

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some points related to this research. Those include Background of the Study, statement of research problems, objectives of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

### **A. Background of the Study**

English, being a globally acknowledged language, holds significant importance in fostering economic and educational connections among nations. Although it is a part of the curriculum in Indonesian schools from primary to tertiary levels, its application in everyday communication within Indonesia remains limited. This situation poses a notable challenge for many Indonesians who find it difficult to effectively communicate in English, highlighting a disparity between formal education in the language and its practical utility in daily life. This raises concerns about the efficacy of the current English language education system in meeting the communicative needs of the population.

Indonesia finds itself trailing its neighboring nations concerning the publication of scientific papers in international journals that are indexed by renowned databases such as Scopus, Elsevier, Thomson Reuters, or ISI. A comparative analysis based on the Scimago Journal Ranking places Indonesia below countries like Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq, despite boasting a higher number of universities and a larger population. This noticeable gap in scientific contributions persists even though Indonesia is equipped with a substantial academic infrastructure. As of August 15, 2021, Indonesia occupies the forty-eighth position in the ranking, underscoring a continuing disparity in English proficiency when juxtaposed with other nations (source: [www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php](http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php), accessed on August 15, 2021).

Presently, the prerequisite for English proficiency is confined to individuals pursuing advanced degrees (Master's and Ph.D.) in specific universities, and it is also a requisite for certain job positions within various companies. This limited scope has resulted in a considerable scarcity of Indonesians who demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the English language. Consequently, English usage is predominantly confined to legal contexts and remains constrained to specific events and social circles, contributing to a broader societal challenge in achieving widespread fluency. The need for an enhanced grasp of English extends beyond academic and professional spheres, highlighting the importance of addressing this issue comprehensively to elevate the overall linguistic competence of the Indonesian populace.

Indonesian learners take a considerable amount of time to master English, possibly due to their inability to consistently employ the language as a habitual practice. According to Panggabean (2007: 160) it would be better if Indonesia people learning from native speakers. A native speaker acquires their language because they keeps learning by listening, thinking, and speaking. So, they learns language continuously. While Indonesian, English learners do spend less time using and thinking in English. They are depending on what learning activities in the classroom, for example twice a week. In the classroom the teacher may use traditional methods or they do not involve deeply. Like the actual time that the teachers and learners spent English in a week is less than two hours. Regardless of how many years they have studied English, the fact is in this circumstance they learn it in week, not year.

According to Foss & Hakes (1978 : 234-266) the process of language acquisition and language learning in a few weeks only produces very little achievement. For example, babies began changing their production of speech-like sound to true

speech production when they are eight to ten months though they have heard and responded to the voices of adults long before it. Only after they were four or five years, when they had been doing reinforcement, imitation, and expansion, their speech was nearly like those adults.

Certainly, there exists a marked contrast between English and Indonesian, encompassing distinctions in phonology, morphology, and syntax. Notably, the pronunciation of English poses an additional challenge as it lacks a strict conformity with its corresponding graphic representations. As asserted by Himpun Panggabean (2015: 37), the acquisition of all human languages, including English, is deemed achievable for individuals with normal cognitive abilities. It is emphasized that no human language stands out as inherently more difficult to learn than others, suggesting that the acquisition of English is a feasible endeavor for language learners.

According to Kato Lomb, it is easy for someone to learn a language not because of talent. Kato Lomb herself was a person who was late in learning the language. She learned a new language after graduating from PhD. And she learned the language self-taught because of her desire to work. Kato Lomb learn various foreign languages easily even though they do not live in the country where the language is spoken. She did not grow up multilingual, and lived in her Budapest whole life. She acquired, however, 17 languages and she is a professional translator (Krashen, 2017: 113-119)

Unlike most polyglots, Lomb learned the languages relatively late. She does not care about the language in high schools and universities (his PhD in chemistry), she started studying English on her own at 1933 to find a job as a teacher. It is regrettable that few linguists have studied polyglots and what it is they know about language learning. She expresses her belief that a language learner's success is primarily

determined by motivation, perseverance, and diligence and not by innate ability (Lomb, 2005).

According to Kato Lomb “*I only have one mother tongue: Hungarian. Russian, English, French, and German live inside me simultaneously with Hungarian. I can switch between any of these languages with great ease, from one word to the next.*”

“*Translating texts in Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, and Polish generally requires me to spend about half a day brushing up on my language skills and perusing the material to translated.*”

“*The other six languages [Bulgarian, Danish, Latin, Romanian, Czech, Ukrainian] I know only through translating literature and technical material.*” (Lomb, 2005).

The way we learn can be the same as Kato Lomb. What needs to be learned from Kato Lomb is learning a second language or foreign language in a way that is not limited to formal conditions or limited time. It is understandable that creating a similar atmosphere in Indonesia takes a long time, but there must be an awareness that the Indonesian people must start learning English in a new way and leave traditional methods. Indonesians can learn from Kato Lomb regardless of whether studying at school still doesn't support students in learning English more actively or not, in the future.

Kato lomb has several works, but only *Polyglot: How I Learn Language*, as complete references for studying and analyzing language acquisition and language learning of Kato Lomb through her work which contains stories of her experiences. The book that deals with personal language learning. It is a collection of anecdotes and

reflections on language acquisition and language learning by Kato Lomb's experiences. This Book tells of Kato Lomb (as a learner) who learned many foreign languages as an adult. But the most remarkable aspect through a researcher's cursory is her ideas for learning languages strategies probably are not same as ordinary people.

From a few words of the foreword and several journals that discuss about Kato Lomb, the researcher did not focus the research on one thing, for example how Kato Lomb learned language just by reading and translating. The researcher thought that there were many ways and strategies employed by Kato Lomb in language acquisition and language learning.

The researcher thought that there were many ways and strategies employed by Kato Lomb in language acquisition and language learning. Considering many experiences she had in learning languages, so the researcher will examine the entirety of how does Kato Lomb learning strategies in second language acquisition and second language learning; and what are the factors of Kato Lomb's success in learning second language acquisition and second language learning.

The researcher consider that there is no researcher from Indonesia who has conducted the research as studied by the researcher. So, it becomes the researcher's challenge whether learning a foreign language will be done easily by imitating the polyglot strategies or not. Therefore, the researcher is interested in using Kato Lomb's polyglot research object which can be examined through narrative texts about her experiences. The researcher believed that acquiring insights into the strategies employed by polyglots to learn second languages would yield valuable information, serving as a contribution to both students and teachers in Indonesia.

## **B. Statement of the Research Problem**

1. What learning strategies are kato lomb employed and how is each of the employed learning strategy contributif in becoming a multilingual person?
2. What factors do affect kato lomb success in becoming multilingual person?

## **C. Objective of the Research**

1. To examine the learning strategies employed by kato lomb and identify the contribution of each employed learning strategy in becoming a multilingual person.
2. To identify the factors that affect kato lomb's success in becoming a multilingual person.

## **D. Significance of the Research**

1. Students

The finding of the research give input to the students motivated to learn English easily from a polyglot. Whether the curriculum in Indonesia still makes English only as a subject in class with limited time, but as English learners should look for alternative learning and motivation to learn English by theirself, learn language acquisition easily as easy as polyglot in learning languages.

2. Teachers

The finding of the research give input to the teacher to provide easy alternatives to teach English for students such as how to learn language very easily like poliglot learning language. Regardless of whether in the current or future curriculum, English is still as a subject not as communication tool, teachers can still provide strategies how English can be learned freely without limited time, but English can be applied successfully by students.

### 3. The Readers

The finding of the research give input to the readers to take the foreign language learning method from the polyglot. So far, learning foreign languages using traditional methods, perhaps through language acquisition or language learning strategies from polyglots, the readers can easily learn foreign languages like polyglots learning many languages easily.

### 4. Other Researchers

The result of the study is expected to provide contribution and inspiration for other researcher. Considering that research on polyglots as language learning is still rarely carried out by researchers. So the researcher hope that further researchers can develop this research even better and more specific, so that it is more useful for readers, students, and teachers in learning new foreign languages how to learn an easy foreign language like Kato Lomb learning foreign languages easily, even in a self-taught way or not directly learning with native speakers.

## **E. Scope and Limitation of the Research**

The scope of this study is focused on analyzing the learning strategies employed by Kato Lomb in becoming a multilingual person, with a specific emphasis on Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning. The primary reference for this study is the book "Polyglot: How I learn Language" by Kato Lomb.

The discussion will primarily revolve around the learning strategies used by Kato Lomb, as outlined in her book, and will draw upon the theoretical framework proposed by Rebecca Oxford in the context of Second Language Acquisition and Learning. Additionally, the study will also consider the factors that contributed to Kato Lomb's success in becoming a multilingual person, utilizing the theoretical insights provided by Rod Ellis.

It is important to note that the focus on multilingual learning strategies in this study is applicable to the learning of any language worldwide, including English. The analysis will aim to provide valuable insights into effective language learning strategies that can be applied universally.

It would have been preferable for researchers to directly visit or conduct interviews with Kato Lomb, but unfortunately, that is not possible as she passed away. Therefore, this research is limited to a literature study, specifically focusing on Kato Lomb's book

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which primarily include the restriction of using only the book "Polyglot: How I learn Language" by Kato Lomb as the primary reference. The study's findings and conclusions will be based solely on the information presented in this particular source. Therefore, additional perspectives or alternative approaches may not be thoroughly explored or considered within the scope of this research.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Kato Lomb**

Kato Lomb was a an interpreter, translator and one of the world's first simultaneous translators. Initially she graduated in physics and chemistry, but her interest brought her to learn languages. She was able to translate fluently in nine or ten languages (in four languages even without preparation), and she translated technical literature and read belles-lettres in six languages. She was able to understand journalism in a further eleven languages. As she said, in total she earned money in sixteen languages (Bulgarian, Chinese, Danish, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Ukrainian). She learned these languages mostly on her own, as a self-taught. Her



aim to master these languages is the most practical, to satisfy her interests. Language acquisition and language learning were her passion, as is clearly evidenced throughout *Polyglot: How I Learn Languages*. Other major publications include: *Egy tolmács a világ körül* (An interpreter around the world) which appeared in 1979, *Nyelvekről jut eszembe...* (Languages remind me...)/ *With Language in Mind* from 1983, and *Bábeli harmónia* (Interjúk Európa híres soknyelvű embereivel) / “Harmony of Babel (Interviews with famous multilinguals in Europe)” published in 1988 (Peek, 2008: 78).

## 2. Multilingual Person

According to Li (2008), a multilingual person is someone who possesses the ability to communicate in multiple languages, whether actively (by speaking and writing) or passively (by listening and reading) (p. 4).

## 3. Second Language Acquisition

According to Stephen D. Krashen, language acquisition that have been internalized naturally or unconsciously and focus on linguistic forms (Krashen, 1981: 6).

## 4. Second Language Learning

Learning language refers to on linguistic abilities is internalized language consciously and it is the result of formal learning situations (Stephen D. Krashen, 1981: 6).

## 5. *Polyglot: How I Learn Language*

*Polyglot: How I Learn Language* is the book (narative story) was written by the Hungarian polyglot (Dr. Kató Lomb). The story about how Kato Lomb’s second language acquisition and language learning by herself autodidacly. Although originally published in Hungary in 1970, with reprints in 1972, 1990

and 1995, as well as translations into Russian, Latvian and Japanese (Alkire, 2005), *Polyglot: How I Learn Languages* has been translated in English by Ádám Szegi and Kornelia DeKorne, edited by Scott Alkire, and can be accessed freely online at [www.tesl-ej.org](http://www.tesl-ej.org) (Kato Lomb, 2005).