

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Development of technology and science demands us to perceive worldwide information. Nowadays the role of English is very crucial, for instance in making use of technology and in holding worldwide communication, therefore, English competencies must be acquired wisely. However, English is not easy to acquire that emerges of errors cannot be avoided. Student's linguistic system which contains errors influenced by other linguistic system and still has imperfection is called interlanguage (IL). The errors emerged in the students' linguistic system is the result from both students' native language (in this case, Indonesian) linguistic system and target language (in this case, English) linguistic system being learned itself.

The term "interlanguage" was first coined by Selinker (1997:155) to refer to the students' linguistic system which has its own characteristics—different from both the students' native language (L1) linguistic system and target language (L2) linguistic system. He then confirms that interlanguage (IL) as a universal phenomenon and that interlanguage is the product of interaction between two linguistic systems, namely L1 system and L2 system. Thus, interlanguage (IL) is the reflection of the attempt of the students in internalizing a linguistic system they are learning. According to Nemser (1971:116), "interlanguage" has its own system, which is approximative in nature.

There are three major characteristics of interlanguage (IL) system according to Adjémian (1976:298-311), namely: its systematicity, vulnerability and fossilization. The first characteristic of IL system is its systematicity. IL system is systematic and is having consistent rule and feature. The second characteristic of IL system is its vulnerability (Adjémian prefers to use the term ‘permeability’) toward infiltration or influence of linguistic elements from both native language (L1) system and the target language (L2) system. The last characteristic of interlanguage is its fossilization. Selinker (1988:92) confirms that if the characteristic of interlanguage is being disappeared, then someone’s interlanguage system tends to be fossilized. In other words, fossilization of IL system can possibly be occurred if the interlanguage system is no longer developing towards the L2 system.

From the above description of the characteristics of IL, the researcher is interested in exploring the second characteristic of IL—the vulnerability of IL system. In specific, the researcher investigates to what extend the infiltration or influence of native language (Indonesian) system and target language (English) system to the Indonesian learners of English’s IL system. Consequently, as one of the most qualified schools in Surakarta, the researcher picks the students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta as the subject of the current research and the compositions written by them as the object of the research. The researcher, in particular, picks English compositions written by two classes of the students at grade VIII as sample representing the whole students’ population in the school.

As examples of how IL vulnerability is, the researcher takes several erroneous sentences which are taken from the students' compositions:

1. ***To arrive we around about Jogja City to climb andong carriage.**
2. [...] my friends and I have ***lounge at canten and studying with they,**
3. My activities ***in Everyday don't difference with school child my age.**

Through the errors committed, it can be seen that the sentences above are influenced by native language/L1 (Indonesian) and target language/L2 (English) system. These prove the vulnerability of the students' interlanguage (IL) system to the influence of L1 and L2 system; therefore the language system is neither completely English nor Indonesian.

The emergence of grammatical errors as well as contextual unacceptability in the above sentences is the result of the influence or infiltration of students' native language system (Indonesian) and the target language system (English). The first and the third sentence show that the students' IL system is being influenced by Indonesian system; therefore they utilize word-for-word translation from Indonesian into English in order to convey their intended meanings. While the second sentence portrays the student's problem in English parallel construction implying that their IL system are being influenced by the English rule application itself.

The above phenomenon of second language acquisition (SLA) describes the students' language systems which are still developing. In engaging with this type of SLA study especially the IL study, the researcher considers several necessary frameworks used as tools to deal with the data in the research. Those are

interlanguage (IL) theory, error analysis (EA) framework and linguistics. The whole studies dealing with the vulnerability of interlanguage system to the influences of other linguistic systems are being clarified in the current research.

The researcher believes that utilizing error analysis (EA) framework in the research is an effective way to deal with data in the absence of a suitable analytical framework in IL. As what Cook (1993:112) believes that EA alone does not provide a sufficient description or explanation of learner's language, but it has a significant contribution to make as part of an analysis. Therefore, the researcher uses the EA framework arranged by Shridar, James, and Corder to analyze the erroneous sentences found in the students' compositions as the reflection of the L1 and L2 influences. Furthermore, the researcher uses the interlanguage (IL) theory proposed by Selinker, Adjémian, Ellis and Corder to recognize the touch of influence from both Indonesian and English system to the students' IL system displayed in the students' English compositions.

The focus of the present study is the influences of both L1 (Indonesian) and L2 (English) system to the IL system as reflected on the erroneous sentences found in the students' English compositions which are produced by grade VIII students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta. In short, the discussion of the research is being narrowed down into one of the IL system characteristics—its vulnerability to L1 and L2 system. The research elaborates the errors found by using linguistic category taxonomy by Burt, Dulay, and Krashen. The researcher investigates the influences reflected on those errors by making use of Selinker's and other linguists' theory of IL. Based on the background of the study, the

researcher puts the research title *Vulnerability of Interlanguage System: A Case Study of Students Learning English as a Foreign Language in SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta*.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the problem of the research into “how is the vulnerability of the students’ interlanguage (IL) system to the influence of native language (Indonesian) and target language (English) linguistic system.” The vulnerability of students’ IL system meant by the researcher is the characteristic of the students’ IL systems which tend to easily absorb the influence from both native language (L1) and target language (L2) linguistic system. To answer the problem, the researcher proposes several subsidiary research questions, as follows:

1. How is the influence of native language (Indonesian) linguistic system to the students’ interlanguage system?
2. How is the influence of target language (English) linguistic system to the students’ interlanguage system?
3. To what extend does the students’ native language (Indonesian) system influence their interlanguage system?
4. To what extend does the target language (English) system influence the students’ interlanguage system?
5. What is the ratio of L1 (Indonesian) influence to L2 (English) influence on the students’ interlanguage system?

C. Objective of the Study

The researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To describe how native language (Indonesian) linguistic system influences students' interlanguage system.
2. To describe how target language (English) linguistic system influences students' interlanguage system.
3. To describe the frequency of the influence of students' native language (Indonesian) linguistic system to the students' interlanguage system.
4. To describe the frequency of the influence of the target language (English) linguistic system to the students' interlanguage system.
5. To describe the ratio of L1 (Indonesian) influence to L2 (English) influence on the students' interlanguage system.

D. Benefit of the Study

The writer expects this research will give some benefits as follows:

1. Practical benefit

This research will show the problem faced by students in learning English as foreign language. Consequently, this study can be useful to improve the students' self-awareness of their developing English competencies by understanding their own errors and how those come to be.

2. Theoretical benefit

The research extends the study of interlanguage as well as gives wider knowledge on the study of second language acquisition (SLA), notably

applied linguistics. In addition the research can be used as an additional reference for further researcher, especially for those who are interested in studying SLA, more specifically interlanguage.

E. Research Paper Organization

In order to attain such readable research, the researcher arranges the research paper organization into five chapters, those are: Chapter I is the introduction includes background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study and research paper organization. Chapter II is the review of related literature consisted of previous study and theoretical review covering: 1) interlanguage (IL) theory includes the concept and characteristics of IL and 2) error analysis (EA) framework includes the identification of error, error categorizations and algorithm for conducting EA. Chapter III is the research method covering type of research, object of the research, data and data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique. Chapter IV is the research finding and discussion of the study entitled “Vulnerability of Interlanguage System: A Case Study of Students Learning English as a Foreign Language in SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta”. Chapter V is the last chapter; it covers the conclusion of the study and the suggestion for next researcher and English teacher dealing with the constraints of the present study and the constraints of the research finding of the current study.