

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Language is a very important communication tool used among human history. Through language, it helps people to communicate with others in order to express themselves. From time to time, the world seems become unite. People can easily communicate with others through various technologies regardless their nations and their places as well. To cope with this need, people need to learn a language that is widely and commonly used among them

To meet the need to communicate among people in the world, many of them learn English in various ways. Bandura (1997, cited in Nunan: 1999) states that learning strategies can enhance self-confidence, individuals' perception that they can successfully complete several tasks. Some of them try to find their strategies to master English which is appropriate with their needs. Since human is a unique characteristic, their strategies to learn the language are also different from one to others. Many of them find that one strategy works while the others do not and vice versa. Regarding this fact, some researchers have been investigating how English is learnt by people, specifically by students, viewed from different aspects.

Some researchers find that there are many learner-related factors that influence language learning; even if the same English teaching is given to a group, the result will be different (Rahimi et al., 2008, Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Tamada,

1996; Oxford, 1990a). There are many factors behind it; one of them is the learning strategies used by the learners. Researchers find that greater strategy used is often related to higher levels of language proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford & Ehrman 1995; Oxford 1996; Cohen 1997, cited in Nunan: 1999). Therefore, most educators now accept the assumption that the use of learning strategies has become a guidepost for distinguishing from high to low learners' skill (Brown, 2002).

In recent years, researchers have identified key areas of individual differences that can influence the choice of strategies and the frequency they used (Rahimi et al., 2008; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). One of the factors which have been found in influencing the use of learning strategies is gender. Gender differences have been found in many areas of human social and cognitive development. Studies indicated that females show more interests in social activities than males, females are less competitive and more cooperative than males. The studies also state that females are better than males both in second and first language acquisition (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). In language learning strategy research, many studies across different cultures show more frequent strategy use by females than males, especially the social-based strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Green & Oxford, 1995). However, some findings revealed that males employed more strategies than females (Poltzer, 1983 cited in Rahimi et al., 2008; Mat Teh, et al., 2009), and some even suggested that there were no significant differences between males and females on their use of language learning strategies (Chou, 2002 cited in Mat Teh, et al., 2009).

According to the explanation above, this study is attempted to investigate the language learning strategies employed by male and female college students. This study is intended to reveal the differences of language learning strategies terms of its gender.

### **1.2.The Scope of the Study**

This study only investigates the languages learning strategies employed by male and female college students, the language learning strategies applied in this study are those proposed by Oxford (1990).

### **1.3.Research of Questions**

This study was conducted to answer the following research question stated below.

1. Is there any difference between language learning strategies used by male and female college students?

### **1.4.Hypothesis**

Based on the research question, this study is directed at testing the null hypothesis.  $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$

There is no significance difference between language learning strategies used by male and female college students.  $H_a: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

There is a significance difference between language learning strategies used by male and female college students.

### **1.5.Aims of Study**

Considering the research question above, this study is aimed to examine whether or not there is a difference between language learning strategies used by male and female college students.

### **1.6.Significance of the Study**

It is admitted that every human being is unique. Regarding the diversities of person's characteristics, it is possible that each person has their own strategies to learn something. Similarly both male and female college students have their own ways to learn the materials given by their teacher.

This study is expected to be able to portray the language learning strategies employed by male and female college students and to give benefit findings for teachers in facilitating their students, particularly in learning a language.

### **1.7.Research Method**

Below are methods which are used to accomplish this study. It explains the research design, data collection, procedures of study, and data analysis.

#### **1.7.1.Research Design**

This study applies descriptive quantitative to investigate the study. According to Sugiyono (2008), the computation by using descriptive statistics is

employed if the findings of the study are only to portray the phenomenon of one population without any intention to generalize the findings.

### **1.7.2. Data Collection**

This study is conducted at Indonesia University of Education. The participants of this study are college students of Department of English Education. The participants are 50 male college students and 50 female college students.

To collect the data, the study uses questionnaire as the instrument. Questionnaire is used in this study as Sugiyono (2008) states questionnaire is appropriate for the study which takes large amount of participants. Moreover, questionnaire is an effective instrument for the variable that will be measured and knowing what is expected from the participants.

### **1.7.3. Procedures of Study**

Below are the procedures of this study.

1. Trialing questionnaires to samples of the population
2. Analyzing the valid and reliable questionnaire items
3. Distributing the questionnaires to the sample
4. Collecting the results of instrument
5. Analyzing the results of the data collection
6. Concluding the study

#### **1.7.4. Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) is used to complete the analysis of collected data. Descriptive statistics, including means, and standard deviations are applied in order to investigate the data, and the use of language learning strategies. Meanwhile, the *t*-test is applied to examine the relationships between gender differences and the use of language learning strategies.

#### **1.8. Clarification of Terms**

1. Gender: It is male and female college students.
2. Language Learning Strategies: It is method used by college students to learn a language. In this case the language learnt is English.

#### **1.9. Organization of the Paper**

This study is organized into five chapters as follows.

##### **Chapter I Introduction**

This chapter contains the background of the study, the scope of the study, research questions, hypothesis, aims of the study, significance of the study, research design, population and samples, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

##### **Chapter II Theoretical Foundation**

This chapter elaborates the concept and definitions which functions as the theoretical foundation of this study for investigating the research questions.

### **Chapter III Methodology**

This chapter describes the methodology applied in conducting this study including design, setting and participants, data collection, instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

### **Chapter IV Findings and Discussion**

This chapter reports the findings and discussion of the study generated by interpreting and analyzing the collected data.

### **Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions**

This chapter draws conclusions from the findings and offers some suggestions for students, teacher, and further research.

