

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents several topics related to the study. They are background of the study, formulation of research problem, objective of the research, significance of the study, and the scope of study.

#### **Background**

English is a foreign language that studied as part of educational curriculum from elementary school until to the university. As a foreign language, English is not used formally but as communication tool for educational discipline (Shinta, 2012).

What makes this language become requirement in every single school even in the university nowadays is because the global development in communication is standardizing from this language. Teaching English in global perspective has a major concern to increase the ability of society. Not only in the school they had taught English, but many places that teach English. It can help for students want to learn English very well.

Due to the idea of English as a universal language and need to be taught until university level, Soefandi (2008) said that teaching English in university can be categorized into two, there are general courses and support courses. As the core courses, English language teaching can be found in English language program, while supporting courses can be found in another departments. Thus, the differences between teachings English in English department and Mathematics department is the material, where in mathematics department it becomes a supporting material which consist of general basic pattern on how to use English.

Munby et all in Soefandi (2008) believes that the purpose of teaching and learning English in the university is to support the academic activities of students that often called as English for Academic.

Learning English as a foreign language can also create some problem and difficulties, because the social and situation of where English used do not support the learners to communicate in English in their daily life. In considering the students as the object of learning process, it is proper to know and understand that, students must need strategies and some characteristics for helping themselves to master the language. Good language learners must have broader knowledge about what they learned, also always active and creative in class and should have good communication with others. There are many observations and research studies tried to define the characteristics of good language learner. One of them is (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Rubin and Thompson, 1994) cited in Behabedi (2013) believes that good language learners; 1. find their own way for taking the responsibility in their own learning, 2. organize information about language, 3. are creative, and try to feel the language by experimenting its grammar and words, 4. create opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom, 5. learn to live with uncertainty by not getting confused and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word, 6. use memory strategies to bring back what has been learned, 7. make errors work for them and not against them, 8. use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of the first language, in learning a second language. 9. use contextual cues to help them in comprehension, 10. learn to make intelligent guesses.

To correlate, there are several previous studies about students' characteristic in learning English. First research was conducted Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch Palestine Square, Department of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Iran. The research analyzed about learning styles and characteristics of good language learners in the Iranian context (a study on IELTS participants) and the researcher found out the students' characteristics of good language learners in the Iranian context. The research focused on style to increase vocabularies. In terms of style, the findings revealed that there is a high correlation between high scores in IELTS and possessing Kinesthetic, Auditory, and Visual styles. It also presented that the learners were interested in individuality rather than group work. In terms of Tactility style, of course the participants of the study recorded a high score. The second research was conducted by M. Naci KAYAOĞLU, the researcher studied about exploring poor and good learners' language beliefs and their language strategy used in an attempt to see whether there is any significant relationship between the poor and good learners. This paper particularly seeks to examine to what extent language beliefs as a construct are reflected in learners' language behavior, which consequently may provide some pedagogical implications for teachers to benefit in classroom applications. The results demonstrate that good language learners significantly differed from poor learners in certain beliefs including perceptions about pronunciation, possessing special abilities and the nature of language learning. The findings indicate a possible relationship and correlation between learner beliefs and strategy used.

Both of these researches have strong relation with this present research about students' characteristics of good language learner in learning English on their department.

Moreover, this research is conducted because the researcher is interested in investigating students' characteristics in learning English in Mathematics department toward their ability in comprehending the teaching-learning process on English language as their minor subject. Based on the observation, most of students have attended the competition especially in debate competition. The researcher has seen the students in mathematic also have some skill such as speaking skill. Therefore, based on those reasons, it is appropriate to analyze and find out the characteristics of students in teaching-learning process because generally every students' also have different characteristics in learning English. Thus, the researcher will see how far they understand and master English and to find the ways to increase students' interest in learning English language.

### **Research Question**

Based on the background, the problem statement to be analyzed in this research is *what are the characteristics of mathematics department students of Universitas Negeri Gorontalo in learning English?*

### **Research Objective**

The objective of research is to find out the students' characteristics in learning English conducted in Mathematics department Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

### **Significances of Research**

This research is expected to give well contribution in teaching-learning process.

They are as follows:

- a. Teacher/lecturer: Will understand students' characteristics in learning English, it is a major concern for the teacher to provide a proper material which can gain students' ability, therefore teacher can define and understand the characteristics that could affect the learning process. And also, teacher can help the students select the appropriate method for their own learning style.
- b. Students: Will understand more the characteristics that have been proven in learning process and understanding that characters can facilitate the process of teaching and learning.

### **Scope of research**

The scope of this research only focused on students' characteristics in learning English. So, this research used questionnaire that consist of five options (always, often, sometimes, never, and rarely) to measure some indicator of students' characteristics. Moreover, the object of this research, researcher used participant from Mathematic Department students especially in fourth grade, and being the sample is class A.