

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country with a tropical climate and very humid which its resources not only merely in natural diversity, but also in cultural diversity that can support the growth of tourism and hospitality industries. Those potential resources make tourism and hospitality sectors become important components of the national economy (Indonesia Travel, 2004). Moreover, tourism and hospitality industries offer excellent employment and business opportunities. The industry is progressing very fast in all parts of the world and is growing to be the largest provider of employment opportunities in the century.

In education and training sector, the number of tourism education programs and facilities in the world is still quite small in relation to the size of the sector despite the rapid growth of tourism (UNWTO, 2002). There are still the needs for education and training at all levels to meet the needs of professionals and management roles, to occupational, skill-specific training programs and a need for standardization in the education and training system to meet demand for skilled labor in the tourism industries.

Regarding the hospitality and tourism education growth, then in 1997 the government founded Medan Tourism Academy (*Akademi Pariwisata Medan: AKPAR Medan*) as one of government tourism schools in Indonesia. But

historically, the first hospitality and tourism education in Indonesia at a diploma level was first offered in Hotel and Restaurant Academy (*Akademi Perhotelan dan Perestoranan : APP*) in Bandung, as a public school and it was followed by the opening of Tourism Training and Education (*Balai Pendidikan dan Latihan Pariwisata*) in Medan. This school had changed its name and program several times until 1997. It is now called Medan Tourism Academy which offers Diploma III and Diploma IV programs and one of the programs is the hospitality management program. The small numbers of hospitality schools, of course, are still inadequate with the growth and development of Indonesia's tourism, as one of the important sectors for the country's economy support. The development of sustainable tourism for Indonesia requires supply of qualified employees, not only for rank and file positions, but also for higher levels.

The graduates of the hospitality students in AKPAR Medan are in the level of secondary labor divisions and competent in doing the supervision and administration. In order to reach that competence, AKPAR Medan should implement the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum (CATC) amended in 2007. The curriculum is designed to be industry based, well-structured and flexible. This curriculum has applicable concept in Tourism where communication is an extremely vital element of all customer-contact and service situations.

Communication for hospitality students, especially the speaking English skill should be mastered by them due to the context and the situation that has been explained above. This kind of skill should be mastered by the students very well not only when they are as the students but also as the workers in industries. But in

fact, in the real industry and at school the students' speaking skill is relatively low. This was expressed by some stakeholders in the hospitality industries that have cooperation with AKPAR Medan under the supervised field training program in which the students in the third and fourth semester having this kind of training program for 6 (six) months.

This kind of condition is also supported based on the data of students' Intake in 2010/2011 in which the students who were accepted in AKPAR Medan also having a low average score which is about 6.1. It means that the students' input in AKPAR Medan also have low basic English. The same fact is also expressed by Pitana (2012), the head of tourism and creative economy resources development board in his opening speech at a seminar on improving of graduates' competence in AKPAR Medan who said that the English skill of AKPAR Medan's students is still poor if it is compared with the skills of Bali Tourism Institute and Bandung Tourism Institute's students, which these kinds of tourism schools are under the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.

The students' poor ability of English speaking skill in AKPAR Medan gives bad influence for themselves. For example, as it is mentioned above, when the students were having the job training, they got some complaints and input from their department supervisors because they were lack of proficiency in speaking English, then it made them having difficulty in communicating and having transaction especially with foreign guests. It often happened, when the students in charged in front office department such as a bellboy, greeter, concierge operator or as a receptionist. Because of the students' poor English, they were

forced to use the code switching with Indonesian language or even used gestures in order to be able to communicate with the guests.

Some inputs are also delivered by stake holders in hospitality industries to AKPAR Medan. They really hope that the quality of speaking English skills of the students can be improved through the cooperation program between the hotel industries and AKPAR Medan because by having the school trainees who are competence in speaking English, it will influence their hotel operations.

Furthermore, from the competitive side of the graduates students also give effects to them. For instance, because of the poor ability of the students' speaking skills becoming a serious challenge for the students to compete with graduates from other countries as nowadays the labor market of hospitality industries is wide open. In line with that statement, Pangestu (2012) said that facing the ASEAN Economic Community 2015 the world needs many hospitality workers; it is more than 5,000 certified hospitality workers needed. On the other side, graduates will have difficulties to get the job because of their lack English speaking skills. Besides, the threat from other countries such as Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and other countries in Asia becomes more intense and more massive since they produce and provide hoteliers with better English language skills.

The problem is how the students could have English language skills, especially spoken English that are so poor and can meet the curriculum and market need? Generally, the hospitality students' lack of English skill is due to the learning process.

To deliver the desired outcome that is consistent with the lesson plan, the learning process involves many variables, such as; input, learning motivation, lecturer, curriculum, learning and teaching activities, assessment system, facilities, references, learning media and learning materials. In accordance, Faturohman (2007) states that teaching and learning activities involve several components including goals, learning materials, teaching and learning activities, teaching methods, instruments, sources and evaluation.

In addition, Faturohman (2007) states that teaching materials are medium to achieve the teaching goals that are consumed by the students. Then Kitao (2009) clearly states;

“Learning materials or teaching materials or instructional material is one of the five components among other (teaching method, evaluation, the teachers and the students of language instructional playing important role in process of teaching and learning). Learning materials are the things “consumed” by the students. They provide competences and skills which must be mastered by the students. They take the central role and function in the instructional”.

According to the above statement, learning material is the core of teaching and learning process. It reflects competencies skills that have to be achieved by the students and it becomes a heart of the teaching and learning processes. Because of that learning materials become vital and centralized.

Related to learning material availability in AKPAR Medan, in the real situation, this academy has lack of books and learning materials availability in its library. The same condition was also described by Wilson (2010), one of the lecturers in AKPAR Medan, who stated that the causes of the poor ability of the

students, were; the lack of hospitality course book, lack of international hospitality textbook and slow adjustment of conventional books to the latest hospitality English book. Based on the data above, it shows that the lack of hospitality English coursebook becomes a serious problem. Therefore, speaking English for hospitality students should be developed to improve students speaking skills and to meet the job market requirement.

Theoretically, one of the alternatives of learning materials development model for English speaking specially for the students of the hospitality is a task-based learning material approach. This model significantly affects the students' speaking ability. Task-based learning material has a variety of features that are helpful in the development of language proficiency. In Task-based approach, learning is developed through performing a series of activities as steps towards successful task realization. By working towards task realization, the language is used immediately in the real-world context of the learner, making learning authentic. Thus, task-based learning material is assumed to be an effective way to improve the students' speaking ability.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Therefore to fill the research gaps mentioned, the problems of the study will be aimed at finding out:

1. How are the existing English speaking materials of Hospitality students in AKPAR Medan?
2. What are the relevant speaking materials for Hospitality students in AKPAR Medan?

3. How speaking materials through task-based learning are designed for Hospitality Management students in AKPAR Medan?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to answer the questions posed in the problems of the study. The objectives of the research are:

1. To know the existing materials for students of Hospitality in AKPAR Medan.
2. To investigate the relevant speaking learning material for Hospitality students in AKPAR Medan.
3. To design appropriate speaking materials through task-based learning for Hospitality students in AKPAR Medan.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study mainly focuses on developing speaking materials through task-based learning for hospitality students in AKPAR Medan which is expected to help the students in achieving their learning objectives and also to investigate the actual condition of teaching and learning process which will be helpful in the process of developing the relevant speaking materials for the students.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to have some significance. First, theoretically this study is expected to provide relevant English speaking materials especially for Rooms Division study program students in AKPAR Medan.

Second, practically, the results of this research may also contribute to 1) students who learn English at AKPAR Medan and who want to master English that they need, 2) teacher/lecturer – as a source of information and references in order to enrich their knowledge and horizon about topics discussed, and 3) other researchers, this research may be as a basic reference or information in order to have further related study.

