CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In this daily life, every living thing communicates to each other. Animals like monkeys, dogs, etc. interact with their friends in their own ways, producing sounds and gestures, which can only be understood among themselves. Similar to animals, human beings also need to communicate. In his book *Language and Mind*, Noam Chomsky says that human beings have normal human intelligence that enables him or her to associate or relate

normal human intelligence that enables him or her to associate or relate something which has been perceived. Moreover, humans also have true creativity which makes him or her able to create something completely new. These two kinds of intelligence differentiate humans from animals in communicating. This theory can explain why humans can construct language rather than animal.

Besides language, people can communicate by using gestures, sense of touch, expressions of face, etc. However, using a language is the most effective ways for communicating or conveying message because it is easier and generally understood by other people than the other tools. In Littlewood's book, *Foreign and Second Language Learning*, it is said that a normal person, according to Chomsky's theory, has Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in his or her brain. This LAD makes someone as human beings capable to learn a language. So, a person's brain is designed to help him or her to learn a language. Since language plays an important role in people's life, they started to study and find more about language. Many people learn other language besides their mother tongues. These languages are called second languages. "The term second language is becoming increasingly used in the United States and elsewhere within applied linguistics to mean the learning of any languages after the first language." (C. Richards, 1978: p.5)

Many people are interested in learning several languages so that they are able to communicate in many different ways with more than one language to many other people. According to Deborah Schiffrin in her book, *Discourse Markers*, language has three functions. The first function is called referential function that is to send and receive information about the world. Through languages, people can discover many events and stories from the other parts of world. The second function is social function, that is the function to establish, maintain and adjust relationships with others. In other words, languages can be a link for people to communicate with other nations. Through languages, people can do their business jobs or make deals, transactions and also contracts with people, not only from the same city or country but also from the other part of the world. Moreover, language is important to maintain and establish relationships with other people from different nations or countries since it also deals with culture. Thus, when a person learns a language, he or she will also learn about its culture since culture shapes language in community. So language learners can learn about foreign language and also its culture. This is the advantage in learning foreign language. The third function is expressive function. Language has other function to reveal the users' personality or selves, feelings, orientations and statuses. Language is also used to accomplish social function. As a matter of fact, "Language is designed for communication" (Schiffrin, 1987: p.6).

One of the languages that people want to learn is English, however, English is not widely spoken language considering that the total of Chinese native speakers has outnumbered the total native speakers of English. Even though Chinese is widely spoken, but "Chinese is spoken little outside of Chinese communities so English is the most widespread language in the world" (http://ilcz.doshisa.ac.jp/users/kkitao/library/student/kenji/htm). The countries that use English as the dominant language are the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. All of these countries are former British colonies. In other countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Nigeria, Philippines, Malaysia and also Indonesia, English is also widely used. Furthermore, Kitao estimates that the total number of native English speakers are more than 350,000,000 and more than 400,000 speakers of English as second language or foreign language. Besides the fact that English has many speakers, it is also the major language of news and information in the world. "English is commonly used as a medium for the communication of information and news" (http://www.ilcz.doshisa.ac.jp/users/kkitao/library/student/kenji.htm). We can see that English is connecting so many people from many different countries. One of the proofs is that three quarters of all messages that conveyed in telex and telegrams are sent in English. Moreover, eighty percent of computer data are processed and stored in English. Much satellite communication is carried

in English. The other proof is that five thousand newspapers, more than half of the newspapers published in the world, are published in English. Even in countries that English plays as a minority language, there is at least one newspaper printed in English. In many countries, television news is broadcast in English. Thus, English is a major language of international business, science, diplomacy and many professions. The facts above are the reason the writer chooses to observe English in second language learning.

This research sees English as a learned language in second language learning process. The writer chooses English since it is the most widespread language and many people in Indonesia start to learn it. In learning language, learners cannot be separated with errors, that is the reason why the writer focuses on the errors of making questions. There are many types of learners according to age: children, adolescents or teenagers and adults. In this research, the writer will focus on children because first of all, the writer likes children. In her opinion, if she deals with things that she likes in the research, she will enjoy the research so that she can do better. She wants to know how is the capability of Indonesian children in learning English relating to their ages. She will look at the errors in constructing questions because she saw that most of researches from the former students are focusing on the grammatical errors of the sentences. Thus, she wants to make something different by focusing on

the questions. By doing this research, she wants to see the classifications of errors that the children make and the frequencies of the errors.

Hopefully, this research provides more information for second language learning process.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There are two problems that the writer wants to reveal by doing this research.

1. What types of grammatical errors do children learners make in making questions with English?

2. What is the frequency of each kind of errors made by the Indonesian children learners?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to find out the types of grammatical errors that were made by Indonesian children learners aged six to twelve years old, in making questions. Besides that, the writer also curious to know the frequency of errors occurring in the process of learning by the learners. She wants to see which type of error that the children often do and which type of error that children seldom do. Moreover, she wants to know which respondent or child makes the highest percentage of error and which respondent makes

the lowest percentage of errors. She wants to see whether there are some particular features that the children with certain ages do in making questions.

1.4 Significance of the study

She hopes that this research provides input for readers about second language, particularly in the knowledge of language teaching for children, in making three types of questions: question words questions, tag questions and yes/no questions. So from this research, the readers know about the classifications of errors that the children usually do in making questions and also the frequency of the errors. By knowing that, the readers who are interested in teaching English or giving private English lessons for children can be aware of the errors that the children usually do so the learning process will go effectively. Moreover, the writer also hopes that this research will give further information for the other researchers who want to conduct the same research.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Categorization: to put something in category or divide something according to its classes or types. (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1997: p.129)

2. Questions: A sentence requiring information or answer. (Oxford American Dictionary, 1980: p.735)

3. Errors: Deviation in usage which result from gaps in learners' knowledge of the target language (Ellis, 1997: p.139)

4. Grammar: The study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relation in the sentence. (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1997: p. 328)

5. Grammatical errors: the errors in sentence or speech or writing, that are evaluated according to its conformity to grammatical rules. (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1997: p.328)

6. Second Language:

   • Any language other than the first language learned. (Lightbown, 1983: p.125)

   • Any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue (Ellis, 1997: p.3) "L2 Acquisition", then can be defined as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongues, inside or outside the classroom, and "Second Language Acquisition" (SLA) as the study of this. (Ellis, 1997: p.3)

1.6 Scope and limitations of the study

There are many types of second language learners, so the writer focuses on one type that is children learners. The errors in making questions are taken from the questionnaire spread by the writer herself to the children learners. She also takes the children of certain ages, from six years old to twelve years old. The scope of this research is children's second language acquisition and the writer limits the scope only in the learning of making questions in English. The writer categorizes the errors in making questions produced by children learners that she has already chosen. This research excludes the learners' background and their mother tongues, and also the sex of the learners.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is discussing about the introduction which consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, scope and limitation of the study and the organization of the study. The second chapter is about the review of related literature, which consists of the review of underlying theories and the review of related study. The third chapter is about the methodology of the study that includes the research approach, source of data, instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis. The fourth chapter is about how the writer analyzes the data that she has collected. The fifth chapter is the conclusion of her research.