

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

English is not a new thing to learn these days, for almost every country in the world is speaking English as their first language. Jaekeun (2014) stated that English is the most common language spoken by many countries around the world. Similarly, data of World Amanac (2008) shows that English is spoken by 50 countries and 514 million people worldwide. As global language and a tool to communicate in the recent era, the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored (Sozdinler, 2008). Consequently, it is needed in almost every aspect of life and plays a major role in countless sectors including medicine, engineering and education.

English become one of compulsory subjects in most school in Indonesia. It is generally taught from the junior high school grade up to the first year of university or college. It is based on the decree No.96/1967 stated by the Indonesia Minister of Education and Culture that “English is the first foreign language taught in Indonesia from the first year of junior high school to university”. In this case, it is said that English is the first foreign language (Halim, 1981: 8).

English can be learned anywhere and anytime, since it becomes the international language. Hence, most developed countries tend to have certain institution which served English as their product of learning. Indonesia is one of non-native countries which provide countless learning programs for pupils in certain education institutions for a long time. Indeed, Indonesia has started its educational international cooperation with other countries shortly after its proclamation of independence. According to Indonesia Ministry of Education (2010), International cooperation is mainly done with the associate countries. Recently, Indonesia has established various forms of international cooperation with at least 162 countries on five continents; including advance country such as United States of America, Australia, Japan, Egypt and United Kingdom. These

programs can be easily found and been implemented by many schools and universities in Indonesia such as International student program and student exchange. Indonesia has abroad institution partners to carry out these programs. The programs are good to expand the education system in Indonesia and build up a high-quality relationship with other country in all regions of the world.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) is one of universities which has implemented international program for relatively long time. Solopos (2012) reported that Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta has an agreement with other countries such as Jordan, Korea, Sudan, Palestine, Thailand and Madagascar as the partners in their international program. Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta has international class for ten majors, they are: Math Education, Biology Education, Accounting, Communications Science, Informatics, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Nursing and Islamic Education in Arabic (<http://web.ums.ac.id>). Jordan, Korean, Sudan, Madagascar and Palestine regularly studied in engineering or communication science major, meanwhile Thailand students typically studied in Teacher Training Education major.

While international students are coming in a relatively large number, very little is known about their nature of experience studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Therefore, it is interesting to know how is international student life's in the university take place. Since international students are coming from different country, they bring different custom, value and culture with them. Hence, investigating their academic experience during their study in Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta will be worth to conduct.

Having had numerous differences, obviously they need more time to adjust Indonesia's culture, custom even the value. For this reason, their academic experience will be critical aspects to investigate since there was not been any research of this issue in Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The current study will use student's personal perspectives as the object of this study.

Phenomenology focus on the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of

perceiving (Van Manen, 1990). Traditionally, phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. The motivation behind the phenomenological approach is to light up the particular phenomena and identify phenomena through how they are seen by the practitioner in a circumstance (Stan Lester, 1999). This ordinarily converts into social affair detail data and discernments through inductive, subjective strategies, for example, interviews, discussion and member perception, and representing it from the examination members' point of view or the person who encounter those phenomena.

In this study, the researcher is interested in investigating academic experience of international Palestinian student studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. This research uses phenomenological approach. Hence, it will investigate and analyze academic experience of international Palestinian students based on their experience and perspective.

For this reason, the writer is interested in conducting a research about academic experience of Palestine student. Therefore, the writer decides to carry out a research entitled **PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL PALESTINIAN STUDENT STUDYING AT UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA.**

B. Problem Statement

The problems of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. How does international Palestinian student perceive his academic experience at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta?
2. How does international Palestinian student face the academic problems (if there are any) during studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta?

C. Limitation of the Study

The researcher limits the study on the academic experience of a male international Palestinian student in the fifth semester studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

D. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study in this research are to describe:

1. How international Palestinian student perceives his academic experience at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.
2. How international Palestinian student faces the academic problems (if there are any) during studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

E. Benefit of the Study

The researcher expects that this research can give benefits, both theoretical and practical benefit:

1. Theoretical Benefit

Theoretically, the researcher hopes the result of the research can give valuable references for those who intend to analyze the academic experience by using phenomenological approach.

2. Practical Benefit

a. The researcher

- 1) The result of the research can be used as additional information to obtain deep understanding about academic experience of international Palestinian student.
- 2) The result of the research can also be used as additional knowledge to investigate a phenomenon by using phenomenological approach.

b. The lecturer

- 1) The result of the research can add a timely informative reference about the academic experience faced by international Palestinian student studying at Department of English Education.

2) This study can be valuable contribution to improve the teaching quality for the lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

c. The other researchers

For other researchers, this study can be used as a reference to conduct future researches dealing with similar problem with different setting.

d. Policy makers

For the policy makers, the result of this research is expected to become essential references to evaluate the service towards international students and hopefully can be used as a consideration to improve the education service's quality.

F. Research Paper Organization

This research paper organization of “Phenomenological Investigation on The Academic Experience of International Palestinian Student Studying at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta” is as follows:

Chapter I presents background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statements, the objectives of the study and the benefits of the study.

Chapter II presents three sections. The first section is the previous study in subjects related to this topic. The second section presents underlying theory of the studies. This section consists of three parts; they are Academic Experience, Phenomenology and International Student.

Chapter III consists of research method, time and place of the research, subject and object of the research, source of the research, techniques of collecting data and technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV presents the research findings and discussion.

Chapter V consists of conclusion, implication and suggestion.