

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

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 require solutions. One of the problems is lack of English exposure in the society. English has been taught as a foreign language subject in any educational levels in Indonesia. Musthafa (2005: 2) 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. This argument is in accordance with what Hariyanto (1997: 111) said that some students are successful in speaking English when they are still going to school. Then, when they have graduated, the ability soon vanishes as they hardly get exposures to English. Dubin and Olsbain (1987: 30) say 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 need to

use the target language as much as possible. In this case, 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.

In relation to the use of English in the classroom, Nunan (1999: 87) says that students in foreign language classrooms are rarely encouraged to make use of their language skills in the real world. The only practice they have is in class. This, of course, is not surprising in foreign language contexts in which opportunities to use the language is limited. His statement indicates that teacher, as a language model, should expose English as much as possible. Therefore, the students have a great opportunity to imitate and mime (see Broughton, et al.: 1980) and finally they can produce English as the target language being taught in a classroom.

The above statement is related to what Brown (1980: 61) says that teachers might do well to be as deliberate, but meaningful, in his communication with students as the parent is to the child, since input is as important to the ESL/EFL learner as it is to the first language learner. Moreover, that input should also foster meaningful communication. Furthermore, Harmer (2002: 67) also explains that when teachers use their voice to produce language, it means that they have modeled the language. This thing is a basic and important teaching skill that may influence students' ability and achievement in English.

In accordance with all the arguments above, a big question on students' perception then appears. Although the teachers of English produce the target

language in classrooms a lot, it means nothing if the students have negative perception on it. As Brown (1984: 9) mentions that a strategy used by a teacher in teaching will build students' perception on the subject, strategy and the teacher. Related to Brown argument, Harmer (2002: 128) writes that students generally respect teachers who show their knowledge of the subject. A teacher who uses English as a medium of instruction while teaching English shows that he or she is professional and has a good knowledge in the subject being taught. Meanwhile, Richards et al. (1992: 268-269) describe that perception is the recognition and understanding of events, objects, and stimuli by sense (sight, hearing, touch, etc.). Moreover, Baron (1995: 90) mentions that perception is the process through selecting, organizing, and interpreting input from our sensory receptors.

Finally, in implementing their knowledge to their students, teachers have their own style. Based on the informal interview with the headmaster of one public senior high school and some students there, it was concluded that some teachers tended to use English as a medium of instruction while others used Indonesian.

Based on the above explanation, this study were concerned with the students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction used by the English teachers in the classrooms and its influences to the classroom interaction.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the above background, this research attempts to address the following question:

- a. What are the students' perceptions on the use of English as a medium of instruction by their teacher in the classroom?
- b. Does the use of English as a medium of instruction influence the classroom interactions?

1.3 The Purposes of the Research

In accordance with the research questions above, the purposes of this research are:

- a. to investigate the students' perceptions on the use of English as a medium of instruction by their teacher in the classroom.
- b. to identify whether the use of English as a medium of instruction influence classroom interaction.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

Related to the research questions and the purposes of them, this study was supposed to find out the students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction by their teacher in the classroom, and the influences of using English as a medium of instruction to classroom interactions.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

The findings of this thesis are expected to be able to:

1. Share good inputs to English teachers about the students' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction while teaching English in the classroom run and its influences to the classroom interaction.
2. Contribute valuable information to local government, especially in Tanjungpandan Belitung, to improve the English teachers' ability by giving them many chances to continue their study to higher educational institutions.
3. Give some additional information to anyone who is interested in investigating the same area of study.