CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Writing

Biggs (1988, p. 175) describes writing as a complex cognitive activity involving a synchronic attention on thematic, paragraph, sentence, grammatical and lexical. Writing is also considered as the communication of a person's ideas to other people (Applebee, 1984, p. 29). There are two categories of writing in the second language according to Horwitz (2008, p. 34): structured writing and communicative writing. On structured writing, learners write in order to practice grammatical and lexical items that they have already learned, while on communicative writing, students have to deal with meaning without focusing too much on vocabulary and structure. In order to achieve the expected result in writing in second language, students need to learn how to be aware of the processes involved in their writing; i.e. how to develop and organize their ideas, and especially how to deal with language related concerns, e.g. grammar and diction (Raimes, 1991, p. 58). Writing involves a number of activities, i.e. setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, writing a draft, reading and reviewing, revising and editing (Hedge, 2008, p. 97).

Studies from various researchers have proven that writing in second/foreign language is a difficult task for foreign language learners (Daud 2012, p. 84; Kim and Kim, 2005, p. 144; Diab, 2005, p. 18; Busch, 2010, p. 98; Hisham, 2008, p. 42; Chen, 2002, p. 121; Erkan and Saban, 2011, p. 54). The difficulty mainly concerns on turning the ideas into comprehensible and precise text (Richards and Renandya, 2002, p. 120). Broughton et al. (2003, p. 92) have pointed the problems on writing in second/foreign language such as: the accuracy of English grammar and lexis; problems on relating the

style of writing to the demands of a particular situation (especially for academic purposes), and problems of developing ease and comfort in expressing what needs to be said.

Buyukyavuz and Cakir (2014, p. 105) stated, "In developing learners' writing skill, teachers have a crucial role which needs to be adequately fulfilled. Most of the teachers prioritize surface-level features of writing; i.e. teachers have a tendency to focus on the teaching and practicing of grammatical rules in writing activities". Zamel (1983, p. 31) on his research has proven that teachers unfortunately view themselves only as 'language' teachers. They attend mostly on the surface-level features of writing (i.e. grammatical part). However, successful writers do not just connect sentences together based only on the grammatical correctness (Sengupta and Falvey, 1998, p. 132). One of the categories of a good writing is to use the correct dictions and to be able to paraphrase them based on grammatical correctness and descriptive correctness (Daud, 2012, p. 13).

Belcher and Braine (1995, p. 27); Jordan (1997, p. 97); Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 109); Zamel (1987, p. 157); and Khalil (2000, p. 20) stated that there is a mismatch between the expectations required by the institutions and the students. In language teacher education, it is assumed that the student only need core courses (e.g. linguistics, second language acquisition, and teaching theories) in order to become effective teachers (Busch, 2010, p. 19). Busch further added that the students are expected to have a good command of grammar and vocabulary in the target language in order to convey messages either orally or in written form (ibid). Bilal et al. (2013, p. 92) on their research found that a particular factor such as linguistic inefficiency affects negatively on writing ability.

2.2. Verbs

Verb in a clause determines other clause elements which may occur and specifies a meaning relation among those elements (Biber, Conrad, and Leech, 2003, p. 206). They (ibid) categorize verbs generally into two (main verbs and auxiliary verbs) and Palmer (2003, p. 37) divides verb based on the types of usage as follow:

2.2.1. Main Verbs

Main verbs act as a central role in clauses. They usually occur in the middle of a clause, and they are the most important element in the clause because they determine the other clause elements. The pattern of these clause elements is called 'the valency pattern'; e.g. clauses with the main verb *go/went* cannot take a direct object (e.g. *I went the house*). However, *go/went* can be followed by an adverbial, such as:

*I **went** <u>into the empty house</u>*.

In contrast, a clause with the main verb *give* usually oc6curs with both a direct object and an indirect object. In the following example, *him* is the indirect object and *a message* is the direct object:

*I could **give** <u>him a message</u>*.

2.2.2. Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs occur before a main verb and qualify the meaning of the main verb. On the example below, *could* and *be* are auxiliary verbs, and *staying* is the main verb.

*Jack the Ripper **could be staying** there*.

In this example, *could* adds unreality to the meaning of the main verb, and *be* signals an ongoing process. The overall meaning is quite different from the sentence without auxiliary verbs, *Jack the Ripper stays there*.

2.2.3. Verb Types and Functions

Verbs can be grouped into five major types according to their ability to function as main verbs or auxiliary verbs (Palmer, 2003, p. 137), i.e.:

a. **Main verbs** (e.g. *run, eat, think*) have meanings related to actions, events and states. It is divided to three types:

　1. **Action verbs**, verbs which refer to action (e.g. clean, watched, etc.)

　2. **Event verbs,** verbs which refer to event (e.g. it *is raining* today)

　3. **Stative verbs,** verbs which refer to a state (feelings, condition, and/or statement)

b. **Linking verbs,** (e.g. *appear, be, feel, become, get, look, remain, seem, etc.*) verbs which connect a subject with adjective or noun.

c. **Modal verbs** (*can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might, must*) functions only as auxiliary verbs.

The class of lexical verbs is an open class, which means that the English language is always adding new lexical verbs. Most lexical verbs have regular endings for forming past and present tense (e.g. *call, calls, called*). However, many of the most common lexical verbs in English have irregular morphology, e.g. *run-ran, eat-ate, and sleep-slept.*

One distinctive feature of English grammar is that lexical verbs or main verbs often occur as multi-word units:

　He **turned on** the lights.

　I **looked at** that one again.

Simple or continuous form can be used for action verbs, e.g.:

*I **cleaned** the room as quickly as possible.*

*She**'s watching** television at the moment.*

Simple or continuous form also can be used for event verbs, e.g.:

*Four people **died** in the crash.*

*It**'s raining** again.*

Simple form is usually used than the continuous form on stative verbs:

*I **don't know** the name of the street.*

*Who **owns** this house?*

Some verbs can be used to talk about both states and actions, but with different meanings:

State (usually simple form):

*I **come** from France.* (this is where my home is.)

*She **is** very friendly.* (permanent quality or state)

*We **have** two dogs.* (own)

***Do** you **see** what I mean?* (understand)

*Your dress **looks** nice.* (appear)

Action (simple or continuous):

She is coming from France on Wednesday.

He came from Italy yesterday. (travel from)

She is being very unfriendly. (temporary behaviour)

We're having a meeting to discuss it.(hold a meeting)

We had mussels for starter and prawns for main course. (eat)

Jane is seeing her boss today and she's going to tell him she's leaving.

I don't see Rebecca at work any more since I moved office. (meet)

What are you looking at?

I never look at the price on the menu.(see with your eyes)

2.2.4. Subject and Verb Agreement

The subject and verb agreement is considered as one of the cause of the common errors on verbs in writing since students aren't well aware of these rules (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002, p. 141). There are twelve main points of the subject and verb agreements.

The indefinite *pronouns anyone, everyone, someone, no one, nobody* are always singular and, therefore, require singular verbs, e.g.

- Everyone **has** done his or her homework.

- Somebody **has left** her purse.

Some indefinite pronouns — such as *all, some* — are singular or plural depending on what they're referring to. (Is the thing referred to countable or not?) Students should be careful in choosing a verb to accompany such pronouns.

- Some of the beads **are** missing

- Some of the water **is** gone

On the other hand, there is one indefinite pronoun, *none*, that can be either singular or plural; it doesn't matter whether to use a singular or a plural verb — unless something else in the sentence determines its number. (Generally, *none* means *not any* and will choose a plural verb, as in "None of the engines are working," but when something else makes *none* as meaning *not one*, it becomes singular verb, as in "None of the food is fresh.")

- None of you **claims** responsibility for this incident?

- None of you **claim** responsibility for this incident?

- None of the students **have done** their homework.

(In this last example, the word *their* precludes the use of the singular verb.)

Some indefinite pronouns are particularly troublesome. **Everyone** and **everybody** (listed above, also) certainly *feel* like more than one person and, therefore, students are sometimes tempted to use a plural verb with them. They are always singular, though. **Each** is often followed by a prepositional phrase ending in a plural word (Each of the cars), thus confusing the verb choice. *Each,* too, is always singular and requires a singular verb.

- Everyone **has** finished his or her homework.

You would always say, "Everybody *is* here." This means that the word is singular and nothing will change that.

- <u>Each</u> of the students **is** responsible for doing his or her work in the library.

Word "students" may be confused as the subject, but the real subject is *each* and *each* is always singular — <u>Each is</u> responsible.

Phrases such as *together with, as well as*, and *along with* are not the same as *and*. The phrase introduced by *as well as* or *along with* will modify the earlier word (*mayor* in this case), but it does not <u>compound</u> the subjects (as the word *and* would do).

- The <u>mayor</u> as well as his brothers **is** going to prison.

- The <u>mayor and his brothers</u> **are** going to jail.

The pronouns *neither* and *either* are singular and require singular verbs even though they seem to be referring, in a sense, to two things.

- Neither of the two traffic lights **is** working.

- Either **is** fine with me.

In informal writing, *neither* and *either* sometimes take a plural verb when these pronouns are followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*. This is particularly true of interrogative constructions: "Have either of you two clowns read the assignment?" "Are either of you taking this seriously?" Burchfield (1996, p. 268) calls this "a clash between notional and actual agreement."

The conjunction *or* does not conjoin (as *and* does): when *nor* or *or* is used the subject closer to the verb determines the number of the verb. Whether the subject comes before or after the verb doesn't matter; the proximity determines the number.

- Either my father or my brothers **are** going to sell the house.

- Neither my brothers nor my father **is** going to sell the house.

- **Are** either my brothers or my father responsible?

- **Is** either my father or my brothers responsible?

Because a sentence like "Neither my brothers nor my father is going to sell the house" sounds peculiar, it is probably a good idea to put the plural subject closer to the verb whenever that is possible.

The words *there* and *here* are never subjects.

- There **are** two reasons [plural subject] for this.

- There **is** no reason for this.

- Here **are** two apples.

With these constructions (called expletive constructions), the subject follows the verb but still determines the number of the verb.

Verbs in the present tense for third-person, singular subjects (*he, she, it* and anything those words can stand for) have *s*-endings. Other verbs do not add *s*-endings.

- He love<u>s</u> and she love<u>s</u> and they love_ and . . . .

Sometimes modifiers will get between a subject and its verb, but these modifiers must not confuse the agreement between the subject and its verb.

- The **mayor**, who has been convicted along with his four counts of various crimes but who also seems, like a cat, to have several political lives, **is** finally going to jail.

Sometimes nouns take weird forms and may 'look' plural when they're really singular and vice-versa. Words such as *glasses, pants, pliers,* and *scissors* are regarded as plural (and require plural verbs) unless they're preceded the phrase *pair of* (in which case the word *pair* becomes the subject).

- My glasses **were** on the bed.

- My pants **were** torn.

- A pair of plaid trousers **is** in the closet.

Some words end in -*s* and appear to be plural but are really singular and require singular verbs.

- The news from the front **is** bad.

- Measles **is** a dangerous disease for pregnant women.

On the other hand, some words ending in *-s* refer to a single thing but are nonetheless plural and require a plural verb.

- My assets **were** wiped out in the depression.

- The average worker's earnings **have** gone up dramatically.

- Our thanks **go** to the workers who supported the union.

The names of sports teams that do not end in "s" will take a plural verb: the Miami Heat <u>have</u> been looking … , The Connecticut Sun <u>are</u> hoping that new talent …

Fractional expressions such as *half of, a part of, a percentage of, a majority of* are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, depending on the meaning. (The same is true, of course, when *all, any, more, most* and *some* act as subjects.) Sums and products of mathematical processes are expressed as singular and require singular verbs. The expression "more than one" (oddly enough) takes a singular verb: "More than one student <u>has</u> tried this."

- Some of the voters **are** still angry.

- A large percentage of the older population **is** voting against her.

- Two-fifths of the troops **were** lost in the battle.

- Two-fifths of the vineyard **was** destroyed by fire.

- Forty percent of the students **are** in favor of changing the policy.

- Forty percent of the student body **is** in favor of changing the policy.

- Two and two **is** four.

- Four times four divided by two **is** eight.

Sentence compounds with a positive and a negative subject and one is plural, the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject.

- The department members but not the chair **<u>have</u> decided** not to teach on Valentine's Day.

- It is not the faculty members but the president who **decides** this issue.

- It was the speaker, not his ideas, that **<u>has</u> provoked** the students to riot.

2.3. Error

Ferris (2011, p. 273) claims that "errors are the deviation of rules of the target language in morphological, syntactic, and lexical forms which is violating the expectations of literate adult native speakers". In writing, errors are considered common since it is a part of the learning of the students (Dulay 1982, p. 260).

2.3.1. Error and Mistake

Error and mistake often considered the same in a loosely sense; especially since students often checked the definitions and the class of a word solely based on a dictionary. Ellis (1997, p. 282) denies this by stating that error and mistake are two different things. Errors are systematic, repeated, and typically made by the students. It is occur when the difference happens as a result of students' lack of knowledge, i.e. the lack of competence. Ellis (ibid) further adds that error refers to gaps in the learner's knowledge.

In contrast to errors, mistakes are unsystematic, occasional, and occur at random. "Mistakes occur when learners fail to perform their competence" (Corder, 1967, p. 60). Mistakes are a result of processing problems which prevent learners from accessing their knowledge of a target language rule and causing them to choose other alternatives, non-standard rules which they find easier to

access. They reflect processing failures which arise as a result of several factors, such as lack of automaticity, forgetfulness, emotional disturbances, and lack of meticulousness.

2.3.2. Types of Errors

Corder (1967, p. 27) classifies errors into four types: addition, omission, selection, and misordering. Each of these types of errors is explained below:

2.3.2.1. Addition Error

Corder (1967: 36); Burt, Dulay, and Krashen (1982, p. 54) claim, "addition errors characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed sentence." The types of addition are:

1. Double markings, e.g. *I **didn't took** my medicine this morning.*
2. Regularization, e.g. *I **drinked** a glass of orange juice today.*
3. Simple additions, e.g. *Cats **doesn't** sleep in the nights.*

2.3.2.2. Omission Error

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item which should appear in a well-formed sentence, e.g.:

I should eaten already.

Notice that the sentence should add the word *have* after the word *should.*

2.3.2.3. Selection Error

Selection errors are characterized by wrong usage of a word based both on the grammar and context. Dulay (1982) named this

'misformation'. In selection/misformation, the students use a word which is in incorrect grammar/context, e.g.:

Grammatical: *People <u>seen</u> the president yesterday.* (*Saw*)

Contextual: *He <u>gets</u> about $40.000 a year. (Earns)*

2.3.2.4. Misordering Error

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in an utterance, e.g:

He never knows what means <u>gesundheit</u>. (*…what gesundheit means*)

Corder, (1981, p. 44); Burt, Dulay, and Krashen, (1982, p. 136); Erdogan, (2005, p. 150) further adds, students made written misordering errors which based on word-for-word translation of native language surface structures.

2.3.3. Causes of Errors in Writing

Higher education students frequently try to impersonate academic discourse by a particular style of writing "marked by fragmentation, incoherence, odd or inappropriate diction, the juxtaposition of colloquialisms with sophisticated academic structures, and an unintentionally humorous misuse of academic phrases and forms" (Neal, 1995, p. 44). This 'style' has been coined as "Hyperfluency" by Balester (1991, p. 269). Hyperfluency concept is parallel to "hypercorrection" concept as described by Labov (1972, p. 238), a person's over-adjustment to perceived-prestigious language use. For instance, a person (say, in writing an essay) may choose the construction "between you and I" rather than "between you and me" because the hyperconscious of the need for a "correct" grammatical

construction, without paying attention to the context, based on the register. Register defined by Halliday and Hasan (1985, p. 55) as a "variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation". However, even words regarded as synonyms (e.g. get and earn), still have their own variety of language and situation, since there are no absolute synonyms; no two words have the exact same meaning (Palmer, 1986, p. 103).

2.3.3.1. Interlingual Error and Intralingual Error

Richards (1971, p. 82) differentiates two sources of error. The first source of error is called '**interlingual error**', which results from the mother tongue interference. The second source, '**intralingual error**', reflects the incorrect generalization of the rules within the target language.

2.3.3.2. Collocational Competence

On the other hand, collocational competence is also considered as one of the causes of the errors. Kjellmer (1991, p. 214) compares the output of moderately fluent native speakers with the moderately fluent learners of the same language, and stated that while the native speakers make hesitation pauses between long sequences of words, the learners pause after every two or three words, which must be ascribed to a difference in the automation of collocations. In building his utterances, the native speaker makes use of large prefabricated sections and uses the pauses to plan one or more thought units ahead. "The learner, on the other hand, having automated few collocations, continually has to create structures that he can only hope will be acceptable to native speakers" (ibid.); he put his hesitation-pauses to decision-making at fairly trivial word-structure level. This decision-making on trivial words may result in

cases of the misuse, overuse, and underuse of a word. Students who violate the collocational norm may produce perfectly grammatical but totally un-English sentences or at least misuse a particular word, and such manipulations are not normally tolerated.

2.3.4. Error Analysis

Error analysis is a way to reveal errors which are found in speaking or writing; it is the process of determining the incidence, nature, cause and consequences of unsuccessful language (James, 1998, p. 261).

There are three aims of error analysis; first, it can be used to find out the level of language proficiency that the students' have reached. Second, it can be used to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning. Last, it can be used to find out how people learn a language (Sercombe: 2000, p. 30). Brown (1980, p. 140) stated, "it is a fact that the learners do make errors and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learners error, called error analysis."

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The results of previous studies have shown that one of the errors of students' writing is on the verbs, including verb tenses, finite/non-finite verbs, and so on). In this study, the writer focuses only on the errors in using verbs in undergraduate students' writings.

This study focuses on profiling the undergraduate students' error in the use of verbs in their essay. It consists of what are the types of errors, the frequencies of the errors, and the causes of the errors. The writer uses the types of errors based on Corder

(1967, p. 27) addition, omission, selection, and misordering. And then the writer also uses the classifications of verbs based on Palmer (2003, p. 37), action verbs, stative verbs, event verbs, linking verbs, and modal verbs. Furthermore, to show the frequencies of the errors, the writer uses the formula adapted from Mahsun (2007, p. 39). Afterwards, the writer uses Richard's (1971, p. 82) two sources of errors, i.e. interlingual and intralingual errors to determine the causes of errors.