

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the beginning of the research. It presents an overview of the research explaining the importance of this research and supported by theories relating to this research. This chapter consists of background of research, the research questions, the research objectives, the significances of research, research framework (rationale), the limitation of research, the research methodology, and data analysis.

### **A. Background of Research**

This research aims to analyze the students' grammatical errors in students' writing project, especially in using subject-verb agreement (SVA) and pronoun-antecedent agreement (PAA). Basically, learning English consists of four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Aydoğan, 2014: 673). In addition, writing is one of the most difficult skills for students. As Phuket (2015), writing is difficult skills in English. Furthermore, Mbau, Marhum, and Muhsin (2014) add that writing is the most difficult skill because it needs the process which the students have to learn words, phrases, clauses, and arrange them into grammatically correct sentences.

Furthermore, grammar is necessary for writing sentences. Without grammar correctly, sentences can not be understood by readers. As Kumar (2015: 187), English Second Language (ESL) people can not write correctly without knowing grammar. Similarly, Saaristo (2015: 291) states that person can not write or speak correctly without grammar. Writing can not have meaning when the

sentences are incorrect because the structure of the sentences does not use grammar. It leads misunderstanding to readers.

Based on observation conducted in one of Senior High School at Cileunyi in Bandung reveals that most of the students have a problem concerning grammar. In the students' writing text, most of the common errors are in grammatical. In addition, the grammatical errors that generally appear in the students' writing text are in SVA and PAA. As Phuket (2015: 100) states that based on the following taxonomy, grammatical is one of the error categories. As Wyatt (2016) states the most common grammatical errors contain split infinitives, adverb usage, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, pronoun case, apostrophe usage, dangling modifiers, double negatives, sentence structure, and comma and semicolon usage.

In addition, SVA and PAA are the basic learning English, but most of the students on the fieldwork have problems in the agreements. As Murshidi (2014) states SVA is a basic principle of the English language grammar which denotes a singular subject needs a singular verb and a plural subject needs a plural verb. Furthermore, Nayan (2009: 190) states majority of the English Foreign Language (EFL) learners still have problems with their SVA in their writing. In addition, Ojetunde and Folasade (2013) state the students commit the errors in SVA and PAA in their writing text. For instance, the learners of Karya Budi High School Cileunyi frequently produce an error dealing with SVA and PAA in their writing text, such as:

1. Aninda bring some books.     *instead of*   Aninda brings some books.
2. Lia introduces she name.     *instead of*   Lia introduces her name.

The first sentence shows the error in the usage of SVA. Either subject or verb should agree, if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular, and vice versa. As Brown (1984), the rules of SVA are the use of singular verb forms with singular subject and the use of plural verb forms with plural subject. When the subject is singular, the verb must be added by –s at the end of the verb (Azar, 2012). In the sentence, *Aninda* is the singular subject, so the verb must be added –s at the end of the verb, *brings*. Furthermore, the second sentence shows the error in the usage of PAA. The pronoun must agree with its antecedent (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002). In the sentence, the appropriate antecedent must be *her* to replace the subject, *Lia*. Because of *Lia* is feminine, so the possessive adjective agrees to use *her* (Brown, et al, 1984: 172 and Anderson and Anderson, 2003: 110).

The previous research about the issues above is from Abushihab (2014) who finds the grammatical errors in writing made by Turkish EFL learners. In addition, Boroomand and Rostami (2013) investigate Iranian EFL learners who commit errors in writing. They state that subject-verb agreement is one of the errors that found in Iranian EFL learners' writing. In addition, Ojetunde and Folasade (2013) investigate the third person subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent concord in the written English of Nigerian secondary school students. Moreover, Nayan (2009) finds subject-verb agreement errors that made by Malaysian learners. Furthermore, Novita (2014) finds grammatical errors in Indonesian EFL learners and one of the errors is subject-verb agreement. Nevertheless, this

research is different from the others. First, this research analyses the grammatical errors, especially in SVA and PAA whereas Abushihab and Novita analyse grammatical error in general, Boroomand and Rostami analyse the error of writing in general, Nayan just analyses SVA, and Ojetunde and Folasade analyse only the errors of SVA and PAA in the use of third person. Second, this research takes the high school EFL students whereas Abushihab, Nayan, and Novita took the university students and Ojetunde and Folasade take the senior secondary school.

Based on the observation and the preliminary research, it is interested to know the types of error in SVA and PAA, and casual factors committed by the students of Senior High school. Therefore, this research paper is given a title, “**An Error Analysis of Subject-Verb Agreement and Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement in Students’ Writing Project** (A Descriptive Study at Tenth Grade Students of Karya Budi High School Cileunyi, Bandung)”.

## **B. The Research Questions**

Based on the background above, this research frames the following research questions to be investigated:

1. What are the types of error in subject-verb agreement committed by students in their writing project?
2. What are the types of error in pronoun-antecedent agreement error committed by students in their writing project?
3. What are the factors of students’ errors in using subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement in the students’ writing project?

### **C. The Research Objectives**

To respect the research questions, this research is aimed to:

1. To describe the types of error in subject-verb agreement committed by students in their writing project.
2. To describe the types of error in pronoun-antecedent agreement error committed by students in their writing project.
3. To find out the factors of students' errors in using subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement in the students' writing project.

### **D. The Significances of Research**

*Theoritically*, this research can be an additional reference to improve knowledge about subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement. *Practically*, the research shows out the frequently students' errors in using subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement. Furthermore, it can give a contribution for English teachers in teaching writing to the high school students to minimize the errors in those agreement.

### **E. Research Framework (Rationale)**

Grammar organizes a sentence, so the sentence has a meaning clearly and readers can understand easily what the writer's intention. However, learning grammar is not easy, although learners have a grammar book because they should have a considerable knowledge of grammar (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002). Moreover, EFL students should have knowledge of grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary to express ideas and the constant use of eyes, hands, and

brain are required when learning writing (Sattayatham & Ratanapinyowong, 2008: 19).

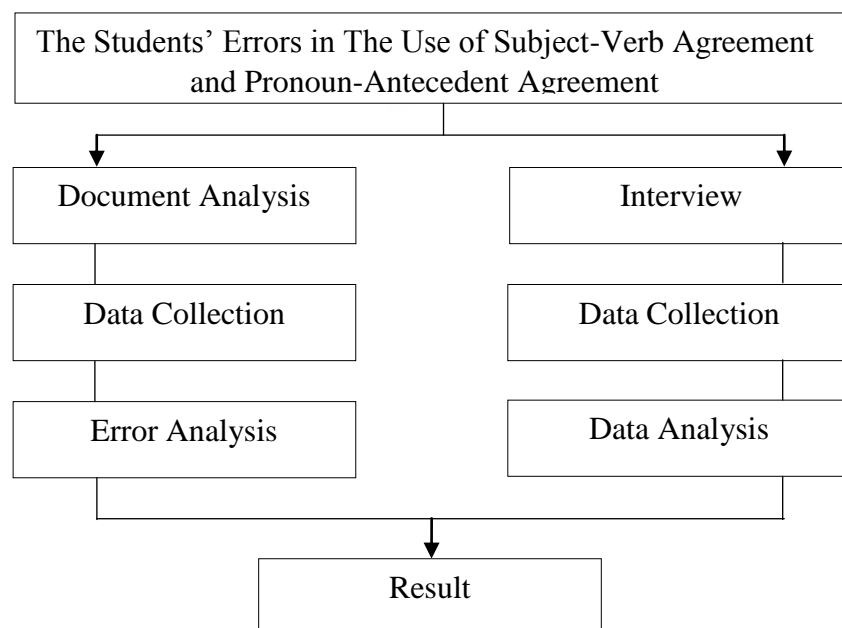
Writing is one of skills in learning language. It is the most difficult skill among the four skills of English (Sermsook, 2017; Phuket, 2015; Mbau, 2014; Hinnon, 2013) because in writing process, students have to learn words, phrases, clauses, and arrange them into grammatically correct sentences (Mbau, 2014). Grammar has an important role in writing. Without correct grammar, sentences can not be understood by the readers. As Kumar (2015: 187) people can not write correctly without knowing the rule of grammar. In brief, grammatical error by the EFL students can appear in their learning process, especially in writing. The grammatical error is an error in combining morphemes phrases, clauses, and sentences (Novita, 2014: 2). SVA and PAA are the common grammatical errors (Wyatt, 2016). First, SVA is a subject that must agree with its verb form. As Brown (1984) states SVA means a singular subject that must agree with a singular verb and a plural subject must agree with a plural verb. Second, PAA means a pronoun must agree with its antecedent (Langan, 2004).

SVA and PAA almost appear in students' writing text. It is able be seen in their descriptive writing text. Descriptive text is a type of texts (Nida in Newmark, 1988: 13) that describes a particular person, place, or thing (Anderson and Anderson, 2003: 26). Describing person, thing, or place usually uses pronoun to describe the subject. The knowledge of the usage of PAA is needed by the students to describe the subject without recalling the subject's name. Furthermore, in the text, students are demanded to describe something that using correct pattern

of simple present or past tense. Using the present or past tense is one of the grammatical features of the text (Anderson and Anderson, 2003: 26). SVA can be presented in the pattern of those tenses which is the subject and the verb must agree in number (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002).

By error analysis (EA), SVA and PAA errors that committed by students in their writing can be analyzed. In addition, neither students nor teachers can improve their knowledge in the process of language learning (Sattayatam and Ratanapinyowong, 2008). EA is the study of errors which are the learners make in their writing or speech (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The EA is able to be described by collecting a sample of language learner, identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluation the students' error (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 51).

Latest on, this is the research framework to identify the types of error in using SVA and PAA in students' writing project. Figure 1.1 presents the framework of the research.



**Figure 1.1 Framework of The Research**

This research is conducted as indicated in the scheme. *Firstly*, students' writing project are analyzed about the types of the errors in SVA and PAA. *Then*, the factors of students' error are described by interview. *Finally*, the results are classified into types of error in SVA and PAA and the factors of students' errors in SVA and PAA.

#### **F. Limitation of Research**

The focus of the subject-verb agreement is only in the use of tenses in language feature of descriptive text. The tenses are simple present tense and simple past tense.

#### **G. The Research Methodology**

This sub-chapter conducts the design of the research generally. It consists of research design, research site, participants, techniques of collecting data, and data analysis.

##### **1. Research Design**

The qualitative methodology is used in this research. Qualitative research is conducted to understand the phenomena experienced by research subject. As Creswell (2012: 26) states qualitative research is exploring a problem, developing and understanding a central phenomenon in detail, and collecting data based on words from a small number of individuals so that participants' views are obtained. The researcher employs it to analyze and to describe the frequent errors on the SVA and PAA that made by students. Furthermore, it is to understand the phenomenon about the usage of SVA and PAA more detail.



The method of this research used descriptive study because the necessity of qualitative research is to analyze the data to answer the research questions. The descriptive study answers the major research questions and form an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012: 247). Likewise, Sukardi (2013: 157) states that descriptive study is a study which is the data collection is used to answer the research question related to the central phenomenon. It is relevant to this research because it focuses on analysing grammatical errors in detail, especially in SVA and PAA which common phenomenon in EFL learners.

## **2. Research Site**

Karya Budi Senior High School Cileunyi is a target site reaching data of this research. It is located at Cileunyi in Bandung. The reasons of choosing this site are the school has a high priority in English subject. It can be looked at one of its visions that the school must be leading in English and Information Technology achievement. By the school's perspectives, English is an important subject that should be prioritized in the school learning process. The students should have more knowledge of English, especially grammar which has an important role in learning English.

*Second*, as observation conducted, most of the students in the school faced problems in a grammatical error. The problems found while the researcher observed the students' writing text. The common grammatical errors are in SVA and PAA.

### **3. Participants**

Participants of this research are the tenth-grade students because pronoun and descriptive text are the major materials in the tenth grade. In descriptive text, the students should be able to use correct simple present or past tense which is subject and verb must agree in number or subject-verb agreement. The materials are relevant to this research which analyzes SVA and PAA.

The researcher takes nine students. The criteria of the samples are the students who have got high, medium, and low achievement in English subject in the first semester and they have some problems in SVA and PAA in their writing text. Dealing with the members of the population, the researcher restrictes valid sample for qualitative research depends on the researchers' need. In selecting the participants, the researcher uses purposeful sampling because it is able to help researcher understanding more detail on the research. In addition, it uses to consider the participants which are related to the needs of the research. As Creswell (2012: 206) states in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon.

### **4. Techniques of Collecting Data**

To collect the data, this research uses two techniques that are document analysis and interview.

#### **a. Document Analysis**

The document is taken from the students' book that consists of their descriptive writing text. The descriptive text is one of the main materials

that should be learnt by tenth-grade students. Based on the text, it is relevant to this research because the phenomenon of the grammatical errors in SVA and PAA usually appear on their writing text.

The document analysis helps the researcher to analyze the grammatical of participants in written text. Documents represent a good source for text (word) data for a qualitative study and provide the advantage of being in the participants' language and words, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them (Creswell, 2012: 223). In addition, the result of observation or interview will be more credible if it is provided by document (Sugiyono, 2009: 329).

The procedures of collecting the document are, firstly, a relevant descriptive text produced by the students are collected and chosen for the research. Secondly, some sentences on their text that contain the grammatical errors in the agreements from the descriptive text are taken. Then, the sentences are analyzed based on correct rules of SVA and PAA.

#### **b. Interview**

To answer the third research question that is the factors of getting errors in SVA and PAA by the students is investigated by interview. By the interview, the researcher can describe personal information in detail from the own responses' participants (Creswell, 2012: 218).

The researcher uses open-ended interviews. It is implemented when the researcher has evaluated students' writing text that is descriptive text. According to Creswell (2012: 218), an open-ended response to a question

allows the participant to create the options for responding. In addition, Turner (2010: 756) says that standardized open-ended interviews are likely the most popular form of interviewing utilized in research studies because of the nature of the open-ended questions, allowing the participants to fully express their viewpoints and experiences.

## **H. Data Analysis**

The focus of this research is only on error analysis in the usage of subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement. To analyse the data from the document, procedure of error analysis is used to analyze the errors. Meanwhile, the data from the interview is analysed based on the steps of analysing and interpreting qualitative.

### **1. Document Analysis**

The procedures of error analysis are a collection of a sample of learner language, identification, description, explanation, and evaluation the error (Corder, 1974 cited in Ellis, 1986). On the other hand, Ellis (1986) says that the fifth step is handled as a separate issue with its investigation. As a result, this research only includes four procedures of error analysis which are explained below:

#### **a. Collection of A Sample of Learner Language**

A sample of learner language that is used in this error analysis includes data collected from the learners who do a task from their teacher. The task that is taken is the descriptive text. In addition, the data collection

are produced by limited language learner who got high, middle, and low score in the first semester of English subject.

b. Identification Error

In this step, the errors that are made by the participants are identified based on the English rules of subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement. To recognize the errors, the data are read thoroughly.

c. Description Error

Description error is meant to describe and to classified the errors based on a specific category. The errors categorize to the types of error such as omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. The output of this step answers the first and second question.

d. Explanation Error

The explanation error is determining why the error committed in trying to understand the processes of learning. The errors in using SVA and PAA found are classified based on the causes of the errors. The output from this step answers the third question.

## 2. Interview

This technique is chosen to know in-depth information about the factors of errors in using SVA and PAA committed by students. The research is conducted as 1) open-ended interview is chosen to help understanding the central phenomenon and to answer the research question (Creswell, 2012: 218), 2) audiotape the interview, and 3) transcript.