

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general issues related to the present study. These include background, research questions, significance of the study, the clarification of main terms, and thesis organisation.

1.1 Background

A number of theories regarding language development in human beings have been proposed in the past and are still being proposed in the present time. Such theories have generally arisen out of major disciplines such as psychology and linguistics (Kiymazarlan, 2002).

One of the theories concerns ordered sequence in first and second language acquisition which is particularly significant to the theory of language development (Meisel, 2011). Much of the early research focused on the order of acquisition while subsequent research has increasingly paid attention to sequence of stages evident in the acquisition of a single feature as well as order (Loewen & Reinders, 2011).

Furthermore, Loewen & Reinders (2011) stated that the order of acquisition represent a developmental of L2 learning similar to developmental sequence. However, the order of acquisition relates to the learning of different syntactic and morphological structures, whereas developmental sequence relates to the stages of acquiring one specific morphosyntactic features, such as English negation or question formation. As mentioned by Irvine (2005) the

morphosyntactic features studied include negation, question formation, relative clauses, and word order.

Some studies concerning negatives acquisition in English and German provide evidence of a clear sequence of development (Meisel, 2011). Each of these sequences is defined in terms of grammatical properties, such as negation, which have been acquired during the period. Furthermore, Ellis (1996) mentioned that the acquisition of negation shows clear transitional structures which involve a series of forms that learners use to master the target language form. Examples of English:

no swim (the negative article is placed at the beginning of the utterance— external negation)

I no can swim (the negative article comes inside the utterance- internal negation 1)

I can't swim (negative is attached to modal verbs- internal negation 2)

These forms are indicative of the developmental stages that learners pass through on the way to target language (TL) competence. Clear examples of developmental sequences in L1 acquisition are those found in the acquisition of English negatives and interrogatives (Ellis, 1994). Wode (1997:100 in Meisel 2011:80) suggested three universal stages in the development of L1 negative structures:

Stage I is one word negation for example no, non

Stage II is multi-word negation that is Neg placed in external position which consists of, anaphoric negation and non-anaphoric negation

Stage III is clause-internal negation

The question to be asked now is whether second language learners succeed equally well in acquiring negative construction. At the beginning of the 1980s,

according to Meisel (2011), negation was perhaps the most frequently studied feature of second language learners' interlanguage. The majority of these studies, however, focused on English as a TL (e.g. Ravem 1968; Milon 1974; Cazden et al. 1975; Hanania&Gradman1977; Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann 1978; Stauble 1978; Schumann 1979 in Meisel 2011). In spite of disagreement in detail, there was a consensus in assuming that learners follow an invariant acquisition sequence. Most authors also agreed that the same sequence holds for child and adult L2 learners. Based on those studies mentioned above, Meisel (2011:81) summarized the stages in the development of L2 negative structures:

Stage I is anaphoric negation

Stage II is non-anaphoric external negation

Stage III consists of internal negation, neg preposed with main verbs, neg postposed with auxiliaries

Stage IV is target-like negation.

There were thirteen studies performed between 1968 and 1982 which explored developmental sequence in the acquisition of negation in English by speakers of other languages (Irvine, 2005). Furthermore, he stated that the majority of these, or seven of the studies, had subjects who were children from 9 months to 7 years old. These included Ravem's (1968, 1978) studies of his son and daughter with L1 Norwegian, Wode's (1976) study of his son and daughter with L1 German, Milon's (1972) study of a recent immigrant from Japan with L1 Japanese, Adams' (1974) study of 10 children with L1 Spanish, Young's (1974) study of three Spanish speaking children, Gillis and Weber's (1976) study of two Japanese children, Gerbault's (1978) study of her daughter with L1 French. These

seven studies have a total of twenty-one children who were studied and only Adams' (1974) study dealt with more than three subjects.

Three studies, according to Irvine (2005) dealt exclusively with adolescents. These were more varied in nature. Butterworth (1972 in Irvine 2005) was a case study of a 13-year old Junior High School student who was a recent immigrant from Colombia. In Ellis's 1982 study (reported in Ellis, 1996), he looked at the SLA of three ESL students in London; two had L1 Punjabi and one L1 Portuguese. Felix (1982 in Irvine 2005) did a study involving a classroom of 44 EFL students in Germany.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, studies of developmental sequence of negation in Indonesian context have not been conducted. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the developmental sequence of negation by learners of EFL at the beginner level of secondary school with Indonesian as their L1. It is worth studying because as Meisel (2011) states that it constitutes strong empirical evidence in support of the claim that the structure of negation is indeed acquired in a strictly ordered fashion.

1.2 Research Questions

The research problems of the present study are formulated in the following questions.

- (1) What negative structures are evident in the interlanguage produced by EFL learners at one secondary school in Bandung?
- (2) How is negation acquired across periods?

1.3 The significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study can give insights into several aspects of negation acquisition of EFL beginner level regarding the case of developmental sequence which can contribute to the development of the theory of applied linguistics, especially to the existing theorization of developmental sequences in SLA.

Practically, this study is also significant for teachers as it can help them to understand why students might produce certain negation whose variety of utterances may be necessary for the learners to hear in order to move to the next stage. Investigating the learners' developmental sequences might influence the teaching and learning process. That is because the investigation provides teachers with the information about how much the learners had learnt and how language was learnt.

1.4 The clarification of main terms

- 1) Second Language Acquisition is generally used to refer to the process in which people learn any language other than the first language (Ellis, 1996:11)
- 2) Developmental sequence is that learners pass through a series of identifiable stages in acquiring specific grammatical structures such as negatives, interrogatives and relative clauses (Ellis, 1996:20).
- 3) Interlanguage is the separateness of a second language learners' system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages (Ellis, 1999:201).

- 4) Negation is an example of transitional structure (Ellis, 1996:99).
- 5) The scope of negation normally extend from the negative itself to the end of the clause, or to the beginning of a final adjunct (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1983:187)

1.5 Thesis Organisation

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I introduces the present study, outlining background, research questions, the significance of the study, the clarification of main terms and thesis organization. Chapter II reviews of the related literatures on the topics being studied, i.e. the developmental sequences of negation which includes learner language, acquisition orders and developmental sequences, the acquisition of syntactic structure, the historical overview of the developmental sequence studies in second language acquisition and the influential factors of the development of second/foreign language acquisition. Chapter III discusses a set of methodology which covers research questions, research design, participants, data collection and data analysis. Chapter IV presents research findings and interpretations, while, conclusions and recommendations are successively presented in Chapter V.