

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Reading materials play an important role to the English Language Teaching (ELT). This statement is supported by Harsono (2007). He stated that learning materials is one of the very crucial elements that has to exist to conduct teaching/learning activities. English reading materials are required in order to improve reading skill of students, especially vocational students.

A vocational school is a school in which the students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job. Vocational students need to be prepared to enter the working world after they graduate and should have some special abilities to support their knowledge. In Indonesia, the government encourages the graduates of junior secondary level to proceed to vocational school. This encouragement is intended to prepare the human resources that are ready to work in order to reduce unemployment in the productive age and reduce the number of poverty.

One of Private Vocational Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Swasta: SMKS*) is SMKS Jambi Medan located in Jalan Pertiwi No. 116 Medan Tembung. SMKS Jambi Medan has two skill programs, namely Office Administration and

Accounting. In accounting skill program, the principal of SMKS Jambi Medan, Drs. Albiner Simbolon, expects that the students can be skilled labors or job creators in the field of Financial Accounting, Taxation, and the operation of Accounting Application, Myob (*Sumut Pos*, 2011). He realized the importance of English for students of accounting. Therefore, he instructed English teachers to open the conversation class as an intracurricular program besides English subject in the school. The conversation class is expected to assist students in increasing their English speaking skills. But the real fact is from the view of the teacher in the conversation class, Indah Sari Lubis, S.Pd., she should teach them the basic English such as irregular verb, because when the teacher explained a material related to the vocational school syllabus, they have a problem in comprehending the irregular verb. In solving this problem, she always asks them to memorize five vocabularies of irregular verbs and its translations everyday and the next day, they will pronounce it in front of class. When she was asked about the percentage of students who have good English skills, she said that only 10% of all students of accounting have it. She also added that the lack of vocabularies is still shown by the students of accounting in spelling the words, even a basic word such as *chair*. This reality shows that the students' motivation in learning English is still low because the basic English should have been comprehended in junior high school level, but they have not master it.

Based on the realities above, it can be concluded that the learners' motivation and the lack of vocabulary are the problems in English teaching-learning process. In solving the learners' motivation, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in this case, English for Accounting is extremely needed in order to increase their motivation. It is supported by Chen (1993) which stated that ESP will be more motivated, benefit, and effective in increasing students' learning motivation because it relates to their fields of the study and caters to their needs. From his statement, it can be assumed that the materials which concern to the field can increase the learners' motivation. It means, the materials for students of accounting should concern to their field that is accounting.

In order to solve the students' lack of vocabulary, reading materials are extremely needed in order to increase the vocabulary mastery because when the students read the text, they will find many new vocabularies there. In line with Hammer (1998) which stated that reading texts provide opportunities to study language: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the way the students construct sentences, paragraphs, and texts. In other words, the students learn new vocabularies when they read a text. Vocabulary should be taught only in context, never in word lists to be memorized with dictionary definitions (Scheleppregrell, 1986) as practiced by the teacher above. The vocabularies which teacher teaches should be words which are useful for situations in which they encounter English.

The teacher should not give long lists of words each week but focus on useful words that are present in reading passages that students are working it.

The competency standard of reading skill in the national curriculum for third year vocational students is understanding the meaning of interpersonal and transactional written discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of conveying requests and orders relating to the professionalism (BNSP, 2007). Because the focus of the competency standard is conveying requests and orders, this study is focused in analyzing the reading materials of procedure texts. The procedure texts taught by the teacher were from the textbook which entitles “Get Along with English for Vocational School Grade XII Intermediate Level”. The texts seem irrelevant to the competency standard because the existing reading materials do not relate to the students' professionalism. The irrelevant text is *How to Operate a Sony Television*. In the text, for instance, that irrelevant text is describing about how to operate a sony television. This text seems inappropriate to the competency standard for students of accounting because it does not meet with their professionalism that is accounting. The text was too general for them. Further, the materials will not assist them to face their workplace later as an accounting staff, for instance. If associated with the theory of authentic materials, the existing materials, particularly reading materials in teaching-learning process essentially should give the real information or situation related to the students'

field because authentic materials are important tools for use in ESP classes, they motivate and immerse learners in specific areas of the target language in which practice is needed. Beside that, choosing the reading material of accounting should also concern to the language features (the sentence patterns, the technical vocabularies, and the functional words/phrases) , the level of difficulties, and the kinds of genres that should be learned.

Therefore, this study was devoted to studying and designing reading materials of English for students of accounting. In the other words, this research intended to analyze the existing syllabus and reading materials. If the existing reading materials are not in accordance with syllabus and relevant to the accounting students' needs, designing reading materials are really required. The design of reading materials will use Authenticity-Centered Approach (ACA). According to Mishan (2005), authenticity-centered approach is materials-centered and upholds the importance of materials design not only as a professional skill applied by course book writers, but as one used by individual teacher in individual teaching contexts. Simply, authenticity-centered approach is defined as a teaching approach which focuses on the materials, in this case, authentic materials. The teacher gives an authentic text to the students in teaching-learning process.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of the study, the problems of study are formulated as the following.

1. How are the existing English reading materials for students of accounting in SMKS Jambi Medan?
2. What English reading materials are needed to meet with the accounting students' needs in SMKS Jambi Medan?
3. How are the English reading materials designed through ACA for the students of accounting in SMKS Jambi Medan?
4. How are the new English reading materials validated?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In line to the problems, the objectives of the study were to

1. evaluate the existing English reading materials for students of accounting in SMKS Jambi Medan,
2. investigate English reading materials which meet to the accounting students' needs in SMKS Jambi Medan,
3. design English reading materials through ACA, and
4. validate the new reading materials.

1.4 The Scopes of the Study

This study was focused on designing appropriate English reading materials which are relevant to the students of accounting in vocational school, particularly Grade XII-AK 1 students of SMKS Jambi Medan

1.5 The Significances of the Study

Theoretically, this study is expected to produce English reading materials for students of accounting in vocational school, particularly for Grade XII AK 1 students of SMKS Jambi Medan. Additionally, it is expected to provide a good reference in designing appropriate English reading materials for students of accounting in vocational school.

Practically, it is expected to inspire the English teachers in vocational school to select appropriate English reading materials for their students. Moreover, further research is required in order to exploit the best improvement.

