

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of Study

Language plays an important role as it is used as a means of communication. It is an instrument that people use to express their ideas, feelings, desires etc. One of languages used widely around the world by people is English. It is such a global language that people, particularly Indonesian, are demanded to be able to use it.

For this purpose, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been learnt formally. The EFL students have to learn four basic skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening; and three aspects, namely: phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. Among those language skills and aspects, there is a tight relationship that is their function to build a complete ability of English. They must be learnt integratedly in the hope that the learners can use the language effectively.

Finocchiaro (1974: 3) defines a language as a system of rules by which items are stored in the mind and manipulated so as to form infinite sets of combinations. The rule is definitely the grammar. Without understanding grammar, it is impossible for the EFL students to compose sentence and speak English grammatically, and it will limit the capacity for communication. By understanding it, students are expected not only to arrange words in the correct forms and orders, but also to understand every

word they read and listen as well as speak and write sentences of their own.

In learning grammar, students learn the forms and the arrangements of forms required by the system. They also have to master the grammatical construction of the language and understand the meaning of a sentence. For this reason, they must learn absolute construction which is a secondary clause in a sentence that modifies the whole meaning of the main clause. Such clauses are not linked grammatically because the subject of absolute construction is always different from that of its main clause. The function of absolute construction is to give additional detail of its main clause.

In this study, it is interesting to study the students' mastery on the use of absolute construction. It is part of the syllabus, and it occurs frequently in discourse, especially in descriptive and narrative prose. Hence, the researcher was motivated to conduct a research entitled: "A Study on the Mastery of Absolute Construction Structure of the Fifth Semester Students of the English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in Academic Year 2011/2012".

B. The Reasons of Choosing the Topic

There are some reasons why the researcher chose "A Study on the Mastery of Absolute Construction Structure of the Fifth Semester Students

of the English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in Academic Year 2011/2012” as the title of the thesis:

1. absolute construction is a subject that the fifth semester students have to master since it frequently appears in discourse writing, particularly in descriptive and narrative prose. Mastering absolute construction would help the students in comprehending such discourse, and
2. absolute construction is part of the syllabus.

C. The Problems of Study

The problems of this research were stated as follows:

1. how good is the students’ mastery in using absolute construction?
2. what kind of errors are made by the students on absolute construction?

D. The Aims of Study

This study is aimed at:

1. finding out how good the students’ mastery on absolute construction is, and
2. finding out some errors made by the students.

E. The Contribution of Study

1. For Lecturer

This study is expected to give information about students’ ability in understanding absolute construction, so the lecturers will know how to teach and decide what strategies are suitable for students.

2. For Students

Having known the kind of problems of them, English students can avoid or anticipate the similar problems so that they will result the correct use of absolute construction.

3. For Researcher

The result of this study can enhance the researcher's knowledge about absolute construction which is important to be learnt.

4. For Other Researchers

The finding of this study hopefully can be a reference for other researchers who conduct the similar research.

F. The Clarification of Terms

To understand the term clearly, the key terms of the study are clarified as follows:

1. Study

Morris (1981: 1279) defines study as the act or process of studying: the pursuit of knowledge, as by reading, observation, or research.

2. Mastery

The act of mastering: the state of having control over something, eminent skill through knowledge (Morris, 1981: 586).

3. Absolute Construction

Absolute construction is a secondary clause in a sentence that modifies the whole meaning of the main clause. (Rajappan, <http://profrajappansblog.blogspot.com/20/10/10participial-construction-absolute.html>).

