

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter provides the basic information of this research. It expresses things that become the background of this research, including signifying the selection of research topics. This chapter is divided into some headings such as the background, the research question, the aim of research, and the significance of research.

Background

Language laboratory plays an important role for the students academic performance and achievement. Students could learn and practice the lesson such as listening subject, speaking, or writing in language laboratory. Language laboratory according to Parker (cited in Bocar, 2013, p. 32) is an area containing equipment designed to facilitate second/foreign language learning. Thus, it can be deduced that language laboratory is a place that enables and helps students for the improvement, development and the successfulness of their foreign language learning. Generally, language laboratory is equipped with certain facilities such as tape recorders, videocassette recorders, or computers, etc. that could support the students who are learning foreign language.

Language laboratory has been widely used and implemented in Indonesia particularly in schools and universities. However, some of language laboratories have not met the quality standard of international language laboratory. This phenomenon can be seen clearly on the number of the language laboratory visitors. For instance, the language laboratory of the English Department Study

Program in State University of Gorontalo has little number of users or visitors.

The data gained from the operator of language laboratory of English Department Study Program, there are only approximately 257 visitors of the language laboratory each month during 2014. Meanwhile, in 2015, the number of the language laboratory visitors does not show an excellent improvement to the number of the visitors. The data shows that there were only 261 numbers of language laboratory visitors during 2015. There is a big gap between the numbers of visitors of the language laboratory. According to Parker (cited in Bocar, 2013), the quality and services of the language laboratory is one of the main factors that can influence the numbers of the language laboratory visitors. The quality of the language laboratory involves the availability of the supporting tools such as the audio recording for listening, track learning language progress software and another supporting tools that enables students to learn foreign language effectively. This is contradicting to the fact that can be found in language laboratory in English Department.

Based on the pre observation done in English laboratory of English department, it is found out that the language laboratory is lack in some ways. Such as the audio recording that is not available in language laboratory, track learning language that has not been updated, as well as the software that enables students to practice more about English still needs to be improved. Thus, an evaluation on the language laboratory services and quality should be attained in order to figure out this phenomenon.

Further, the management of English laboratory in English Department is basically organized by the English department. There is a head of language laboratory that taking care and evaluating the performance of language laboratory. However, there are still some points that needs to be improved in terms of its management in order to achieve a good standard of language laboratory management. As well as the management, the language laboratory in English Department gives several services for the visitors. Although there are some of the students who are based on the pre-observation not feel really satisfied with the services given in language laboratory. This probably happen because of the high expectation of the students as the visitors in order to get comfortable in visiting language laboratory. This is closely related to the technician resources in language laboratory. Based on several students that the language laboratory technicians are mostly the common students who are not really qualified to be in language laboratory. This has led this unsatisfactory from the students as the visitors of the language laboratory. Assessing laboratory services is important because it will give a lot of beneficial aspect to the availability and accessibility of adequate learning resources, such as laboratory and information technology support services. By evaluating and assessing the language laboratory through the students' perception, it will give an evaluation to the improvement of functions and services of the language laboratory itself. Moreover, the only criteria that counts in evaluating service quality are defined by customers or in this case the students themselves. Only customers judge quality and all other judgments are essentially irrelevant. Thus, it can be concluded that the main aim of this research is to know in what extent does

the language laboratory between customers' perceptions of what services should be delivered and how well those services have met idealized expectations.

Moreover, laboratory assessment is also essential as academic laboratory face many challenges in gaining more visitors. These challenges have led academic laboratory leaders to analyze the role of the English laboratory and to demonstrate impact. Cullen (2001) stated that in order to gain more visitors, the leader or the operator of the language laboratory need to focus on how to meet the customers' expectations.

Thus, the study of the students' perceptions of English laboratory services quality and user satisfaction needs to be conducted in order to evaluate the English laboratory services. By evaluating the services and the users satisfaction, the improvement on the English laboratory could be attained, as this research can give any contributing factors to certain things that should be employed by the English laboratory. Furthermore, to meet these challenges, laboratory leaders must evaluate services offered to more efficiently allocate resources and to examine perceived effectiveness of the English laboratory based on the perspective of the students in meeting their expectations and satisfaction.

Problem Statements

The following research studies about:

What are the students' perceptions of English laboratory services quality?

Objective of Research

Understanding the students' perception on English laboratory services and quality is one of the important aspects in determining the effectiveness of language

laboratory used. Therefore, based on the problem statement which has been explicated in research question previously, then the present objective of this research is:

To find out the students' perceptions of English laboratory services quality.

Significant of Research

This present study is expected to give theoretical and practical significances.

Theoretically:

Theoretically, this research is aimed to give a light to the implications of the students' perception towards the English laboratory quality by providing a systematic framework deals with the way of how its implication to the educational side especially in the process of producing a comfortable and a high quality laboratory for the students' inconvenience.

Practically:

Practically, this study is aimed to help the English Department Study Program to evaluate and maximize the using of language laboratory based on the result of this research particularly in terms of students' perception on the language laboratory services and quality.

For the lecturers, it is expected that this research will give an implication and parameter on how to maximize the use of language laboratory based on students' perception about language laboratory itself.

For the English Department Study Program, it is hoped that this study will also serve as a guide for the laboratory leaders on how to improve the quality and services of the English Laboratory.

For the Head of the English Department Study Program and the Head of Language Laboratory in State University of Gorontalo, it is expected that this research will give more valuable input for the development and the improvement of the language laboratory's quality and services, especially in State University of Gorontalo.

For the next researcher, this research is expected to be a guideline for the further researcher and to bring a great understanding about the fundamental aspect of the English laboratory services and quality improvement