

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English has become the most important language in the world recently. English affects so many aspects of education, business, science, and technology. Therefore, many people in Indonesia learn English. However, learning English is not easy for Indonesians. There are several factors that may cause Indonesian people think that it is difficult to study English. First, English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Second, English is not used in the daily life but it is used on certain occasions and by certain groups of people.

Learning a foreign language (English) needs process and efforts. For Indonesian learning English, they will have to minimize using their L1 system, and build a system of L2 knowledge. Indonesian language is absolutely different from English, especially on the system of language. For this reason, Indonesian learners of English should build the new system of L2 (English).

The difference between the learners of L1 and L2, have been studied by some theories, namely; Contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH), Error analysis, and the latest theory is Interlanguage. In the middle of the twentieth century there was the most popular research for applied linguists, which was called the study of two languages in contrast. Finally, the studies of comparative and contrastive the difference of languages is commonly known as Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

(Brown; 2000:207). In Contrastive analysis hypothesis, there are difficulties as well as aids from L1 (Indonesian) when learning English. According to Ellis (1986: 6-7), it was assumed that if there were differences between the L1 and L2, the learner's L1 knowledge will influence the L2, and if the system of L1 and L2 were coincidentally same, the L1 will actively help the L2 learning. This is a part of a process called *language transfer* (Odlin, 1989: 1). Language transfer is divided into two: **positive transfer** that is called facilitation (when $L1 = L2$) and **negative transfer** that is called interference (when $L1 \neq L2$) {James; 1980:15}. It is obvious that these transfers are very much influenced by the L1. The influence of L1 affects the ways transfer the L1 into the L2 or vice versa (Eppert, 1982).

Later on, error analysis theory showed up after the contrastive analysis theory. Researchers and teachers of second language started to realize that the mistakes of the students in this process of constructing a new system of language needed to be analyzed carefully, because the mistakes probably happened as the ways to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition... as Corder, 1967 (as quoted by Bright and McGregor, 1970.: 98) noted; "*A learner's errors....are significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures that learners is employing in the discovery of the language*". So, the learner's errors are used and analyzed as the evidence of learning process. A learner who studies something really new is possible to make some trials and errors, and these trials and errors prove that he is in progress in studying the new material.

Later on, error analysis is criticized for several reasons, as summarized in Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977 (as quoted by Selinker, 1978); *“By focusing only on errors, researchers were denied to access to the whole picture completely. They only studied what the learners’ mistakes, but not what made them successful”*. In this case, EA was considered to focus too much to the students’ errors, and as the result, EA paid less attention to other important aspects such as students’ motivating factors. Furthermore, it was often difficult or almost impossible, to identify the source of an error.

The latest theory is called the interlanguage theory. This new theory does not view the differences between the two languages that may cause errors and mistakes, but more on the natural process of interlanguage. The language system in interlanguage will not remain the same with neither L1 nor L2 language system. According to Ellis; *“Interlanguage is used to refer to the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner’s L1 and the L2 system he is trying to learn”* (Ellis, 1987:42). Interlanguage can be said as the new language as the result of learning two or more languages. As EA, the new language (interlanguage) is also viewed as the evidence of students’ efforts and process in learning a second language.

There have been many studies which focus on contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (EA), but there are only very few studies that focus on interlanguage (IL). The writer often finds that the study of interlanguage sometimes only found as a part of a research book, not as the main focus of the research. To the writer’s knowledge, there have not been any studies that investigate the interlanguage manifestation in Indonesian students’ productions. Therefore, this study was

conducted to describe the stages of interlanguage that manifest in students' compositions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Based on the reason mentioned above, this study is intended to find out stages of interlanguage of Indonesian students who learn English. Thus, the problem that arises and is investigated in this study is:

What are the stages of interlanguage which manifest in students' compositions during their learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)?

1.3 Objective of the study

In line with the statement of the problem, this study is intended to describe:

The stages of interlanguage which manifest in students' compositions during their learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)

1.4 Significances of the study

The study is expected to:

1. Provide the empirical evidence to the readers regarding the theory of interlanguage in order to support the study of interlanguage. Since this study is only a case study, it is not going to generalize the results of this experimental study to a wider population of learners.
2. Serve as the alternative source for trainers who would like to deal with the Interlanguage, since there is a very limited research about this study

especially in post-graduate library of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University.

3. Inform tutors that interference including mistakes and errors are the parts of interlanguage which are the natural processes in the second language acquisition (SLA).
4. Serve as a reference material for those who would like to write an analysis on similar subject

1.5 Scope and limitation

The writer limited the data for this thesis to eight compositions of English First (EF). English First is an international course in Indonesia whose students are heterogeneous from all parts of community. The writer then chose the pre-intermediate level from EF since the writer was a teacher at EF. The eight chosen compositions were those from general English course at the pre-intermediate level (level 3). The level three is categorized into a pre-intermediate since level 3 has already gotten the basic English in its previous levels, but the learners are not good enough to get placed in the real intermediate level. The students of level 3 in this study were mostly students from junior high schools, but several of them were adult-start-learners. Because most of them were young, they tended to write the target language (English) according to their previous language system (Indonesian). As a result, the language produced was not the language they should write.

The writer collected the data once for a snapshot analysis for this case study. For pre-intermediate students, writing a composition in English is fairly difficult.

That is why the writer just assigned them to write a composition which consisted of 50-100 words or 1-2 paragraphs only in 60 minutes. The selecting process was held in the 3rd week of February – 1st week of March 2005. The writer planned this length of time to schedule the each class written assignment. What the writer analyzed from the students' compositions was the stages of interlanguage, according to what Pienemann and Johnston call the developmental stages.

Although similar findings might happen to other EFL learners, this study is not going to generalize the findings to a wider population of learners.

1.6 Assumption

The assumption of this study is:

The students' compositions were made seriously by the students.

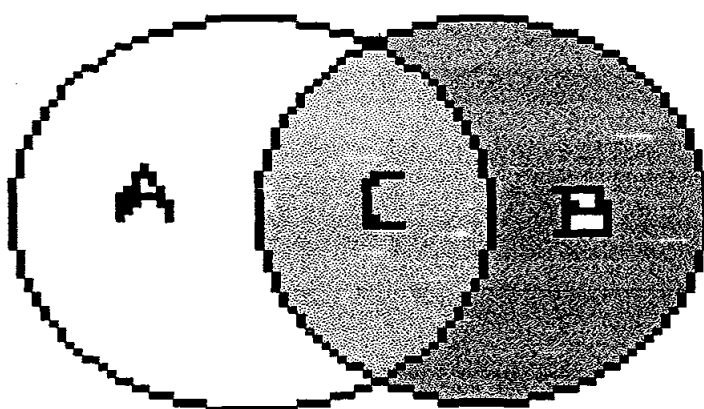
1.7 Theoretical frameworks

In this study, the writer uses some theories related to interlanguage:

1.7.1 *Interlanguage theory*

According to Ellis, the theory of interlanguage was first developed with view to L1 acquisition, which also saw the first effort to examine experimentally how a learner built up knowledge of a language by connecting it with the L1 and L2. Where Second language acquisition (L2) is concerned, the key concept to build up a language system in the process of learning is called *interlanguage*. "*Interlanguage is the theoretical construct which underlay the attempts of SLA researchers to identify the stages of development through which L2 learners pass on their way to L2 (or*

*near L2) proficiency” (Ellis, 1987:42). This is used to refer to the **systematic knowledge** of language which is independent of both the learner’s L1 and the L2 system he is trying to learn, and also as the evidence of the learning process. This Interlanguage is the process of the learning of two or more languages. For example, a student who speaks language A fluently (his native language) and studies language B (ex; English), may result language C which is neither a part of language A nor B. To make a clear description, this image below might show the interrelation.*



NB :

- A → Language 1
- B → Language 2
- C → **Interlanguage**

1.7.2 The developmental stages

In the process of interlanguage, there are several stages that EFL learners undergo. Pienemann and Johnston (1987) (as quoted by Freeman &

Long, 1992:276) describes as the developmental stages and sample ESL structures. There are 5 stages described in the developmental stages; stage X, stage X+1, stage X+2, stage X+3, and stage X+4. These 5 stages describe the developments of ESL learners which will get discussed further in chapter 2.

Studying developmental sequences or the steps might lead to acquisition of a particular structure as they are described in the stages. Typically, investigation of developmental sequences has involved a longitudinal study in which the students' compositions are analyzed for particular structure. It is interesting that these stages, somehow, are written explicitly in Ellis' definition about interlanguage; *"Interlanguage is the theoretical construct which underlay the attempts of SLA researchers to identify the stages of development through which L2 learners pass on their way to L2 (or near L2) proficiency"* (Ellis, 1987:42). It is clearly seen that SLA researchers try to identify the stages of development in the learning process. So, it can be assumed that the referred stages in Ellis' definition about interlanguage are the developmental stages (X – X+4).

1.7.3 Second language acquisition theory

There are several theories which become the framework of this thesis. Second language acquisition theory is closely related to the Interlanguage which is the core of this study. For most scholars and educators, SLA is a common theory; they study it in universities. According to Ellis; *SLA is the product of many factors pertaining to the learner on the other hand and the learning situation on the other. SLA is not a*

uniform and predictable phenomenon. There is no single way in which learners acquire a knowledge of a second language (Ellis, 1986:4). SLA is a very complicated process. As it is written in the definition, it involves many factors to study a second language and these factors are sometimes can not be predicted because there have to be many efforts to study a second language.

Second language acquisition stands in contrast to first language acquisition. Second language acquisition (SLA) is the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue or the first language (L1). SLA research has the approximately the similar footsteps of L1 acquisition research, both in its methodology and in many of the issues that it has applied. It is not surprising that a key issue of SLA and L1 acquisition is on the similar or different process.

Compared with the foreign language, second language acquisition is not meant to contrast with foreign language acquisition. SLA is used as an universal term that holds both untutored acquisition (or naturalistic) and tutored acquisition (or classroom).

1.7.4 Theory of writing

Writing requires a complicated process. According to Rimka (2004: 5), a beginning learner cannot write a good writing at the first time because writing involves several stages to go through. The writing, however, has two different types; personal writing and formal writing. Personal writing is a relatively simple and straightforward process because it might not follow a logical outline (e.g. writing a diary or a letter to a friend). Formal writing is a more complex process. It involves a

well defined problem and logical outline. It is more dedicated to a public consumption such as journal readers or community members. Formal writing involves formal restriction, such as a problem description, background and purpose of the paper, text reliability and unity, etc. A good example of formal writing is academic writing, which includes study assignments, laboratory reports, and scientific papers. Writing a formal composition involves processes. There are two different views of writing process; **the writing stages and cognitive processes** (Rimka 2004: 6)

There was a study regarding the composition which was conducted by Mina Shaughnessy in the 1970s about “basic writers”. She studied 4000 student essays from the error point of view whose first language was not English, and found that these students actually full of respect and care; they were not intellectually incapable, but they were actually linguistically varied from the second language (English). Finally, she came out with the result that the cause of error was much more important than the fact of the error itself (as quoted by Reid, 1993: 9).

Then, the writer thinks about how the students feel while writing their compositions which are not their first language. According to Corder, 1981 (as quoted by Tarone, 1984), one of the reasons of mistakes and errors are the influence of students’ L1. Then, the writer concludes that most students whose first language is not English might have schemata about how to write a composition by using a language which is not their mother tongue (L1). They usually think what they want to write directly from their first language. In other words, their first language always

becomes a shadow for writing the second language so that students tend to make their own rules which sometimes are not the part of their L1 neither L2 (interlanguage) . Another expert seems to support the writer's opinion. According to Flower and Hayes,1981 (as quoted by Rimka 2004), principally, a writer has to translate the meaning of his or her thoughts from a complex internal system of words, parts of statements, and abstract symbols which involve a writer's short-term memory, because the writer has to deal with many controls at the same time such as spelling, grammar, text coherence, style of language, etc. It means, in writing a composition, a learner might explore his internal system and at the same time control the grammar or language style in his brain. If his L1's grammar or language style is strong, it automatically influences his composition. Since first language system and second language system are facing in contras, mistakes and errors are the result of their L1's schemata. In line with the writer's opinion, according to Corder,1981 (as quoted by Tarone 1984), there are four reasons for these error and mistake; a natural product of student risk-taking (known as the interlanguage), an overgeneralization of L2 rules, the transfer of a rule from the student's first language (L1 interference), or the difficulty of implementing the English language rule.

The students' compositions analyzed in this thesis were those which belong to a pre-intermediate level. *"Pre-intermediate is an early period of consolidation and expansion, where students in the process of studying the four skills systematically; understanding, speaking, reading, and writing". (Alexander,1967:vii).* At this stage, students should start to write simple, compound, and complex sentences and how to

relate ideas from notes. The main stages of pre-intermediate level in the written language might be summarized as follow:

1. Practice in writing simple sentences through controlled comprehension
2. Practice in writing compound sentences through controlled comprehension
3. Practice in writing complex sentences through controlled comprehension
4. Practice in relating ideas from the notes given.

1.8 Definition of key-terms

To avoid any misinterpretation of this study, the writer lists some terms that are used in this study:

- a. ***Interlanguage***. Interlanguage is used to refer to the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the L2 system he is trying to learn (Ellis, 1987; 41).
- b. ***Language***. Language is the system of human expression by means of words. (Procter, 1983:617)
- c. ***Interference***. Interference is where the L1 and L2 share a meaning but express it in different ways. It is related with the way in which previous learning prevents or inhibits the learning of new habits (Ellis, 1986:22).
- d. ***Stages of interlanguage***. Stages of Interlanguage are the patterns of interlanguage in the developmental sequences according to Pienemann and Johnston (1987) [...as quoted by Freeman and Long, 1992: 276].
- e. ***Pre-intermediate***. Pre-intermediate is an early period of consolidation and expansion, where students are in the process of studying the four skills

systematically; understanding, speaking, reading, and writing.

(Alexander, 1967: vii)

f. **Composition.** Composition is a formal writing. It is a demanding and complex process which involves the writing stages and cognitive processes. (Rimka, 2004: 6).

g. **Writing.** Writing is primarily a thinking and problem-solving process. (Flower and Hayes 1980, 1981 as quoted by Rimka 2004: 6)

1.9 Organization of the study

There are five chapters in this thesis which relate to each other. Chapter one deals with Introduction, in which explains the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, significance, scope and limitation, assumptions, theoretical frame-work, and the definition of key-terms.

Chapter two is the review of related literature which contains: the interlanguage, interlanguage and the developmental stages, genesis of interlanguage, the three historical concepts, second language acquisition theories, theory of writing, and review of the related study.

Chapter three deals with research methodology, explains the design of the study, the subjects in detail, instruments, procedures of data collection, and the technique of data analysis.

Chapter four deals with data analyzing and relates the data with the actual field research to find and explore the essentials of the study. As the last but not the

least, Chapter five deals with Conclusion and suggestion for what have been enlightened from chapter 1 - 4.