

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Writing is one of the four language skills that a student has to master in order to be able to produce a kind of composition. To do so, he is required to use his grammatical knowledge to make the sentences meaningful. The grammatical knowledge should be imparted into the mind of the student in the learning process when he first studied the language. In this case, English as the target language must be introduced to the student by explaining the grammatical rules of the language.

The grammatical rules produce meanings in the form of concepts of communication. For instance, the tenses in English contain the concept of time as related to an activity. The Simple Past Tense is used to denote an action in the past which is based on the conjugation of the verbs. Thus, the sentence “I wrote the lesson” refers to an action of writing done in the past. The full verb is the word “write” which is conjugated into “wrote”. However, it has nothing to do with the present situation according to the essence of the grammatical rules. In other words, the act of writing itself ended in the past without any influence to the present time. The verb “wrote” only denotes a certain point of time in the past. If the connection between the past and the present time must be described, then, the tense should be changed into the Present Perfect Tense. Thus, the sentence is changed into “I have written the lesson”. This sentence implies that the act of writing the lesson was done in the past and the result of such an act can be seen in

the real sense that the lesson is written completely and becomes the evidence of the act.

Whatever idea to be presented in a composition can be realized by applying the grammatical rules. The main problem is in the mastery or application of the grammatical rules in producing sentences which later on lead to a text. The sentence as the smallest unit of the text should be understood from the perspective of the grammar of English. Without a full understanding of the grammatical rules, it would be difficult for the student to express his ideas which are related to the daily activities, events, processes, and thoughts. For example, when the student wants to express the idea of the general truth, then, he should use the Simple Present Tense such as in the sentence “Water boils at the temperature of 100 degrees Celcius”. This sentence contains the truth about the law of nature. This is acceptable to all the people in the world. When he wants to describe his activities such as going to the campus, he may write “I walk to the campus in the morning”. This means that the action or act of walking to the campus in the morning is done repeatedly like a habit. It has nothing to do with the past time. The meaning of the sentence is perceived as the general truth of the daily activities.

Of course, tenses as an aspect of grammar is only a small portion of the grammatical rules that should be memorized by the student. There are other rules that are interrelated to one another. Parts of a sentence are basically interrelated by the rules that may be difficult to understand in terms of the mastery of the language. It is a fact that when a sentence is chunked into small parts, the student is expected to be able to complete it by using the grammatical rules that are

applicable. For instance, the incomplete sentence like “He wants to” can be completed by using or adding a verb or a verb phrase like “ He wants to speak English” or adding an a linking verb with an adjective like “ He wants to be successful”. In either case, the student is supposed to have the ability to choose which rule is correct and anticipate what words will appear to make the sentence complete and correct according to the grammatical rules. The anticipatory abilities will of course get improved when the student has more grammatical rules under his control.

Grammatical rules are actually hidden in the mind of the student (Baker, 2001). This means that any rule can be stimulated to appear on the conscious level of the mind. The stimulating force can be in the form of a cue or a clue depending on the mastery of the grammar. Thus, when the student is asked to complete a sentence that is incomplete like “He should speak.....”, he is supposed to know what words come next to the clue to make the sentence complete and correct. In other words, he should show his anticipatory ability to complete the sentence based on the hidden or memorized grammatical rules of English. He can produce sentences like “ He should speak English”, “ He should speak politely”, “ He should speak to his friend” and many others depending on the mastery of the grammatical rules.

There is a big range of choices available in completing the chunked sentence because of the many possible grammatical rules accepted by the speakers of English. The grammatical rules enable the student to construct sentences that contain various meanings in terms of the context of usage. The context here is

defined as anything beyond the sentence that can be related to the meaning of the sentence constructed. For instance, the context of time will force the student to produce words that express the past, present and future. He may choose to produce a short sentence or a long sentence depending on his ability to anticipate what is going to be described. A short sentence is composed of 10 to 15 words whereas a long sentence can reach the number of 50 words and above.

It is interesting to know how students actually complete a given chunked sentence. This study will explore the possible variety of sentences that are produced by the students as they anticipate the words that complete the sentence. Observations in the learning and teaching interactions suggest that students will produce different sentences based on the grammatical rules that they know and apply to express the ideas in the sentence. It is obvious that there will be many different sentences coming to the writing as they also have different levels of knowledge of the grammar. What is explored in this study is that the students have the anticipatory abilities that influence them in choosing the words or grammatical rules to complete the given incomplete sentences. The longer the sentence is the greater the anticipatory ability is. This is due to the fact that the students can combine several grammatical rules as they construct the sentences according to the meanings they want to express.

The writer of this study believes that by understanding what the students add to the clue sentences, it is possible to know how they actually take advantage of their anticipatory abilities in producing either short or long sentences that

convey their feelings and thoughts. The results also prove that such anticipatory abilities exist in the minds of the students under investigation.

B. The Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is formulated in the following questions

- 1) What grammatical rules do the students apply to complete or construct the sentences?
- 2) How are the anticipatory abilities realized in the construction or completion of the sentences?

C. The Objective of the Study

This study is aimed at finding out the grammatical rules that are applied in completing the chunked sentences as the cue or clue and the anticipatory abilities in constructing the sentences.

D. The Scope of the Study

The sentences to be analyzed in terms of the anticipatory abilities are limited to the positive declarative sentences which are chunked for the purpose of stimulating the anticipatory abilities of the students. The length of the clue sentence is limited to the range of 5 to 10 words.

E. The Significance of the Study

The results of the research can bring benefit and advantages in terms of theoretical and practical significance to teachers and researchers.

A. Theoretically :

- 1) Teachers of English can detect earlier the problems of mastering the English grammar when the students are motivated to construct sentences for their composition.
- 2) Teachers of English can pinpoint the areas of difficulty in the grammar to be taught in mastering the language.
- 3) Researchers can further the exploration into the mind of the students in stimulating the anticipatory abilities through other approaches to the teaching process.

B. Practically:

- 1) Teachers of English can provide an exercise of expanding a sentence by stimulating the students' anticipatory abilities.
- 2) Teachers of English can explain more effectively how long sentences can be reduced to a simple idea.
- 3) Students can be easily motivated to speak or write based on the understanding of the grammatical rules as a stimulation for the anticipatory abilities.