

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English is taught as a compulsory subject to the students from the first grade of junior high school up to the third grade of senior high school, and even in some semesters of college level. It is due to the importance of English that is the role it plays in international communication. Out of foreign languages such as Russian, French, German, English and Chinese, English is the most widely used in politics, business, trade and the diplomatic circle.<sup>1</sup> Although the students have learnt English for at least six years, it does not mean that they all have a good mastery on the language. This fact is shown by the rapid growth of the number of private English courses.

The acquisition of a foreign language (L2) is very different from that of the native language (L1). In studying his native language, a child is much exposed to the language because it is used as a means of daily communication. In addition, people speaking around him provide direct exposure and real situation of learning. On the other hand, a student learning in L2 does not meet those situations. Moreover, he has almost unlimited time in the process of learning. Besides, his mastery of the L1 systems has a great influence in this attempt to learn the L2. He tends to transfer the systems of his L1 to those of the L2.

The interference in using an L2 is mainly caused by the differences between the L1 and the L2, which comprise the differences in phonological and grammatical systems as well as the lexical and cultural systems. The interference in lexical system can be found in the utterance “where is your address?” for “what is your address?”, which has “dimana alamatmu?” as its Indonesian counterpart. The student says so because the English for “dimana” as found in dictionary is “where” not “what”.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramelan, *Introduction to Linguistic Analysis* (Semarang: IKIP Press, 1992), p.3

The student will not make such mistakes if he has already overcome his native language habits in using the L2, in this case, English. He should not merely translate Indonesian utterances into English word by word. This, like gaining new habits and overcoming old ones, needs a lot of practice. It is important to carry out a study which will find out the differences and similarities between the L1 and L2 by doing contrastive analysis. The results, then, can be used to predict learning problems for the benefit of teaching an L2.

In this study, the writer does contrastive analysis between Indonesian and English, since English is the first foreign language for Indonesian students. Actually, Indonesian is not the student's native language. They learn Indonesian after they have mastered their own local languages, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese. However, the writer considers Indonesian as their L1 for the reason that they have already mastered both phonological and grammatical systems as well as the lexical and cultural system of the language because they have used the language, at least at school, since they were in elementary school. In addition, the situations, in which they learn Indonesian are the same as those in which they learn their first / native language.

Concerning English teaching in Indonesia, it still cannot be said that the result of the teaching is satisfactory. In spite of having learnt English for six years, most senior high school graduates are very poor in their mastery of English either in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The unexpected result of the teaching cannot be said as merely teacher's faults, indeed. Nevertheless, teachers should try to find some ways to improve the result of the teaching.<sup>2</sup>

In learning a foreign language such English, someone has to master the four language skills. Those are reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. Other English components are grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. All of components are closely related one another, and could not be separated. Grammar

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<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Broughton et al, *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, (London : Henly ang Boston, 1978) p.1

is as one of the English components has the most important role in understanding and mastering English well. By mastering the grammar, someone will be easily able to analyze the sentences whatever sentences those are. So he or she is automatically able to write English sentences correctly.

It is necessary to teach the students English grammar so that they have good skill. In this case the writer just focuses on Contrastive Analysis between English and Indonesian WH Questions.

## 1.2 Definition of key terms

In this step the writer will clarify the meanings of terms used in this thesis.

### 1. WH Questions.

Many questions in English, however, cannot be given a simple "yes" or "no" answer. This kind of questions is called WH Questions because they begin with one of interrogative words, all but one of which start with letters WH . The interrogative words are who, whom, whose, what, which, why, where, when, and how.

### 2. Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis identifies a general approach to the investigation of language, particularly as carried on in certain areas of applied linguistics, such as foreign language teaching and translation. In a contrastive analysis of two languages, the points of structural difference are identified and these are then studied as areas of potential difficulty (interference or 'negative transfer') in foreign-language learning.<sup>3</sup>

Contrastive Analysis is a work procedure of language or language activities that tries to compare the structure of LI and L2 and identify their differences from the two languages.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90

<sup>4</sup> Henry Guntur Tarigan, *Pengajaran Analisis Kontrastif Bahasa*, (Bandung: Angkasa, 1992),

### **1.3 Reason for Choosing the Topic**

Some reasons encouraging the writer to choose the topic, can be stated as follows: First, as far as the writer is concerned, there has been no previous thesis with the same topic. Second, the differences between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) constitute problems for learners learning a new language. Third, a contrastive analysis is needed to anticipate the difficulties in learning an L2.

### **1.4 Statement of the Problems**

1. What are differences and similarities between English and Indonesian WH Questions?
2. What factors make differences between English and Indonesian WH Questions?

### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

1. To find out the differences and similarities between English and Indonesian WH Questions
2. To find out the factors make differences between English and Indonesian WH Questions

### **1.6 Significance of Study**

The writer hopes that the results of this study will be useful for students, English teachers, text-book writers, researcher and for institutions.

#### **1) Students**

It is important that students are aware of the possible problems in constructing English WH questions.

#### **2) English teachers**

Their understanding about difficulties that may be faced by their students will enable English teachers to grade teaching materials and to give appropriate emphasis on the difficulties.

3) Text-Book Writer

The results of this study might be used by text book writers in selecting and grading materials for English instruction in general and the teaching of WH questions in particular.

4) Researcher

This study is expected to arouse researcher interest to conduct an error analysis dealing with English WH questions which will reveal the exact problems encountered by the students in constructing English WH questions.

5) Institutions

This study is expected to have a significant contribution for College Students English Department of Tarbiyah Faculty in Walisongo State Islamic Institute of Semarang to explore more especially WH questions.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The limitation of this study is focus on the differences and similarities between English and Indonesian WH Questions and the factors which make differences between English and Indonesian WH Questions.