CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of The Study

Language is a systematic means of community ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings (Brown, 1994: 4). We use it to understand our world through listening and reading, and to communicate our own feelings, needs and desires through speaking and writing. With strong language skills, we have a much better chance of understanding and being understood, and of getting what we want and need from those around us. Nowadays, in this era globalization, English has often been referred to as a “world language” that is a language spoken internationally. It is known as the foreign language to be taught in Indonesian schools. It is regarded as an essential subject in school either as an optional subject at kindergarten and primary schools or as a compulsory subject starting from junior high schools, senior high schools up to tertiary levels. Furthermore, the main reason why English is very important is that Indonesian people need to use English as a means of communication among other nations since English is widely used as the main international language. In short, English will be very useful to get access of the world, science, and technology.
In learning a language effectively, we have to know the grammar of the language because grammar or structure is the part of the study of a language. That set of rules is also called the grammar of the language, and each language has its own distinct grammar that must be followed in order to form or make good sentences. Grammar is part of the general study of language called linguistics. Using good grammar helps get our point across effectively and focuses the attention on what we have to write instead of how we choose to write it. According to Veit:

Grammar as we mean it is simply your language knowledge. Whatever your brain knows that allows you to use language we will call your grammar. Your grammar is what enables you to understand the very words you are now reading as well as to speak and write words and sentences of your own. You have had a grammar of English for as long as you have known (1986:1).

Students recognize that learning grammar is so difficult. Nevertheless, grammar is one of the important aspects of English language in which foreign students have to master it in order to be able to use English language correctly. Hall (1993) stated that studying grammar helped one to learn about a language. Learning about a language is very different from being able to use the language. Furthermore, by understanding grammar, it will help students in constructing their writing word by word well because Indonesian and English language have different rules. If students are able to write well and correctly, they can communicate and convey their ideas more comprehensively without misunderstanding and discrepancy in the information delivered.
It is not a surprise that students make mistakes in constructing sentences when they have not fully acquired the rules of the foreign language. Language learners may acquire certain rules earlier than the others, which may result in the existence of errors as there might be rules which they have not acquired. These existing errors can be systematic or unsystematic. Unsystematic errors occur in one’s native language; Corder (1971) calls these as “mistakes” and he states that they are not significant to the process of language learning. He keeps the term “errors” for the systematic ones, which occur in a second language development. These kinds of systematic errors are significant to the process of language learning as students who have made errors in their language finally realize the errors as these are known as the students’ progress by the teachers. Realizing them, the students can then learn from the errors.

In contrast, it is inevitable for students who learn foreign language to make errors in their learning process. Dulay (1982:138) states that ‘Errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing’. Besides, Beason and Lester (2003) mentioned that errors are the part of learning process. Students make errors show they are still working on it and understanding students’ errors are very useful for students themselves and for the teachers where they can understand the problems in using target language. Thus, errors are not considered as something to be avoided in language learning, as the proponents of audiolingualism once held, but as an inherent part of the language learning process.

Based on the previous research which was conducted by Maulidiyah (2008) entitled Grammatical Errors in The First Year Students’ Writing Task of SMP Negeri
Malang, she observed grammatical errors done by the first year students based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. The result of her research showed that 38% of students made errors on omission, while 36% of them did errors on misformation, 20% of them did errors on addition and 6% of the pupils made errors on misordering.

Writing, which was once considered the domain of the elite and well-educated, has become an essential tool for people of all walks of life in today’s global community. Whether used in reporting analyses of current events for newspaper or web pages, composing academic essays, business reports, letters, or e-mail messages, the ability to write effectively allows individuals from different cultures and backgrounds to communicate. Writing, like speaking, is such a common part of our everyday lives that we take for granted the writing we do on a daily basis. Most of communication we do is through spoken language but nowadays written communication is also a preference. In addition, the ability to speak and write a foreign language is becoming widely recognized as an important skill for educational, business, and personal reasons. Weigle (2002: 1) declares “The ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important in our global community, and instruction in writing is thus assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign language education”. Furthermore, it is now widely recognized that writing plays a vital role not only in conveying information, but also in transforming knowledge to create new knowledge.

Due to the usefulness of students’ errors in mastering English especially in mastering English grammar patterns, this thesis focused to analyze students’ errors on
the use of grammar in their writing task based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This taxonomy concentrates on the ways in which surface structures are altered. Using this taxonomy Dulay et al. (1982: 150) divide errors into the following categories: (1) omission, (2) additions, (3) misformation, and (4) misordering. Omission is typical for the early stages of L2 acquisition, whereas in the intermediate stages misformation, misordering, or overuse are much more common.

The researcher is interested in analyzing the written task made by Intermediate Level Students at Living English Course because basically they consider English course as an additional place where they can learn English more specifically. It means that schools are the main place to learn English. Furthermore, students should be able to use their knowledge at school and combine it with what the course has. It can be concluded that after passing several grades at an English course centre, at least the students can minimize their errors and they are able to deliver their ideas in good written language. The researcher notices the errors in writing produced by Intermediate Level Students of “Living English Course”. The researcher chooses Intermediate Level Students because this grade is considered as grade where the students are expected to be quite good in writing and quite fluent in speaking English. It means that they have mastered grammatical rules in general. In this grade, the students are taught about how to use auxiliary in sentences, forming nouns and gerund, verb forms in narrative, continuous aspect in tenses, passive sentences form and also the form of have or get something done.
Based on the reasons that are explained above, the researcher would like to conduct a research on the analysis of grammatical errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy in writing task made by Intermediate students of “Living English Course” at Jombang in academic year 2009/2010.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

In this thesis, the researcher has formulated research questions as follows:

1. What are the error types made by intermediate level students of “Living English Course” in their writing task based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy?

2. Which is the most dominant error type that often occurs in the writing task in accordance with Surface Strategy Taxonomy?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, the purposes of the study are:

1. To figure out and classify the types of errors which are found in writing task of Intermediate Level Students in “Living English Course” based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

2. To know the frequency of occurrence of each error type in writing task produced by Intermediate Level Students at “Living English Course”.
1.4 Significance of The Study

It is hoped that the result of this thesis are able to describe the grammatical performance of certain level as a portrayal of the result of learning foreign language, in this case is English about grammar rules especially in writing form.

For the English as a foreign language, teachers especially those in “Living English Course”, the result will contribute to the improvement of English teaching. It will give information of what types of errors made by the students in constructing English sentences in writing. By knowing the students’ problems, the teachers are able to select the most appropriate technique or strategy to overcome the learning problems. The result will also be useful for the teachers in arranging remedial teaching appropriate for the students with those common errors since the teacher knows which area of reinforcement the students need. Also, it will be useful in choosing the text book in the classroom.

For the learners, this thesis will help them recognize their own problems in English learning process by having their assignment returned to them after the correction. Knowing their errors in English, they can later improve their English skills and competence. The learners can also know which parts to review in order to improve their proficiency in English. In addition, it is hoped that the result can motivate the learners in improving their competence in using the target language.
1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this thesis is focused on grammatical errors in writing task and the limitation of this thesis is Intermediate Level Students which are consist of Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 (37 students) where the students from junior high school and senior high school who join in “Living English Course” in academic year 2009/2010.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation of the terms used in this thesis, it is essential to give definition as follows:

1. *Grammar* is one of components of language which must be used by students who have already acquired an English language at school or in a course. By learning grammar, they will know the way words combine to form sentences.

2. *Error analysis* is an analysis of the actual errors produced by the learners.

3. *Error* is something made wrong or incorrectly done through ignorance or carelessness; as an error in writing.

4. *Mistake* can be called confusion which is generally caused by performance factors. Limitations in remembering or forgetting something caused mistake in pronouncing the sounds of language, words, word order, word or sentence stress, and so on.
5. *Surface strategy taxonomy* is a surface strategy taxonomy highlights the way surface structures are altered. The surface strategy elements of a language are altered in specific and systematic ways. Among the common errors are: omission error, addition error, misformation error and misordering error.

6. *Writing* is one of four skills that students necessary to master when they learn English. It is now recognized that writing plays an important role not only in conveying information, ideas, beliefs, and impressions to others, but also in transforming knowledge to create new knowledge.

7. *Task* is a piece of work assigned to or demanded to a learner.

8. *Living English Course* (LEC) is one of a famous English course in Jombang. It is located in Jl. Semeru 24 Kauman Ngoro Jombang Jawa Timur. This course offers two English programs they are General English and UNAS Preparation. For General English, they have four levels, starting from Elementary 1 and Elementary 2, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, Advanced and TOEFL preparation. In addition, for UNAS Preparation, they have 3 programs, starting from SLTP UNAS English (intensive), SMU UNAS English (intensive) and SPMB English (intensive).