CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Language is one of the most essential things to build communication among people. Primarily for the English language, it has prevalence as a means of global communication in nowadays era. According to Prihandani (2020), the use of English in this globalization era expands constantly; it is used vastly by everyone in the world. In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language (Fahmi, 2016). The English language is taught as a requisite subject in some levels of schools in Indonesia; it is principally learned at junior and senior high school levels. Consequently, English teaching is intended to develop students' communication competency such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Prihandani 2020; Ratminingsih, 2019). Especially in the academic field, writing or written form of communication is vastly and essentially used.

According to Harmer (2004), writing is an essential skill that every learner has to have. He mentioned that writing is important not only use in changing communication, yet it is also vitally used in academic interests as well. Moreover, as what is stated by Ratminingih (2019), writing is one of the productive skills that should be mastered by the students. In writing, the students can communicate and express their thoughts and feelings, or they can simply write to note something important. It is also particularly important to have a good capability in writing in order to keep the information organized and completely communicated (Andayani et al., 2018). As mentioned by Mayers (2005) cited in Ratminingsih (2019), in writing, ideas and thoughts are processed, organized, and revised in such a way.

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The more the students practice writing, the more proficient they will be at writing. Thus, writing skill is considerably important for the students.

As at the university level, the students are expected to be able to accomplish the Paragraph Writing course, specifically in the second-semester of the English Language Education department. It is in accordance with their principal needs in academic writings where essays, reports, research papers, etc. are crucially based on paragraphs. As what is stated by Wali and Madani (2020), a good paragraph consists of the topic sentence, the body or supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence. Thus, the Paragraph Writing course is a fundamental subject to be completed by the English Language Education students.

Then, in such a course, writing a paragraph with the topic of comparison and contrast is one of the necessities the students have. Comparison and contrast text is a typical text that concerns on the similarities and differences on a certain topic (Scull, 1987). In other words, the topic ideas of the comparison and contrast text are simply compared and contrasted. This kind of text can show how one idea or one thing may be better or worse than another (Scull, 1987). Additionally, in constructing the text, comparative and contrastive languages play an important role; these make the text more distinctive between differences and similarities (Belkhir-Benmostefa et al, 2018). In short, comparison and contrast is a text that displays certain objects or ideas' similarities and differences.

Considering writing is elementally essential in academic interest, still, there is a process the students need to do to be adequately capable in writing. According to Ratminingsih (2019), writing is a process; it consists of steps and needs to be

practiced continually in order to get optimal outcomes. By the same token, Harmer (2004) mentioned four principal elements or stages to be followed in conducting writing namely planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising), and final draft. Before writers are going to write, they have to plan what they need to convey in their writing. There are three important aspects to be considered in the planning stage; the purpose, the audience, and the content structure. After the writers plan their writing, next, they have to precede a draft. The next stage is editing. The draft that has been produced later proceeding to be edited. Several considerations, after reading the draft, are made, such as the clearness of the information, ambiguity, confusion, working or not, considering the structure and detail information, etc. This stage of writing will help the writers to make reflection and revision based on those considerations. The last stage is the final version of the writing; it, usually, tends to be different compared to the initial draft because of the process of changing with several considerations before.

In addition, writing is also considered as the most complex skill among the three other skills in English language learning; listening, speaking, and reading. As what is stated by Anh (2019), in the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), writing skill is the most complex skill because it very much utilizes the work of the mind. This refers to the ideas that have to be invented, the way those ideas are being expressed and delivered, and how they would be constructed into statements, in this case, a piece of a written form (Anh, 2019). Moreover, the complexity of writing skill is also stated by Alisa et al. (2019). In a writing activity, the cognitive aspect is truly involved in order to understand the management of ideas in every part of the writing process such as planning, drafting, and revising

(Alisa et al., 2019). Thus, writing skill, especially in English language learning, is noticed as the most complex one among other skills.

Because of its complexity, Maysuroh et al. (2017) mention that writing skill is still lack and weak among students. It is one of the skills that often being neglected by the students, eventually, they face perennially struggle to competently do the writing activity. Under such circumstances, writing is to be a complicated subject to be undertaken by the students, even until university level (Maysuroh et al., 2017). Based on Alfaki (2015), the students suffer difficulties in structural and syntactical components. In addition, he mentions grammatical errors, sentence structure problems, and organization matters are the linguistic problems that they face in making well-formed writing in English. In line with Alfaki (2015), Fareed et al. (2016) also mention the issues are found in the students' English writing. Grammatical and syntactical incompetency, mechanics, idea coherency and expansion, vocabulary, and content organization shortcoming are the major factors to obstruct the students' effective English writing. Conclusively, some issues are still found in English writing not only by the students in junior and senior high school, but also in the level of university, especially in the context of grammar.

Considering the fact that the students continuously make errors and mistakes in English writing, understanding the grammar well in order to compose a good one is a must (Kumala et al., 2018). According to Brown (2000), grammar competency settles an important significant position as an essential element in communication competence. He also stated that the language cannot be utilized properly and becomes disorganized when there is ignorance for grammar aspects. Furthermore, Brown (2000) mentions that the importance of grammar competency

is in line with the importance of the formality aspect and its form in writing. In other words, the more formal the situation is and it falls on writing, the more grammar is important to be considered. Based on Ratminingsih (2019), there are some grammar competencies needed to be conceived by the language students, such as word order, grammatical rules; e.g. articles, pluralization, word derivation, etc., morphological and word functions, compounding, conjunctions, logical connectors, contraction, etc. In that case, having competence in grammar concepts is crucial for language students.

There was a study of grammatical errors conducted by Bello (2017). Using descriptive qualitative method, this study was conducted to analyze the grammatical errors in descriptive texts committed by 30 students in the first year of Vocational School of Economics and Commerce Becora, Dili. The result of this study showed that all of the grammatical error types were found; they were omission error (41.06%), misformation error (20.22%), addition error (19.10%), and misordering error (14.60%) and with the total of 89 grammatical errors found. In this study, the suggestion was mentioned for the teacher of Vocational School of Economics and Commerce Becora, Dili to teach more about grammar, especially tenses and subject verb agreement.

Another study of grammatical errors was also conducted by Qamariah et al. (2020). They conducted a study about grammatical errors in second grade students' writing English text in SMK-SMTI Banda Aceh. In this study, the students were instructed to make English text and then their writings were analyzed in order to find out types of grammatical errors they made. The finding of the study showed there were 48 errors in total in which the students made in their writings. In

addition, the errors were categorized into 11 classifications such as, verb-used errors, tenses errors, singular/plural noun errors, adjectives errors, preposition errors, to be errors, articles errors, modal/auxiliary errors, noun errors, objective pronoun errors, and phrasal verb errors. In conclusion, the grammatical errors made by 10 students of second grade in SMK-SMTI Banda Aceh in their writing showed their flaws in composing a good writing (Qamariah et al., 2020).

Through the above background, it is shown that grammatical errors analysis in the students' writings is significant to be conducted. However, despite the vast investigation of students' grammatical errors in their writing, there are very limited reviews at the university level, especially in Indonesia. As the previous research was conducted by Ramendra, Juniarta, and Putrayasa (2021) regarding grammatical errors in the students' essays, in this current study, to enrich the literature about grammatical errors in various aspects, the grammatical errors will be investigated in students' paragraph writing, most specifically in comparison and contrast paragraphs in the Paragraph Writing course of the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021. Further, as the same important point, the current study aims at mapping and also obtaining a clear explanation regarding the types and sources of grammatical errors committed by students. The mapping will be very useful to understand the development of the students' grammar knowledge such as the gaps and the lacks that they have in writing, especially in grammar aspects. In short, this study will be useful to develop and select appropriate materials and methods for effective writing teaching and learning.

1.2 Research Problem Identification

Based on the background of the study stated above, there are problems arose regarding students' writing, especially on grammar and, thus, it makes this study necessary to be conducted. As the writing skill is very important to be mastered in academic field, yet in contradictory, students still face difficulty in writing due to their lack of competency of such aspect (Maysuroh et al., 2017). Supporting this statement, Alfaki (2015) mentioned that the structure and syntactical writing components are the major troublesome the students dealt with. As later mentioned by Fareed et al. (2016), those key problems are the grammatical and syntactical incompetency, mechanics, idea coherency and expansion, vocabulary, and content organization shortcoming. In addition, based on the studies conducted by Bello (2017) and Qamariah et al. (2020), the errors are commonly committed by the students in various aspects of grammar. Moreover, the errors are continuously committed by the students (Kumala et al., 2018). Therefore, this study is considerably important to be conducted in order to analyze the grammatical errors committed by the students in their writing, particularly in this study is the students of English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 because there are still few of grammatical error studies at university degree.

1.3 Research Statements

Based on the research background mentioned previously, there are two focuses needed to be answered by this current study as follows:

1. What are the types of grammatical errors committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education

department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs?

2. What are the sources of grammatical errors committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs?

3. How many grammatical errors are committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs?

1.4 Research Objective

In fulfillment of the problems statements, there are two objectives of the present study, they are:

1. To describe the types of grammatical errors committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs.

2. To analyze the sources of grammatical errors committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs.

3. To calculate the frequency of grammatical errors based on the types and sources that are committed by the second-semester students of four classes in the English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs.

1.5 Research Scope

This study is limited to the grammatical errors of the students' paragraph writing. The paragraph will be analyzed in order to investigate the types and the sources of the grammatical errors. The subject limitation of the study is the students of English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 who take the Paragraph Writing course and the object limitation of the study is the comparison and contrast paragraph writing written by the students of English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 who take the Paragraph Writing course.

1.6 Research Significances

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study is expected to give a positive contribution in English and Indonesian inquiry resources of writing studies. Further, the analysis and examples provided in this study are also expected to be beneficial in the development of writing competency, especially the grammatical aspects in paragraph writing.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

1.6.2.1 For Students

This study is expected to be useful for the students, especially the EFL students, in their development of writing. In addition, from this study, the lacks of

language competency the students have, particularly in the terms of grammar, will be identified. Therefore, it will be beneficial for them to improve their language competency through the identification of those lacks.

1.6.2.2 For Teachers

From this study, the description of the gaps that the students have in paragraph writing is expected to give valuable input for the English teachers in order to consider and design appropriate and effective teaching methods in language development.

1.6.2.3 For Other Researchers

This study is expected to give useful additional information for the future researchers regarding the investigation in writing paragraphs and in the terms of grammatical errors.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

17.1 Grammar

According to Thornbury (1999) in Prihandani (2020), grammar is a study that concerns the patterns, rules, forms, or structures in a language in order to construct a well-formed sentence. In this study, grammar refers to the sentences' structures or forms in the paragraphs made by the second-semester students of English Language Education academic year 2020/2021.

1.7.2 Error

According to Corder (1982), errors are the results of the first language habits interferences the second language learning that learners commit. In this study,

errors refer to the errors in the aspect of grammar that emerge in the paragraphs made by the second-semester students of English Language Education academic year 2020/2021.

1.7.3 Writing

Writing is one of the four skills in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing, and is included in the productive skill that requires students to express their idea through the form of written term (Ratminingsih, 2019; Toba et al., 2019). In this study, writing refers to the paragraphs made by the second-semester students of English Language Education academic year 2020/2021.

1.7.4 Comparison and Contrast

Comparison and contrast is one specific text that portrays or shows the similarities and differences between certain objects, things, ideas, people, and so on. Most importantly, in the writing the text, the focus is only on pointing out whether the similarities or differences of the ideas (Belkhir-Benmostefa et al, 2018; Scull, 1987).