CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Every person needs a language to communicate. The language used to communicate can be his native/first language (L1), second language or other languages (L2). In order to master L1 it is not too difficult for a person to do because most of the time he is exposed to natural settings and everywhere he meets native speakers who are ready to be the source people and models. Learning L2, however is not that easy especially when a person learns the language outside the country where the L2 is used. Indonesian learners of English in Indonesia, for example, will have lot of problems such as not having enough exposure to practice the language, and enough source people to practice with.

The conditions result in the incomplete mastery of the target language. This incomplete mastery of the target language has been the main phenomenon of the result of every L2 learning. This idea is also supported by Selinker (1972) in Cook (1994: 18) who stated that "L2 learning differs from first language acquisition in that it is seldom completely successful only 5% of L2 learners have

'absolute success' in his view." The other 95% learners are less successful in learning the L2.

While learning a second language, learners commonly build up a system for themselves which is different in some ways from the system of their first language (mother tongue) and second language (or L2 hereafter) or the target language (or TL hereafter), the language that the learners are learning. The word second language in this term is also not intended to contrast with foreign language. Second language learning here refers to "the learning of another language (second, third, foreign) after acquisition of one's mother tongue is complete" (Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005: 3). The term 'second' here, based on this definition seems transparent. In this context 'second' can refer to any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue or native language.

The system which the language learners build up for themselves has been given various names or terms, namely: They are (1) transitional competence, (2) idiosyncratic dialect, and (3) approximative system. These terms refer to the same phenomenon but emphasize on different aspects. The first term, Transitional Competence, is proposed by Corder (1977) to give focus on the fact that learners are developing knowledge of second language. This describes the system of rules that a learner has developed at a particular stage (his competence) and emphasizes its temporary nature as the learner progresses (transitional). The second term, Idiosyncratic Dialect, is given by Corder (1977) to specify the view that the learner is speaking an idiosyncratic Dialect. This term

emphasizes that at any given time, the learner operates a self-contained language variety (dialect). When compared with the dialect of normal speech communities, many more aspects of this language will be unique (idiosyncratic) to the individual learner. Third, Approximative System is proposed by Nemser (1971) to give emphasis that the learner's language has its own system, which is approximative in nature. This especially draws attention to the structural aspects of the learner's language, which is approximative, more or less close to the fill second (target) language system. But the most widely used terminology is that suggested by Selinker (1974). He calls this Interlanguage to emphasize the structurally intermediate status of the learners' language system between his mother tongue and his target language. A further study of interlanguage could help us to better understand the learners' problems and try to provide timely help to learners, so that they can achieve competence in the language they are learning.

Selinker (1977) proposes the term "Interlanguage" to refer to the language system of the second language learner, a system distinct from both the native as well as the target language. His language system contains elements of both the first language as well as the target language. It is a continuum at a single point in time between the first language system, which constitutes the learner's initial knowledge, and the second language, which is the target language. In second language teaching, interlanguage has an important role for the teacher as it has the following three points (1) the disposal of errors in the

classroom (as the question of feedback), (2) the sequence of presentation of materials (as the question of presentation), (3) the production of material and curriculum (as the question of materials). Above all, if the analytic data on the learning of a specific language under a specific learning condition are stocked, they are likely to suggest for the production of the realistic and applicable model for teaching a second or foreign language. It would be useful in making linguistic materials and selecting a teaching method. Moreover, this approach is likely to strengthen the relation of research and teaching.

According to Selinker (1972) there is a 'psychological structure latent in the brain' which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. He argues that 5% of L2 learners attain mastery in their TL by using the Latent Language Structure. On the other hand, 95% of L2 learners achieve competence in their TL by using the Latent Psychological Structure.

The Latent Psychological Structure is different from that of the Latent Language Structure with respect to the following facts. It has no direct genetic time table (not subject to a critical period), it has no direct connection with any grammatical concept (Universal Grammar), it has no guarantee of activation or realization into particular grammar structures of the L2, although this device is considered independent, possible overlapping may occur between this structure and other areas of the brain.

Based on the above description, it can be summed up that Selinker's description of the interlanguage system has a cognitive (psychological) emphasis

and a focus on the strategies that learners employ when learning a second language. It is assumed that interlanguage is the result of the learners' attempts to produce the target language norms. That is to say, learner errors (interlanguage errors) are the product of the cognitive process in second language learning or learning strategy. He suggests that there are five processes central to second language learning, namely: Overgeneralization, Transfer of Training, Strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and language transfer. Selinker says that in a given situation the utterances produced by the learner are different from those native speakers would produce the utterances they attempted to convey the same meaning. The comparison reveals a separate linguistic system. This system can be observed when we study the utterances of the learners who attempt to produce a target language for example English.

With regards to psychological process, Jean D'Souze (1977) thinks that these five processes could be reduced to three since he believes that there is no clear cut distinction between processes three, four, and five. According to him, overgeneralization could include strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication. Besides he points out that it is not always possible to say with certainty whether a learner uses a particular form because he thinks it is enough to communicate effectively or because he is using a particular strategy. The followings are the three processes suggested by Jean D'Souza: (1) Transfer from previous learning experience, errors due to

interference; (2) Simplification and overgeneralization of elements of the target language system, errors due to learning strategies; and (3) Errors arising from teaching methods and materials employed, 'teaching induced' errors.

The observable phenomenon indicates that English produced by Indonesian senior high school students of MAN I Surakarta also contains a great number of interlanguage errors, covering various linguistic items as well as grammatical elements. Most of the sentences the writer collected contained interlanguage errors. Such a phenomenon give rise to a question as what kinds of cognitive processes or learning strategy used by the learners which results in interlanguage errors. This fundamental question about foreign language learning becomes the focus of the current investigation. This investigation would give an important contribution to the better understanding of the process of foreign language learning.

In applied linguistics, the learners' foreign language which contains errors is termed as interlanguage (Selinker, 1977). It draws attention to the fact that the learners' language system is neither that of native language nor the target language. Their language system contains elements of both native language and target language as shown in the following sentences taken from the subject of this study:

1. I bought *souvenir that beautiful*

2. Last week *I am and my family* went to *beach parangtritis*

3. There, *I'm swimming and played* with my friend

4. Dina *have eyes small and narrow*

5. *I like with she* and one more *she very fussy*

The examples above show that the learners confronted with a lot of grammatical problems in their attempt to express the intended meaning in English. To cope with the problems, they often rely on the linguistic knowledge they already knew either from their mother tongue or the target language. As a result, they produce interlanguange errors.

The study on interlanguage errors has been much discussed in its connection to the use of the learners' learning strategies. Selinker (1972) in fact discusses in detail what he means by strategy of second language learning and strategy of second language communication. According to Selinker (1972) learning strategies are culture bound to some extent. He gives the example of chanting which is used as a learning device in many traditional cultures. These strategies can be present in the conscious or subconscious level. When a learner realizes that he has no linguistic competence for handling a target language material he evolves some strategies to get through the situation. Whatever strategies he uses considerably affect his 'surface of sentences underlying his interlanguage utterances'. Since we do not have adequate information as to what these strategies might be and how they might work, we can only roughly attribute the sources of his utterances to one or the other strategy.

One strategy which probably works at the conscious level may be the learners' attempt to reduce the target language to a simpler system. For example,

if the learner has adopted the strategy that all verbs are either transitive or intransitve, he may produce Interlanguage forms such as 'I am feeling thirsty' or 'Don't worry, I am hearing him'. Selinker (1972) quotes Coulter (1968) and says that learners avoid grammatical formatives such as articles, plural forms and past tense forms as in:

1. 'It was ( ) nice trailer. ( ) big one.'

2. 'I have many hundred carpenter(s) my own.'

3. 'I was in Frankfurt when I fill(ed) application.'

All these could be the result of a learning strategy of simplification but Coulter (1968) attributes them to a communication strategy. He thinks, because of past experience, the learners have come to know that if they worry about grammatical processes their speech would not be fluent and hence native speakers may not have the patience to hear them through. Besides the learners also felt they did not need a form such as English plurals to communicate efficiently.

It is this phenomenon which inspired the writer most to conduct a piece of research on the learning strategy used by L2 learners which results in interlanguage errors as the focus of this study. The research findings would give a significant contribution to foreign language pedagogy.

B. The Research Problem

Based on the above background the writer formulates research problem

as follows: "What learning strategies used by the high school students of MAN 1 Surakarta which result in Interlanguage Errors. In order to answer this research problem, the writer raises some subsidiary research questions as the followings:

1. What are the types of learning strategies used by the learners which result in interlanguage errors?

2. What is the frequency of each type of learning strategy used?

3. What is the dominant learning strategy used?

4. What is the implication in foreign language teaching?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study, in general, is to find the answer related to issue of learning strategy used by the learners which results in interlanguage errors. It is believe that by investigating the learners' interlanguage errors, we may come to the understanding of the second language learning process because interlanguage errors are the product of learning strategies. We may also get a thorough understanding of the use of learning strategies which may contribute to error stabilization.

D. Benefit of the Study

The study may provide two important benefits, the theoretical as well as the practical point of view:

From the practical point of view, the findings of this study provide contributions to foreign language learning. They can give us clear pictures of the common phenomenon that usually occurs in classroom. English students, practitioners, and researchers will find these research findings useful for language teaching and learning; since theories and claims about language teaching and learning should be based on actual research in language classrooms. To sum up, this study has practical significances described below:

1. In general, the findings will be useful for researchers and language practitioners in understanding foreign language learning process. They can also draw inferences from factors which contribute to interlanguage errors.

2. This research is also significant in order to help foreign language learners understand their own problems (i.e. committing errors) in learning the target language, such as why errors occur; what factors which can lead or contribute to interlanguage errors.

From the theoretical point of view, the findings can make us aware of the theoretical and methodological account of the foreign language learning or acquisition. Thus this study is significant theoretically in the following respects:

1. The researchers may take a benefit from the theoretical foundations, such as theories of interlanguage studies, learning strategies, and error analysis. They can use them as analytical tools for interlanguage studies.

2. Language practitioners and researchers can also take benefit from the methodological framework. The framework used in this study exemplifies

that it is suitable for handling data of interlanguage errors in classroom research.

3. The understanding derived from this research can contribute to the development of the theory of applied linguistics, especially interlanguage errors and learning strategies. This research would give contribution to the existing theorization of the learning strategies. It is hoped that the conclusions reached in this investigation and the directions suggested for future studies will lead researchers to investigate more on related issues.

E. Limitation of the Study

To limit this study, the writer covers only on interlanguage errors as a result of learning strategies used in learning English. These were collected from the English composition written by the students of MAN I Surakarta. The subject of the study is limited to 90 senior high school students of grade two of MAN 1 Surakarta, academic year 2012. So, the findings of this study were not intended for generalization. However, it would be very useful to compare the findings to other studies in order to search for useful general principle.

F. Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into six further chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the study. In this section, the writer scrutinizes the evolving view of interlanguage errors which have become the concern of researchers as

well as practitioners in foreign language pedagogy since the era of audiolingualism until the present state. This chapter also presents the problem statement and the subsidiary research questions. Other related aspects discussed in this chapter are the problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study, the practical as well as theoretical significance of the study, and research thesis organization.

Chapter two is an overview of previous studies on learner language (interlanguage) and learning strategies. Thus, the review on interlanguage and learning strategy studies, especially those relate to error treatment, gains more emphasis. This chapter also presents the theoretical background of interlanguage in its relation to the learning strategy. Three main theories which share a common concern and goal are selected for this discussion. These three (namely, interlanguage errors, learning strategy, and error analysis) are used as the methodological as well as the theoretical background of this study.

Research methodology is discussed in chapter three, covering related aspects such as type of research, research procedure, research subjects, data, data collection techniques, error treatment, technique of data analysis, and conceptual framework. Chapter four presents the research findings and discussions of the findings. Finally, chapter five presents the conclusion and suggestion for further research.