

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Writing as one of language components is very important for the English department students. As Paulston (1976: 205) states, "On the intermediate and advanced levels, the purpose of teaching writing is mainly to teach the writing of research papers, reports, essays, and the like". At the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University, the students have to take Writing I-Writing V which are taught for five semesters. The students start with Writing I at semester 2, that is narrative writing. They go on with Writing II at semester 3, that is descriptive writing; Writing III at semester 4, that is expository writing; Writing IV at semester 5, that is persuasive writing; and Writing V at semester 6, that is argumentative writing. The goal is to lead the students to acquire the skill of making reports and thesis writing (Kurikulum dan Silabus Program S1 Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra, 1982: 145).

A composition is an arrangement of words (Matthew and Ferguson; 1980: 7). To make a composition, a writer arranges words into sentences, sentences into

paragraphs, then paragraphs into composition to conceive and express his ideas. However, it is not enough. The most important of all is that all the sentences must be clear and understood by the readers (Moore; 1966: 124).

According to Arapoff (1970: 5) to make the readers understand what is written, the writer has to select and use various grammatical devices. Arapoff also says that one of the biggest problems in writing is that the students make so many grammatical errors that make their composition lose its meaning. One of the grammatical errors the students make in their compositions is preposition errors (Klassen; 1991: 11).

Thompson and Martinent (1981: 46) state that the students have two main problems with prepositions. First, the students do not know whether in a sentence a preposition is required or not, and the second problem is that the students do not know which prepositions to use because English prepositions are too various.

According to Tjandra (1991: 9), there are some causes that make the students difficult to use correct prepositions. The first cause is that not all English prepositions are transferable to Indonesian prepositions, because there are English prepositions having fixed rules and having to be memorized. In fact, many students simply transfer Indonesian prepositions to English prepositions.

The second cause is that many students use wrong prepositions. Buckingham (1972: 19) also said, "Students of English face variety of problems related to the use of prepositions".

Preposition in English is important because they are used to clarify meaning. Knowledge of relevant prepositions can make us easier to convey our exact meaning in English. They express such ideas as location, destination, direction, time, manner, agent, and many others.

Regarding the importance of the use of correct prepositions, it is important that in their early stages of learning writing, the students have to become accustomed to using prepositions correctly.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problems

This study is conducted to find the answer to the following question: "What kinds of preposition errors are made by the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in their compositions?"

More specifically, this major problem is divided into three sub-problems:

- a. Do the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University add un-

necessary prepositions in their compositions?

- b. Do the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University omit necessary prepositions in their compositions?
- c. Do the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University substitute prepositions in their compositions?

### 1.3. Objective of the Study

This study attempts to find out whether the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University make errors in using prepositions in their compositions, and these objectives are specified into the following three sub-objectives:

- a. To find out whether the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University add unnecessary prepositions in their compositions.
- b. To find out whether the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University omit necessary prepositions in their compositions.
- c. To find out whether the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catho-

lic University substitute prepositions in their compositions.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

Closely related to the objectives, this study is expected to give information about the students' errors which will give evidence to the teacher about aspects of prepositions, that is, prepositions of place or position, prepositions of time, prepositions of direction, and prepositions of manner which have not been well-learned by the students. The result of this study hopefully will be able to help the teacher to eliminate the students' making errors.

#### 1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to finding out the errors on the four kinds of prepositions, i.e. prepositions of place or position, prepositions of time, prepositions of direction, and prepositions of manner in the compositions of the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. The kinds of prepositions the writer is going to discuss are those that consist of one or more words.

## 1.6. Assumption

This study is based on the assumption that the third semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University have already learnt the English prepositions in the previous semesters.

## 1.7. Definition of Key-terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it is necessary to define the following key-terms:

### 1.7.1 Error Analysis

Douglas Brown (1980: 171) defines error analysis as a study of learners' errors by observing, analysing, and classifying them to reveal the learners operating system to acquire the target language.

### 1.7.2 Preposition

Slocum (1993: 255) defines prepositions as words or groups of words that indicate relationship between a noun or pronoun to some other words in the sentences. They are, for examples, in, under, at, on, and beside.

### 1.7.3 Composition

Matthew (1980: 2) defines composition as an arrangement of words and ideas into

sentences, sentences into paragraphs, then paragraphs into composition. Each paragraph should be a complete thought.

### 1.8. The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction which presents background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, assumption, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter Two is review of related literature which deals with contrastive analysis, error analysis, theory of preposition, and theory of writing. Chapter Three is the methodology which discusses the research design, population and sample, the procedure of collecting the data, and the procedure of data analysis. Chapter Four presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The last is Chapter Five which contains the conclusion and suggestions.