

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English has become increasingly important due to its status as an international language. In Indonesia, English is taught in most elementary schools. A few years ago, most schools offered English as one of the extracurricular activities. However, nowadays English is included in the school curriculum. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language; it is not used in daily interactions. Therefore, many students consider English a challenging subject.

Many factors determine an individual's success in learning a foreign language, one of which is parental attitude grouped into social factors (Ellis, 1994). Since parents are the closest individuals to children, parents have a great influence on them. Oskamp (as cited by Gardner, 1985) suggests that parents have a major influence on children's attitude in addition to peers and media. Gardner (1985) further points out that parents definitely affect their children's language acquisition. In his research, he investigated the importance of parental influence by observing parents' decision to enroll their children in a French program. Gardner found out that parents who opposed to the immersion program did not enroll their children. This means that parents were the decision makers in the family and that

parental attitude towards a certain issue has a major influence on their children's lives.

Watson and Lindgren (1979) state that parents have become the children's important companion since they are infants. Parents are the caregivers and role models for their children. Children follow their parents in terms of action and the way they react to something. Parents' opinions will be their measuring rod. Stewart and Friedman (1987) support the importance of parents by stating that parents are the ruler of the family. They are the ones who set the regulation in the family and choose their children's education.

In order to help their children overcome their difficulties in learning English, many parents help their children when they study. Furthermore, many parents even hire private tutors to give their children reinforcement for different subject matters including English.

Many scholars have done extensive studies on parental attitude but they focused on issues such as immersion program and English language teaching in general. Craig (1996) has conducted the research on parents' attitude towards an immersion program in America. The findings of her study reveal that the purpose of administering questionnaire to parents is to evaluate the immersion program. She considers it important because parent's role is very important. Parents who are in favor of this program will indirectly support it by registering their children.

Dang (2007) says that private tutoring is a widespread phenomenon in developing countries. In his research, he found that private tutoring complements formal education and becomes a need for a lot of people. The same thing happens in Singapore, parents also hire private tutors to improve their children's achievement at school. With the hope that after having private tutoring, the children will understand more and get better marks than those who do not hire private tutors. They even set aside extra budget to hire tutors. Furthermore, Cheo and Quah also points out that spending time with private tutors can have a negative effect for the children's grade. (Cheo & Quah, 2005). This controversy is interesting to look at but they suggest one important issue, namely parental attitude. Both authors suggest that parental attitude is a key factor in children's education. In addition, private tutoring is a very Asian phenomenon. It is commonly seen in Asian country and rarely found in America, Europe or Australia.

Parents also hire private tutors in Indonesia. They hire tutors to help their children to study in order to get better grade. Some parents hire professional teacher, but some of them also hire university students as their children's tutors. In English Department, Faculty of Letters of UNIKA Soegijapranata, there are many students who are interested in teaching. They give private English course for individuals, mostly students in elementary and junior/senior schools. Even though these private tutors have not graduated from college, parents trust their children's education to them.

However, Alip (2002) presents a different argument. In his article *English Letters Graduates, Don't Teach!* He argues that the graduates of English department are not ready to teach yet. He based his argument on the fact that no teaching courses are offered by the English department in which he studied. It is obviously very different from Faculty of Letters in UNIKA Soegijapranata Catholic University where teaching courses are offered. Regardless of the fact that some English tutors are considered not well-prepared, they provide services that many parents look for, to give reinforcement and enrichment.

Parents' attitude is an important issue since it will affect their children's attitude too. Thus, this research is made to find out parents' attitudes toward English private tutoring. In this research, questionnaires as the tool to collect data are distributed to the parents who are hiring Faculty of Letter's students as their children's English private tutors.

1.2 Field of the study

This study is within the domain of Second Language Acquisition.

1.3 Scope of the study

The scope of this study is Second Language Acquisition. It is specialised in parents' attitude. This study investigated the parental attitude towards

English private tutoring which is performed by students from English Department, Faculty of Letter of Soegijapranata Catholic University

1.4 Problem formulation

The study addressed the following question:

- What is the parents' attitude towards English private tutoring?

1.5 Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to find out parents' attitude towards English private tutoring.

1.6 Significance of the study

The writer hopes that the findings of the study will be useful to understand the parental attitude towards English private tutoring. In addition, the findings will be useful to inform students at the Faculty of Letters who work as part-time English private tutors.

1.7 Definitions of terms

There are several terms that will be commonly used:

- a. Attitude

An attitude is a response toward a particular object. The object can be person, institution, or rule and behavior. The response could be positive or negative.

b. Tutoring

Tutoring is a non-formal process of learning which is done by teachers and the students. Tutoring can be in the form of group or private (one on one).

