CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The language we use is the same as the sounds which animals can produce. When a dog is barking or growling in the middle of a night, it is communicating something to other dogs and its surroundings. When a student says in front of his (her) classmates that the teacher is coming, he (she) is communicating something. Thus, the barking of the dog and the saying of the student are all forms of communication. They are forms of communication because through the barking and the saying, messages are delivered, from an animal to others and from a human to other humans. But then, is barking of dog a language? The term language is not normally used to refer animal’s sounds although the sounds (barking, meowing, etc) are produced to deliver messages. The word language is used only to refer to human’s way of communicating.

Only human kind is blessed with language capacity, an essentially unique quality. One of the most leading theoretical linguists in history, Noam Avram Chomsky, has proclaimed that when we study language, we are approaching what some might call the ‘human essence’, the distinctive qualities of mind that are so far as we know, unique to man.

As we know, language holds a very important role in human life because it is a means of communication. Without language nobody can communicate with other people. Moreover, without language people cannot establish life. Paul Roberts (1958:18) says, “Language is the system of speech sounds by which human beings communicate with one another.” Through language, we are able to interact or speak with another, express our feeling as well as ideas, desires, and needs, and give information.
Whatever kinds of activities that human makes, they need a language as a means of communication. For instance, talking to someone, debating, discussing something, murmuring, teasing, chatting, and even answering a question involve language. Just like what Diane Larsen (2003:2) tells, “Language is the means for doing something — accomplishing some purpose, for example, agreeing on a plan for handling a conflict.”

Larsen (2003:1) says, “Language is what people use to talk about the things that are important to them, for example, occurrences in their everyday lives.” Language is used to describe people’s experience, to exchange the experience, and to organize the experience which has the most significant influence for human life.

Actually, there are several functions of language in common. Firstly, most of linguistics textbooks state that language is used as a means of communication. Crystal (1974:30) cites, “Language is the most frequently used and most highly developed form of human communication.” In another book, Fromkin and Rodman in Sofyan (1996:2) say, “When you know a language, you can speak and be understood by others who know that language. This means you have the capacity to produce sounds that signify certain meanings and to understand or interpret the sounds produced by others.”

Secondly, language is used to maintain or establish social relationship. This means that language is viewed as a social phenomenon. Larsen (2003:1) states, “Language is a means of interaction between and among people.” It means that language is an interactional language (language for interpersonal communication), that is, choosing and using appropriate language within a social context. Moreover, Hartley in Sofyan (1996:2) cites:

“Language is a means of verbal communication …. Communication can only takes place successfully if the means of communication are agreed upon by its users, and thus language has a social, conventional aspect. Society, as we know, it could not exist without language, ….”

Thirdly, language is used to give information. In this case, language is needed for information. In the process of teaching and learning, this function really plays an important
role. Moody (1970:15) says, “While we shall not argue which use of language ‘come first’, there is no doubt that a principal function of language is the transmission of information.”

From all definitions above, we may conclude that the main function of language is to communicate with others. A good communication between people can be achieved if they are able to use the language perfectly. If the language they are applying is not understood, the communication, of course, cannot reach its goal.

There are many languages in the world which are used by people all over the world and English has become one of the most important languages in the world. It has been universally spoken in daily life. It has been spoken in most parts of the world, either as a first language or a second language. As an international language, English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia; no matter the students go to elementary school, junior high school, senior high school or university. To achieve the improvement of English, The Ministry of Education and Culture prescribes the English lesson in the curriculum. In each semester there is unit system of subject topics that should be covered. One of the subject topics is grammar.

Grammar can help someone to learn a language more quickly and efficiently. Grammar is a theory of how language is put together and how it works. Grammar as the system of language sometimes can be described as the rules of language. Grammar has several sections such as parts of speech, clauses, phrases, etc but parts of speech can be considered as the basic element which should get more significant attention which has been taught since elementary school.

There are eight parts of speech in English and these eight parts of speech are divided into two classes; they are closed word class and open word class. A closed word class is a word class to which no new items can normally be added, and that usually contains a relatively small number of items. Typical closed classes found in many languages are preposition, interjection, conjunction, and pronoun. While open word class accepts the
addition of new morphemes (words), through such processes as compounding, derivation, inflection, coining, and borrowing. Kinds of open word class are noun, verb, adjective, and adverb.

One of the most complicated parts in open word class is the use of verbs. Every sentence has a verb. In English, verbs are the only kind of word that changes to show past or present tense. Verbs can be affected by person and number to show agreement with the subject. While most of English structures need verbs, a great number of non-native speakers of English often make mistakes when using verbs. This fact is very interesting and also challenging to discuss. Many people think that verbs are not very important. In fact, they do not pay much attention to the verbs. That is why they usually make errors in using verbs when forming sentences. The reason is because they do not know kinds of verbs. They do not exactly understand the functions of verbs as well as where and how they must be used whereas in fact, most of English sentences cannot be formed correctly without verbs.

In the case of foreign language learners, the students sometimes may make some errors for it requires sufficient understanding of every student’s ability. Moreover, there are some great differences between English and Indonesia language. The English teachers must conduct the best way to teach the students in order to get the best outcomes. The students are also motivated to learn seriously and make them aware of the errors they have made by showing them the errors they make during the learning process in the classroom.

Regarding that grammar is very important in learning language and there are still many students that still have problems in grammar subject, the writer is intended to conduct a research by analyzing the errors in using mental verb made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems
Based on the background that has been mentioned by the writer before, the writer identifies three problems of the study as follows:

1. What kinds of error are made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs?
2. What is the most dominant error is made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs?
3. What are the causes of the errors made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs?

1.3 **Objectives of the Study**

This thesis is particularly intended to show the problems which have been mentioned before and those are:

1. To figure out the kinds of errors made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs
2. To figure out the most dominant error made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs
3. To find out the causes of the errors made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs

1.4 **Scope of the Study**

In doing a research, it is important to put a limitation to the analysis on specific data that has been chosen in order to avoid the over complicating of issues and analysis. The writer only analyzes types and the causes of the errors made by the 2012 students of English Department University of Sumatera Utara when using mental verbs.

1.5 **Significance of the Study**
When someone does something, of course he or she owns a goal. Other people will not be able to know the benefit of someone’s activity before it is completely done. The benefits of this analysis are:

1. as an additional teaching material for English teachers
2. to motivate and inspire other researchers to do another research on errors when using verb
3. to understand the problems and difficulties of people who are interested in learning English