

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In Indonesia nowadays, English is taught from third grade of elementary school and onward. As one of the disciplines in school, learning English is quite challenging. As the foreign language, students often find difficulties in learning it. Some of it are because of the difference pronunciation with mother tongue, spelling, writing, and etc. Moreover, English is now become one of main lesson which will be tested in national exam. It makes students work harder on learning English language in order to pass it. In this case, language learning takes over its role in education.

Language learning strategies have been a hot topic of research for the past three decades in education. It has been popular since Rubin and Stern, both in 1975, firstly made an article about the issue (Griffiths, 2004). The learning strategies itself are defined as particular steps, behaviors, actions or techniques used by learners to elevate their learning (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Some students can accelerate to learn language than the others, because of some factors affecting the language learning. Some of them are motivation, aptitude, learning styles and strategies, years of learning and so on, which considered as key factors of individual difference in language learning (Skehan, 1991).

Applying good language learning strategies can give advantages such as improving communicative skills. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), the language learning strategies are the tools for dynamic, self-directed requirement to

develop the communicative ability of foreign or second language. It also contributes on individual language learning which involving on decision of strategies used and tactics that related to students tasks and goals (Hurd & Lewis, 2008).

The present study will take junior high school as the subject of research. Numerous studies about English language learning strategies were conducted previously, but mostly take place in higher level of education; while for the middle level of education is rarely found (Xiyang, 2010). Moreover, number of studies related to language learning strategies towards Islamic schools are also nearly blank. There are many Islamic schools spread in entire Gresik area. The levels are from pre-school, beginner, middle and up to the university level. The students in this kind of school are not only taught by Islamic values and lessons, such as *hafidz*, *shalat*, etc, but also general lessons as government curriculum, for example math, Indonesian, English, etc. Some of them, achieves good reputation, not only for their Islamic value and lesson, but also to the other general lesson. The students from some of Islamic schools also achieves high score in English.

Fresiska on 2013, conducted study about the application of language learning strategies and its relation with English proficiency. The subjects of the research were students at Raden Paku Islamic Junior High School. The sample was 114 students which came from seventh grade, eighth grade and the. It was using Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 by Oxford (1990) as the research instrument and English score as comparison. The purpose was to describe the language learning strategies used by the students towards English proficiency. The result shown that the most used strategy by seventh

grade is metacognitive strategy, while for the eighth and the ninth students used metacognitive and affective strategies. The other result shown that for seventh grade, there was significant correlation between language learning strategies and students' English proficiency, but not with the eighth and the ninth students.

Beside that, knowing the most used strategies from students of Islamic junior high schools in Gresik, has important role on leading to the process of the students in using those strategies. The processes or procedures here can be described as the steps used by students to get into specific strategies, what they used to think or take, and what are the factors affecting them to carry out that strategies. This can be used by teacher or parents or tutors to understand at which stage or level need to be upgraded or developed and what factors need to be changed or improved. The findings on the mentioned points will help the students rebuild the power to learn English much more better.

Within the mentioned reasons, researcher hope that this study can describe the English language learning strategies used by the students of Islamic schools in Gresik, in order to help them to achieve better English learning.

1.2. Statement of Problem

How is the English language learning strategy used by the students of Islamic junior high schools in Gresik?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to know the English language learning strategy used by the students of Islamic junior high schools in Gresik.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will be further divided into two, theoretical significance and empirical significance, as below:

1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study is to provide information about the English language learning strategy used by students of the Islamic junior high schools in Gresik on English lesson and the processes or procedures of the most used strategies from the students.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

For the students, the researcher expected that the result of this research can motivate students to learn English more and researcher hopes that students can explore more strategies that make them interested and comfortable, so that their English can be improved.

As for the teacher, the researcher hope that they can be more understand what do their students need to learn English better. The teacher can develop teaching strategy that suitable with the learning strategies used by students, which can make them interested, not bored and easy to understand. Moreover, by studying the processes or procedures the teacher is expected to know the stage or level where their students have incapability, so that it can be improved or developed.

As for other researchers, this study can be a reference to conduct further research related with English language learning strategies used in Islamic junior high schools, such as developing teaching method that

suitable with the language learning strategies used by students and so on.

The researcher is also expecting that there will be further and deeper study about the processes or procedures towards specific strategies found in this study.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This research is specified to study the language learning strategies of the students of Islamic junior high schools in Gresik. This research is limited to study the English language learning strategy used by students in seventh, eighth and ninth grade. The data collecting is limited from questionnaire and interview.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

English language learning strategy is defined as particular steps, behaviors, actions or techniques used by students of Islamic schools in Gresik, to elevate their learning of English. The strategies are consist of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategy. The strategies should be taken not only at school, but also at home and English course they join.