiguity, constituent structure, transformational rules, and syntactic dependencies (Fromkin et al., 2003). This study uses and focuses on discovering syntactic knowledge of teachers of English in Jakarta which covers grammaticality, phrase structure rules, and structural ambiguity.

Grammaticality knowledge permits speakers to make grammaticality judgments in sentences, structural ambiguity to produce different structures with the same meanings or the same structures with different meanings, and phrase structure rules to organize the linear order of the words in sentences and to know the principle of phrase/sentence structure (Fromkin et al., 2003; Brinton, 2000).

## **1.2 Research Question(s)**

The research question(s) proposed in this study is:

How is syntactic knowledge of senior high school teachers of English?

- a. How is the grammaticality knowledge of senior high school teachers of English?
- b. How is the phrase structure rules knowledge of senior high school teachers of English?
- c. How is the structural ambiguity knowledge of senior high school teachers of English?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to discover syntactic knowledge of senior high school teachers of English in Jakarta. Researcher also aims to discover grammaticality knowledge, phrase structure rules knowledge, and structural ambiguity knowledge of the teachers of English in Jakarta as the sub purposes.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study uses and focuses on discovering syntactic knowledge of twenty senior high school teachers of English in Jakarta which covers grammaticality, phrase structure rules, and structural ambiguity in written text.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study would be beneficial for the senior high school English teachers in terms of giving them information about their syntactic knowledge. This study may also become a reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting similar study such as the implication of syntactic knowledge in classroom, the relationship between syntactic knowledge and writing ability, etc.