Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

There are many languages in this world and English is one of them. Since English is an international language that is widely used, it has become an important language that should be mastered in this globalization era. In order to do that, it will need a lot of efforts for some students who want to develop their English language skill. In Indonesia, students have already learned English from elementary school, and some, even from kindergarten level. However, English is a foreign language in Indonesia not a second one. Therefore, it is difficult for students in Indonesia to communicate in English. Moreover, in Indonesia, some of the teachers still do the traditional method which makes the teacher the center of the teaching and learning in the classroom.

Dickinson (1987:9) states that in a traditionally teacher-led class, the teacher does all the tasks of the class management including determining learning goals, developing materials, presenting the materials to the learners through the teaching technique. The teacher also decides to imply, keep records, evaluate the progress, decide and give tasks to the learners, arrange the grouping, asses the achievement, and so on. In that condition, the learners take a passive role in the teaching and learning process. Students need to get more input if they want to improve their English. They should

not only get the skill and knowledge inside the classroom, but also outside the classroom. The students should be more active and try to learn independently so that they can gain better skills.

Sinclair as cited in Dunn (2005:6) states that learning is "what the student does" not "what the teacher does", so this means putting the student at the center of the process. Dickinson (1987) stresses thus, learners have more freedom and choices concerning their own learning and less control from the teachers. Therefore, students need a place where they can learn independently to make them the center in the learning process.

Considering this need, the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University (hence forth, WMSCU) established a Self-Access Center. SAC (Self-Access Center) is a place for students to study independently. In the SAC, as the name suggests, the students are expected to learn and practice English skills and components by themselves because the SAC provides the materials for speaking, reading, listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The SAC is more focused on grammar materials. The students can find grammar materials at self-access materials in the boxes, books, and materials which are set for independent study to support Structure and Intensive Course classes. Besides the materials, there are other facilities such as audio visual room, movie room, and tutorial room. There are also counselors who can help the students if the latter have some difficulties.

The SAC opens at 9:00 am – 15:00 pm on Monday – Friday. On Saturday, it opens at 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Learning at the SAC is compulsory for doing structure and independent study, however, there are some students who do not want to do the assignments. They complain that there are too many assignments that they have to do. Although the SAC is provided to help students to improve their English proviency, it seems that not all of them perceive it positively.

Realizing that there are different opinions about the SAC and reasons why the students use it, the writer is interested in finding out more about their perception. Therefore, the writer decides to conduct a study entitled "The English Department Students' Perception on the Self-Access Center in Widya Mandala Catholic University"

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The writer conducted a study in order to answer these following questions:

Major problem:

-What are the perceptions of theEnglish Department students of WMCU Surabaya on the existence of the Self-Access Center?

The problem is elaborated into the following minor problems:

a. What are the students' opinions about the atmosphere at the SAC?

b. What are the students' opinions about the materials at the SAC?

c. What are the students' opinions about the facilities at the SAC?

d. What are the students' opinions about the tutorial program at the SAC?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

This research is to study the English Department students' perceptions of the SAC, which covers their opinions:

a. The atmosphere at the SAC,

b. The materials provided by SAC,

c. The facilities provided by the SAC, and

d. The tutorial program in the SAC.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give some contributions or inputs to the Self Access Center in helping students to be more autonomous and successful in their study. Hopefully, the result of this study can give significant inputs to the English Department whether SAC succeeds in improving the students' English mastery or inquiring improvements.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is students' perceptions about the SAC. The respondents are the English Department students of WMCU of the year 2011th-2013th. Since the purpose of this study is only focused to the atmosphere, tutorial program, facilities and materials at the SAC, the writer will not discuss anything related to other subjects.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation, it is necessary to define the key terms used in this study

Perception : The awareness or apprehension of things by sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste (Tim Crane, 2011).

A Self-Access Centre : A facility which consists of a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and support), usually located in one place, and is designed to accommodate learners of different levels, goals, styles and interests (Cotterall&Reinders, 2001).

Independent study : Learning a language through the use of a self-contained learning environment which provides an independent study program with readily accessible materials, makes available a form of help, either through answer keys or through counseling, and possibly offers the latest technology.

(Dickinson, 1987)

1.7 Organization of the Study

The research consists of five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction. Chapter II reviews the theories of the study. Chapter III presents the research method. Chapter IV consists of data analysis and findings, and the last chapter, chapter V, presents the conclusion and suggestions.