CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Reading is an action carried out by the reader to acquire information from the writer through words or written languages. As one of the receptive skills alongside listening, reading performs a vital role in English Language Teaching (ELT). It enables the students to understand the learning materials and improve their knowledge, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. Even further than that, reading can also enhance students' cognitive skills, such as working short-term and long-term memory (Abusamra et al., 2020).

The English language' basic skills are consisted of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. In the English Foreign Language (EFL) countries context, the focus of ELT is usually more on reading skills. It is because English is not used or spoken daily so that the students tend to prefer information in the form of written texts. Moreover, Hidayat and Setiawan (2020:176) imply that reading is a fundamental English language skill that EFL learners must possess because by reading, they can get more information and vocabulary to strengthen their English skills, expand their knowledge and insight in other fields. Indeed, reading is a crucial key to students' success in various subjectts (Qiftiyah, 2020). Hence, having good reading skills will benefit foreign language learners in enhancing their English skills and insights.

As a country that taught English as a foreign language, schools in Indonesia also focus more on reading skills in their learning activity. It can be seen from the dominant activities of reading in the classroom where the teacher usually taught their students to read the materials and answer the questions. After all, in learning

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English, foreign language learners can absorb more knowledge, information and experience through reading (Syamsuddin, 2020). In addition, from school to national examination, reading is the most dominant type of English examination, which requires the students to understand the text and question. Thus, in regard to the position of English as a foreign language in Indonesian context, it is essential to review the essence of English reading and readers in Indonesia (Guntur & Rahimi, 2019).

When it comes to reading, it cannot be separated from the texts as materials. There are at least 13 basic types of text in English. Those texts are narrative, recount, descriptive, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, discussion, news item, review, explanation, procedure, anecdote, and spoof. Each text has different purposes and specific functions that can be applied by the teacher as learning materials in the classroom to improve the English competencies of the students. However, paying attention to the contents of the texts used as materials in the learning process are crucial.

According to Erfiani et al. (2019), the students have to learn using suitable materials with their study program to accomplish a good English capability. In harmony with this statement, Richards (2001) suggests that material should serve the basics of lessons' content, equilibrium of abilities educated, and the sorts of language practice students participate in. Therefore, it is necessary to give proper materials to the students based on their study program. Unfortunately, most schools in Indonesia are not using appropriate materials for their students' majors, primarily vocational high schools.

As one of the secondary school categories, vocational high school has special educational purposes for their students. The students in vocational schools are prepared with specific skills based on their majors to get particular jobs soon after graduating. They are prioritized to master vocational practices so that usually every graduate has expertise in a field. Considering these facts, the materials used to teach the vocational school students should have distinguished based on their study programs, goals and needs in learning. Nevertheless, in reality, the majority of the students in vocational schools are using the same materials in learning English as students in general.

SMK Swasta Harapan Al-Washliyah, as one of the vocational high schools in Sigambal, Rantau Selatan, has only one department, which is computer and network engineering. In learning English, the students in this school are expected to master the four skills of English, especially reading skills in terms of grammar, comprehension, making meaning, analyzing and others. With such demands, the students in computer and network engineering study program really need to be facilitated with proper materials in English reading to achieve the intended goals. Furthermore, they also need to learn English using materials containing technical terms and knowledge of their major in order to be beneficial for them in real life.

Unfortunately, based on the preliminary observation conducted by the researcher in grade X of the computer and network engineering study program by seeing the documents (lesson plan, syllabus and English textbook) used in the learning process, the materials are not designed specifically for some vocational school. Further, the preliminary interview with the teacher revealed that the curriculum 2013 has been implemented in this school. Nonetheless, the teacher did not use the

textbook developed by the government. She uses a textbook entitled "Forward an English" by Erlangga for vocational school Grade X students. Alas, this textbook's contents also have no relation with computer and network engineering students.

Additionaly, based on the interview with the teacher, it is found that the dominant text materials used in the learning process are descriptive texts. The teacher argued that descriptive text is more straightforward than other texts, so it is easier to be learned by the students. It can be proved by the result of the teacher' interview that has been transcripted below.

Interviewer : In reading activities, what kind of text that used the most in the learning process?

Teacher : I think we mostly use descriptive text in our learning process because it is more simple than other texts for the students. They also think it is more easier for them to learn.

However, descriptive texts in the textbook do not have correlation with computer and network and are not advantageous for students' study program. The contents of all descriptive texts are not told about computer and network engineering. In fact, the texts are presented with general topics, for instance, Kuta Beach and Stonehenge.

Kuta Beach

Kuta is the exciting tourist area in the southern part of Bali. Most tourists visit Bali because of its exotic and beautiful beaches. Kuta is located in southwestern Bali, not far from the Ngurah Rai airport. Kuta is one of the world's most famous beaches.

The text above talks about one of the tourist areas in Bali named Kuta. Kuta is a very famous beach known by many tourists from all around the world. Kuta is located in southwestern Bali, near the Ngurah Rai airport.

Stonehenge

People visit Salisbury Plain in Southern England to see Stonehenge, one of the great mystery of the world. Thirty large stones stand in a circle. Some are 50, 000 kilos. Nature didn't put the stones there. People started to build this ancient circle 4,500 years ago.

As described in the text above, Stonehenge is located in Southern England. It is one of the great mysteries of the world. It is not built by nature. Instead, people from 4,500 years ago started to build this ancient circle.

The data above illustrates how the existing materials in the textbook are irrelevant for students in the computer and network engineering study program. The texts are aimed to describe a tourism place and an ancient building. While on the contrary, the students need materials that closely integrated to their study program. In this context, the materials above should have accurately talked about places that have relationship with computer and network in order to give helpful informations and terms related to students' major.

In addition, the English teacher admitted more dominant in the learning process by tutoring and the source of the materials only from the textbook. A particular textbook as learning material that pertinent with students' study program is also not provided by the school. Thus, the students in grade X of the Computer and Network Engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal are in

an unfortunate situation because they have to study English with materials that have no connections with their study program.

Based on the problem mentioned above, the researcher developed English reading descriptive text materials which in accordance with the needs of the students in grade X of the Computer and Network Engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal. The researcher believed that if the students are taught using relevant reading materials, it will be easier to apply them in their real lives.

B. The Identification of Problems

Based on the background of the study above, some problems were identified at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal. The first problem was that the content of the English reading materials was not appropriate with students' study program. The second problem was the learning process often dominated by the teacher, which materials mostly taken from the textbook. Moving from those problems, the researcher developed the existing materials (descriptive texts) in the textbook "Forward an English" published by Erlangga 2016 based on the grade X of Computer and Network Engineering students' needs and syllabus used by applying scientific approach.

C. The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, there were two problems of the study in this research. They were formulated as follow:

1. What descriptive texts materials are needed by the grade X students of Computer and Network Engineering study program?

2. How do the suitable English reading descriptive text materials for grade X students of the Computer and Network Engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal will be developed using scientific approach?"

D. The Objectives of the Study

Following the problems of the study above, the objectives were formulated as follows.

1. To find out the descriptive texts materials which are needed by the students grade X of Computer and Network Engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal.

2. To develop the current descriptive texts materials based on scientific approach to be appropriate with students grade X in Computer and Network Engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal.

E. The Scope of the Study

This research focused on developing the English reading materials of descriptive text for grade X Computer and Network Engineering students at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal based on students' needs and syllabus with the implementation of the scientific approach. The reading materials that developed were aimed at one year of study and involved three descriptive texts about historical buildings or famous places.

F. The Significances of the Study

The findings of this research are aspired to be beneficial both practically and theoretically for all related parties, especially for further studies in ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

1. Theoretically, to provide some information and theories about developing specific reading materials, particularly descriptive texts for vocational schools based on their study program that can be used for further studies.

2. Practically, this research's findings are anticipated to provide some benefits for the teachers, the students, and other researchers.

   a. For the English teachers, the materials that will be developed can be a supplementary learning source in teaching reading descriptive text for students grade X computer and network engineering study program at SMK Swasta Harapan Al-washliyah Sigambal.

   b. For the students, the development of the reading materials is expected to enhance their ability and enthusiasm in learning descriptive texts and make them easier to understand the texts since the materials will be developed based on their study program and needs.

   c. For other researchers, this research can be used as a reference for their research.