

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

The rapid development of global communication and information causes English to play an important role in educational, technological, economic, and other aspects. This allows a new generation of students to learn English with a certain understanding of why they are learning the language and why they understand their needs (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 6). Recognizing these changes, the Indonesian government is working hard to master English as a tool to support future development. Therefore, learning English is an important topic and one of the important subjects of education at all levels (Nureffendhi, 2013).

To achieve this goal, many factors need to be considered. One way is to provide the learning materials which is related to the study program. The learning materials provided should facilitate the achievement of student learning goals and student needs (Nureffendhi, 2013). However, people's needs for English vary. For example, business people who want to sell products abroad must master economic terms, medical students must follow the development of their field of knowledge, and hotel receptionists must be able to speak English to greet foreign guests. This clearly shows the need for English material that is related to their needs to help people and students develop English skills that match their interests and work (Asrifan et al, 2020). In addition, suitable English learning materials can help them acquire higher knowledge and proficiency in English. For this reason, English

teaching has two specifications, namely, General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

According to Far (2008), General English refers to contexts in which there is no specific normative need for English language learning. GE focuses as much on education as on grammar and language structure. ESP itself focuses on the situation and adapts to the requirements and needs of the student. In addition, ESP focuses more on teaching context than grammar instruction, with the fundamental goal of bringing content directly to students' real world (Unal, 2014). Thus, Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) state that English for Specific Purposes is a language teaching method whose content and methods are largely determined by the needs and interests of learners.

High school students learn English as a skill in their subject. Most learn all language skills and language components. However, vocational students may require special subjects. They just need to know their expectations and needs, which will help them find a job, as most vocational school students usually look for jobs after graduation. Therefore, it is clear that the process of teaching and learning English must be relevant to their specific program. Students should be provided with specific learning materials or additional learning materials that relate to their future professional context.

In the process of learning a language, students must master four language skills, namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking. It is important to master this skill without neglecting other skills. These four abilities are necessary for understanding language (listening, reading) and producing language (writing,

speaking). Understanding and producing language are interrelated. Language learners must be able to understand language to produce language. To produce language, students must have the vocabulary, acquired through reading and listening (called reading comprehension). Therefore, language learners need to master reading skills.

Suitable reading material is needed to add insight and increase vocabulary. Hammer (1998: 68) notes that reading text can provide opportunities for language learning: this includes vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the student's ability to form sentences, paragraphs, and text. Given the important role of reading in English language learning, reading materials must be developed according to student needs, and the content must represent real-life problems that students will face in the future.

Hotel accommodation is one of the study programs in vocational schools and is included in the field of tourism. According to BNSP (2017), in this study program, students are taught and trained to be able to work in front office parts such as telephone reservation, receptionist, handling complaints, taking orders, or porters. In addition, they are also trained to be able to do housework, laundry, bar and kitchen, public attendant, and room attendant. In addition, graduates from this study program are expected to have good competence in service and communication to be competent in the global industry. For this reason, learning English according to their major will greatly help them in achieving the expected competencies.

Most vocational schools in Indonesia still have problems in providing English learning materials that are related to students' needs. The provision of relevant material helps make it easier for students to achieve learning objectives. The material provided by the government and published by some authors still consists of general topics. Although English is a compulsory subject for students, this material is not specified in a certain program of study. This problem also occurs at SMK Negeri 7 Medan.

This is supported by observation conducted at SMK Negeri 7 Medan in February 2023 to obtain preliminary data. The researcher interviewed an English teacher regarding the curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks used in grade 10 of Hotel Accommodation Program. From observation, the teacher responded that SMK Negeri 7 Medan has started implementing MBKM (Merdeka Belajar: Curriculum Merdeka). The teacher also explained that SMK Negeri 7 Medan applies a high school-based syllabus, where one of the learning outcomes in grade 10 is that students are expected to be able to read and respond to various kinds of texts, one of which is descriptive text. In addition, this competency (reading) will greatly assist students in achieving or mastering other competencies such as speaking and writing.

The textbook used by students of SMK Negeri 7 Medan majoring in Hotel Accommodation entitled, "English in Mind 2nd Edition Grade 10" published by *Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan*. This textbook contains general topics and contents that are not relevant to the field of Hotel Accommodation Program. An example of text title such as "A

Service of Love" which tells the story of two young couples who work as artists, in this text the author describes the physical appearance of these characters. Another example is the text entitled "My Grandma" which describes the physical appearance and personality of the author's grandmother. These two texts still contain general and non-specific topics that cannot meet the needs of students majoring in Hotel Accommodation Program.

Judging from the data, the reading materials have not met the needs of students. The lack of relevant English material can affect students' performance in learning English, especially for their study program. Students find it difficult to understand and comprehend the material, especially descriptive texts. This is because descriptive texts in their textbooks are having general topic which makes them have less motivation. Teacher also admitted that the reading materials and exercises available are not very helpful in improving students' reading skills or improving their understanding of vocabulary/terminology in the field of Hotel Accommodation.

Based on the above problems, researcher realize the importance of developing English reading materials because the available materials are general. This is to ensure that every student in each course receives relevant English language input so that they can use their English language skills and abilities in targeted situations and to support their future work.

Developing all types of teaching materials that have been stated above will take a lot of time, therefore researcher set out to focus on developing English

reading materials of descriptive texts for grade X of the Hotel Accommodation Program at SMK Negeri 7 Medan.

B. Problem of The study

Based on the background of the study above, it is concluded that the problems of the study are:

1. What reading materials are needed by grade X students of the Hotel Accommodation program at SMK Negeri 7 Medan?
2. How are reading materials of descriptive text for grade X students of Hotel Accommodation study program developed?

C. Objective of The Study

Based on the problem of the study above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the reading materials which are needed by grade X students of the Hotel Accommodation program at SMK Negeri 7 Medan
2. To develop English reading materials of descriptive text for grade X students of the Hotel Accommodation program at SMK Negeri 7 Medan

D. Scope of The Study

The scope of the study is limited to developing English reading materials of descriptive text for Hotel Accommodation Program. This is because researcher found research on the development of reading material but not in the field of Hotel Accommodation Program. The study will be applied to the tenth grade of the Hotel Accommodation Program at SMK Negeri 7 Medan. This study will be concerned on English reading material, especially in descriptive text.

E. Significance of The Study

The result of this study is expected to give a theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, the findings of this study will contribute well to the development of English reading material in ESP. Practically, this research will lead to various parties, as follows:

1. English Teacher

The results of this study can be used as additional material or reference sources in teaching students in Hotel Accommodation Program. This research is expected to motivate teachers to develop learning materials that follow learning goals and student needs.

2. Student

This research provides suitable material for students in Hotel Accommodation Programs so that they can learn vocabulary or terms that will support them in improving their English language competence, especially in reading comprehension.

3. Other Researcher

It is hoped that the results of this research can be used as a reference for students majoring in English language education who want to conduct research related to developing English reading materials for certain study programs/majors.