

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

2.1. The Cultural and the Linguistic Background of the English Department

Students of Airlangga University

English Department students of Airlangga University come from regions of East Java, even some of them come from outside this province. They entered English Department after struggling very hard to pass National Exam called UMPIN. The latest data notes that their number now is 282 students i.e., from the total number of the students from the first generation (1988) up to now (1996), 417, minus the total number of the graduated students, 135.*

Most of English Department students are Javanese (approximately 86 % of them are Javanese). The rest of them are Chinese, half-blooded between Javanese and other ethnic groups, and other ethnic groups such as Madurese, Balinese, etc.* Due to their ethnic group background, some of them say that they speak Javanese at home and some of them speak Indonesian and Javanese. Only a few of them speak Indonesian only. From the data got from questionnaire it is noted that 46% of them speak Javanese, 40% speak Indonesian and Javanese, 10% speak Indonesian only and 4% of them speak other languages (switching between Indonesian and other regional language, Indonesian and Madurese, for instance).

* Source: Sub Bagian Akademik dan Kemahasiswaan

The use of Indonesian switching with Javanese by Javanese students at home is caused by the economic status of their family. Indonesian is deemed as high class language. High varieties or languages have greater prestige and low varieties or languages are often disparaged (Fasold, 1984 : 34). So, to use Indonesian is to show their economic and social status. In fact, most of them come from middle and upper class of economic status families. It does not mean that those who only use Javanese are from lower class of economic status. The use of Javanese is merely because of their original region rather than their economic status.

The students who answer only use Indonesian at home are generally from other ethnic groups, e.g., Balinese, Makasarese, etc., or from other provinces whose mother tongue are Indonesian, e.g., Manado, Jakarta, Ujung Pandang, and so on.

2.2. The Description of the Language Competence of the English Department Students of Airlangga University

The English Department students of Airlangga University like any other departments students are those who graduated from the level of SMU. They have learned English in their previous educations, at least for six years, that is, from junior high school (SMP) until senior high school (SMU). It means that they have been familiar with this language since those periods. This supports their competence in using and understanding English.

Their English competence increases when they entered English Department of Airlangga University. In this department they learn some skill

subjects in the early semesters. From 144 SKS (Sistem Kredit Semester), the minimal SKS required to get schoolar (S₁) degree, there are 20 SKS they should take as skill subjects (data source : Buku Pedoman Pendidikan Program Studi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris 1988). Even now, since the curriculum was changed in 1995, the students of English Department of 1995 and up will get 30 SKS of skill subjects from 150 SKS they must take to get S₁ degree (data source: Buku Pedoman Pendidikan Program Studi Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris 1995). It is not including some other English subjects which are, of course, presented in English. Those skill subjects include structure (grammar), listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Looking at their intensity in using English in the class, no doubt, it can be assumed that they are very familiar with this language. Their familiarity with English results in the languages contact between Indonesian, as academic society language, and English, as the language they study, in their speech act. As what Diebold says that when the two languages come into contact there will be bilingualism and the results of it, i.e., interference. This is what happens to them. Their English competence leads them, minimally, to be bilinguals. The bilingualism condition influences upon the way they speak, that is, they often insert English lexicons within their conversation. And it is called lexical interference. The clear description about the way they converse will be described below.

2.3. The Description of the Daily Conversation of the English Department Students of Airlangga University

2.3.1. Rendezvous

In the daily life in the campus outside the class English Department students usually gather in certain places. From the questionnaires distributed to 50 informants there are 4 major places as their favourite rendezvous, they are, language laboratory, FISIP canteen, FISIP verandah, and FISIP indoor park verandah. The majority of them answer language laboratory as their most favourite rendezvous (37 informants). The other answers cover 13 informants who choosing FISIP canteen, 8 informants choosing FISIP indoor park verandah, and 6 informants choosing FISIP verandah.

Language laboratory seems to be a centre of English Department assembly. They are there to meet friends and talk various topics while they are waiting for the following lecture / class, or just to meet friends or wait for the lecturer for certain purposes. The situation is very relax; there is joke, laugh, and any other easy conversations constituting the relax situation.

2.3.2. Language

The very relax situation is showed by the language they use. As academic society, regarded as middle and upper class due to their education, they are accustomed to use Indonesian, in this case informal Indonesian, but, on the other hand, they can not be separated from Javanese as their mother tongue. From the questionnaires it is found that 43 informants answer that they

use Indonesian - Javanese as their communication tool in the conversation with their English Department friends.

The presence of Javanese creates the situation more informal (relax). It is aimed to keep friendship among them. Javanese is considered to be a symbol of the region where they come from.

2.3.2.1. Lexical Interference

In addition to use Javanese, they also use pieces of English, i.e., words, phrases or idioms within their conversation. They use them deliberately or undeliberately for some reasons. We may hear one of them says :

"Yog, Yoga sini kamu *next to me*."

"Lha ini, ini lho kalo anak-anak mau *share*."

"Sungguh, *pure friend* kok."

The use of these pieces of English within their Indonesian conversation leads to the deviation in which the speaker inserts a system of another language while they are using a language. This is regarded as an error by the purists (Chaer, 1995 : 164).

In the purists' eyes the use of the English lexicons should be avoided since it breaks Indonesian norms. It is said so because those English lexicons have already had their equal meaning in Indonesian. So, instead of using English pieces "*next to me*", "*share*", and "*pure friend*", they would better use "*di sampingku*", "*berbagi*" and "*cuma teman*". This deviation phenomenon is called lexical interference.

2.3.2.2. Topics of conversation

The conversations are done when the class breaks. It means they are free from being forced to think hard about their lessons. It is a time when they can enjoy relax situation to tell joke, to tell their private problems and to discuss some recent issues like political and economical issues, social concern , some gossips on celebrities, and of course, gossips on their lecturers.

Being English Department students, they can never be apart from their academic affairs. Every subject needs certain terms which have certain definition and explanation that the English students must understand. They have to memorize those terms with their definition and explanation unless they will get difficulties in their study. So, their topic of conversation does also include this kind of topic of conversation.

It means that the English Department students, no doubt, must make a contact with some certain terms in English. This is one of some reasons why they insert English lexicons within their speech.

Other topics can be on the television programs, movies, business, and other interesting topics such as internet, tourism, advertising, and so on.

Those all are backgrounded by some factors, among other things, friendship built among them and educational background of them.

CHAPTER 3

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS