

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. EFL Learning in Indonesia

Unlike in neighboring countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, where English is used as a second language, English in Indonesia is more likely to be taught and learned as a foreign language (Sulistiyo, 2016, p. 4). English as a foreign language means learning and teaching English occurs mostly in classrooms, rather than as daily communication. As Al-oglah, (2018) claimed if a language is taught in a controlled setting such as a classroom and not spoken by the community, then this language would be considered a foreign language.

English in Indonesia has also become one of the subjects that every student has to learn from junior high school (*SMP, MTS*) to senior high school (*SMA, SMK, MA*). It is based on the amendment of the 2013 Indonesian English curriculum that came into effect in 2014, in which English subjects in Primary Schools are eliminated, Panggabean, (2015). As a foreign language, many students think that English is the most difficult subject, even more than other subjects (Panggabean, 2015, p. 35).

Facing this problem, many researchers began conducting research to find success in learning and teaching English as a foreign language. Erdem, (2018) claimed that there are numerous factors affecting the process of teaching and learning a foreign language such as characteristics of instructors, learning materials, educational requirements, and so on;

however, learners should be paid special attention as they are the main actors of this process. Liando, (2009) claimed that in Indonesia, there are several factors that affect success in learning English such as; the family, teachers, and the individual playing an important role in supporting the learners so they can succeed in English language learning. Moreover, Jimenez, (2018) stated that students' interests, and attitudes, are the reasons for the success of learning the language in the classroom.

B. Students' Perception of English Learning in EFL Context

Students' perception is a cognitive process that they use to monitor, and recognize event objects with their certain meanings and their certain expectations. As Sarkol, K. (2016) claimed that students' perception general definition can be understood as students' ability to see, hear, feel and present or understand what they feel about their environment and their social life physically and mentality. In addition (Adediwura, A., & Tayo, B, 2007 p.166) said students' perceptions may be energized by both present and past experiences, individual attitudes at a particular moment, the physical state of the sense organ, the interest of the person, the level of attention, and the interpretation given to the perception. For this reason, numerous studies have been conducted in the field of the students' perceptions of learning English in the EFL context in various countries such as: Japan, Bulgaria, and Indonesia.

In Japanese, a research conducted by Takeshita, (2014) *Japanese Students' Perception of the English Language and Its Study*, focused on observing closely the attitude and perception of Japanese college students toward the English language, a study was conducted at Toyo Eiwa University, a women's university in Yokohama, Japan. The result shows some characteristics of Japanese female students who are not very good at English but are interested in learning the language for future use.

While in Bulgaria, research conducted by Keskinova & Katsarska, (2011) on *Student perceptions of English studies in Bulgaria*, focused on English Studies (ES) from the point of view of students at various levels of university programs. This research used a comprehensive questionnaire survey conducted among English Studies students in three Bulgarian universities. The result showed data about (a) the ES student constituency; (b) student attitudes toward the discipline and program in the course of engaging with them; and (c) student expectations at the points of entry and departure in terms of content, delivery, interests, and career aspirations.

In Indonesia, a research conducted by Zulfikar, T., Dahliana, S., & Sari, R, A. (2019) *Exploration of English Students' Attitude towards English Learning*. The research focus of the study was to discover students' beliefs in English, and to understand students' attitudes, feelings, and behavior in learning English, the participants are six students selected purposely to participate in an interview session. The results showed that the students had three positive points in behavioral attitude; the students'

attention during learning English, and their positive participation during the English learning. In sum, it can be said that English Department students were found to have positive attitudes toward learning English.