

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Problem

Krashen and Terrel (1988:26) claimed that language acquisition and language learning were two distinct ways of developing competence in second languages. Language acquisition was a "natural" way to develop linguistic ability and a subconscious process. There would be a sense of unawareness in using the rules of a language. Brown stated that

every child, given a normal developmental environment, acquires his native language fluently and efficiently, moreover, he acquires it naturally without special instruction, though not without notable conscious efforts and attention to language. (1980:17)

Language learning was a "formal knowledge" of a language and a conscious process. There would be a sense of awareness and able to describe the usage of the rules of a language.

Krashen (1987:7) stated that language acquisition required slow developments of the use of conscious grammatical rules, and speaking skills emerged significantly later than listening skills. Students

started to produce correct grammatical rules at a time. In this case, the best method for language acquisition was by supplying "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations containing messages that students really wanted to hear.

In the study of second language acquisition, Ellis and Roberts (1987:3) noted that there has been an increasing attention to the role of the context. The broad situational contexts were possible to be compared with the route of acquisition. Context referred to the language choice which could be applied to sociolinguistic analyses. In the study of second language acquisition in context was also the study of learner's variable output. The construct of context was used by sociolinguists to explain why language users made the choices they did. The linguistic context affected the choice. To be able to make language choice, there would be the study of second language acquisition in relation with its social context.

Scovel (1991:16) stated that there were five intrinsic learner variables which determined the second language learning. The first was the lateralization and the critical period for language learning. Berk (1989: 369) stated that during a critical period of

development, language acquisition must occur. While a critical period paralleled the age span during lateralization. The critical period was the period which the left hemisphere of the brain set developmental boundaries for language acquisition. The second was integrative versus instrumental motivation. In learning a language, there were two kinds of motivations. The integrative motivation came as the internal motivation. The instrumental motivation came as the external motivation. Both could be the motivators of a successful language learning. The third was the conscious use of the "monitor" by adult language learners. Krashen and Terrel (1988:129) stated that monitor was the editor of the output of the acquired system. The fourth was empathy. The fifth was anxiety. Anxiety as someone's emotional state of uneasiness could trigger a variety of physiological responses. If anxiety became a hindrance to language learning, it could also be a hindrance to language acquisition. These intrinsic learner variables could be put into a research in foreign language learning.

Noting the importance of language processing strategies in second language acquisition, Wenden (1987 :12) argued that learner strategy was another factor of learner characteristic which might be considered in

determining the acquisition of second language. Learner strategy also referred to the language behaviours or strategies. By asking the students what they were doing on learning tasks, e.g. while reading, we could observe their strategies.

In foreign language learning, the environment or the process of developing the target language was unnatural. In Indonesia, where English was a foreign language, natural learning environment was difficult to provide. Foreign language teachers needed special instructions for teaching a foreign language. According to Jakobovits and Gordon (1974:17), there were three basic distinctions that characterized the various foreign language teaching procedures. The first was nonprogrammed instruction versus programmed instruction. The programmed instruction insured acquisition by the students by completing the program without special achievement and performance tests. Students who had been completing their programs were considered to be successful. The nonprogrammed instruction broke the content of a lesson into steps. Students must acquire them separately and sequentially. The second was mass versus individualized instruction. The mass instruction assumed that a group of individuals in a classroom with similar minimal competencies learned in sequential and

had the contrary assumption. The third was the traditional versus compensatory instruction. The traditional instruction assumed that formal education prepared the individual for the "real life" situation. The compensatory instruction assumed that school was not a substitute or a preparation ground for society.

In Natural Approach, Krashen and Terrel (1988:20-21) stated that grammatical accuracy was very low in early stages and increased slowly with increased opportunities for communicative interaction and acquisition. In this case, grammar would be effectively acquired if goals of teaching were communicative. In other words, it would be better for foreign language classroom to have natural approaches. Comprehensible input was also important. When teachers dealt with unnatural environment of foreign language, they needed comprehensible input for acquisition. The natural approach and comprehensible input would increase foreign language learners to acquire grammatical rules in context. In addition, Perrin and Corder (1975:34) gave the English grammatical rules and its usage. Thomson and Martinet (1990:181-183) gave the conditionals patterns as one of the English grammatical rules. For further details, the writer will explain it in Chapter II

Flory English Centre was built in 1989 by Dra. Florensia Yap. It was one of the English Courses in Surabaya. Like any other foreign language education, Flory English Centre provided the learners with materials in which comprehensible to the learners. The course has been divided into stages. In each stage, students were taught grammatical rules. In this case, the students were encouraged to use grammatical rules. In this observational study, the writer would observe the English grammar acquisition by the students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem in this thesis is to what extent do the Intermediate students at Flory English Centre acquire the English grammar.

1.3 The Objective of the Study

This study is made on the basis of knowing the extent of English grammar acquisition by the Intermediate students at Flory English Centre.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute a further study about communicative English teaching. Hopefully, this

study will help the teachers at Flory English Centre in teaching grammatical rules communicatively.

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

In this study, it will only concern with the use of English grammatical rules in oral communication by the intermediate students at Flory English Centre.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

There were several terms used in this study.

1. Formal knowledge is the knowledge which is achieved in formal education.
2. Comprehensible input is the input which contains messages in low anxiety for the students who are ready to receive it.
3. Acquisition is a subconscious process to develop someone's ability.
4. Grammar acquisition is the ability to use grammatical rules subconsciously.
5. Natural learning is the condition in which someone learns something through natural processes or orders.
6. Natural approach is the approach to natural learning condition.

7. Intermediate is the level in which the students have mastered the use of simple sentence with at least 750 vocabularies, so they are considered ready to communicate in English.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. Chapter two is the review of related literature. Chapter three is the research method. Chapter four is the data analyses and summary of interpretation of the data analyses. Chapter five is the conclusion.