

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the first session in the preparation of this paper. The researcher will describe the research topic according to the conditions, problems, or phenomena found.

1.1 Research Background

Since people are conscious to spend time learning English as a foreign language, a lot of research has been done over the past few decades. Foreign language teaching and learning involve a lot of practice to strengthen the skills to be developed. People realize that learning a foreign language takes work. The average person can understand language based on the CEFR standard for beginners (A1) for approximately 180 hours, the elementary level (A2) takes about 180 to 200 hours, the intermediate level (B1) must be taken for 350-400 hours, the upper intermediate level (B2) for approximately 500-600 hours, and the advanced level (C1) learn all aspects of English for 700-800 hours. While the highest level, proficient (C2), takes 1000-1200 hours.¹ For example, if someone spends more than six hours a day learning English, it will work faster than if they only spent one hour or less. Because learning English takes time, investing in a mentor or teacher-guided learning course or using appropriate learning tools can assist accelerate the learning process.

EFL learning involves a focus on educators (educator skills), students (learning motivation), language skills, and what is being developed to create a great learning environment. Each lesson includes particular instructions developed by the teacher and delivered to the students. Such as writing replies, taking notes, memorizing new vocabulary, or reading one page of a book during the day. Each class, however, must focus on one or more particular skills to be developed over multiple days and educators must address skill development with students in order for it to be successful. Kadwa and Hamza argue that the purpose of teaching and learning is active communication. Educators impart knowledge, morality, behavior, and feedback. Students need knowledge, experience, advice, and role models from educators.² If educators

¹ Ben Knights, "How Long Does It Take to Learn a Language?," n.d., <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/10/11/how-long-learn-language/>.

² Mohammed Siddique Kadwa and Hamza Alshenqeeti, "International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT) The Impact of

want students to succeed academically, they must be willing to pay attention to them and provide feedback to them. Because some students require encouragement to advance to higher levels, as well as careful attention and handling to avoid discouraging their motivation to learn. A great classroom can only be achieved slowly and has many obstacles in it.

Language learning presents obstacles and problems related to where students sit and the number of students in the class. Because classroom management is one of the factors that maximize learning performance. As educators, teaching should be conducive, manageable, and appropriate so that students are more attentive and educators are more prepared for classroom rules, behaviors, and structures³. In addition, Ligia et al. state that for classroom management not only the student discipline but also the educators' restful and friendly attitude towards the students is important, including good educator-student relationships.⁴ For example, if students are not ready to start learning in class, some problems can arise and affect the learning process in the class. Such as creating a hostile atmosphere and harming other students. Nonetheless, Guardino et al. found that classroom environments should focus not only on reducing school performance and student behavior problems but also on student engagement, EQ, and motivation.⁵ Hence, the educators' attitude and self-adjustment in classroom management are required.

Class environment (class size and seating arrangement) refers to the physical classroom, including chairs, tables, positions, and the ability of educators to create an organized, focused, orderly, and effective classroom atmosphere.⁶ Seating arrangements are typically flexible based on the educators' needs and may form circles,

Students' Proficiency in English on Science Courses in a Foundation Year Program," *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)* 3, no. 11 (2020): 55–67, <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt>.

³ Ligia Fernanda Espinosa Cevallos and Sandy T. Soto, "EFL Classroom Management," *Mextesol Journal* 44, no. 2 (2020): 1–11.

⁴ Cevallos and Soto, "EFL Classroom Management", 5.

⁵ Caroline A. Guardino and Elizabeth Fullerton, "Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment," *TEACHING Exceptional Children* 42, no. 6 (2010): 8–13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991004200601>.

⁶ Ahmad Syaifullah, Munir Munir, and Amra Ariyani, "An Analysis of Seating Arrangement toward Students' Motivation in Learning English," *Journal of Excellence in English Language Education* 1, no. 1 (2022): 1–10, <https://ojs.unm.ac.id/JoEELE/article/view/31221/14431>.

groups, or rows. Educators should be able to arrange students so they are not sitting in the back or corners of the class. Moses et al. claim that students who sit in the front row have better interactions with their educators and claim to perform better than those sitting in the back row or corners⁷. Other researchers also add that students given a front-row table or a central area are exemplary students.⁸ This indicates whether seating arrangement has an impact on student learning progress.

On the other hand, there is a class size that can affect students' focus in their involvement in class. Class size means the quantity, or number, crowd of a class. Jeremy et al., some researchers found the results of their research that in teaching learning, quantity is the main key compared to quality. Educators will change the way they teach when class size is decreased and provide better and more personalized instructions. Because educators in small classes have more time to pay attention to students.⁹ A class with 31-40 students should be the maximum limit per class with one educator instead of forcing educator to spend extra time and energy, which can result in not giving optimal instructions. The same opinion from Elfirahmi et al., the educators' focus is reduced if they are in a large class and have difficulty managing the class. In addition, in small classes, students feel that the educators have more time to effectively develop student achievement, particularly in the EFL setting.¹⁰ Instead of forcing teachers to handle a lot of students in class, it is better to reduce students in the class. It will actually have a good effect on students and teachers.

⁷ Moses Waithanji Ngware et al., "The Influence of Classroom Seating Position on Student Learning Gains in Primary Schools in Kenya," *Creative Education* 04, no. 11 (2013): 705–12, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2013.411100>.

⁸ Min Zhang, "If You Take Learning Seriously, I'll Assign You to a Good Seat": Moralized Seating Order and the Making of Educational Success in China's Public Schools," *Ethnography and Education* 14, no. 4 (2019): 428–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2018.1441733>.

⁹ Jeremy D Finn, Gina M Pannozzo, and Charles M Achilles, "The 'Why's' of Class Size: Student Behavior in Small Classes," *Review of Educational Research* 73, no. 3 (2003): 321–68, <http://www.sfu.ca/~jcnesebit/EDUC220/ThinkPaper/FinnPannozzo2003.pdf>.

¹⁰ Thamrin Elfirahmi and Uning Musthofiyah, "Small Classes of English Language Learning in University Level: Teachers' Views," in *TEFLIN International Conference. Creativity and Innovation in Language Materials Development and Language Teaching Methodology in Asia and Beyond* (Surabaya, 2016), 538–44.

The perceptions of educators and students need to be heard equally. How do educators manage class sizes, especially large classes that will drain the energy, and how do students deal with the emotions while in large classes. Many findings show that students prefer small classes when they feel anxious. In addition, small classes are believed to increase student academic achievement.¹¹ On the other hand, stress, fatigue, and frustration are felt by educators in large classes.¹² In popular project STAR (Student Educators Achievement Ratio) provides class size categories, small class is 13-17, regular class size is 22-25.¹³ Each country has different policies regarding class size. Taiwan has 30-35 for small class, Shanghai averages 30 in small class, Hong Kong has 25 and 30 as called small class. Meanwhile, according to regulation of the ministry of education and culture (*Permendikbud no. 23 tahun 2013 pasal 2*), Indonesia has a population 28 to 36 for an average class.¹⁴ In question, is the class average appropriate to be implemented in Indonesia? However, the researcher conclude that small class should be in average of 15-25 student per class.

Educators must be proficient in the subject they are master it, also challenged with effective classroom management. Educators should observe their students' interests and learning styles. It is intended to make it easier for educators to set appropriate class settings. As explained in the previous paragraph, educators have plans for shaping the environment of the class. During the lesson, the educator is not just adhering to the monotonous atmosphere. Guardino and Elizabeth describe the effectiveness of changing the classroom atmosphere to improve student behavior. As a result, he saw a 45% increase in student engagement in the classroom. The

¹¹ Pauline Carolyne Fortes and Abdellatif Tchanchane, "Dealing with Large Classes: A Real Challenge," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 8, no. 5 (2010): 272–80, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.037>.

¹² Gemechu Abera Gobena, "Teachers' Perception in Teaching Large Class Sizes at Undergraduate First Year Regular Students in Some Selected Private and Public Higher Learning Institutions in Eastern Ethiopia and Its Implication on Quality Education," *Journal of Education and Practice* 5, no. 4 (2010): 165–75, <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/10803>.

¹³ Gary James Harfitt, "How Class Size Reduction Mediates Secondary Students' Learning: Hearing the Pupil Voice," *Asia Pacific Education Review* 13, no. 2 (2012): 299–310, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-011-9193-6>.

¹⁴ Dapodik.co.id, "Jumlah Rombongan Belajar Berdasarkan Rasio Jumlah Peserta Didik Tahun 2023," 2022, <https://www.dapodik.co.id/2020/07/dapodik-versi-terbaru-jumlah-rombongan.html>.

student's negative behavior was 90%, which decreased after the intervention. The researchers also added that they were satisfied with the students change in the classroom atmosphere.¹⁵ Hence, educators in considering the classroom atmosphere to support student involvement are essential.

In Indonesia, educators have full authority to regulate instruction. Based on the 2013 Indonesian curriculum (K-13), the educational environment in Indonesia should consist of discipline, engagement, safety, and comfort.¹⁶ The 2013 curriculum (K-13) regulates group seating arrangements and encourages a discussion method wherever possible. For example, educators are not always at the front of the class, but they are providing equipment for discussion and supervising students. However, the seating plan is not implemented in all schools in Indonesia because many school classrooms are 20 m² and are occupied by 30 to 40 students.¹⁷ Hence, it makes students feel claustrophobic and uncomfortable.

Professional educators ensure successful class management. Educators understand strategies for organizing lessons, such as selecting appropriate strategies for directing attention to student activities, creating effective and productive learning environments, and overcoming student-distracting behaviors. According to narrative research by Farah S. Zahra, teaching in a suburban public school is difficult because they are many problematic students. In contrast to urban schools, students find it difficult to fit in and cannot manage the atmosphere. Also, schools do not support changing students' attitudes. In another story, educators in private schools receive administrative training and learn how to deal with difficult students. Although the students did not commit any negative behavior (getting off the seat, being rude, or disturbing other students), some felt that the lesson was not very interesting or

¹⁵ Guardino and Fullerton, "Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment."

¹⁶ Ministry of Education and Culture, "Standar Proses Pendidikan Dasar Dan Mengengah," 2016, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/224242/permendikbud-no-22-tahun-2016>.

¹⁷ Lies Kryati, "Sistem Pengelolaan Kelas Di Indonesia Dalam Kurikulum 2013," *Jurnal Ilmiah Iqra'* 11, no. 2 (2018): 25–37, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jii.v11i2.583>.

important in lives.¹⁸ There is still a lot of homework that educators and governments need to do to create the right classes. A successful classroom is determined by the educator who sets the class. Whether educators put attention to the fact that there is a relationship between seating arrangement and class size or not, they should combine the two to form a better classroom environment.

The researcher found the phenomenon of students who tend to be passive during lectures. Most of the students compete to get a back seat position instead being in the front row position when the type of seating position is traditional row. Class size affects the students' problem. If they are in a small class or a small group discussion, they tend to be actively involved in the discussion. The factors of unfocusedness and lack of confidence are the main problems why students delayed in understanding the material. Only a minority of students are highly active in class, it's due to they have a higher English background than their friends. Therefore, the researcher found the phenomenon of active and passive students who were influenced by seating arrangement and class size, so the researcher wanted to find efforts to increase student involvement in EFL learning.

This similar study has been conducted several times by researchers. Saifi, et al., conducted research in 2018 focused on the impact of classroom management on students' academic achievement at the university level.¹⁹ In the same year, Diego F. Macías discusses the area of classroom management mainly about the relationship of classroom management with aspects of the use of language and teaching methods.²⁰ Roberth and Philips paper focuses on the influence of high school science class size on students' achievement in introductory college science courses and

¹⁸ Farah Sahirah Zahr, "Junior High School Novice Educators' Self-Efficacy in Managing Students' Challenging Behaviour in Indonesia," *KnE Social Sciences* 2022 (2022): 53–67, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i4.10515>.

¹⁹ Imran Latif Saifi et al., "Impact of Classroom Management on Students' Achievement at University Level," *Asian Journal of Social Science & Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2018): 13–27, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326849656_IMPACT_OF_CLASSROOM_MANAGEMENT_ON_STUDENTS'_ACHIEVEMENT_AT_UNIVERSITY_LEVEL.

²⁰ Diego Fernando Macías, "Classroom Management in Foreign Language Education: An Exploratory Review," *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development* 20, no. 1 (2018): 153–66, <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n1.60001>.

on the variation of educators practices across class size.²¹ And Xiaoming Yang, Xing Zhou, and Jie Hu, in 2022, in their research, discussed the influence of seating arrangements in student involvement in the classroom.²² Li Xi, et al. discusses seating position can affect students academic performance at the university level in Beijing.²³ Some of the research above has similarities with this research, namely the influence of classroom management, research subjects, and research methods.

From the above study, the researcher found gaps. The gap is related to student engagement. The researcher filled the gaps by finding student experiences related to the use of seating arrangements and class sizes that affect student engagement in the learning process that have been applicable with the qualitative by narrative inquiry method in islamic university level in Kudus. EFL students share their feelings and experiences of seating arrangements and class sizes at a university with different classroom management by teachers that influenced their engagement during learning.

1.2 Research Focus and Scope

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze students' experiences toward the importance of seating arrangements and class size management and its effects on students' engagement. This study is conducted through a narrative inquiry with data collected from college students. A narrative inquiry would be match for this study since it focuses on the experience and explanation from the student.

1.3 Research Problem

The research problem based on the background study above can be framed as follows:

²¹ Robert H. Tai and Philip Michael. Sadler, "High School Class-Size and College Performance in Science," *The High School Journal* 90, no. 3 (2007): 45–53, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2007.0014>.

²² Xiaoming Yang, Xing Zhou, and Jie Hu, "Students' Preferences for Seating Arrangements and Their Engagement in Cooperative Learning Activities in College English Blended Learning Classrooms in Higher Education," *Higher Education Research and Development* 41, no. 4 (2022): 1356–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2021.1901667>.

²³ Feng-Kuang Xi, Li., Yuan, Zhang., Yunqui, Bai., Chiang, "An Investigation of University Students' Classroom Seating Choices," *Journal of Learning Spaces* 6, no. 3 (2017): 13–22.

1. How did the EFL students experience differences in seating arrangement and class size in the EFL learning processes?
2. How can the different seating arrangements and class sizes affect the students' engagement in the learning processes?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives are following:

1. To find the best type of seating arrangement and class size for students based on their experience in the EFL learning processes
2. To find out how seating arrangement and class size can affect students' engagement in learning processes

1.5 Research Significance

Researcher are expected of some the outcomes of this study:

1. Theoretical Benefits:

The research is significant because it gives a theoretical description of the influence of seating arrangement and class size on EFL students in learning processes.

2. Practical Benefits:

The research contributes new insight to the EFL classroom for discovering new knowledge by providing the experience of classroom management (seating arrangement and class size) in the narrative inquiry field, especially for:

- a. Student

This study may help students voice their concerns in the classroom environment set up by the educators and determine what type of classroom management is right for them.

- b. Educators

This study may lead an English educator to a better understanding of how to set the class according to the students after knowing the proper type of class size and seating arrangement for the class.

- c. Further Reseachrer

This study may provide information to conduct similar research, helping students complain about classroom management, what type of seating arrangements, and what class size is most appropriate.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1. Narrative Inquiry

Olga Culver state Narrative inquiry is a voice or personal stories of individuals or small groups that reveal in-depth information from the perspective of individual and usually become self-identity.²⁴ Interviews (oral history) are frequently used as a source of information for biographies, documentaries, and journal articles.²⁵ In this study, narrative inquiry acts as a form of conveying students' opinions about their experiences while learning English by applying seating arrangements and class sizes.

2. Classroom Management

Educator plays a key role in shaping the behavior and success of students in the classroom. Emmer & Sabornie argue the purpose of implementing classroom management strategies is to improve social behavior and increase student engagement in academic work.²⁶ Seating arrangement and class size choices are matters in managing class.²⁷ Classroom management is the educators strategy for managing students to keep them organized, conducive, and pay attention to the educators. The educators minimize behavioral disturbances from individuals and groups.²⁸ So, educators can focus on the rules and strategies designed.

3. Seating Arrangements

Modifying the classroom atmosphere has a very good impact on student behavior in class, including changing the seating arrangements, fun and simple lesson, and the

²⁴ Olga Culver, "Narrative Inquiry in the Language Classroom: An Incubator of Identity and Growth Exploration," 2012, p.45, http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1543&context=ipp_collection.

²⁵ "Qualitative Study Design," Deakin University, 2022, <https://deakin.libguides.com/qualitative-study-designs/narrative-inquiry>.

²⁶ Edmund T Emmer and Edward J Sabornie, Handbook of Classroom Management, Handbook of Classroom Management, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203874783>.

²⁷ Youki Terada, "How Novice and Expert Teachers Approach Classroom Management Differently," Edutopia, 2021, <https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-novice-and-expert-teachers-approach-classroom-management-differently>.

²⁸ "Classroom Management," The Glosary of Education Reform, 2014, <https://www.edglossary.org/classroom-management/>.

arrangement of the classroom accessories area.²⁹ McCroskey & McVetta in Mary P. Kinahan argue there are various sitting positions in the class that are commonly used, namely traditional straight-row, horseshoe/U-shape, and modular. The traditional straight-row is a row of tables and chairs arranged from front to back facing the blackboard or educators' stage. The horseshoe is semicircular or the shape of the letter C or the letter U. Horseshoe can be called a semicircular row. The modular or grouping design is designed for small groups.³⁰ In addition, there is a circle seating arrangement where the table is formed circularly and the teacher is in the middle.

The traditional straight-row classroom requires students to sit in each row consisting of 4-5 tables facing the educators stage or blackboard, with the back students facing the backs of friends in front of them. This position is suitable for a small building with a large number of students when there is only one educator, and communication only occurs between students and educators.³¹ The Horseshoe or U/C shape, commonly called the U letter suitable for smaller classes. Where every student can see other students, the educator, and the material that is commonly presented in front of class without being hindered by other student. Unlike the traditional straight-row, the U letter looks wider with space in the middle of the class. Each table is pinned to the wall.³² Modular or also called grouping, are formed where several students' tables are close together to form several grouping/modulars in the class. Hilal argues that this position is suitable for exclusive interaction and building better communication through such activities as discussions among friends usually used for groups.³³ Circle position helps teachers

²⁹ Guardino and Fullerton, "Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment."

³⁰ Mary P. Kinahan, "Teachers and Seating Arrangements and Assignments: A Qualitative Study," Northeastern University (2020).

³¹ İkrām Çınar, "Classroom Geography: Who Sit in the Traditional Classrooms?," *The Journal of International Social Research* 3, no. 10 (2010): 200–212, http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt3/sayi10pdf/cinar_ikram.pdf.

³² I Made Widwan Pranena, "U-Shape and Cluster Seating Arrangement in Teaching English as Foreign Language in Yayasan Dana Punia," *Journal of Educational Study* 2, no. 2 (2022): 168–76, <https://doi.org/10.36663/joes.v2i2.346>.

³³ Ü.SELİN HİLAL, "Effects Of Different Seating Arrangements on Learning Experience" (Bilkent University, 2014),

restore the student's focus. Students can see each other and be centered in the middle, that is, the teacher. There was no front or rear position, so no one looked at the back of the other student.³⁴ This position helps students to become more aware of the classroom atmosphere.

4. EFL Learner

English as a foreign language is English spoken by people other than native speakers as an additional language. Considering that English is the international language and globalization seems unstoppable, many countries are coming together to promote English in their own countries for their citizens to learn. Although neither the first language (L1) nor the second language (L2).

1.7 Organisation of Thesis

This study is divided into five chapter, as following:

1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes Research Background, Research Focus and Scope, Research Problem, Research Objectives, Research Significances, Definition of Key Terms, and Organisation of Thesis.

2. CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter includes Theoretical Description (The Description of Classroom Management, Seating Arrangement, Class Size, and Students experience), Theoretical Framework, and Review of Previous Study.

3. CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes Research Method, Research Setting, Research Participants, Data Collection, Data Analysis Technique, Research Validity, and Research Ethical Considerations.

4. CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the result and discussion.

5. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Effects-of-different-seating-arrangements-on-%3A-the-Hilal/2e139f9d4d6665486888c2d4bb0bb9437afe44d8>.

³⁴ Joseph Falout, "Circular Seating Arrangements: Approaching the Social Crux in Language Classrooms," *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 4, no. 2 (2014): 275–300, <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2014.4.2.6>.

This chapter includes conclusions and recommendations or suggestion.

