CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English has become the “Lingua Franca” that has been used widely all over the world. Many fields use English as a tool of communication. A large number of countries have invested enormous resources in English language learning to promote the English skills of its workforce and economic outlook. Indonesia is one of those countries.

The nation-wide implementation of English teaching for school students was one of the efforts and changes made. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. To improve the English of Indonesian students, English has already been officially included in the curriculum, starting from Elementary School, Junior High School, Senior High School and University Level. Young children are supported to learn English from their early ages. Teachers are also supported to help students develop their skills. Teachers are trained and educated to improve their skills, learning media are also prepared well to help the students improve their English. But the fact shows that the achievement of the students in learning English is vary.

Some students learn English language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second
language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence.

However, there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. The internal factors are those that the individual language student brings with him or her to the particular learning situation, such as age, personality, motivation, cognition, etc. The external factors are those that the individual language gets from the particular learning situation, such as curriculum, social background, extrinsic motivation, etc.

Social factors are believed to play a crucial role in language learning and have a major impact on second/foreign language proficiency (Ellis, 2003). The study of language cannot be divorced from the study of social identity, thoughts and culture. Also, the ability of students to communicate cannot be divorced from their sociolinguistic backgrounds. The sociolinguistic background of a student provides him an opportunity of being better or less equipped in oral communications. This is because there are instances of linguistic interference in the language usage of the student. One example, there is linguistic interference of the mother tongue in students’ utterances and this affects their mastery of English language as a second language.
The sociolinguistic background of a child influences the child’s understanding and speaking of English language in the classroom and school environment. For instance, a child from the high social class whose parents more often than not, use the English language for interaction will have little or no problem in communication with English language in the classroom situation (Onovughe, 2012). On the other hand, a child from the low social class who is used to speaking indigenous language with little or no English language finds it strenuous and unpleasant speaking the English language in a classroom situation during the teaching – learning process. The family is an important background to the linguistic development of a student’s English language. There is the derivation that the social stratification and social mobility of parents help to encourage or discourage students’ communication and classroom experience especially during the teaching – learning process.

As it has been stated before, learner factors are many. Researchers have examined individual differences in attempting to answer the question “Why some learners are more successful than others in learning a second language within the same social context?” Different researchers have identified different learner variables as important in influencing learning outcomes. Among the variables the more frequently discussed are motivation, age, and learning strategies.

TK Gethsemane is one of the schools that face this situation. The teachers of this school find that it is absolutely correct that the achievement of students is varied. The students come from many social backgrounds. The
parents of the students are from various statuses. They are vary in economic level, kind of occupations, level and education etc. The students of this school also show that their achievement in English is quite varied as their backgrounds are varied. Students from a certain backgrounds shows more attention and more interest in learning English, while students from other certain backgrounds shows not too much attention to learn English. Teachers of this school explained that it seems that some parents need so much efforts to meet their children’s learning needs, in the other hand, some of the parents have no problem in supporting their children. The central hypothesis to this case is there must be a correlation between the parents’ statuses and the achievement of their children.

This research investigated the social factors students/learners affecting SLA. According to Geeslin and Long (2014:27) social variation (social factors) are varieties of language use defined according to class, education, occupation, age, sex, etc. This research aim to investigate, from a social aspect to see how parents’ economic level, parents’ education level, environment and parents’ occupation, influence students’ achievement in English learning. The writer chose students of TK Gethsemane as the subjects of study because, beside the accessibility consideration, this school, like other schools, has many students with various social backgrounds.

1.2 Problems Statement

Based on the research background, the researcher states the central research questions as follows:
1. How is the correlation between social factors and children’s achievement in English learning?

2. What social factor is the most dominant influencing the students’ achievement?

3. Why do the most dominant factor influencing the students’ achievement in the way it does?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research is aimed:

1. To find out the correlation between social factors and children’s achievement in English learning.

2. To analyze which of the social factors is most dominant influencing the students’ achievement.

3. To explore the reason why the most dominant factor influence the students’ achievement.

1.4 Significances

The significance of the study is multifold. The conclusions derived throughout the research can be a contribution to every individuals involve in teaching-learning process. For teachers, this research is useful for them to help their students learn second language. For parents, the result of this research will inform them about what factors should be given special attention.