

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language is a bridge which can pass anything it wants in written or in oral form. It means that language is an instrument of communication among the communities of human beings. It is primarily spoken and it constitutes meaningful sound which enable people to communicate.

Language is an important part of human activities in daily life. Without language human can not do the communication with other people. Moreover as human society we need language to speak and to develop the relationship with others.

Language is the system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings (Hornby, 1995: 662). It means that we use language to transfer our ideas and to express our emotion, desire, and feelings.

In order to be able to communicate with others, we have to use language. In this case language is the way of social interactions. It has been developed both the functions and the structure of the sentences. The function should meet the demands of language users and as an interaction of those demands to make the communications more effective.

Learning a language means learning the master of three components of language. One of the components is grammar. Regarding the importance of grammar in language use, R.H.Robins (as quoted in Nasr,1984: 74) in his article “syntactic relation” pointed out that if a language had no grammar, no systematic ordering of its words in sentences, it could never be learned by a native speaker or by a foreigner. Indeed, a language without grammar is no language at all. So the ability in using grammar correctly is very important because knowledge of grammar will help us to understand how a language functions as a means of communication more effective.

Language also is a part of culture because it is a part of human behavior. Nasr (1980) says that language is an acquired vocal system for communicating meaning. This statement tells us about (1) language operates in a regular and systematic fashion, (2) languages are basically oral and they represent meanings as they are related to real life situation and experiences.

Nida and Taber (1974: 40) argue that each language has its own characteristic such as word order, word building capacity, sentence pattern and so on. It means that every language in the world has its own features to be different from one to another.

Based on the social role of language, each society has its own language. In East Nusa Tenggara province there are many languages spoken by people in different place of different cultures and societies. James Fox (1973) as quoted by Levi in a preliminary study (1978: 3) divided language in East Nusa Tenggara province into 35 languages, for examples: Lamaholot Language, Dawan Language, Tetun Language, Wewewa Language, etc.

One of that local language is Laura Language. It is in Sumba island especially in the Southwest Regency. It is spoken by almost all people in that district. There are some question word examples that interest the writer to do this research, as follows.

Siapa nama kamu? (Gharra ngara mu?)

Kapan kamu pulang? (Pirra bu bali?)

All the sentences above are unique and interesting to be investigated because as in English, the question word in interrogative sentences of Laura language stands in the initial position of a sentence. Based on the discussion, the writer would like to make a study, to describe the kinds of WH Questions of Laura Language, the syntactic pattern of Laura Language and the function of Laura Language under the title “The Study on Wh-Questions of Laura Language

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the topic above this study has three problem statements, they are formulated in questions.

1. What are the kinds of Wh-Questions used in Laura Language?
2. What is the syntactic pattern of the Wh-Questions in Laura Language?
3. What is the function of Wh-Questions in Laura Language?

1.3 Objective of the study

In line with the statement of problems above, the objectives in this study is formulated as follows.

1. To describe and explain kinds of Wh-Questions used in Laura Language.

2. To describe and explain the syntactic pattern of the Wh-Questions in Laura Language.
3. To describe and explain the function of Wh-Questions in Laura Language?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study in general is divided into two: academic significance and practical significance.

1.4.1 Academic Significance

There are some academic significance of this study. They are stated below.

1. As a contribution of ideas to the theoretical framework of linguistics on local language.
2. As an additional source and the development of Laura Language.
3. As the scientific information for the enriching literature on the related study on the future.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

This study will be practically used :

1. To motivate and train the writer in doing research.
2. To implement the writer's knowledge and to know more about the using of Wh-Questions in Laura Language.

3. To provide the theoretical information for Sumba Language dealing with Wh-Questions in Laura Language.
4. To promote the Laura Language as a local or regional language in Sumba island.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study belongs to linguistics that covers macrolinguistics and microlinguistics. Microlinguistics covers psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics. While macrolinguistics covers phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

The specification of this study is dealing with syntax. Syntax is the sentences pattern of language (Fromkin et al,1990: 155). There are many syntactic pattern such as yes-no questions, tag questions and Wh-questions. Here the writer limits her study on the use of question words (*what, where, when, why, who, whose, which, whom and how*).

This study focuses on the Wh-Questions used in interrogative sentences of Laura Language, in term of its syntanctic pattern.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are some terms used in this study to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding which are presented as below:

1. Study

Study is the activity of learning or gaining knowledge of a particular subject, especially from books (Oxford,1995: 1187).

Study in this writing is more emphasize on the WH-Questions of Laura Language.

2. Question

It is a sentence which is addressed to a listener/reader and asks for an expression of fact, opinion, belief, etc (Richard 1985: 235).

3. Wh-Questions

Wh-Questions is a question that asks for information starting with: what, when, where, who, whom, whose, which, why and how (Azar, 1989: 112).

4. Laura Language is one of so many local languages that exist in East Nusa Tenggara province. It is widely spoken by people in the Southwest of Sumba regency (Verheijen,1991).