

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This research attempts to find out the model realization of teacher's conception of teaching in English classroom interaction at Politeknik Negeri Medan. In this chapter, the background of the study, the focus of the study, the problems of the study, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, operational definition of key terms are presented.

1.1. The Background of the Study

Language teaching existed since the sixteenth century and language teacher education did in the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1960s, changes in industrial world resulted the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Ramirez: 2015). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) mention that the rising of ESP is caused by the development of economy in the world. This ESP is the main concept used in teaching English for Vocational Education. They have so many important milestones on the road to today's practices and always change from time to time.

Teaching English for Vocational Education is claimed to be different from that for other forms of education like university. According to UU No. 12 Year 2012 about High Education verse 16, "Vocational Education is diploma and applied undergraduate programs of high education that prepare students for jobs with certain applied skill". Therefore, teaching English course in Vocational Education must be related to ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and dominated to practical ones instead of theory.

Politeknik Negeri Medan is one of vocational higher education in North Sumatera. This state vocational high education has created thousands of skilful alumni ready to work based on their major. It consists of 6 departments and 26 study programs and none of them is English study program. Thus, the institution determines the minimum standard of students' English proficiency because they are expected to be able to communicate in English properly especially in the workplace. According to Academic Manual, "Every student as an alumnus candidate must achieve 400 TOEIC score for Diploma 3 and 450 TOEIC score for Diploma 4".

Politeknik Negeri Medan decided to use TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) as English proficiency test to measure students' English communication competence. TOEIC is a proficiency test to measure someone' English communication competence in the workplace. TOEIC test is administered twice during the study in Polmed. Firstly, new students are required to take TOEIC test in the first semester. The results inform both English lecturers and the institution about students' prior knowledge and input about what materials and teaching methods should be used in English classes. Secondly, the TOEIC test will be taken by students right before they graduate. The second one is an official ETS test so alumni can use the certificate to apply for jobs inside or outside the country. The certificate also can be used to continue studying abroad. As TOEIC test is administered regularly in Politeknik Negeri Medan, the trend of alumni' TOEIC score can be seen especially in the last four years. According to the report, 39.8% (2020/2021), 45.5% (2021/2022), 26% (2022/2023), and 15.27% (2023/2024) of alumni candidates are able to pass the minimum criteria for TOEIC scores; however, the rest of them must retake the test to fulfil the graduation

requirement. The data from the last four years are still far from expectation. Alumni's TOEIC scores are supposed to be the reflection of whether the English classes in Politeknik Negeri Medan is successful or no. It means there must be a problem to be solved and the institution must work harder in solving the problems in English classes.

This condition becomes the phenomenal gap of this study. An immediate investigation is needed to find the sources of the problems and fix them. If English teaching and learning is a tree, we need to look into its root which determines how good the quality of the fruits. Taking care the root will give high impact improvement to the quality of the whole body of the tree. It is argued that the first thing that a teacher brings to the classroom is his or her conception about teaching. It means if we take care of teacher' conception of teaching in English class, we improve the whole process of English teaching and learning which contributes to better students' English competence.

There are some factors affecting students' success in learning English in Indonesia. One of the most important ones is teacher's conception about teaching English because it is what teacher brings to the classroom and contributes a great and direct impact to students' achievement. However, the pattern of English teacher's conception about language learning at Indonesian vocational high education is still not found. There are some previous studies related to this in schools and universities, but those in Indonesian vocational education are still insufficient.

Dejene (2020:1) considers that better understanding on teacher's conception is a very important tool for improving effectiveness of teaching and learning

process. Furthermore, he also emphasizes that educational reforms need to take teacher's conception into account if overall and sustainable changes in teaching and learning are targeted. Then, educational improvement is doomed to failure if teachers' conception, beliefs, attitudes and intentions are not put into priority (Betoret & Artigo, 2004; Chan & Elliot, 2004).

According to Koballa et al. (2000), a crucial role of any teacher education program is to discover and evaluate teacher candidates and their ideas in connection to classroom practices. To improve teacher education and classroom practice, it is imperative to get a deeper understanding of teachers' ideas and gain insight into changes in beliefs, as highlighted by Pajares (1992) and Richardson (2003). Bryan (2003) proposed that teacher educators might gain insights into their students' ideas and apply this information to better support trainees' professional growth and learning.

Therefore, it is very crucial to find out English teachers' conception about teaching and their realization in the classroom. Using this understanding, the research findings will inform the teachers and institutions about the way forward in moving potential candidates into the right direction with more suitable and more modern theories of English language teaching and learning in vocational education (Dejene; 2020).

According to Gage (2009), teaching conception actually consists of four main objects which are conception of process of teaching, conception of content of teaching, conception of Students' Cognitive Capabilities and Motivation and conception of classroom management. However, this study will not take classroom management because it deals time (productive and counterproductive) and

environment (family and neighbourhood) which are out of control of the researcher. Therefore, this study focuses on conception of process of teaching, conception of content of teaching, and conception of Students' Cognitive Capabilities and Motivation. Some studies about teachers' conception are still focused on the process of teaching (Dejene, 2020; Betoret & Artigo, 2004; Chan & Elliot, 2004) without touching teacher's conception of content of teaching and students' cognitive capabilities and motivation. Therefore, it is very important to do research on the three teaching conceptions to find better way to improve teaching learning process in English class.

In vocational education, English language courses must relate to English communication in the workplace. The lecturers are required to teach practically 60% and theoretically 40%. It means that they train the students to communicate more instead of teaching them English grammar theory. However, teachers' conception and their realization model in vocational educations are still unknown. Therefore, it is very crucial to do research on the model of teachers' conceptions and their realizations in English classroom interaction in vocational education.

Moreover, the teaching conceptions and their realizations must be affected by some factors. It is also important to see how teaching conceptions and realization are carried out that way. Thus, this research also will find out the factors affecting teachers' conceptions and their realizations.

Models of conceptions of teaching in this study are the pattern of teacher's belief, value, attitude and perception in his or her mind. Meanwhile, models of realization in this study is considered as the implementation of the given input and output behaviour in the English classroom interaction in vocational education. In

other words, this is a pattern of students and teachers' behaviour that is realized or implemented in English classroom. The model is derived from teachers' perception. By focusing on the realization model, the pattern of classroom interaction in English classroom in vocational education will be found. If the model of conception of teaching and the realizations are found, the problems in the classroom are easier to identify; furthermore, class interaction and students' achievement can be improved.

During these years, there were many theories and research have been implemented in English classroom at Politeknik Negeri Medan. Unfortunately, the outcome is still far from the expectation which is written in minimum criteria in Academic Regulation Book. The research conducted in English class should at least improve alumni's TOEIC score, not another way around. Therefore, it is very important to investigate teacher's conception of teaching in English class because the first thing that English teachers bring to the classroom is their conception about teaching.

Referring to the description above, and going beyond theoretical justification, the model of teachers' conceptions and their realizations take an important role in classroom interaction which contribute to their success. Especially in vocational education, it is important to see the model of teachers' conception of teaching English and their realizations in classroom interaction. Therefore, the title of this study is "**Realization Models of Teacher's Conception of Teaching in English Classroom Interaction at Politeknik Negeri Medan**".

1.2. The Focus of the Study

This study focuses on realization model of teachers' conception of teaching in English classroom interaction in vocational education. The objects of teacher's conception in this study are limited to conception of process of teaching, content of teaching, and student's cognitive capabilities and motivation. The realization model refers to model of how teacher's conception of teaching is implemented in English classroom interaction. English teachers in this study are teachers or lecturers who are teaching English in vocational higher education in Indonesia. Instead of 'lecturer', the word 'teacher' is preferably used in this study because this refers to the actor or doer of teaching. English teachers at Politeknik Negeri Medan as vocational educations are the main focus in this research.

1.3. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the purpose of study in this dissertation is to investigate the realization models of teachers' conception of teaching in English classroom interaction at Politeknik Negeri Medan. Thus, the problems of the research can be derived into three main questions as follows.

1. What conception of teaching do the English teachers have in the classroom interaction at Politeknik Negeri Medan?
 - a. What conception of teaching do the English teachers have about Process of teaching?
 - b. What conception of teaching do the English teachers have about Content of Teaching?

- c. What conception of teaching do the English teachers have about Student's cognitive capabilities and motivation?
2. In what models are the conception of process, content, and student's cognitive capabilities and motivation realized?
3. Why are models of the conception of process, content, and student's cognitive capabilities and motivation realized as the way they are?

1.4.The Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the teacher's conception and the realization model of teachers' conception in English classroom interaction at Politeknik Negeri Medan. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to investigate three main points as follows:

1. To identify teachers' conception of teaching at Politeknik Negeri Medan, including:
 - a. Identifying teachers' conception of process of teaching at Politeknik Negeri Medan;
 - b. Identifying teachers' conception of content of teaching at Politeknik Negeri Medan;
 - c. Identifying teachers' conception of Students' Cognitive Capabilities and Motivation at Politeknik Negeri Medan;
2. To identify the realization model of teacher's conception of process, content, and student's cognitive and motivation at Politeknik Negeri Medan;

3. To explain why the realization models occur the way they are at Politeknik Negeri Medan.

1.5.The Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is concerned with the realization models of teacher's conception of teaching in English classroom interaction within the context of higher vocational education. The primary focus is on how English teachers at Politeknik Negeri Medan conceptualize the process and content of teaching, and how these conceptions are realized in actual classroom interactions. In Process of teaching, conceptions and realizations are observed based on Conventional-Direct-Recitation (CDR) and Progressive-Discovery-Constructivist (PDC) teaching in accordance with Nathaniel Gage's Theory. The content of teaching is framed within the theoretical lens of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in Cognitive domain. Moreover, the students' cognitive capabilities and motivation is seen based on Gage's theory too. Those are concerned to understand the alignment between what teachers believe about teaching and what they actually do in classroom settings.

The participants of this study are 11 English teachers at Politeknik Negeri Medan, selected through purposive sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate in the research. These teachers were actively involved in teaching English courses and agreed to be observed and interviewed during their classroom teaching sessions. The investigation covers in-depth interviews, document analysis, classroom observations, and retrospective interview during the even semester of the academic year 2023/2024. The classroom interaction observed

refers specifically to face-to-face instructional settings conducted in the institutional English courses provided by the Politeknik.

This study is delimited in several aspects to maintain a focused and manageable scope. First, the participants are limited to English teachers only, and do not include other subject teachers or student participants. Second, the data collected focuses on teacher's oral statements, oral classroom interactions and teacher's verbal behaviour. Third, this study does not attempt to measure students' learning outcomes or achievement, as the core interest lies in teacher beliefs and their realization in practice.

Fourth, the findings are limited to the context of Politeknik Negeri Medan and therefore are not intended to be generalized to all vocational colleges in Indonesia. Fifth, the study does not cover online or hybrid teaching, as the observations were conducted in traditional face-to-face classroom settings.

The delimitations were made intentionally to allow the study to explore deeply and critically the complexities of teacher cognition and classroom interaction within a specific institutional and instructional setting. Given the time constraints, institutional access, and the need for in-depth qualitative data, the researcher limited the number of participants and focused on one institution. These delimitations ensure that the research remains rigorous and meaningful within its qualitative interpretive paradigm.

Due to the scope and delimitations of the study, the findings should be interpreted as context-bound insights rather than generalizable truths. Nevertheless, the study provides a foundational understanding that may inform future research involving a larger sample, multiple institutions, or a broader range of teaching

contexts. The in-depth analysis generated through this focused approach may contribute significantly to the ongoing discourse on teacher beliefs, intentions, and pedagogical implementation in vocational English teaching.

1.6.The Significances of the Study

This study is about model realization of teachers' conception in vocational education. The research of teachers' conception is not a new thing in English Language Teaching, however, this kind of research in vocational education is something rare. Therefore, the results of this study give significances both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the findings of the study are expected to be useful as follows.

1. The findings of this research contribute to theory of Teaching especially Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) related to English Language Teaching in higher vocational education in Indonesia.
2. The findings also update the theory of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is implemented in Non-English classrooms.
3. The findings of the study enrich the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) for adult learners since this theory related to teacher's conception as factors affecting SLA.
4. For researcher, these are useful for the coming researchers of English Language Teaching as literatures.
5. For the readers whose interest related to research, this can enlarge their knowledge and understanding about teaching English in vocational education better.

Practically, the findings of the research can be used as follows.

1. The findings of this research are very useful for English teachers and lecturers in vocational education. These can be useful to improve the quality of English teaching learning process.
2. For curriculum developers, the findings are useful to decide what method and materials are best suited with teacher's conception in vocational education to improve the learning process and students' outcome.
3. For the institutions, this is important data for improving English teachers' quality and English subject curriculum which give significant impacts on English class interaction and alumni's English competence.
4. For the Government, the findings of the research can be taken as the base for doing educational reformation in English teachers and classroom and for making new policy and regulation to improve the quality of English classes in vocational education in Indonesia.

1.7. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of avoiding misunderstanding, the following terms need to be operationally defined.

1. **Teacher** is someone who conducts "teaching" in classroom. The word "teacher" in this study is preferably used, instead of "lecturer" because this is to emphasize the actor or doer of teaching activity.
2. **Teacher's conception** refers to teacher's understanding and belief toward teaching.

3. *Conception of Teaching* is understanding and beliefs in the process of teaching, content of teaching and students' cognitive capabilities and motivation.
4. *Conception of Process of Teaching* refers to teacher's conception on how teaching happens, what teacher and students say and do, what experience as they see and hear the teacher and their classmates in the classroom.
5. *Conception of Content of Teaching* refers to teacher's conception on subject matter taught in the classroom as the objectives of teaching.
6. *Conception of Students' Cognitive Capabilities and Motivation* refers to teacher's conception of students' intelligence, prior knowledge and motivation.
7. *English Classroom Interaction* refers to English language teaching and learning process conducted by English teachers in Politeknik Negeri Medan.