

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is used as a communication tool in people's daily life. Finch (2003) states that language is a system of communication used by certain particular individuals or communities in conveying their thoughts and feelings in various activities in daily life. Furthermore, Marzulina (2018) adds that language means a communication tool that people use to make it easier for them to interact or connect each other. From the definition above, it can be concluded that people use language to deliver their ideas and feelings orally or written communication which enables them to interact each other.

English is one of the languages that is used by people and it had been placed in globalization as the international language in the world. Mauranen and Ranta (2009) state that English has been known as a lingua franca (ELF) which refers to the use of the English language as an international language used by people around the world in various aspects of life such as economic, business, and cultural. Herlina & Holandyah (2016) also add that people from different countries use English as their international language to communicate and exchange knowledge with others.

In conclusion, it is widely known that English is an international language and it has many interrelations various aspects of people's life.

English is very popular and it takes special place in educational system in many countries, including Indonesia. Hamra and Syatriana (2010) claim that to make the students of Indonesia interact easily with other people from various countries, the schools are required them to learn English from elementary to high school. Abrar and Mukminin also add that English takes special place in educational system in Indonesia as one of compulsory subjects that must be taught by the teachers to the students from elementary to university level (as cited in Marzulina, 2018, p. 64). Furthermore, 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. In short, English had become the obligatory subject that must be taught by the teachers 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. 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. Marzano (2003) also states that the most important role of a teacher in teaching and learning process is classroom manager. Thus, it could be concluded that the most influential action of teacher in teaching and learning process is managing the classroom.

Teacher should be able to have a good classroom management. Brown (2001) claims that classroom management refers to the techniques that teachers use to keep the students organized, orderly, focused and productive during a class, as a consequence teachers must have knowledge of classroom management. He also adds

that it also includes maintaining classroom discipline such as addressing misbehavior and giving rewards and punishment. Nunan (2000) adds that teachers have to know about classroom management properly, since it influences the teachers to build and maintain workable system in the classroom. Thus, effective teaching and learning process cannot take place in poorly managed classrooms.

Classroom management mastery in teaching and learning process is influenced by the class size. Wilson (2002) defines that class size refers to the number of students in a given classroom whether it is small or large. Additionally, class size will influence the activities in teaching and learning process. Brown (2009) states that class size will affect teaching and learning activities, such as on classroom management and assessment. Wilson (2006) also adds that different type of class sizes will also have different impacts on teaching. He states that all students who are in a small class will understand the material easily because the teachers can transfer their knowledge to the students one by one. On the other hand, teachers will face many challenges in teaching large class such as classroom management, student control and marking, planning and assessment. In short, the number of students in small and large classes can challenge the teachers in their classroom management and assessment. Based on explanations above, it can be concluded that large class is considered as one of the biggest challenges faced by teacher in the classroom.

Nowadays, large classes become a universal phenomenon. Brown (2001) affirms that the appropriate language classes should have twelve students. It means that a class which consists of more than twelve students is considered as a large class. Haddad (2015) adds that the number of more than 25 students taught by one teacher is considered large class. Based on definitions above, it can be concluded

that large class is the class situation where the number of students are more than twenty five students per one teacher.

Many teachers assumed that large classes bring many difficulties in teaching and learning process. Hayes (1997) states that the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching large classes are divided into five parts: (1) discomfort, (2) control, (3) individual attention, (4) evaluation and (5) learning effectiveness. Brown (2001) also adds there are four challenges that commonly present in teaching large classes: (1) students' proficiency and ability, (2) teachers' and students' attention, (3) students' opportunities, and (4) teachers' feedback. In short, large classes are the major problem in some schools faced by the teachers in teaching and learning process.

In the preliminary study, I interviewed one teacher of English at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju. Teacher of English (YS) said that, *“Large classes give both positive and negative impact in teaching and learning. Large classes can encourage the students to create the new knowledge by sharing and exchanging their ideas. Furthermore, it is hard to control the students in teaching large classes because the students often make a noise in teaching and learning activity”* (personal communication, July 9, 2018). In line with the interview result above, I also found similar result when I observed the class. The result of observation showed that some students tended to make loud noise especially if they were seated in back seat during teaching and learning process. In addition, they also often asked permission to leave the class. The results above showed that large classes tended to have negative impacts rather than positive impacts in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the negative impacts could challenge the teachers in teaching large classes.

Studies have been undertaken to investigate the impact of large classes in English teaching and learning process. It has been proven by previous study by Epri (2016), he conducted a study on the impact of large classes. The result of his study was that large classes bring many negative impacts to both of the teacher and student. In addition, the same field of study was conducted by Hadi and Arante (2015), they analyzed the English teachers' perception through teaching large classes. Their study revealed seven challenges which the teachers encountered when they were teaching English in large classes.

Based on the explanations above, I was interested in investigating about English teachers' perceptions on the challenges in teaching large classes at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of this study are formulated in the questions:

1. What are the English teachers' perceptions on the challenges in teaching large classes at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju?
2. How do the teachers of English at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju cope with the challenges of large classes?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

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

1. To know the English teachers' perceptions on the challenges in teaching large classes at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju.

2. To provide the strategies of coping with the challenges in teaching large classes at MTs Patra Mandiri Plaju.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to be useful for the school as a reference in analyzing which class size is more appropriate, so the teaching and learning process will be more effective. It is also hoped that the results of this study can be as a feedback for junior high school English teachers to improve quality of teaching and learning process by considering both appropriate strategies and classroom management. Further, the results of this study will add my knowledge about teaching large classes and challenges to be faced. Finally, this study is expected to provide useful information for the next researchers who want to have similar research.

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