CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the introduction of the study and begins with the background of the study. The statements of the problem, aims of the study, and significance of the study are also elucidated in this chapter. The organization of the paper is presented in the end of this chapter as well.

1.1 Background of the Study

Successful teaching and learning a language mostly occur when there is a good cooperation between teachers and students. Lengkanawati (2007) states that both teachers and students have responsibilities in succeeding teaching and learning process, which is suitable to their roles in their capacity. Taken as an example, teachers, who have important roles in guiding their students, can become identifiers and helpers of students' learning strategies (Lengkanawati, 2007). It is supported by Wenden (1985 see Oxford, 1990) who claims that in new teaching capacity, teachers are expected to identify students' learning strategies, to conduct training on learning strategies, and to help students become more independent. Furthermore, students can play their roles as researchers to their own learning styles or learning strategies, negotiators toward their learning

materials, supervisors and organizers to their learning progress and so on (Hedge, 2001 see Lengkanawati, 2007). It is along the lines of Rubins' point of view (1975, see Liang, 2009) which states that good language students/learners have a willingness to communicate, take advantage of all practice opportunities, and monitor their own speech. If both teachers and students can play their roles effectively, teaching and learning process will run well.

Based on an observation in a classroom during Teaching Practicum Program (*Program Latihan Profesi*), sometimes, there were some discrepancies between teachers' teaching styles and students' learning styles and strategies. In other words, either teachers, students, or both of them, might not play their own roles well. From the observation, it was found that the students tended to have difficulties in learning English when the teacher's teaching styles were not suitable to their learning styles or learning strategies. For example, in testing students' ability in grammar, the teacher asked all students to memorize some particular grammar patterns and scored how many patterns the students could memorize.

There were two phenomena which occurred to the students in the class during the memorizing test. First, some students could memorize all the grammar patterns that the teacher asked and they were able to answer the questions given regarding the tested materials. Second, there were some students who tended to force themselves to memorize those particular grammar patterns in order to get the score. After gaining the

score, they tended not to catch what they had memorized. It was seen when the teacher asked some questions regarding the tested materials to those students. Most of them looked confused and were not able to answer the questions delivered by the teacher.

The result of the observation showed that not all of students were suitable to the teacher's styles in teaching the grammar patterns (e.g. memorizing strategy). The students belonged to the first phenomenon possibly indicated that their learning styles and strategies were proper with the teacher's teaching styles. On the other hand, the students belonged to the second phenomenon indicated that their learning styles and strategies were probably not suitable to the teacher's teaching styles. If the second phenomenon continuously happened in a classroom, it could raise problems such as the students would get bored and lost their willingness in learning English. Thus, as stated earlier that it is better for teachers to be identifiers and helpers for their students' learning strategies. It is supported by Lengkanawati (2007) who asserts that students tend to be bored and not to pay attention to teachers when the teachers are not able to identify the students' needs and strategies in learning a language.

Language learning strategies, as defined by Oxford (1990), are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques employed by students, often consciously, to improve their progress in understanding, internalizing, and using a second language. Oxford claims that if students can choose the appropriate language learning strategies and are able to

apply those strategies in their learning process, they will be interested in learning a language and make the learning process more understandable.

According to Oxford's suggestions (1990), all appropriate language learning strategies are oriented toward the broad goal of communicative competence (competence or ability to communicate). Oxford (1990) asserts that language learning strategies which consist of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies can help learners participate actively in such authentic communication. Taken as an example, memory and cognitive strategies are useful for understanding and recalling new information. Moreover, compensation strategies help learners conquer knowledge gaps and continue to communicate. In the other hand, metacognitive strategies aid learners to regulate their own cognition. Affective and social strategies are able to develop learners' self-confidence and provide interaction and more empathetic understanding needed for learners as requirements for gaining communicative competence (Oxford, 1990 p. 8-9).

Furthermore, in second language learning areas, the use of language learning strategies is clearly related to students' achievement and proficiency (Pressley & Associates, 1990 see Oxford, 2003). Yu & Wang's research (2009) reveals that cognitive and metacognitive strategies are positively correlated to English achievement. It is also supported by Yeh and Heh (2004, see Sheu, 2011) who report a significant correlation between LLS use and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

4

Additionally, in more specific research, Wu (2008) finds that higher proficiency EFL students use learning strategies more often than lower proficiency EFL students, especially cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies. Wu also finds that the use of cognitive strategies has the strongest relation to English proficiency, particularly in listening and reading proficiency (*ibid*).

According to the previous explanation, it can be assumed that strategies which students use in learning a language are mostly related to their English proficiency and English achievement. As suggested by Oxford (1990) and Lengkanawati (2007) that it is better for teachers and students to know, understand, and identify students' language learning strategies due to the reasons above. For the teachers, by identifying the students' language learning strategies and conducting training on learning strategies, they can help their students become independent learners as suggested by Wenden (1985 see Oxford, 1990). Moreover, for the students, Oxford (1990) emphasizes that by recognizing their strategies in learning a language, the students begin to have greater responsibilities for their own learning. They also can decide whether the strategies are appropriate for them or not. Then, if they find that their strategies are not effective for them, they can ask teachers to help them find out the appropriate strategies to be better language learners.

Considering the importance of recognizing LLS used by the students, this study concerns with LLS employed by senior high school

students in a public senior high school in Bandung and the correlation between students' LLS and students' English achievement. It is expected to help the students and the teachers in this school enhance their process of teaching and learning English.

1.2   Statements of the Problem

Statements of the problem are clearly articulated statements about the topic of interest (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). By providing the statements of the problem, the topic of interest can be focused and narrowed. This research, therefore, attempts to answer the following research questions.

1. What types of language learning strategies are mostly used by the students?

2. Which language learning strategies are most frequently employed by the students who get the highest and lowest English achievement scores (the highest achievers and the lowest achievers)?

3. What is the correlation between students' language strategies and their English achievement?

1.3   Aims of the Study

There are at least three aims in conducting this study. Those are presented in the following features.

1. Investigating the types of language learning strategies which are mostly used by the students.

2. Figuring out the types of language learning strategies which are most frequently employed by the highest achievers and the lowest achievers.

3. Examining the relationship between students' language strategies and their English achievement.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Strategies play an important role in language learning. Oxford (1990) suggests that learning strategies can make learning process easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Therefore, this study is expected to give benefits to teachers, students, and theoretical significance.

This study is expected to give English teachers information regarding language learning strategies which are employed by their students. Knowing the students' language learning strategies will help the teachers guide deficient students to avoid inactive strategies and aid them to find an appropriate one.

This study also gives students chance to know what types of language learning strategies they use. It helps the students improve their English skills with or without teachers' help by optimizing the application

of strategies which are appropriate for them or altering their previous strategies which are not suitable for them.

In term of language learning strategies, this study can strengthen or weaken the previous studies in this field. It also can prove that weather or not language learning strategies are capable of being correlated with another field, in this case English achievement. This will support or oppose the theories from preceding researchers such as Oxford, O'Malley, Chamot or other researchers.

1.5   Clarification of Terms

The title of this study is "Students' English Language Learning Strategies and their English Achievement". Keeping away from the possibility of misinterpretation dealing with the key terms in the title above, here are the clarifications of the terms.

1.5.1   Students' Language Learning Strategies

Students' language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques employed by students, often consciously, to enhance their progress in understanding, internalizing, and using second language (Oxford, 1990). Based on Oxford's classification (1990), there are six language learning strategies. Those are memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

1.5.2 English Achievement

In this study, English achievement refers to English final scores which the students get from the average of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective assessments by means of daily, mid-term, and final test. The tests are conducted to measure students' competency achievement, to monitor students' development, to do some learning improvements, and to ascertain the students' learning achievement (Government's Rules No.19, 2005 see National Education Department, 2008).

1.6   Organization of the Paper

The paper is organized into five chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into subtopics that elaborate the given issue as follows.

a.   The first chapter is introduction. It contains background, statements of problem, the aim of the research, the significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

b.   The second chapter is theoretical foundation. This chapter intends to elaborate the theoretical foundation from the experts and previous researchers. It describes the definitions of learning strategies, language learning strategies, classifications of language learning strategies, English achievement, and related research findings.

c.   The third chapter is the research methodology used in investigating the types of language learning strategies which are mostly used by

the students and examining the relationship between students' language strategies and their English achievement. It consists of research design, population and sample, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

d. The fourth chapter is findings and discussions. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis about the LLS which are most frequently used by the students, by the students who got the highest English achievement scores, and by the students who got the lowest English achievement scores. This chapter also provides the result of analyzing the correlation between students' language learning strategies and their English achievement.

e. The fifth chapter is conclusions and recommendations. This chapter provides the conclusions of the study which are based on the findings and the recommendations for EFL students and EFL teachers for a better teaching and learning process.