

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English as an international language is a foreign language in Indonesia. We can say that it is a foreign language because this language is not used by residents our country or community in which this language is being learned (Dulay, 1982:278).

Before learning English as a foreign language, all of Indonesian students have learned regional language from their society which is used in their daily communication. From this we can say that at least they have mastered the morphemes, the structures, the syntax and the sound of the regional language.

After acquiring their regional language, Indonesian language is introduced when they begin to take the formal education in kindergarten. The teacher teaches them how to spell, read and pronounce the Indonesian language well. Here they also begin to learn the morphemes, the structures, the sounds, the syntax and the sound of the Indonesian language.

As the Indonesian language is learned first, learning English has always been hard for most Indonesian students, because they are still influenced by their Indonesian language. As what Mackey (1969:107-108) says that the first and most obvious reason for failure in mastering a second language is that the learner has had experiences with the previous language. The learner thought of his native language structure first.

This influence will also be seen when they are at the first semester of the English department. Many students may still make various mistakes in forming wh- questions in English (translating Indonesian into English in wh- questions). And it interests the writer to find out whether the students' native language (Indonesian) interferes and causes errors in their wh- questions.

Being interested in finding out the types of errors in using wh- questions made by the first semester students of the academic year of 1996/1997 of English department of Widya Mandala University Surabaya, the writer decided to conduct a research under the topic: Errors in Using Wh- Questions Made by the First Semester Students of the Academic Year of 1996/1997 of the English Department of Widya Mandala University Surabaya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In line with its background (in section 1.1.), the major problem of this study was formulated as follows: "What types of errors are mostly found in the wh- questions made by the first semester students of the English department of Widya Mandala University Surabaya?"

To answer the aforementioned major problem, the following sub-problems should be answered first:

1. Do the errors in using wh- questions mostly consist of the wrong use of wh- word?
2. Do the errors in using wh- questions mostly consist of the wrong use of pronoun?

3. Do the errors in using wh- questions mostly consist of the wrong use of auxiliary verb?
4. Do the errors in using wh- questions mostly consist of the wrong use of verb form?
5. Do the errors in using wh- questions mostly consist of the wrong use of word order?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to determine the types of errors mostly encountered in wh- questions made by the first semester students of the English department of Widya Mandala University Surabaya.

To achieve this major objective, the following sub-objectives should be achieved first.

1. To find out the sub-types of errors in wh- word
2. To find out the sub-types of errors in pronoun
3. To find out the sub-types of errors in auxiliary verb
4. To find out the sub-types of errors in verb form
5. To find out the sub-types of errors in word order

These sub-types of errors will then be ranked according to their frequency of occurrences.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be used by the English teacher as feedback to improve their ways of teaching wh- questions. Hopefully, by so doing,

they will help their students minimize (if not get rid of) the errors in using wh- questions in English. And the result of this study would give us better information about how students learn wh- question patterns in their efforts to master English as a foreign language.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

To carry out this research, the writer gave the translation test in Simple Present and Past Tenses, because these tenses require the students to use appropriate auxiliary verbs in making questions. Consequently, if the students have mastered these tenses, they would be able to master the other tenses easily. This test was given to the first semester students of the English department of Widya Mandala University Surabaya. After collecting the students' worksheets, the writer analyzed just the misconstruction of wh- words, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, verb forms and word orders.

1.6 The Assumptions

This study was carried out under the assumptions that:

1. The students have mastered the Simple Present and Past Tense, because this study includes the students' ability to construct the English wh- questions in these tenses based on the Indonesian statement.
2. The students have more or less the same level of intelligence.

1.7 The Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theories of Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Language Transfer since these theories are dealing with errors of second or foreign language learners.

1.7.1 Contrastive Analysis

According to Romaine (1988:206) contrastive analysis was developed as a means of comparing two languages in order to pinpoint the areas of differences and similarities. While Dulay et al. (1982:124) say that contrastive analysis treats of errors based on a comparison of the learner's native language and target language. Differences between the two were thought to account for the majority of an L2 learner errors. So the most second language learners' errors would result from their automatic use of L1 structure when attempting to produce the L2 (Dulay, 1982:118).

Brown (1980:148) says that contrastive analysis hypothesis which is deeply rooted in behaviorism and structuralism, claims that the principle barrier to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system.

1.7.2 Error Analysis

According to Romaine (1988:206) error analysis was used to predict and/or account for the problems and errors likely to research in the learning of particular language by a learner with a given language background.

1.7.3 Language Transfer

Romaine (1988:206) says that transfer is the tendency for inter language to be shaped by features of learners's first language. It was assumed that most of the difficulties faced by the learners of second language were the result of interference from his native language. Where there were differences between the L1 and L2, knowledge of L1 would aid L2 learning. This is the essence of the notion of transfer. The concept was originally formulated within the context of behaviorist psychology, which treated learning as a result of habit formation by reinforcement. Where there are similarities, transfer is positive; where there are differences, transfer is negative. Errors will result from negative but not positive transfer.

Essentially, transfer theory predicts that learners with different ways due to the differing effects of positive and negative transfer. In this view, the process of learning a second language consist in replacing the features of L1 that interferes with the acquisition of those L2, and thus approximating the structure of the L2.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

In order to help the readers understand the meaning of the terms presented in this thesis, the writer has included the definition of key terms as follows:

1.8.1 Interference

Dulay (1982:99) defines interference as those instance of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilingual as a result of their familiarity with more than one language.

1.8.2 Contrastive Analysis

According to Dulay (1982:140), contrastive analysis is the treatment of errors based on the comparison of the learners native language and target language. Differences between the two were thought to account for the majority of an L2 learner's errors and would result from their automatic use of L1 structure when attempting to produce the L2. In short, L2 learner's errors are mostly caused by the interference of their native language.

1.8.3 Foreign Language

Dulay (1982:278) says that foreign language is a language that is not used by resident of the country or community, in which the language is being learned (in this study, the foreign language is English).

1.8.4 Native Language

Dulay (1982:278) states that native language also called host language is the language used by the residents of the country or community in which the language is being learned. The native language in this study is Indonesian.

1.8.5 Target Language

Dulay (1982:11) defines that target language is the language being learned or taught. In this study, the target language is English.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consist of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, the problem, the objective, the scope and limitation, the assumption, the theoretical framework, the definition of the key terms and the organization of this thesis. Chapter II deals with the review of related literature and studies which are relevant to this study. Chapter III presents the methodology of this study which consists of the nature of the study, subject of the study, instrument of this study, procedure of collecting the data and technique of data analysis. Chapter IV discusses the data analysis and interpretation of the findings. Chapter V is the conclusion which presents the result of this study and some suggestions concerning this study.