

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

English has spread over the world in accordance with increasing global communication which creates intelligibility of language in every nation. English as international language also has affected every dimension of human life includes education for teaching and learning that makes use of teaching and learning English as mother tongue, second language and foreign language and it educationally attempts to elevate the quality of human. There has been noted that in one parts of region in globe i.e., Asia continent, „English as Asian language“. Schneider (2014) commented to this notion by saying that there is nothing hesitation that Asia has the number of English speakers“ mostly increased rapidly and dynamic development is more pronounced than anywhere else on the globe. He continuously said, “Based on the European Union affords 24 official languages, into which all parliamentary proceedings have to be translated! Notably, half of ASEAN“s member states, including Cambodia, Laos, Thailand or Indonesia, have had no British colonial background and no special relationship with English before“. The interesting thing is that in those countries English now enjoys learning as obligatory subject but it is not yet spoken widely especially in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, teaching English is recognized as foreign language where mostly of Indonesian English learners are bilingual for both local and national languages. Teaching English in context of foreign language in Indonesia aims at communicative competence. Competencies are inclusive to the literacy skills, productive skills and receptive skills in which many scholars have investigated for

many years over the regions in Indonesia, various types and levels of education, and significantly in urban to rural areas (Budiawan: 2008).

In the level of university learners, English has its own department in which hopefully Indonesian students will be English teachers, experts in English literature, or others relevant to the job of English users. The only state higher education institution in Padangsidempuan, State Institute for Islamic Studies (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri: IAIN*) Padangsidempuan had become the interest of the investigation for the practice of teaching English as foreign language.

There were many students found studying English who were going to be English teachers at IAIN Padangsidempuan. The students were expected to be competent in three subjects areas: 1) language: structure and grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, pattern practice, error analysis, and so on, 2) the four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and 3) teaching practices: micro-teaching, teachers' code and ethics in Indonesia, and TEFL, course design and so on.

Considering that the students must be well acquainted with the three subjects' areas as requirement to be English teacher, practices of learning the subjects in and outside classroom should had been relevant with essence of each in term of knowledge, ability and or skills. In the following there was identification a number of problematic areas of the students practices in English study program of IAIN Padangsidempuan.

Firstly, learning English in the classroom was mostly done by presentation with discussion session between lecturer and students. Nevertheless, presentation with powerpoint was used to deliver material through reading aloud, no

explanation and responses to presenter rarely found. In the discussion that was expected to appear situation asking and giving opinion, stating argument, and questioning, however, based on pre observation, desire to participate in the classroom activity had not been found.

Secondly, learning English was also shown by one agenda of English students organization known as *HMJ TBI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan Tadris Bahasa Inggris)* by having study club three days a week done by group of five or six students. Around several years ago, 2010-2012, this activity had followed by several students by at least two groups of a class. They joined the club to study English grammar, speaking and exercise. However, after it was observed, today this activity had not be found because of unkown yet reason. It was indicated by no activity report and learning view around English area. Then after it had been confirmed, indeed it was still written in the annual program of *HMJ TBI* as agenda of English students to improve English skills but out of realization.

Another problematic view was no English library visiting. Based on its place which is easy to access and books shelf which provided English books for every subject, probably English library will be visited day by day to accompany students in learning. However, based on observation in five days the library was quite where few students read or borrow English books. After confirming to librarian who was also as the head of English study program, indeed the books here were free to be read and borrowed by English students for a week without payment. Additionally, the library was visited mostly by students who were writing graduate thesis and it was used to be rarely.

Lastly, last year recently IAIN Padangsidimpuan emerged „Tutorial English subject“ to English students of a chosen class. Doing this class, students were expected to have individual tutorial in four skills of English. However based on observation and clarification of students and lecturer, only four female students came to class to learn since first meeting until the rest of meeting before final examination. After lecturer treated students by saying that those who were not coming ten meetings of lecturing, students would not be passed. Then, three meetings left all students of class come joining learning.

Preliminary data that had shown situation English learning in IAIN Padangsidimpuan inspired to be studied in deep. Previously last year, one research was conducted by one of English lecturer there in Reading subject focus. Based on the result of the English subjects in the final semester, the learners“ achievement were far from the expectation that is 70% of the grade standard. Harida (2014) found that the students“ ability in understanding text was still low, they had many problems in understanding English texts, and they also could not apply the appropriate reading strategies in their reading activities. Their abilities were still low in reading comprehension based on their capability to apply reading strategies, actually reading strategies could increase students“ ability in reading comprehension.

Such situation in deed invited attention to investigate attitude of students towards their English learning. As it was known, studying attitude was important to do since attitudes, based on experts determined achievement and underachievement of learning English language. According to Dehbozorgi (2012) learning a language, there has an important issue that becomes as affective

variable. By dealing with Noels, et.al (2000: 35) it is agreed that in fact, attitude as affective variables, it is also as well as orientations, anxiety, and motivation which had been shown to be at least as important as language aptitude for predicting second language achievement. Also, it was supported by some scholars that there were seven areas which have been defined for affective factors encompassing acculturation, ego, personality, emotion, beliefs, attitude, and motivation (Dehbozorgi (2012)).

Apple & Musyken, (2005: 92) agreed social-psychological factors related strongly to achievement in second-language learning. This meant that the learner's attitudes towards the language they learn were believed to affect learning success. They also continuously said "Because the motivation to learn the second language is determined by attitudes". Inferring this statement, highly motivated learners learn the language better than that of those who oriented to others such as commercial, educational obligatory or other instrumental reasons.

Deriving from above scholars' definitive conclusions on attitude as one key element that was very crucial and influential in language learning especially in second and foreign language context, English students' attitudes towards the learning and teaching at IAIN Padangsidempuan had been investigated.

Many studies recently had been conducted that support this view empirically (Hosseini and Pourmandnia (2014), Rukh (2014), and al Mamun, et.al (2012)). For instance, priory Gardner et al. (1976) found positive correlations between motivational factors and the achievement in French of English Canadians. Comparison between the scores for integrative and instrumental motivation

showed that the first ones were consistently better predictors of second language proficiency.

In Asian context, Chihara and Oller (1978) conducted research on attitudes. They concluded that there was a relatively strong correlation between positive attitudes and success in learning English. The study did not, however, focus on different varieties of English or provide information about the sample on the basis of variables such as sex or age.

Another point is female and male differences in viewing language learning. There have been noted that female students were highly motivated than male students which resulted more commitment in learning (Dornyei: 2006). It was also in line with last issue that had been already observed in preliminary data above. There showed male students came into *English Tutorial* subject fewer than that of female students. This difference made interest in deep investigation.

These researches" recognition on the evidence that attitude was close related to language learning above, so it was important to figure out the above problematic issues in relation to the English students" attitude towards the English language teaching and learning at IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the above background of the study, research questions were directed as follows:

1. What are students" attitudes towards English language teaching?
2. What are students" attitudes towards English language learning?
3. What is role of students" gender in English language learning attitudes?

1.3 The Scope of the Study

The study that had been conducted in IAIN Padangsidempuan focused on the English students' attitude towards the English language teaching and learning at English study program in *Tarbiyah* and Teacher Training Faculty. Gathered data from the English students in the seventh semester consisted of two parts; attitudes towards English language teaching in terms of language teaching based Kumaravadivelu (2006) included language-centered method, learner-centered method and learning-centered method; attitudes towards English learning in terms of attitude towards long-term English learning, interest in communication and culture, perceptions about studying English in school context, images associated with English, learning activities, self-rated four language skills, self-reported academic English grade, exposure to English outside school, and identification of English role; and the role of gender on those attitudes.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The present research aimed at answering research questions above generally and research objectives specifically were in the following:

1. To investigate students' attitude towards the English language teaching
2. To investigate students' attitude towards the English language learning
3. To describe role of students' gender in English language learning attitudes.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

This research was significant in general to dimension of education and research literature. For specific, the research was expected to be significant for:

1. Teachers/ lecturers: knowing that attitude as learners' personal traits that is crucial and influential in English language learning, then teachers/ lecturers can make use of attitude to be more directed to improve the learners' behavior better in learning English.
2. Learners: considering that attitude can affect the English language learning, and then learners with their own awareness of it make controls of attitude to build positively view and value on English learning inclusively to three aspects of attitude to English language learning.
3. Researcher: having investigated for English language learning, then attitude towards attitudinal objects can be widened broadly to other related variables. This will provide a frontier to other researcher forwards to conduct research in various subjects of learning and other relevance.