

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Like any human learning, foreign language learning is inseparable from making errors. In learning a foreign language, learners are involved in the process of “approximations to the system used by the native speakers of the language” (Brown, 2000, p. 215). This implies that there are two different kinds of system: the language learner system and the target language system. Ellis suggested that learners are engaged in comparing the linguistic features noticed in the input with their own grammar, which is their representation of the target language.

Syntax is one of the structural linguistics in which the students need to develop in learning English. It is one of the important subjects for making them capable to speak and write accurately. Its areas cover the English phrases and clauses. Generally, the English phrases consist of five types: noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (Adj P), adverb phrase (Adv P), and prepositional phrase (Prep P). Then, the English clauses include independent and dependent clauses.

English is the first foreign language which is very seldom used for communication in any time, although two parties of communication understand English. Other foreign languages are only used by a particular group of people. The Indonesian language is a very important language as a lingua franca. English

and Indonesian are two different languages and they certainly have different systems or rules. The main differences are for examples, found in phrase patterns as the syntactic rules, especially in noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP).

Previous study showed that there are some errors in applying English phrases. A research by D, Basri (2013) showed that the native Indonesian-speaking students of English at the Faculty of Letters UMI Makassar made 16 kinds of syntactic errors about the English phrases in their descriptive paragraphs. The research results presented by Zawahreh (2012) show a number of errors of each type: function words, morphology, syntax, tenses, words-order and lexical. Errors of syntax are sequence of tense, errors in using progressives, omission of verb to be, omission of the main verb, omission of to, addition of to and passive voice. Similarly, Liu and Xu (2013) remark that some students in their writing make some syntactic errors, like errors in tense and voice and agreement errors quite frequently yet unconsciously. Because of the previous researches, the writer tries to make research about the errors on English phrases in undergraduate students' writing.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the background of the study, the main research question of the study is:

- How is the profile of undergraduate students' errors in English phrases in their writing?

The subsidiary questions are:

1. What are the types of errors made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing?
2. What are the frequencies of the errors made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing?
3. What are the causes of errors made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing?

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study was aimed to find the profile of error made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing. The profile of error consists of: types of errors, the percentage of each type of errors and the causes of the error made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing.

1.4. The scope of the study

This study is focused on the errors made by undergraduate students in English phrases in their writing.

1.5 The significance of the study

By conducting this research, the researcher hopes to gain a deeper understanding about kinds of errors in English phrases, the frequency of each error and what cause the errors. By knowing the kinds of errors and the causes, it can help students to improve their writing skills especially in English phrases.

This also can give contribution to English Department as a reference to improve the teaching in grammar especially about the correct form of phrases.