

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background of the study; (2) problem of the study; (3) objective of the study; and (4) significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching profession is the oldest profession in the world and now is entering another new era. Brown (2007) defines teaching as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, give instruction, guide in study something, give knowledge, cause to understand. Good teaching is indicated by the effectiveness of teaching behaviors thus it becomes foundation for development of expert teacher, while successful teaching is marked by the achievement of students. Moreover, someone who has a profession as a teacher is required to have a professional mandate (Whitty, 2000). By this way, the teacher can teach students well and can improve students' achievement in learning English.

Students' academic achievement is defined by student's ability in solving problems, which can be measured by written test. It is claimed by a research study from Coetzee (2011) that academic achievement indicates the numerical score of student's knowledge. While, a research study from Bacon (2011) claimed that academic achievement refers to standardized test scores, grades, and overall academic ability and performance outcomes. Therefore, student's academic

achievement refers to the grades obtain by students upon accomplishing the courses in their study.

In teaching English, the role of teacher is very important to make teaching and learning process run well. It was supported by Day and Sammons (2014) note that a person who holds the key to success of the students in learning something such as science, language, or others is a teacher. Mann (2005) adds that the English language teacher needs to be aware of the teaching methods and techniques needed for successful teaching and a good teacher is also supposed to be very competent in English. It can be concluded that the teacher needs to be aware of their quality in teaching to make the teaching and learning process well.

From the statement above, teacher of English should be professional. In accordance with Whitty (2000), teaching profession should have a professional mandate to act on behalf of the state in the best interest of its students. Several countries such as Japan, Korea, and Australia present the urgency of professional development to improve education and the teaching and learning activities (Mizuno, 2010). Similarly, Zhang (2015) adds that most countries using English and put great emphasis on the professional development of English teacher's ability because language teachers play an important role in the whole language teaching process. It is supported by Tanang and Abu (2014), who state that the students learning achievement depends on the readiness of teachers to do learning activities which are supported by teacher's knowledge, skills, attitude, and practice, that involve in professional development. From the definition above, it

can be concluded that professional development is an oriented-factor for students' outcomes.

Teachers need professional development to cope with daily teaching problems and the diversity of students in the classroom. Professional development is all teachers' responsibility as professional teachers regardless of what discipline they teach. Language teachers' professional development is not just about imposing fresh language teaching theories, methodologies, and teaching material on teachers but also a process of refreshing and reshaping teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs, morals, practices and reflection (Guan & Huang, 2013). Moreover, Tanang and Abu (2014) added that professional development helps teachers to construct their lifelong learning to achieve better achievement. Therefore, teachers are expected to have better understanding about the needs of every students and able to improve the quality and achievement of educational goals.

Professional development might give improvement for the ability and quality of teachers in teaching. Professional development is the best choice of teacher to be able to make their performance better and can raise the students' achievement (Mizell, 2010). According to Richards and Farrel (2005), the characteristics of professional development of teacher identify as 1) subject-matter knowledge; the teacher required to be able to increase their knowledge of basic disciplines in teaching languages based on the professional knowledge of language, 2) pedagogical expertise; the teacher must be able to master and add insight about teaching and can improve the ability to be able to teach the students

with variety of different ages, 3) self-awareness; teacher aware of themselves and their own abilities in teaching about material, values, and basic principles of an educator, 4) understanding of students; teacher be able to guide the students to understand the lesson, be able to explore the potential of the students, understand learning style that can make the students more interested in learning, be able to overcome problem faced by the students during learning and can provide problem solving for the obstacles that faced by the students, 5) understand of curriculum and subject-matter; teacher deep knowledge about the curriculum and subject-matter so that they can teach well, 6) career advancement; teacher enhance the knowledge and expertise needed to advance a career. Therefore, the teacher can help the students learn and improve their abilities at the highest level.

However, there are some problems faced by teachers' professional development in English Language Teaching. Richard and Farrel (2005) assume that professional development is more vital than teacher college training since in-service professional development helps teachers find practical solutions for problems they actually face. Since English teachers always encounter classroom troubles, they need to have opportunities of ongoing professional development. Additionally, many people may not be aware of their local school system's methods for improving teaching and student learning. Professional development is the only strategy school systems have to strengthen educators' performance levels. Professional development is also the only way educators can learn so that they are able to better their performance and raise student achievement (Mizell, 2010). So,

it is critical to pay attention that teachers should be aware that professional development is useful for teachers' professional growth.

In relation to these problems, a preliminary study was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang by using observation and informal interview. Based on the informal interview, it was found that there were two teachers of English who have a low sense of awareness in teaching students. This problem impact students' achievement because of the teacher's lack of knowledge and of understanding about how to expand their ability which makes them unable to find the students' needs. Teachers' professional development may play an important role in how teachers teach, thus effecting students' achievement and also teachers' effectiveness. It is supported by a teacher of English at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang who said that teachers' professional development is useful for teachers' professional growth and students' achievement. Ideally, teachers should be aware of their needs to develop professionally (personal communication, February 5, 2019).

Related studies have been undertaken to find out teacher professional development in English Language Teaching. Hartono (2015) found that teachers were adequately aware of teacher professional development although they had limited awareness to certain activities familiar to them. There was a difference in their perceived understanding of professional development and they had different conceptualizations of it. In addition, Alfaki (2014) found that being a professionally developed teacher means that a teacher was aware of how to motivate his or her students because in teaching and learning, motivation played a

great role and also teachers had their own role to play in their professional development along with the role to be played by the government. So, both teachers themselves and the government had complementary parts to carry out in teacher professional development. All of those studies revealed that teachers are always in the situation expecting them to utilize themselves with information and capability to access current theories and practices in teaching. Thus, as far as the identity as a teacher, professional development is a must to do.

Up to this point, the researcher feel that it is very important to find out teachers' perceptions towards teachers' professional development in English Language Teaching. Therefore, a research was conducted entitled is **“Teachers’ Professional Development in English Language Teaching at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang”**.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Based on the background, the research problem of this study was formulated as: “What were EFL teachers’ perceptions towards teachers’ professional development at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang”?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the research question above, the objective of this study was to find out the EFL teachers’ perceptions towards teachers’ professional development at MTs Negeri 1 Palembang.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study is expected to provide some significances for some parties. This research is expected to have both theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, this research gives positive contribution in education especially for English teacher. Practically, it is expected to be beneficial for those dealing with professional development in English Language Teaching.

1. For the school

This research is expected to be useful in improve the English teaching qualities in the school as an evaluation in teaching and learning process.

2. For teachers

This research is expected to be a source of material of how a teacher must be professional especially in the teaching process.

3. For students

This research is expected to increase learning achievement of students in the learning process.

4. For other researchers

This research is expected to be a source of material in conducting similar studies for further study. Therefore, through this research, it is expected that this study contributes as references for other researchers to enrich their resources.

5. For the researcher

By doing this research, I can enrich my knowledge about how to conduct a qualitative research especially about teachers' professional development in English Language Teaching and I hope this research will help me in the future.