

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Foreign languages are an important requirement in the era of globalization (Nasaruddin, 2018, p. 30). This relates to the needs of the world market in trade, education, and employment. In addition, the command to learn a foreign language is also mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاخْتِلاَفُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَاوِنِكُمْ اِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.” (Ar-Rum:22)

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يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّاَقْبَاۗئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا
اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

“O, people! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may ‘get to’ know one another. Surely the nobles of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware” (Al-Hujurat:13)

It can be concluded that learning foreign language is important. Language as a means of communication is useful to achieve goals such as work needs, improving skills, getting scholarships, etc.

English is one of the foreign languages taught in the Indonesian vocational high schools’ curriculum. English in vocational schools is needed to support their skill program. Therefore, learning English in

vocational high schools must be carried out optimally to generate graduates who qualify the needs of the workforce.

The 2013 curriculum learning is based on the concept that learning is a process of developing the potential and character development of each student as a result of the synergy between education in schools, families, and communities (Ratnaningsih, 2017, p. 105). As indicated by the Decree of Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 104 in 2014, the 2013 curriculum learning process provides opportunities to improve students' potential into abilities that increase in knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed in society, nation and contribute to the welfare of human life (Wahyudi, 2017, p. 4). The learning orientation in the 2013 curriculum is student-centered. Therefore, the aim is students can explore independently what they want to achieve.

Nowadays, the English subject in high schools still tends to use teaching materials based on textbooks (Irambona & Kumaidi, 2015, p. 115). The phenomenon also occurs in the English learning process in vocational high school. It certainly degrades the essence of the 2013 curriculum objectives in accordance with the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation that hopes to create independent student outputs in learning. In addition, foreign language learning in the 2013 curriculum is required to build students who have the courage to express their competencies.

Interaction and communication are crucial in the learning process of a foreign language (Myslihaka, 2016, p. 147). The students will be easier to understand learning material through good interaction and communication (Split, Koomen, & Thijs, 2012, p. 460). Therefore, the interactions of students and teachers need to be structured well. It will make the learning process more effective and efficient so that the students can master the English language.

The aims of forming a vocational high school are to create younger generations at the beginning of the workforce that can plunge directly and

be absorbed by the world force (Mahbub, 2018, p. 229). Although vocational high school is on the same level as high school, both have different ways of teaching students, preparing for their graduation output, learning objectives applied, and students' needs. In contrast to senior high school, the vocational high school instead more focuses on applying theory or practice than tends to study a lot of theory.

The need for English must be appropriate with the majors taken by students such as materials, methods, and skill development (Ma'fiah & Sumardiono, 2020, p. 335). However, teachers usually manage classes, use teaching methods even teach materials the same as in senior high school. It can affect the learning outcomes.

In the context of vocational learning, the main basis for learning success is if students have reached the level of expertise in accordance with the program of expertise (Mahbub, 2018, p. 230). Learning English in vocational high school aims to make students have the ability to master the basic knowledge and skills of English to support the achievement of competence in the expertise program.

International Test Center (ITC) reports regarding the results of the TOEIC exams for vocational high school students in 2016, the average vocational high school students were at the elementary level. On a broader scale, the ITC 2017 used the Vocational Institutions English Readiness Assessment (VIERA) revealing that more than 70% of students in vocational high schools are predicted to have not been able to reach the intermediate level (Lee, Wahidiat, & Khurniawan, 2017, p. 52). It reveals there are problems to be solved in the learning process at vocational high schools.

Based on the results of preliminary observations at SMKN-PP Pelaihari showed that students lacked self-confidence and even tended to refuse to apply speaking English in class. The teacher was difficult to ask them using English in the class. The student learning outcomes can measure the level of ability in mastering skills. High school student

learning outcomes can be a benchmark that the learning process is successful. The average of English National Exam scores of SMKN-PP Pelaihari as follows:

Table 1 The Average of English National Exam Scores of SMKN-PP Pelaihari		
Students	Average English National Exam Scores	Year
136	80.58	2015
106	53.51	2016
95	39.39	2017
128	44.13	2018
136	44.49	2019

Table 1 The Average of English National Exam Scores of SMKN-PP Pelaihari

Based on the table data above, the average scores of English subject at the national exam since 2016 has decreased, especially from 2015 to 2016. Although it has increased slightly in the past few years, it can not get close to the previous score. A significant degradation indicates that there is a problem in the learning process so that it impacts on the scores of students. It can be from a degradation of the quality of learning, teacher difficulties in teaching, mismatch of learning needs and facilities, changes in standard competence, changes of curriculum, availability of material, etc. The causes need to be found and analyzed so that it can be handled properly. Even though the abolition of the national exam has been implemented, these scores can still be a benchmark that the process of learning English at SMKN-PP Pelaihari is less successful.

In addition, there are some issues that discuss the competency gap between vocational graduates with the industrial needs. As reported that many vocational graduates are unemployed throughout 2017. One of the factors could influence this phenomenon is the lack of ability of graduates in a foreign language, especially English language skills (Asmin, 2019, p. 263).

As reinforcement, the interview with the English teachers at SMKN-PP Pelaihari revealed several difficulties in implementing English learning in the classroom. The difficulties encountered can be from the condition of the school environment, student behavior, the internal competence of the teacher, etc. The researcher interest to study these problems.

The results of the interview and pre-observation attracted researchers to analyze more deeply how the facts regarding the difficulties faced by teachers in the English learning process, especially at SMKN-PP Pelaihari. Therefore, the researcher will conduct a study entitled “The Analysis of Teachers’ Difficulties in English Learning Process at SMKN-PP Pelaihari”

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researcher will investigate and focus on:

1. What are the teachers’ difficulties in English learning process at SMKN-PP Pelaihari?
2. What are the teachers’ ways in overcoming the difficulties in English learning process at SMKN-PP Pelaihari?

C. Objective of Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this research are stated as follows:

1. To analyze the teachers’ difficulties in English learning process at SMKN-PP Pelaihari.

2. To find out the teachers' ways in overcoming the difficulties in English learning process at SMKN-PP Pelaihari

D. Significance of Study

Theoretically, this result of the study adds to the theoretical study of teacher difficulties in the learning process, especially at vocational school. It hopes that the government can also consider the difficulties reveal in this research to formulate a curriculum renewal plan in Indonesia. The researcher hopes the results will be a reference for the development of teaching materials, methods, and learning approaches in vocational high schools.

Practically, this result of the study will be a reference for further research, especially those related to teachers' difficulties, classroom interaction, and need analysis. This research also explains in-depth analysis about the actual situation of teachers' difficulties in the learning process so that the teachers can overcome the problems faced appropriately. Furthermore, this study can be the information stock to prepare a new teacher in the future so that they can overcome the difficulties.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation of the title, the researcher explains the key terms such as:

1. Teachers' difficulties are referred to the problems that faced by the teachers in teaching English. The teacher in question is an educator in English subjects at SMKN-PP Pelaihari. The difficulties were analyzed in related to the teaching English process such as students, methods, strategies, materials, facilities, and technology.
2. English learning process is an activity to develop students' English language skills during learning at school. The ability of English is also adjusted to the majors at school.