CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Erin Gruwell (Hillary Swank) is the main character in The Freedom Writers movie. She is a new, excited school teacher who leaves the safety of her hometown, Newport Beach, to teach at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach California, a formerly high achieving school which has recently put an integration plan in place. Her enthusiasm is rapidly challenged when she realizes that her class is all "at-risk" high school students, also known as "untouchables", and not the eager-for-college students she that was expecting. The high school's student self-segregate into racial groups in the classroom, gang fights break out, and eventually most of the high school students stop attending classroom

She teaches classroom 203 which is full of racial group students. What she faces is far from her expectation because the students often fight each other in order to maintain their gangs even in the classroom. She continues to teach although they begin to stop coming in the class. She struggles, and tries the best to teach them although the students do not respect her.

One day, one of the Latino students draws a picture of one of his Nigger friends. The drawing is about a black with a big fat lips. It makes Gruwell's patient is culminated and the drawing is embarrassed the boy. She compares the problem with Holocaust (the mass murder by the Nazis of the Jews of continental Europe between 1940 and 1945) (Collins English Dictionary: 2000). In this day

she debates with several students in the classroom about racial issues. She tries to make them understand that studying is the important thing that they should do rather than fighting in racial gangs.

Gruwell tries many ways. She starts by trying many teaching methods to get their attention such as holding a trip to meet Holocaust victims, giving them books to be read, holding dancing concert to raise money for guest speaker from Europe, and so on. Her big intention to change their habit is successful and they become friends and no more gangs fighting. Although at the first time she gets opposition from her department head, who refuses to let her teach her high school students with books in case they get damaged and lost, and instead tells her to focus on training their discipline and obedience. From her brave, patience, and speech, she realizes them to be good students and finally all of them go to college.

Gruwell's speech shows that she is really confident in showing her belief, claiming, asserting, stating, and describing what she wants for her students in order to love studying in the school. She does not let any kind of obstacle prevents her intention to change her students. She also does not want her students become gangs' fighter in their age which is the age is the time to study.

Gruwell's effort in order to change her students' condition which to love in studying has close relation with the 34th hadith of Imam An-Nawawi's Hadith. It says:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيْد الْخُدْرِي رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُوْلُ: مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكُرًا فَلْيُعَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِإِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيْمَانِ.

The meaning is:

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say: "Whoever sees something wrong should change it by his hand. If he cannot, then by speech. If he cannot, then within his heart, and that is the weakest of faith." (Muslim)

In the *Hadits Arba'in Nawawiyah* which had been translated into Indonesian by Abdullah Haidhir, the hadith contains:

- 1. Menentang pelaku kebatilan dan menolak kemunkaran adalah kewajiban yang dituntut dalam ajaran Islam atas setiap muslim sesuai kemampuan dan kekuatannya. (To defy badness and to refuse denial is an obligation in Islam for every Muslim which is accordance to her/his ability).
- Sabar menanggung kesulitan dan amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. (To be
 patient in bearing difficulty and command for the good and forbid for the
 denial).
- 3. Amal merupakan buah dari iman, maka menyingkirkan kemunkaran juga merupakan buahnya keimanan. (A good deed is half of faith, so to get rid of denial is also half of faith). (Yahya, 2007: 99-100).

From the explanation of Arba'in Nawawiyah 34th hadith above, it is depicted in Erin Gruwell' effort to change the badness. In this context, the badness is the bad condition of her students who do not obey her lesson. She tries so many ways to change it, by getting two more jobs to buy sources for them, asking for more power from head of unified school in Long Beach, inviting a guest, Miep Gies from Europe to come and talks to her students, and everything

she does in order the students will love to study. She does not want to see her students failed. Finally, what she is attempted for them is ended happily. Her students love to study as like as they love her. Finally, many freedom writers were the first in their families to graduate from the high school and go to college. Erin Gruwell and the freedom writers started *the freedom writers* foundation dedicated to recreating the success of room 203 in classroom throughout the country.

From the story of Erin Gruwell above, the writer interests with the way Gruwell taught her students. Beside, her unique and funny teaching methods, the researcher is also interested in the way she spoke to her students. The students who had bad thinking about other people who were not including their tribes, became to respect and to love each other because Gruwell realized them, although she needed to debate with them about gangs, and it was started by her speaking when she explained about Holocaust victims. In this case, the writer interests with her speaking and wants to analyze Gruwell's speaking by using speech acts theory, especially in illocutionary acts.

This research traces the speeches of Erin Gruwell as the main character. The writer is interested in knowing woman personality seen from the light of her speeches. The theory which is used by the researcher to analyze the speech of Erin Gruwell is based on speech act theory. The theory of speech acts is part of pragmatics. Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to the context in which a person is speaking or writing. This includes social, situational, and textual context. It also includes background knowledge context; that is, what people

know about each other and the world (Paltridge 2006: 53). Then speech acts which is first introduced by John Austin's observation that while sentences can often be used to report states of affair, the utterance of some sentences in specified circumstances, be treated as the performance of an act (Brown and Yule 1983: 231). Austin argued that there are three kinds of acts which occur with everything we say. These are the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act (Paltridge 2006: 55).

Illocutionary acts are utterances which are performed with the intention of producing a further effect. Illocutionary acts are the acts which are committed by producing an utterance; by uttering a promise, a promise is made; by uttering a threat, a threat is made. For example, in saying, "I will try my best to be at home for dinner", the speaker performs the speech act of promising to be at home in time

According to Austin's preliminary informal description, the idea of "illocutionary acts" can be captured by emphasizing that "in saying something, we do something". For example, "I sentence you to ten years imprisonment". This sentence becomes an action because the speakers say a word to decide the punishment to the prisoner. Then, it can be concluded that sometimes someone uses word not only to say things but also he/she uses it to do things. It means that when someone says something, it has some action behind it. (Rahmah 2009: 1)

Since any such attempt to develop taxonomy must take into account Austin's classification of illocutionary acts into his five basic categories of verdictive, expositive, exercitive, behabitive, and commissive (Searle 1979: 1).

Then, illocutionary acts were developed by Searle into these categorizes, assertive, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Leech 1983: 105-106). Searle said that Austin's categorizes in illocutionary acts had some weaknesses. One of them is there is no clear principle of classification and because there is a persistent confusion between illocutionary acts and illocutionary verbs (Searle 1979: 10).

In this research the writer really wants to know about illocutionary acts produced by Erin Gruwell as the main character in *The Freedom Writers* movie. Moreover, the writer also analyzes the function of Illocutionary acts produced by Erin Gruwell. That is the reason why the writer is interested in doing the research under the title *Erin Gruwell In The Freedom Writers*, *A Movie: An Illocutionary Act Anlysis*.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background mentioned before, the researcher's problems are as follows:

- 1. What types of illocutionary acts can be found in Erin Gruwell's dialogue in The Freedom Writers movie?
- 2. What functions of illocutionary acts can be found in Erin Gruwell's dialogue in The Freedom Writer movie?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance to the statement of the problems, the aims of this study are:

- To explain the types of illocutionary acts in Erin Gruwell's dialogue in The Freedom Writers movie.
- To explain the functions of illocutionary acts in Erin Gruwell's dialogue in The Freedom Writer movie.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In doing this study, the writer hopes that it can give some benefit for:

- 1. 4. 1 For the writer herself, because in doing this study there are many things that she can take to deepen her knowledge, not only about illocutionary acts but also about how to write and analyze a case.
- 1. 4. 2 For everyone who wants to deepen her/his knowledge about illocutionary acts, especially for everyone or students in the English Department Faculty of Letters and Humanities State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The subject of the study is a movie entitled *The Freedom Writers*. As a movie, there are many characters who utter much dialogue, so to avoid unclear discussion; this study is limited to the dialogue spoken by Erin Gruwell as the main character. The definition of the dialogue itself is a conversation between characters in a literary work or a movie. Dialogue brings characters to life by revealing their personalities and by showing what they are thinking and feeling as they react to other characters. (Dinurriyah, 2013: 127).

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity, the researcher gives some definitions of important terms used in this study.

- 1. Erin Gruwell: she is the teacher and the main character in the movie
- 2. Illocutionary acts: sentences which can often be used to report states of affair, the utterance of some sentences in specified circumstances, be treated as the performance of an act (Brown and Yule 1983: 231).
- 3. The Freedom Writers: an American movie directed by Richard LaGravenese, released on 2007, and distributed by Paramount Pictures