CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the most important elements to master in the learning a foreign language is the grammar of the language. It is undeniable that there are difficulties in the learning of the grammar of a foreign language both the grammatical rules and their application. Illustrating this point, Bloch dan Trager, in their book Outline of Linguistic Analysis, state that ".... whenever one is learning a new thing, he usually makes some errors, such as English. This is quite understandable since learning another language means learning a new speech habit".[1] The errors he makes can be in the form of grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary.

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Indonesia and the basic grammar of English is taught to Indonesian students beginning from the Junior High School. The problem with the teaching of English grammar in Indonesia is that the students very often make errors throughout the learning process. This is due to the fact

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[1] Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager, Outline of Linguistic Analysis, Linguistic Society of America at the Waverly Press, Inc., Baltimore, Md, 1942, p. 3.

that the nature of the target language is different from their native language. The students may find some elements of the target language that are different from their native language. It is assumed that different elements pose problems to learners.

Since language learning occurs through habit formation, error correction is thought to be useful for concious learning about the grammar of the language.[2] To get the habit formation of the grammar of the language, some error corrections must be done so that the students know the correct rules in English. Better information on the errors the students make will help the teacher in the making of decisions on the types of assistance given.[3] Considering this fact, the writer through this study would like to help teachers in teaching the English Tag Questions. The focus of this study is on the students' errors in English Tag Questions. She decided to identify the types of errors, find out the causes of the errors and suggest some techniques to minimize the errors.

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[2] Stephen D. Krashen, Language Methodology Series Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, Pegamon Press, 1982, p. 11.

[3] D. Wagiman, MA., The Acquisition of English Simple Past Tense by Indonesia Students : an Error Analysis, Magister Scientiae, No 12/3 Edisi 1987, p. 14.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With reference to the reason for choosing the topic, the statement of the major problem under study is formulated as follows :

"What types of errors do high school students make in the learning of English Tag Questions and what are the possible causes of the errors?".

In the attempt to answer these questions, the following sub-problems are formulated :

1. Do the errors of English Tag Questions pattern mostly consist of personal pronoun forms?

2. Do the errors of English Tag Questions pattern mostly consist of possesive pronoun forms?

3. Do the errors of English Tag Questions pattern mostly consist of the wrong construction of auxiliary verbs?

4. Do the errors of English Tag Questions pattern mostly consist of the usage of the relevant tenses?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this study are as follows :

1. to identify the types of errors made by high school students in the learning of English Tag Questions;

2. to find out the possible causes of the errors;

3. to suggest some techniques to minimize the errors

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are hoped to give feedback to English teaching which may be used to improve the quality of English teaching such as to plan a remedial teaching, to get rid of these grammar errors as soon as possible. As we know, teachers' assistance in the learning process may help the students acquire the language faster. Hopefully, the findings of this study can support the theory of Error Analysis.

1.5 The Limitations of the Study

Being aware of how broad the topic of this study would be, the writer found it necessary to limit it. For the sake of this study, she took only the second year students of SMAK of Santo Stanislaus II Kalijudan Surabaya who enrolled in the academic year of 1988/1989. There were 106 students taken as the subject of this study. They consisted of forty female students and sixty-six male students.

The writer limited her study to only some errors. The errors discussed are mainly the ones concerning with the English Tag Questions errors, such as errors in the use of personal pronouns and errors in the use of auxiliary verbs. To this point, there is no point of

difference between the terms "errors" and "mistakes" in this study.

1.6 The Assumptions of the Study

This study is based on the following assumptions :

1. In the second year, the students' proficiency in using the personal pronouns is considered to be already good enough. They are supposed to have no difficulties in using the personal pronouns.

2. In the second year, the students' proficiency in using the possessive pronouns is considered to be already good enough. They are supposed to have no difficulties in using the possessive pronouns.

3. In the second year, the students' proficiency in using the auxiliary verbs is considered to be already good enough. They are supposed to have no difficulties in using the auxiliary verbs.

4. In the second year, the students' proficiency in using tenses, especially Present Continous Tense, Simple Present Tense, Simple Past Tense, Future Tense, Past Continous Tense and Present Perfect Tense is considered to be already good enough. They are supposed to have no difficulties in using the tenses.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to follow the ideas presented in the following chapters, it is worthwhile to define some terms used in this study. They are Acquisition, Question Tag, SMA or Indonesian Senior High School and errors.

Acquisition is the act of acquiring.

A question tag is a question which consists of an affirmative or negative statement and a short question at the end of the statement. The short question is called a question tag.[4]

SMA is a Senior High School, an educational Institute as the continuation of Junior High School. This Institute prepares students to continue their studies to the higher education or to live in the society.[5]

Errors are defined as the systematic, consistent deviances characteristic of the learner's linguistic system at a given stage of learning.[6]

1.8 Organization of the Study

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[4] Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayan Republik Indonesia, English for the SLTA, Structure Reference Book II & III, Jakarta, 1979, p. 29.

[5] Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, Kurikulum Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) 1975, Buku I, Ketentuan-ketentuan Pokok, Jakarta, 1975, p. 6.

[6] Kenneth Croft, Readings on English as a Second Language for Teachers and Teacher Trainees, Little, Brown and Company (Inc,), Boston-Toronto, 1980, p. 105.

This study consist of five chapters. Chapter I the Introduction, deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the limitations of the study, the assumptions, the definitions of key terms and the organization of this study. Chapter II discusses the review of related literature and studies which are relevant to this study. Chapter III deals with the methodology of the study which consists of the nature of this study, the population and samples for this study, the instruments of this study, the procedures of collecting the data, and the data analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings and the interpretation of the findings. The conclusion of this study is given in chapter V, the last chapter of this study. This chapter presents the result of this study and suggestions concerning the study. Hopefully, The suggestions will be of some help for English teachers to overcome the problems encountered in the classroom, especially to improve their ways of teaching English Tag Questions.