

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia is a country which consists of 33 provinces. Each province has its own language which is particularly different from one to another. Due to the economic development of the country, many people move from their home towns to other places for several reasons, for examples to find a job or better education and even marriage. This movement brings effects to the society. People who move to new places will try to learn the local rules, habits, and, essentially, the language with the intention of adapting to the environment. The local society also tries to learn and understand the new language in order to understand the new comer in the community. Language is the most important tool in communication. Therefore it is important to understand the language of our society. Wardhaugh (2002) defines language as what the members of particular society speak. As a result, this continuous process creates a multilingual community, a community with people who speak more than one language. The people of a multilingual society do not only speak the national language and their own language, but also the new language. This kind of condition which situates a community in regular usage of more than two languages for different purposes is called Polyglossia (Holmes, 2001). In this situation, there are languages that consider as the H and L varieties. The H or High status variety is the language which has prestige in the sense of high status and is standardized in grammar books and dictionaries. In contrast, the

L or Low status variety is usually the local language which is not standardized. For instance, in Javanese society, Indonesian and English language are considered as the H varieties, while Javanese, which is the local language, is considered as the L variety. People likely use Indonesian or English language in formal situation. They usually use them in offices, schools, and other formal institutions. They also use them when their listeners have higher status or better educational background. Javanese as L variety is used in informal situation, for example: at home, relating to conversations with family members or friends. Therefore, nowadays many people want to learn English. Moreover, the status of English as international language, which is also functioned to show the prestige of the speakers, supports people who want to enter the globalization era.

The status and functions of English in Indonesia have been increasing in the past few years. This fact might be influenced by two different factors i.e. globalization and economic development. According to Graddol (2006), the increasing interdependence and integration of economic activity would point to a significant expansion in the roles of a language, which is the heart of many globalization mechanisms; moreover, economic development of Indonesia, which rapidly increased, invited many foreign investments that lead to the increasing use of foreign language in Indonesia. The globalization has significantly increased the function of English in Indonesia. English is not only a language for learning but also a language for showing identity and prestige. As an international language, English is used in countries which have great economic power such as United States of America, England, and Australia. Yet, English is seen as a language of

opportunity and it also creates significant inequalities (Hall & Eggington, 2000). Therefore, English has prestige in the sense of high status and people's respect for it. That is the reason why many people think that someone who can speak English well is considered to be an educated person and has higher value than the other who cannot. This point of view is applied in many companies in Indonesia today.

Many companies in Indonesia put the requirement of ability in using English as one of their major points, not only in multinational companies which were built in Indonesia, but also in non-multinational companies. This fact is interesting since, practically, most workers in Indonesia do not have good ability in using English. The workers tend to use Indonesian Language. Therefore, it turns to the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing. Sometimes they will use English, but when they get difficulty they will turn to their mother tongue, which is Indonesian. For example, this phenomenon happened in a company in Surabaya, PT. Tinindo Indonesia. PT. Tinindo Indonesia is a multinational company whose business in trading steel plate and alloy is already expanded to several countries in South East Asia such as Singapore, Australia, and Malaysia. The owner of this company is an Australian. Some of the employees are expatriates, but most of the employees are Indonesian people. In order to succeed the business, this company has certain requirements in recruiting the employees. One of the requirements is the ability in understanding and using English. It is understandable since some of the employees are foreigners and many of the company businesses deal with international trading which needs English ability. Although the employees could meet the requirement in the recruiting process, the

employees do not use English in their daily activity in the office as much as the company expects. Most of them prefer to use Indonesian language in discussions, meetings, and presentations. It seems that they do not really care about using English during working. On the other hand, the director and other expatriates employees in this company do not encourage the Indonesian employees by learning Indonesian language.

If we take a closer look to this phenomenon, it can be seen that there is a process in which the employees of this company choose the language they use. In Linguistics area, there is a subdivision which explains the relationship between language and society, called Sociolinguistics (Holmes, 2001). In regard to Sociolinguistics, we find the fact that people speak differently in different social context. We can also identify the social functions of a language and the way it is used to communicate social meanings. The phenomenon of choosing the appropriate language is one of the subdivisions in Sociolinguistics, called Language Choice. Here is an example of Language Choice: there are three persons in an office, they are Mr. A, Mr. B, and Mr. C. Mr. A and Mr. B are Indonesians while Mr. C is an Australian. Mr. A can speak several languages i.e. Mandarin, Indonesia, Javanese, and English; Mr. B can speak Javanese and Indonesia; Mr. C can speak English and Mandarin. When Mr. A and Mr. B are in the canteen, they use Javanese to talk to each other. But when they are in the office, they use Indonesian. When Mr. A is talking to Mr. C in a meeting which is also attended by the director who is a Canadian, they use English. They use both English and Mandarin in daily activities in the office. Based on the example, it

shows that the speakers change their language under certain factors. Holmes (2001) stated certain social factors like addressee, social context, function and topic of discussion are important for language choice in many different kinds of speech community. It is also known as the Domain of language use. Joshua Fishman (cited in Holmes, 2001) stated that a domain involves typical interactions between typical participants in typical settings. Here, people do not only consider the setting of the addressee but also the linguistic repertoire of each person. Linguistic repertoire is a personal capability in using language which is different from one person to another (Holmes, 2001).

Regarding to this thesis, the writer focuses on the use of spoken English language in a professional workplace in a multinational company in Surabaya. This thesis is a case study in PT. Tinindo Indonesia. The result of this study shows how far English has been used in professional workplace relating to when and why English is used instead of Indonesian. The phenomenon is interesting because it relates to the daily life of many employees in Surabaya. Furthermore, the previous researches about the use of English in company in Surabaya are still limited. Therefore, the writer is interested in conducting a research about the use of English in the real professional workplace in Surabaya.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems**

Regarding to the background of the study, the writer proposes two research problems for this research. They are:

1. What language is chosen by the professional in different settings of the workplace domain?
2. What social factor is the most influential in language choices, why?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on that statement of the problems, this study aims to:

1. Describe the language chosen by the professionals in different setting of the workplace domain
2. Describe the social factors which might account for that choice.

### **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

This study only discusses the situation when the professionals use English and the factors why they use it. For that reason, this study does not discuss the phenomenon of code-switching and code-mixing that might arise in the research. The writer limits the discussion of this study to the language choice of the responders, disregarding the advantages or disadvantages of their choices. Due to the sampling, the result of this study cannot be generalized as the use of English in professional world in Surabaya.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The result of this study can expectantly give several contributions for the readers. The contribution of this study to Sociolinguistics is to give a new point of view about the English usage in professional workplace so that the readers can

comprehend what language is mostly used by professionals in the workplace. The readers are also expected to understand what social factors give the most influence to the professional's choice of language. Besides, the result of this study can hopefully be used as an input for educational institutions regarding the kind of English that is used in the real world. So, the educators can determine what kind of theories or methods that suit the use of English in the professional world. Finally, the result of this study can give an insight whether ability in using English is necessarily put as one of the major criteria in the recruitment process or not.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

*Language choice* : the choice of language used in different social context

*Oral communication* : communication in spoken way or communicating by saying words

*Linguistics repertoire* : individual ability in using language

*Multinational company* : a company which has employees from other countries

*Professional* : someone who works in a company

*Workplace* : a place where an employee works