

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discusses introduction. It covers the background of the problem, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, research questions, the purpose of the research, the significance of the research and the definition of the key terms.

1.1 The Background of the Problem

English is an International language that is needed to be mastered by people. Having mastery in English, it can help us to communicate with other people in the world. Beside that by mastering English, people will be able to get a job easily. For instance, to get a job at a company, generally more opportunities are given to the employers who can speak English well. Considering the importance of English, it is taught as the first foreign language in Indonesia, and also a compulsory subject that should be learnt by the students of junior high school up to university.

There are 4 skills in English that should be mastered by students; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is a process of transferring ideas, feeling, and imagination from the writer into a piece of paper. Writing is also a process of communication between the writer and the readers. The goal of writing is the reader can catch the idea about what the writer has written. To reach that goal, the writer has to express her/his ideas with a good organization and punctuation.

An essay is a piece of writing which discusses ideas and concepts in a clear order. In writing essay punctuation is very important because punctuation can give clear meaning, can change a completely different meaning of a sentence. According to Nasuk and Omolola (2016) some of the common types of punctuation include; full stop, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, colon, semi-colon, hyphen, brackets, dash and apostrophe. If these characters are not used correctly, it can't only make the wrong meaning but also make an essay difficult to understand. It is supported by Sahmon and Abdal (2016) who said that proper punctuation makes an essay clear to understand. Wrongly placed punctuation marks may make a sentence ambiguous or even change the meaning. In other words, punctuation makes the reader easy to understand the sentence. Considering the important function of punctuation in writing essay, it is always discussed and also included in the assesment aspect of writing subject.

After the researcher did informal interview at March 07, 2019 with some of students at the second year student of Bung Hatta University, the researcher found that many students had difficulty in completing an essay using correct punctuation. It can also be identified from their writing exercise. Sometimes they don't use comma in a sentence that should use comma. For example: **Jhon Albert who was born in padang began to learn English in his twenties.** "Who was born in Padang" is a clause that provides nonessential information and should be set off by commas. The correct sentence is **Jhon Albert, who was born in Padang, began to learn English in his twenties.** Based on the problem above, the researcher wants to analyze about

students' ability to complete an essay using correct punctuation at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

1.2 The Identification of the Problem

There are some problems appearing in completing the essay by using correct punctuation. The problems are the students use many commas in one sentence, the students use apostrophes where they don't belong to, and the students don't put dash even though the sentence should use dash.

The main problem of completing essay is the students have less attention in using full stop at the end of the sentence. Andersen (2014) states that a sentence is a group of word which begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark. Most sentences contain a subject and a verb. So, if there is a group of words that consist of subject and verb but there is no punctuation, it is not a good sentence. So their sentences are not correct and understood.

Not only that, the students are also confused in using comma, apostrophes and dash. Sometimes the students use many commas in one sentence. In addition, some of students haven't mastered the function of each punctuations. The other problem faced by the students is they can't differentiate some kinds of essay. There are 5 kinds of essay; narrative essay, descriptive essay, cause and effect essay, comparison and contrast essay, and argumentative or persuasive essay.

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher focused on analyzing five kinds of punctuation. They are Full stop, Comma, Colon, Semi-colon, and Dash, because these punctuations are the commonly used in writing essay. In term of kinds of essay, the researcher focused on descriptive essay because the students learn this kinds of essay at the beginning of the fourth semester.

1.4 The Formulation of the Problem

Base on the limitation of problem above, the researcher formulated the problem as: “How is the second year students’ ability to complete an essay using correct punctuation?”

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is the second year students’ ability to complete an essay using full stop (.) at English Department of Bung Hatta University?
2. How is the second year students’ ability to complete an essay using comma (,) at English Department of Bung Hatta University?
3. How is the second year students’ ability to complete an essay using colon (:) at English Department of Bung Hatta University?
4. How is the second year students’ ability to complete an essay using semi colon (;) at English Department of Bung Hatta University?

5. How is the second year students' ability to complete an essay using dash (–) at English Department of Bung Hatta University?

1.6 The Purpose of the Research

In general, the purpose of this research is to find out the second year students' ability to complete correct punctuation in an essay at Bung Hatta University.

Specifically, the purposes are:

1. Finding out the second year students' ability to complete an essay using full stop (.) at English Department of Bung Hatta University.
2. Finding out the second year students' ability to complete an essay using comma (,) at English Department of Bung Hatta University.
3. Finding out the second year students' ability to complete an essay using colon (:) at English Department of Bung Hatta University.
4. Finding out the second year students' ability to complete an essay using semi colon (;) at English Department of Bung Hatta University.
5. Finding out the second year students' ability to complete an essay using dash (–) at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

1.7 The Significance of the Research

This research result will be useful for lecturer, students and further researcher. For the lecturers, they know students' ability to complete essay using correct punctuation and then they can do some improving on the related teaching aspects. For students, they know their ability to complete essay using punctuation and they find

out various ways to improve their strategy to master punctuation. For the further researcher, they can use the result of this research as references and sources.

1.8 The Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of terms used in this research, it is necessary to define the terms as follows:

1. Ability is a special talent or skill that someone has to use punctuation in completing essay.
2. Punctuation is a set of mark that regulates and clarifies the meanings of different text.
3. Essay is a short piece of writing on a particular subject.
4. Descriptive essay is a kind of essay that describe something, person, place, experience and etc.