

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Language is the main tool for interaction. People need and use language to deliver a message or communicate in daily life. It is usually used to make such a connection among people and they can communicate easily when they use language. Conversely, the concept of language, people use language to communicate, share ideas, express things or feelings, and people can share something in written or oral communication that allows people around the world to interact and connect with one another (Putra & Marzulina, 2015, p.186). It means that, people cannot communicate and share ideas or information with each other without using language.

Today, in the era of globalization, many languages can be used to interact or communicate. People may use more than one language to communicate, the important language is English. In most of countries, English is used as the first language, second language, or foreign language, because English is one of the international and global languages in the world. People who have various cultures, languages, and countries will use English to connect with each other. It supported

by Crystal (2003), English has two types to make English as a global language. Firstly, the country can use English as the main language and secondly, the country can use English as a second language. In addition, English is used in various fields such as education, science, economics, art, information and technology, politics and so on. In shortly, English is basically a very important position in every aspect of human life.

In Indonesia, English is an international language and its position as a foreign language. 101 countries and 10 organizations that use English as a formal language and around 1,000 million users. English proficiency in Indonesia is in a low position at number 34 of 40 countries that cannot speak in English (EPI, 2013). In addition, English as a foreign language taught in school almost from elementary school to university. It means, students have experience and knowledge in school because schools have an important role to grow and build students' skills and abilities. Further more, many places such as schools and private institutions that provide services to develop skills and teach English as motivation in the teaching and learning process. As an example, some institutions in Indonesia require teachers and students to speak English during the learning process. Furthermore, students start learning English since in playgroup. In reality, this is considered a difficult subject for Indonesian students. Because of that, students need to study hard and try to be intelligent in English.

English language proficiency is the ability of an individual to communicate effectively in English. In today's world, where the medium of instruction in almost every university is English, this is a necessary skill. Thus,

almost every institution requires non –native English speaking students to undergo either the TOEFL or IELETS test to assess the level of their English proficiency as students who have difficulty in the English language skills may not function well in academics and communication. Also, students, especially enrolled in scientific and technical courses, need a strong knowledge of English to grasp the underlying concepts. Therefore, English can be a problem for a huge population of non-native English students, especially those who study at international universities.

Proficiency of language is tested by measuring the ability of an individual's language use and communication skills in the learned language (Yuyun et al., 2018, p. 2). In Indonesia, students who are non-native speakers and have been qualified to attend an English-medium university must prove their proficiency in English to pursue their studies. Therefore, students are given options to prove their proficiency by taking Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Non-native English speaking students consider having English language proficiency as an educational goal, which is the academic achievement. To be a language proficient, students not only fluency but accuracy as well, and that can be considered as educational achievement. Therefore, they get to feel more confident and more belonging because of their achievement and proficiency, which lead them to be more involved in the society.

Some important factors that affect English proficiency such as intelligence, motivation, learning strategy, learning style, physical condition,

environment condition, and language aptitude. However, most experts believe if language aptitude plays the more important role in teaching and learning process. It is supported by Woytak (1998), language aptitude is learnt a foreign language actually innate but can be developed over the time. In addition, according to some authors argue that aptitude is an "umbrella term" for a set of cognitive skills and capacities, such as working memory or phonological coding/decoding which goes beyond the skills, usually measured to determine the linguistic aptitude (Teepen, 2014, p. 2). the components in language aptitude include phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, and language inductive ability. This clearly shows us that an individual difference aspect that influences the result of their language learning.

To learn new language or foreign language students need aptitude. However, language aptitude has influences in the teaching process and to reach success language skill in a learning process. In addition, language aptitude is the factor that encourages students to communicate by using the language they learn as a target language and obtain crucial input for language acquisition (Tellier, 2013, p. 2). It means that the students' language aptitude can promote successful language learning and assist them to reach high English learning achievement. Based on this reason, it is very important to understand the relationship between language aptitude and achievement in learning English, so that the teachers especially the teachers of English may understand their students well and be able to expand more suitable and specific strategy of learning for the students themselves and assist them to reach what is expected will reach education system.

Based on the informal interview with the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang who have taken all the language aptitude test, it was found that some of them were not satisfied with their aptitude. However, some students have low motivation to learn English, some students did not enjoy when learning English, and the important object is the students were not aware of their language aptitude or abilities in learning a new language. So, it is still crucial to concern on this issue.

Regarding to the problems above, studies have been undertaken to investigate the correlation between students' language aptitude and English achievement. Rista (2014) found that students have good score in language aptitude also have good score in English achievement. It means that, language aptitude influenced students achievement in learning English.

However, it is the main issue to investigate the capability of the students in learning English and students proficiency of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Regarding to the phenomena in the background of problems, the title of my research is *The Correlation between Language Aptitude and English Proficiency of the Undergraduate EFL Students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang*.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background the research questions are:

1. Was there any significant correlation between each category of language aptitude and English proficiency of the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?
2. Did language aptitude significantly influence English proficiency of the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problems, the research objectives are:

1. Whether or not there was any correlation between each category of language aptitude and English proficiency of the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.
2. To know if language aptitude significantly influenced English proficiency of the undergraduate EFL students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

From this study, I hope this study can give some pieces of information in the development of language teaching and learning process, especially in comprehension the students' language aptitude relating to the students' English proficiency. To get success in learning, learners need to be conscious of their capability as a power to reach the purpose of learning. Another key point, the outcome of this research can be useful for English teachers, especially in developing materials and to aid learners to reach high English proficiency, generally, and it will be useful for English lecturer of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Besides that, my research findings are expected to be very meaningful, especially for me as a novice researcher learning how to conduct a research. This research is a reference for the sequently researcher. The first, the result of the study may give contribution to other researchers as the basis or additional information for their further research. The second, to find out information if language aptitude as a factor that can influence the student's success or failure in English proficiency.