

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is important for people. The most significance is that it is a tool for communication. It is considered important for students to learn languages, namely foreign languages, e.g. English. Students are expected to be able to use English. Students who are not English speakers have to learn the language in order to be able to communicate in English, since English is a language that is generally used in academic, professional and personal domains. English becomes more and more important in the world. Most students in Asia have to learn English for the reason that they can communicate with foreigners by using it. Moreover, the recent curriculum has inserted foreign languages to be the subjects taught and assessed. English as a foreign language has been taught since elementary level to tertiary level in order to make the students competent in English. It means that paying considerable attention toward English language learning is necessarily conducted.

There are many studies, which have been conducted in the field of foreign language learning namely English as well as what factors influence the success of the language learning itself, for the purpose of supporting the success of the students within their language learning. As the output, it is expected that the language learning process could make the students master the language and obtain higher achievements.

Additionally, in the recent curriculum, the students' achievements in the language learning processes are seen from their competencies related the subject of the study. A competency is an ability to behave, to think, and to act consistently as the embodiment of knowledge, attitudes, and skills possessed by learners (Direktorat Pembinaan SMA, 2010). And, in the context of English language learning, it involves four language skills.

Government Regulation (PP) No. 19 of 2005 Article 25 paragraph 4 states that competency includes the attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This means that language learning and assessment of learners should develop competencies related to the affective domain (attitudes), cognitive (knowledge) and psychomotor (skills) of the learners themselves. However, the question is what factors are influential toward the success of the language learners in mastering the language itself and how much they contribute to it.

It is recognized that in order to make the language learning successful, there are many things that should be put into consideration, one of them is the language learners themselves. It is in line with what is stated by Sardiman (as cited in Tjandra, 2009: 4) that the learning achievement of an individual is an interaction among many factors. Factors that affect learning are generally grouped into two main factors; those are internal factors and external factors. Internal factors involve physical factors, psychology, and fatigue –both physical and mental fatigue; meanwhile the external factors include family factors, school factors, and community factors (Slameto, 2010: 54-72).

Therefore, in order to make the learners to be successful it is important to consider about their characteristics as they are brought to the learning task (Johnson, 2001: 117). It is in accordance with Madrid (1995: 62) that the learners' individual characteristics can help to explain his/her individual outcomes. The roles played by male and female students, their social contexts, beliefs and experiences, age, motivation, aptitude, cognitive styles, learning styles or strategies, their affective states and personal characteristics may help to understand their learning processes and the final results they obtain.

Nowadays, English teachers are mostly concerned with the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, as it is expected by the curriculum. However, there are some other factors influencing the process of language learning that must be considered as well, which are not yet explored optimally by most of the teachers, such as: what underlined beliefs, styles, and learning strategies used by their students in order to achieve the goals of the English instruction and become successful language learners. It is accepted that those factors are influential for language learners in their language learning.

According to Oxford (2001), language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how and how well students learn a second and a foreign language. Learning styles are the manners in which students perceive and process information in acquiring a new language whether by using one or more senses as well as functioning individually or group in language learning (Reid, 1984). Meanwhile, Learning strategies are steps or actions taken by language learners to enhance any aspect of their language learning (Oxford,

1990). Besides, the students' beliefs about language learning also determine the learners' success in language learning. Beliefs about language learning are assumptions or ideas about various factors in language learning that students hold and bring into language learning (Horwitz, 1987). Breen (as cited in Bernat, E. & Gvozdenko, 2005) stated that in the classroom context, the language learning beliefs, and other characteristics that students bring with them to the learning situation have been recognized as significant contributory factors in the learning process and ultimate success.

There were some researches conducted to investigate the relationship of students' beliefs about language learning, learning style and language learning strategies toward students' achievement, namely English achievement. However, most of the researches done have no concern with the simultaneous contribution of those aspects toward students English achievement, especially in secondary level. Furthermore, there are only few studies on the contribution of language learning belief, learning styles, and language learning strategies toward the English achievement of senior high school students in Indonesia, mainly Singaraja, Bali. Most of the researches done are conducted in different subject matters and/ or with different aspects of learning.

Lan (2012) had conducted a study on the roles of anxiety and beliefs about language learning on the English achievement of 7th graders of Taiwanese. The study showed that beliefs had a correlation on students' achievement. In terms of learning styles, Tjandra (2009) found out that learning styles had a significant contribution toward students' achievement on social science of S1 students of the

Primary School Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, UNDIKSHA Singaraja. Moreover, Surianingsih (2011) stated that students' learning style has strong contribution toward the English writing competency of the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Mendoyo. Additionally, Tao (2011) also had conducted a prediction study toward the English achievement of Chinese students studied English seen from their learning styles, and found out that students' learning styles could become significant predictors of English achievement.

In the context of learners' learning strategies, Winasari (2010) has carried out a correlational study on the contribution of language learning anxiety and language learning strategies on students English proficiency of second year students of senior high schools in Mengwi, and discovered that language learning strategies gave significant contribution on English proficiency. Besides, Sioson (2011) had also conducted a prediction study in relation to language learning strategies, students' beliefs, and students' oral performance. It was found that students' beliefs had significant contribution on the oral performance of the participant.

Seen from the researches done in different subject matters above, such as sciences, and language skills/ proficiencies, beliefs about language learning, learning styles and language learning strategies were discovered to have a relationship with the students' achievement (Tjandra, 2009; Surianingsih, 2011; Winasari, 2010; Sioson, 2011, Lan, 2012). It was recognized that there were possibilities those beliefs about language learning, language learning strategies, and learning styles gave significant contribution toward the success of learning.

Therefore, this research was aimed at investigating how senior high schools students' beliefs about English language learning, their learning styles, and language learning strategies contributed to their English achievement.

1.2 Identification of Problems

State Senior High Schools in Singaraja have put great emphasis on how English language learning should be carried out in the classrooms in order to make the students obtain higher achievements in English. It can be seen from how the teachers have tried to put their best efforts to make their students to be successful in learning English. A part from the teachers' side it was apparent that the students' English achievement was not merely influenced by the teachers or even the schools policies, but more on themselves. They have brought their own characteristics of learning into the classrooms. These circumstances need to be followed up by better understanding about what characteristics are influential toward the students' success in language learning and how much the characteristics would have contributed to their success in learning English. Therefore, it is important to investigate the characteristics that the students have brought into the process of learning a language, namely English, in order to know which characteristics are influential at most, and how much they contribute to the students' language learning process, so that the results can be used to help the students in finding the best way of learning English as well as mastering the language.

Considering the differences that each student brings into the language learning, each of them might have their own beliefs about language learning, their own styles and strategies in their language learning. They might have held some particular beliefs about language learning, have had particular styles of learning, and have utilized amount of language learning strategies. And whether or not those beliefs, learning styles, and learning strategies have had significant contributions toward the students' English achievement as well as how much the contribution was, a research needed to be conducted.

Regarding this matter, the researcher attempted to investigate how students' beliefs about English language learning, their learning styles, and language learning strategies contribute to their English achievement in state senior high schools in Singaraja, and whether the contributions were significant or not.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study is limited on investigating the contribution of the beliefs about language learning, learning styles, and language learning strategies towards the English achievement of the eleventh grade students of State Senior High Schools in Singaraja in the academic year 2011/2012, Semester I. The beliefs about language learning was limited on types of beliefs proposed by Horwitz (1987) including foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations. The learning styles used in this study referred to the learning styles proposed by Reid (1984), which concerned about major learning style preferences including

visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual learning styles. Furthermore, the language learning strategies used referred to the learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990), which included memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. In terms of English achievement, the students' achievements were quoted from the students' English scores in the school report books, mainly semester I, in the academic years 2011/2012. The scores used were the scores of the cognitive and psychomotor domains presented in the school report books.

1.4 Statements of the Problems

Based on the explanation above, there were some research problems explored, as follows

1. Is there any significant contribution of beliefs about language learning on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja?
2. Is there any significant contribution of learning styles on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja?
3. Is there any significant contribution of language learning strategies on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja?
4. Is there any significant contribution of beliefs about language learning, learning styles and language learning strategies on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja?

1.5 Purposes of the Study

Referring to the statement of the problems above, the study attempted

1. to investigate the contribution of beliefs about language learning on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja.
2. to investigate the contribution of learning styles on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja.
3. to investigate the contribution of language learning strategies on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja.
4. to investigate the contribution of beliefs about language learning, learning styles and language learning strategies on the eleventh grade students' English achievement of state senior high schools in Singaraja.

1.6 Significances of the study

The outcome of the study is proposed to provide both theoretical and practical significances.

1.6.1 The theoretical significance

Theoretically the findings of this study is expected to share clear insight concerning with the contribution of language learning beliefs, learning styles and strategies toward English achievement.

1.6.2 The practical significances

a. To the teachers

The results of this study are expected to give benefits to ESL/ EFL teachers as self reflection and feedback in order to improve their

professionalism. Based on the results of the study, the teachers are expected to be able to determine what strategies they should use to enhance their students' learning, when they know what their students believe about language learning and what learning styles and language learning strategies their students use. It is also expected that the study is useful for teachers to realize some physiological factors that affects students' success in learning.

b. To the students

It is expected that the students can recognize that their beliefs about language learning, their learning styles, and language learning strategies are useful for them when learning a language. Moreover, it is anticipated that the students will be able to figure out what should they do to be successful in language learning.

c. To the other researchers

The result of this research is supposed to be beneficial to other researchers. It is expected that this study is able to widen and deepen the knowledge and understanding about language learning, as well as to be advantageous for the researchers to conduct further studies by making use of the result of the study. The researchers may explore the study in different population, with better methodologies and instruments with the expectations that the results will be better and more portraying the theories.