

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Prepositions are words which link nouns, pronouns, and phrases to other words in a sentence or it can be called as connecting words (MacFadyen, 2014). Unlike noun, verbs, and modifiers, which may change form according to their meaning and use in the sentence, prepositions never change form. It expresses a number of relationships, including time, location, manner, means, quantity, purpose, and state or condition. Some of the prepositions which commonly arise in learners' work are preposition: of, to, in, for, with, on, at, and by (Berry and Brize, 2010).

Prepositions is one aspect of part of speech which is difficult for second language learner to learnt. Long after ESL/EFL students have achieved a high level of proficiency in English, they still struggle with prepositions (Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman, 2001). This could be due to a wide range of linguistics functions that preposition served.

Misuse of preposition, which commonly done by Indonesian second language learner is the interchangeably of Indonesian preposition. For example, the sentence, "The book is **in** the table", instead of saying, "The book is **on** the table". Or "He is **in** the school now", instead of saying "He is **at** school now".

Having an effective writing skill is important in academic field because teaching and learning exercise mostly done by writings or other written text. By studying and practicing more, learners might develop their writing skill. Besides that, good writing is still need a high level of importance in the grammatical system and eventually in the learning of

the language. The aim of good writing is to get across information in a clear and concise manner (Checkett&Feng-Checkett, 2004). Therefore, the writer's writing should be understandable for the reader about his/her idea in a simple way.

For students who learn at English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of State University of Jakarta have to take prerequisite courses of writing: Basic Writing, Academic Writing 1, Academic Writing 2 and Business Writing. The purpose of those subjects are to improve learners writing skill to be more competent so that they can be able to make a good writing and also writing *skripsi* at the end when the learners have fulfilled their study in university. So, the written accuracy of students is important. A lack of written accuracy may meddle with the clarity of their message (or ideas) and indicate them as poor users of the language (Ferris, 2011).

In writing assignment, students' misuse is committed when using inappropriate preposition whereas the preposition is one of the important points in part of speech used as connecting words to show the relationship of a noun or pronoun to some other word in the sentence. Therefore, the learners need to pay attention in using the appropriate prepositions in order to produce a good writing and to make the reader understand what they want to say through their writing clearly.

There are some studies about the errors made by ESL learners when dealing with such prepositions and discusses the source behind the errors in writing. The research conducted in Philippine by Castro (2003) showed that the most errors made by the students are substitution error or misselection of preposition with percentage 62%. The major cause of error faced by them is intralingual cause- the errors that originate from the target language. He revealed that the interference of Filipino is minimal as the result show the

dominance of intralingual over intralingual errors. Meanwhile, Darus (2009) in his research showed that the errors of prepositions included omission, addition, and wrong selection in 70 college's students' writings. The most frequent source of prepositional error was caused by the interference L1 of learners. The other study conducted by Khurriyati (2013). The major type of the errors was the wrong selection of preposition with percentage 45% among 37 pupils as the participant of her subject. She also found that the factor that influenced the errors was caused by intralingual errors. Another study conducted by Zawahreh (2012) revealed that the most predominant errors within function words were errors of insertion of prepositions. The sample of this study consisted of 350 students. The result of this study showed that 170 errors in preposition which were caused by the dominance of mother tongue interference which is the Arabic language.

From those previous studies it can be concluded that one of the students' problem is on the use of preposition. And also it can be seen that the errors made by the student are derived from both interlingual errors and intralingual errors. This study will be conducted in English Department at the State University of Jakarta students. Since the previous study were not conducted in English Department students in university and were not specifically discussed the error based on their types of preposition, this study will be focused on profiling students' error in using preposition specifically according to the type of preposition in their writings.

1.2 Research questions

This study is undertaken below the following question: How is the profile of undergraduate students' error in using preposition in their writings?

This research is focused on finding the answer to the three subsidiary questions:

1. What are the types of errors frequently made by undergraduate students in using preposition?
2. How is the frequency of errors undergraduate students' make in using prepositions?
3. What are causes of students' error that undergraduate students made in using prepositions?

1.3.Purpose of the study

This study is aimed at profiling students' error in using prepositions in their writings made by the undergraduate student in ED-UNJ, by finding out:

1. Types of errors undergraduate students' frequently made in using preposition in their writings.
2. The frequencies of errors made by undergraduate students in using preposition in their writings.
3. The cause of errors undergraduate students made in using prepositions in their writings.

1.4.Significance of the study

By conducting this research, the researcher hopes to gain a deeper understanding and insight of the specific problems regarding the use of these prepositions. It may be useful for the readers who will be the English teachers to be more effective and thus more successful in the lessons especially with this particular group of students especially for undergraduate students at English Department - State University of Jakarta.