CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background of the Study

In the 1984 English Curriculum for Senior High School, it is stated that "plural-nouns" is one of the subtopics of English given to the third year students. The agreement of plural-nouns in a sentence: determiner + plural-noun + verb, as in:

These books are new
- determiner plural-noun plural-verb

Nouns refer to something which one may think of as either singular or plural, as in:

- Our team plays
  - determiner singular-noun singular-verb

- The team are hungry
  - determiner plural-noun plural-verb

This pattern shows us that there are several elements required to form plural-noun pattern in a sentence. These elements are determiner, plural-noun, and verb. If one

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likes to make correct "plural-nouns" in a sentence, he should know that each of these elements must be put in the correct position. In addition, the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns, and the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs must also be correct.

Determiners such as articles: 'the", 'a", and 'an"; demonstrative adjectives: 'this", 'that", 'these", and 'those"; and adjectives of indefinite quantity: 'many", 'some", 'few", 'several", 'all", 'much", and 'little"; usually come before nouns, as in: "Those people wait outside". Plural-nouns like regular plural-nouns: 'books", 'churches", 'knives", 'tomatoes", 'ways", 'ladies"; and irregular plural-nouns like: couple, deer, trousers, news are put after the determiners, as in: The couple have a young son. Here, plural-nouns are used as the subjects of a sentence. The verb form used in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence is verb-plurals, as in: The

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books are on the table. However, if the noun is always singular in their plural forms, the verb should be singular, as in: The news is good tonight.

Briefly, the elements of the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence is: -determiner + plural-noun + verb. Deviating from the elements and the agreement means making an error in the agreement of plural-nouns pattern in a sentence.

When occupying myself with doing teaching practice at SMA Kristen Pirngadi Surabaya, held from January 20, 1988 to April 15, 1988 I found that a large number of students still made mistakes in the agreement of "plural-noun" pattern in sentences as in:

- "These trousers is mine" instead of "These trousers are mine";
- "The audiences are interested in the speech" instead of "The audience are interested in the speech";
- "Measles are a contagious disease" instead of "Measles is a contagious disease";
- "Fruits contain vitamins" instead of "Fruit contains vitamins"; and so forth.

The English teacher told me that this problem also had come about in years before. He should take action to

get the better of this problem. However, it was not easy for the teacher to focus on which elements when teaching the pattern of "plural-nouns", as no data had showed which was the most distressing element of the pattern.

Considering the problem stated above and being interested in discovering what basic form of "plural-noun" pattern in a sentence the most distressing, a research on Error Analysis in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence made by the third year students of SMA Kristen Pirngadi Surabaya was conducted.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of this study, the major problem of this study was formulated as follows: "What elements in the agreement of the plural-noun pattern in a sentence are often greatly misused by the third year students of SMA Kristen Pirngadi Surabaya?"

To answer the forementioned major problem, the following sub-problems should be answered first:

1. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners required by articles in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns?

2. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners required by demonstrative adjectives in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns?
3. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners **required by adjectives** of **indefinite quantity** in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns?

4. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by regular plural-nouns in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns?

5. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by irregular plural-nouns in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns?

6. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by regular plural-nouns in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs?

7. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by irregular plural-nouns in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs?

8. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the verbs required by full-verbs in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs?

9. Do errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the verbs required by **to be** verbs in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs?
1.3. The Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to know the elements of plural-noun pattern in a sentence which had been mostly misused by the third year students of SMA Kristen Pirngadi Surabaya. To achieve this major objective, the following sub-objectives should be achieved first:

1. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners required by articles in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns.

2. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners required by demonstrative adjectives in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns.

3. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the determiners required by adjectives of indefinite quantity in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns.

4. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by regular plural-nouns in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns.

5. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the
misuse of the plural-nouns required by irregular plural-nouns in the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns.

6. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by regular plural-nouns in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

7. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the plural-nouns required by irregular plural-nouns in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

8. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the verbs required by full-verbs in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

9. to know whether errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence mostly consist of the misuse of the verbs required by to be verbs in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

These kinds of errors would be ranked from the highest to the lowest frequency.

1.4. The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are prospects as feedbacks for English teachers to improve their methods of
teaching the **agreements** of plural-nouns in a sentence. Expectantly, by doing this, the students' errors in the agreement of plural-nouns in a sentence could be decreased. Stefanus Laqa Tukan (1988) stated that Second Language Learners' Errors would be of some help for second language teachers to have a wider horizon about second language learners' mistakes and above all to have a more positive attitude towards second language learners (their students) who make the errors. Expectantly also, the consequences of this study would keep us better-informed about how students learn the agreement of English plural-nouns in a sentence (the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns and the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs) in their attempts to understand English as a foreign language.

1.5. The Assumptions

This study was conducted under the following assumptions:

1. The students are able to put determiners in their position before nouns.

2. The students have been able to put nouns in the subject position of a sentence of which the word-order is "subject + verb".

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3. The students have mastered the Simple Present Tense, because this study includes the students' ability to apply the agreement of plural-nouns in Simple Present sentences.

4. The students have been able to make simple active sentences in the Simple Present Tense of which the word-order is "subject + the infinitive without to (+'s for the third person singular)"

5. The students have been able to construct the passive sentences in the Simple Present Tense of which the word-order is "subject + be + past participle verb".

6. The students have been able to put adjectives in their positions of a sentence in the Simple Present Tense of which the word-order is "subject + be + adjective".

1.6. *Theoretical* Framework -

There are 4 theories underlying this study. They are Error Analysis, Constrative Analysis, *Interlanguage*, and English Plural-Nouns in a sentence.

1.6.1. Error Analysis .

Error Analysis is a procedure which deals with collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors according to their hypothesized causes, and
evaluating the seriousness of the errors.

The procedure in Error Analysis in this study is applied as a guidance to analyze the students' errors in terms of collecting samples, identifying and describing errors, and classifying the errors according to the surface feature of the error itself.

1.6.2. Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis exists in two versions: the strong version and the weak version. The strong version claims that errors can be predicted by identifying the differences between L1 and L2. The weak version of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis claims that Contrastive Analysis can be used to identify which errors are the result of interference.

In this study, the writer discussed both the strong and weak version of Contrastive Analysis, but it was only used as a helping theory to strengthen the Error Analysis.

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Ibid., p.23.

Ibid., p.24.
1.6.3. Interlanguage

Sridhar, quoted by Croft (1980), said that the learner's deviations from target language norms should not be regarded as undesirable errors or mistakes; they are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning process. Selinker (1972) suggested that there are five principal processes operating in Interlanguage; namely, language transfer, overgeneralization of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of L2 learning, and strategies of L2 communication.

In this study, this theory is used to see the students' errors which were caused by applying incorrect English agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence (the incorrect agreement between determiners and plural-nouns and the incorrect agreement between plural-nouns and verbs).

1.6.4. Agreement of English Plural-Nouns in a Sentence

What the writer means by "plural-nouns" are ones which consist of Regular Plural-Nouns (e.g. books, keys, and tomatoes) and Irregular Plural-Nouns (e.g. men, pyjamas, family, Electronics, women-servants and sisters-in-law).

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There are two theories concerning with the agreement of English plural-nouns in a sentence. They are one theory concerning with the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns and one theory concerning with the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

Thomson said that adjectives (in this case, determiners) are used with singular and plural, masculine and feminine nouns. Thus, if the determiners (a, this, that) are singular, the nouns are singular, and if the determiners (these, those, many, a few) are plural, the nouns are plural. It can be concluded that if the determiners are plural, the nouns must be plural in the agreement of determiners and plural-nouns.

In addition, Hemphill said that if the subject of a sentence is plural, the verb should be plural and if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular. It can be concluded that if the subjects are plural-nouns, the verbs should be plural in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

Both of the theories are used in a sentence at the same time, as it enabled to make the correct agreement of English plural-noun pattern in a sentence.

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16 Ibid., p.84.
1.7. Definition of Key Terms

To help the readers to get clarity, it is necessary to include the following key terms used in this study, namely: errors and agreement:

1.7.1. Errors

Chomsky (1965) as quoted by Dulay et al. (1982) divides the cause of errors into two, namely:

(1) Competence errors caused by lack of knowledge of the rules of language.

(2) Performance errors caused by memory lapses, physical states such as fatigue, and psychological conditions like strong emotion.

Corder (1967), as quoted by Dulay et al., identified performance errors as mistakes, and defined the term "errors" as the systematic deviations due to the learner's errors still developing knowledge of the L2 rule system. While Dulay et al., who do not restrict the term "error" to competence based deviations identifies that error is any deviation from a selected norm of language performance, no matter what the characteristics or causes of the deviation might be. In this study, errors refer to deviations of plural-noun pattern in a sentence made by the respective students. Thus, there is no distinction between the terms

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17 Dulay, Burt-and Krashen, op.cit., p.139.
1.7.2. Agreement of English Plural-Nouns in a Sentence

Roloff and Brosseit defined a noun that names more than one person or thing plural in number. In this study, what the writer means by "plural-nouns" are ones which consist of Regular Plural-Nouns (e.g. books, keys and tomatoes) and Irregular Plural-Nouns (e.g. men, pyjamas, family, Electronics, women-servants and sisters-in-law).

Since the agreement of English plural-nouns in a sentence dealt with the agreement between determiners and plural-nouns and the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs, the writer used Harry Shaw's definition. He defined "agreement" as "correspondence in person, number, gender, or case". Thus, when a determiner agrees with its noun, both determiner and the noun have the same number (singular and plural). Adjectives (in this case, determiners) are used with singular and plural, masculine and feminine

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nouns. And when a subject agrees with its verb, both the subject and the verb have the same person (first, second, third) and number (singular or plural). So the term "agreement" is used both in the agreement of determiners and plural-nouns and in the agreement between plural-nouns and verbs.

Considering the limitation of this study, in this thesis, the writer used the term "agreement" to refer to "correspondence between determiners and plural-nouns and correspondence between plural-noun subjects and their verbs in number (plural) in a sentence".

1.8. The Limitation of the Study

This thesis simply dealt with the students' errors in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence. What the writer means by "plural-nouns" are ones which consist of Regular Plural-Nouns (e.g. books, keys and tomatoes) and Irregular Plural-Nouns (e.g. men, pyjamas, family, Electronics, women-servants and sisters-in-law). Plural-nouns were limited as subjects of an affirmative sentence. The modifiers used in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence were limited to determiners: articles (e.g.


22 Harry Shaw, op.cit., p.231.
the, a and an), **demonstrative adjectives** (**e.g.** this, that, these, those) and **adjectives of indefinite quantity** (**e.g.** many, some, few, several, all, much and little). The verbs used in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence were limited to full-verbs and to *be*-verbs. The tense used in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in a sentence were limited to **Simple Present**. The following examples in the agreement of plural-noun pattern in sentences are:

- *These dresses* are worn-out.
- *This news* is good.
- *Measles* is a contagious disease.
- *All my brothers-in-law* are clever.
- *The Brussels* is a nice city.
- *A few teaspoons* of coffee are provided.
- *Too much sugar* in tea is bad for you.
- *Electronics* is a field of study.
- *The committee* never make up their minds in a hurry.
- *Many machinery* are out of order.
- *The poor* is often hungry.

The subject of this study was limited to the third year student of **SMA Kristen Pirngadi Surabaya**. There were four classes, they are: **IIIA1, IIIA2, IIIA3.1, and IIZA3.2**. Class **IIIA1** and class **IIIA2** were chosen as try-out groups and class **IIIA3.1 and class IIIA3.2** as the samples of this study.
1.9. **Organization of the Thesis**

There are five chapters presented in this study. Chapter I deals with the background, the problem, the objective of this study and the *significance*, the assumptions, the theoretical framework, the definition of the key terms, the limitation and the organization of this study. Chapter II presents the review of related literature. Chapter III deals with the methodology of the study which consists of the nature of this study, the population and samples for this study, the instruments of this study, the procedures of collecting data. Chapter IV deals with the data analysis and findings, the occurrence frequency of errors and the interpretation of the findings. Chapter V is the conclusion which *discusses* the results of this study and some suggestions for further study.