

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research, research questions, research purposes, scope of the research, and significance of the present research which have been elaborated. The purposes of this chapter were to delineate the topic of this study, the aims, the area of the study, and the importance of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

Recently, people have tried to master more than one language due to their needs; thus, the studies on Second Language Learning (SLL) have expanded (Montero, et al. 2014; Stefánsson, 2013; Latu, 1994; Troike, 2006; Moeller, 2015; Pica, 2005). For example, Walqui (2000) examines how contextual factors such as individual, social and societal factors, affect the process of learning second language. The study reveals that the significant factors come from the individual, which is students' level of proficiency and linguistic distance. Walqui also emphasizes that larger social and cultural contexts of second language development give a considerable impact on second language learning, especially for immigrant students. This present study uses the term second language that refers to English being learnt by Indonesian learners; although English is not acknowledged as a second language by Indonesian speakers, the term second language does not only include the language after first language, it also includes languages such as the third, the forth or even foreign languages (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Moreover, Troike (2006) often refers second language as a target language; it is not only one language after first language, but also the term is applicable to the third or fourth languages being learned. Moreover, Troike also defines second language as typically a language that is necessary for education, employment and other purposes. In addition, several experts also contribute to the definition of second language; they state that second language is the languages besides learners' "native language" or "mother tongue" (Mitchell and

Myles, 2004; Bhela, 1999). Referring to those underlying theories; therefore, the term English as second language is largely used in this present study.

Even though the studies in the notion of second language learning have been considerably conducted; the difficulty among people in mastering L2 still becomes an essential issue in the study of language. There are several aspects which lead to the difficulty in learning English as second language, those aspects are: grammar, lexical, pronunciation, word order, sentence structure (Geertzen, et al. 2012; Maisarah, n.d). One of the prominent issues that many researchers are concerned with is active and passive voice; since many researchers consider that passive voice is the thorniest problem in L2 grammar when it comes to teach and to learn; furthermore, the notion of active and passive voice is somewhat inseparable, especially when passive is a derivation of active voice; therefore, active and passive voices are worth investigating (Hinkle, 2002; Tanko, 2010).

Studies in the field of active and passive voices have gained significance considerably since the SLL studies begin inception. Active and passive voice sentences are frequently used in the study of second language in order to compare which sentence is more difficult to learn in the second language (Bhela, 1999; Stefánsson, 2013). Although the studies of active and passive sentences have widely been involved in the study of SLL by many researchers, there are still limited numbers of studies in Indonesian language. The common issues of active and passive voice studies are passive voice sentences are more difficult to learn in second language. Hinkle (2002) has conducted research on discovering why English passive is difficult to teach and to learn; the study reveals that the difficulty confronted by L2 learners of English is caused by the different instruction of their languages; meaning that L1 interferes with L2.

Several previous studies of English active and passive voices in second language learning reveal many interesting data on learners' tendency to hardly associate with the use of passive and inanimate active sentences (Master, 1991; Pfaff, 1987; Bates, et al. 1982; Roe, 2016; Larsen-freeman & Long, 1991; Dabrowska & Street, 2006). Roe (2016) states that a noticeable difference among English and other

languages in the use of passive is, English speakers commonly use the agentless passive than the agent one. This difference somehow leads to the problem that is confronted by the learners in identifying passive voice; since Roe emphasizes that the way learners discover passive structure in the text is by focusing on identifying preposition ‘by’ as an indication to passive voice; thus, the English learners tend to be more familiar to agent passive structures. Moreover, Suprato (2012) in the result of contrastive analysis between English passive and bahasa Indonesia, discovers that although in general English passive voice considerably emphasizes only *to be + past participle* in its structure; the other items in passive with expressed agent help participants to comprehend this type of passive. The preposition ‘by’, and the past participle verb are the items that essentially indicate passive sentences with expressed agent; the other two items in the sentences are: subject, and object. In fact, those sorts of items are essential in formulating Indonesian passive sentences; Alwi (1998) points out that subject, object and preposition “by” are important elements to indicate passive sentences, and Indonesian passive voice largely includes subject and object in nearly all formation of passive.

Another appropriate starting point for a discussion of second language learning is known as the factors affecting second language learning. According to Spolsky (1989), the most significant factor is the relationship between contextual factors, individual differences, learning opportunities, and learning outcome (Spolsky, 1989). Moreover, individual differences have become the most consistent variable in second language learning; the aspects that are largely considered as the essential variables are: language aptitude and motivation (Dornyei & Skehan, 2003 as cited in Doughty & Long, 2005). A recent study discovers that, motivated students study in regular and productive ways to take every chance to perfect their language skills. Moreover, the findings enrich the significance of learners’ motivation and attitudes in L2 study (Ushida, 2005).

However, the notion of agent and agentless types of English active and passive voices, which involves Indonesians as English learners, is not yet studied by many researchers, particularly in Indonesia. Moreover, these agent and agentless

types will enrich the study of active and passive voices in the area of second language learning. Therefore, this study present study will improve our understanding on classifying which type of passive that is difficult to learn.

These previous investigations have provided the impetus for this recent study. As already observed with the Japanese students who learn active and passive sentences (Master, 1991); the Asian speakers in this present study, in particular Indonesian, will have such difficulty dealing with English active-passive sentences especially in the notion of agentless type. In this present study, all of the participants are studying English as second language in the formal classroom but also they have various degrees of informal exposure to the second language; different aspects that influence second language learning will be further analyzed in this study. This research will be undertaken in two ways: First, the learners' comprehension of agent and agentless of English active and passive sentences will be traced on three parts of question sections in accordance to agent and agentless materials; second, examine the factors affecting comprehension.

This present study attempts to fill the gap by investigating the agent and agentless types of English active and passive voice and discovering the different features of passive in their L1 and L2 as reported by Roe (2016), Alwi (1998) and Master (1991).

1.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate how Indonesian students as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive sentences in the process of learning English as second language. In order to achieve the purposes of this study; therefore, the following research questions are formulated, as follows:

1. How do Indonesians as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of active and passive voice sentences of English?
2. What are the factors affecting their comprehension?

1.3 Purposes of Study

Based on formulation of the research questions above, the aims of study are:

1. To discover in how Indonesian students as English learners comprehend agent and agentless types of English active and passive sentences in learning second language.
2. To investigate the factors affecting their comprehension.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The scope of this study is the students' comprehension of English active and passive sentences especially in the notion of agent and agentless types. The aims of this study are to discover how Indonesian students as English learners comprehend English active and passive sentences in the process of learning second language and to investigate the factors affecting their comprehension. However, due to time constraint, the participants of this study are limited to only 26 students in 2015 batch. The analysis highlights the correct answers given by participants; moreover, the factors of individual differences will be discovered in the test.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The primary purpose of this study lies in its attempt to identify factors which might be associated with the learning of English active and passive voice, especially in the notion of agent and agentless types. The focus is to investigate whether there is the correlation between the factors and the learning of English active and passive voice, and the result can contribute the aspect of learning second language.

Moreover, this study bears significance in two respects: The first benefit, this study will improve our understanding which properties of L2 learning are universal and language-specific by enriching the data of tenses, aspects of individual differences and other issues in SLL. The second, this study attempts to fill the gap in the study of second language learning and to provide the L2 research on how Indonesians who learn English as a second language comprehend English active and passive voice especially in the notion of agent and agentless types.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There were some terminologies that need to be clarified to give understanding about the topic of the research:

1. Aptitude and Attitude

Aptitude is one of individual differences; it is a rate of a person's ability in language proficiency such as "phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity and inductive ability" (Carroll, 1973 pp. 5-13). Carroll also defines Attitude as a factor relates to psychological factors such as, motivation, empathy, and so forth.

2. Formal learning and Informal learning

Formal (conscious learning) is a planned and systematic learning, namely classroom-based learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004); on the other hand, they suggest that Informal (unconscious learning) is unstructured learning, it is the way when new language is 'picked-up' in the community.

3. Grammatical sensitivity

Grammatical sensitivity is a term used to emphasize someone's ability of understanding the contribution that the words make in the sentences; it is more concerned about the recognition of word functions rather than explicit representation (Carroll, 1973).

4. Individual difference

Individual difference is a term used by experts who study in the field of second language acquisition and second language learning to mention that every person has their own significant differences of competence, especially those significances in language/linguistic ability (Dabrowska & Street, 2006).

5. L1 (First language) and L2 (Second language)

Harley (2005) in his book defines L1 as the first language that is learned by bilingual people. Troike (2006) often refers second language as a target language; it is not only one language after first language, but also the term is applicable to the third or fourth languages being learned. Moreover, Troike also defines second language as typically an official language that is necessary for education, employment and other purposes.

6. Second language learning

Second language learning as defined by Mitchell and Myles (2004) is the learning of any language in any level but this learning of ‘second’ language takes later than acquiring first language. Mitchell and Myles (2004) suggest that second language includes ‘foreign language’ under the general term of second language; they also justify such statement by emphasizing both local and remote languages.

1.7 Organization of the Report

This study is organized in five chapters. Each chapter has different information of this study. It depends on the headline of the chapter. They were elaborated as follows:

1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of information about background of the research, research questions, purposes of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the report.

2. CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents elaboration of relevant theories, ideas, and issues of the study. It also provides findings of the previous studies and other supportive information relevant to the present study.

3. CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives information about approaches and procedures, research design, data collection, and data analysis of the research.

4. CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides the results of the analysis and the discussions on the significance of the results.

5. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter provides conclusion drawn from the results of the research addition, it also includes suggestions for further research.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has provided five sections which include background of study, statements of problems, the aims of study, methodology, and organization of the paper. The literature reviews that were related to the study will be discussed within next section.