

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background; (2) problems of the study; (3) objectives of the study; (4) significance of the study.

### 1.1. Background

Language is communication tool that can be used to interact with people. Brown (2007) states that language is a systematic instrument of communicating ideas or feeling by using sounds, gestures, or signs agreed. Lunenburg (2010) adds that communication is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. In conclusion, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication. One of the international languages is English.

English is one of the international languages in the world that should be mastered by people from many countries in the world to communicate each other. Sharifian said that English is used by millions of people around the world (as cited in Yusuf, 2015, p. 144-145). In short, it is widely known that English is an international language which has many interrelations in various aspects of people's life.

Being a global lingua franca, English is increasingly recognized as an indispensable requirements in various fields. Montgomery (2004) adds that it facilitates global exchange of information, development of knowledge, and prospects for career advancement and mobility. Agreeing on the importance of English as the language of science and business. Kruseman (2003) suggests that the medium of education should be English so that students will be

equipped for an international career in today's globalizing world. As a result of this view, a growing number of non-English speaking countries are adopting English as a medium of instruction at their institutions of higher education.

English is used in educational system in many countries, including in Indonesia. Abrar and Mukminin note that English takes special place in educational system in Indonesia as one of obligatory subjects that must be taught by the teachers to the students from elementary to university level (as cited in Marzulina, 2018, p. 64). According to the 1989 law on the Indonesian educational system gives English a place as the first foreign language among other foreign languages used in Indonesia such as German, Arabic, or Japanese. From explanation above, it can be concluded that English had become compulsory subject which should be taught by the teacher in many countries. .

The role of the teacher is very important to make teaching and learning process run well so that the students can learn English well. Dubin and Olsbtain (1987) note that in a natural setting, teachers usually are native speakers or near-native speakers of the language and can cope with various decision- making steps that deal with language use. On the other hand, in the foreign language setting, teachers are typically non-native speakers who may never have spent time in an English speaking country and therefore may find it little harder to make decisions of a native-like nature. In order to improve their language competence, they have to teach the target language as much as possible. In conclusion, classroom is an appropriate place for them to use the target language. The lack of English exposure for students can be minimized since they are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom.

The teaching and learning of English in Indonesia has been the center of attention among

researchers because of the burning issues, such as the lack of English exposure that requires solutions. Musthafa (2005) mentions that in learning Indonesian language and regional languages, Indonesian students are exposed naturally to the language since it is used in their social environment. The problem appears when they learn English because of the low intensity of exposure of it in society. Thus, The lack of English exposure for students can be minimized since they are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Nowadays, English as a medium of instruction becomes a phenomenon. Coleman (2006) names this phenomenon as Englishization of European higher education and categorizes the reasons which compel higher education institutions to offer programs and teach courses (CLIL), internationalization, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability and the market in international students'. Collins (2010) adds that it is therefore, inevitable that many parents, especially those from middle or upper class families, prefer an English-medium school for their children, both at the secondary and HE levels.

The use of English appears to be a fast moving worldwide shift, in non-anglophone countries, from English that taught as a foreign language (EFL) to English being the medium of instruction (EMI) for academic subjects. In teaching and learning subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences is not simple. The students use language to communicate and to understand mathematical acts, concepts, principles, problem solving. Zakaria and Aziz (2011) note that the use of English language as a medium of instructions in Mathematics may cause problems. It is because the change in the medium may create unfamiliarity to the concepts taught and may slow down or retard their sciences and mathematics learning. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that teaching and learning both mathematics and physics on the use of English as a medium of instruction may create unfamiliarity to the concepts taught.

In the preliminary study, I interviewed three students at SMP Paramount Palembang. One of students (RS) said that, *“I enjoy learning mathematics and sciences subject if the teacher and my classmates use English because it is more fun and interesting”* (personal communication, August 27, 2018). The other student (MR) supported that, *“Speaking English in the classroom motivates me in studying some subjects such as mathematics, physics, etc.”* (personal communication, August 27, 2018). Meanwhile, another student (TR) had different opinion, (TR) claimed that, *“It is hard for me to study mathematics and sciences subject if my teacher speak English because I am not familiar with some words in English”* (personal communication, August 27, 2018). In line with the interviewed result above, I also found similar result when I observed one class. The result of observation showed that most of students were interested with mathematics subject especially when their teacher asked some questions in English and played English video. In addition, the result of observation also showed that some students who did not understand the explanation from their teacher tended to keep silent during teaching and learning process. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of English as a medium of instruction in the classroom would give both positive and negative perceptions in learning mathematics and sciences subjects.

In addition, I chose SMP Paramount Palembang that was handled by the private sector. This school is one of schools in Palembang that uses bilingual language, *Bahasa Indonesia* and English in teaching and learning process. A Paramount School has the same subjects materials as the others junior high school. However, Mathematics My Pals (MP) and Science My Pals (MP) subjects use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

Studies have been undertaken to determine perceptions of students, teachers and parents concerning English-medium instruction and their perceptions of English as a foreign language. It

has been proven by previous study by Tarhan (2013). He conducted a study and the result of his study was that students, teachers and parents do not favor English-medium instruction at secondary education. In addition, the same field of study was conducted by Rahmadani (2016), he analyzed the students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction in English classroom. His study revealed that most of students at senior high school Palangkaraya give positive perception of EMI dominantly applied by the English teacher in the teaching of English subject.

From the explanation above, I am interested in investigating students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction on the eighth grade students at SMP Paramount Palembang.

## **1.2. Problems of the Study**

The problems of this study are formulated in the following questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions on the use of English as a medium of instruction at SMP Paramount Palembang?

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

From the problems above, the objectives of the study are:

1. to investigate the students' perceptions on the use of English as a medium of instruction at SMP Paramount Palembang.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study are expected to give benefits to the following parties:

- (1) To the School

The result of this study is expected to know the students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction and can provide the policy for what students need.

(2) To the Teacher

The result of this study is expected to give the benefits for the teacher. It can be improved the quality of the students.

(3) To the writer

The result of this study is expected to give the benefits for the writer, so she could increase her knowledge and expand her experience by doing this research

(4) To the next reseacher

This study is expected to provide useful information for the next researcher who wants to have similar research.