

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introduction that consists of the background of the study, problem statement, object of the study, and benefits of the study.

A. Background

Proficiency in English is considered essential for educational success, and its inclusion in the curriculum reflects its importance in today's globalized world. The accessibility of English education to all students, including those in Vocational High Schools, demonstrates a commitment to providing equal opportunities. Overall, the emphasis on English learning reflects Indonesia's recognition of its significance in preparing students for success in a connected global society.

In vocational high schools, English education is customized to suit the specific majors available. Consequently, teachers are tasked with thoroughly planning the learning process to engage students directly in activities that foster active and interactive participation. This methodology, as outlined by Baedowi (2012), prioritizes student-centered learning, where students are actively involved in various tasks and encouraged to reflect on their actions. The objective is for vocational school students to grasp the practical application of English within the contexts of their chosen majors. Through active involvement in the learning process, students can better understand how to effectively utilize English within their respective fields of study. This approach ensures that students are adequately equipped to apply their English skills in practical situations relevant to their vocational training.

In English learning, proficiency is developed across four core skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Reading comprehension is about understanding the meanings within written texts. Speaking involves expressing various meanings through spoken language, employing appropriate structures and linguistic elements. Writing focuses on conveying diverse meanings through written communication with a communicative intent. Listening comprehension aims to understand the different meanings conveyed in oral texts, encompassing interactions, opinions, and instructional content, while also considering the specific purpose, structure, and language used in oral communication.

It's crucial for everyone to acknowledge the widespread importance of English, which acts as a bridge across various domains like technology, education, politics, business, and industry (Memon & Zarif, 2017). Hence, every teacher aspires for their students to grasp the material thoroughly to understand the English curriculum effectively. In Vocational High Schools, English is regarded as a vital subject studied alongside other disciplines. English serves as a complement to the primary language, Indonesian, which is the mother tongue. Recognized internationally, English holds significance as a global language. Mastering English is key to navigating the modern world, given its pervasive influence in fields like science and technology, which predominantly use English. Therefore, proficiency in English is crucial for everyday life in today's globalized society.

The primary goal of English language education, as outlined by Lu Zhi (2013), is to ready Indonesia's youth for global competition. Language is seen as a tool for scientific thinking, aiding individuals in reasoning systematically and coherently. It serves as the cornerstone of human interaction, facilitating the expression of emotions, desires, opinions, and even thoughts. Proficiency in language enhances communication skills, enabling individuals to effectively convey their messages. Thus, mastering language is crucial for improving communication abilities and preparing individuals for active participation in the global arena.

According to Jacewicz et al. (2009), English is predominantly employed for communication in urban centers and tourist destinations. This underscores the importance of English in shaping social interactions, as contemporary society demands a language that can be understood by diverse groups, including local residents and international tourists. Consequently, schools play a crucial role in developing English proficiency within smaller communities. Nonetheless, numerous students encounter challenges when it comes to expressing their thoughts and ideas effectively in English. Octavianda et al. (2015) point out that challenges often stem from individuals' tendencies to use English less frequently in their daily routines compared to regional languages. The blending of language patterns between English and Indonesian also presents hurdles for students. Moreover, the learning process of English itself contributes to the difficulties encountered.

Sutrischastini and Riyanto (2017) point out that the challenges in learning English can be attributed to factors such as teaching methods, which impact student engagement, creativity, and academic performance, as well as the competence of English teachers. They

propose that fostering innovation and creativity among educators is crucial in addressing these challenges and offers an alternative approach to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

In addition to these factors, the global community's increasing emphasis on learning English is driven by the accessibility of language education regardless of geographical and time constraints, especially with regards to English. This highlights the importance of incorporating foreign language studies, particularly English, within the Indonesian education system, particularly in school environments. Proficiency in English yields numerous benefits for students, as it enhances their skills and comprehension. Moreover, consistent exposure to English learning facilitates easier understanding and better prepares students for competition at various levels, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, mastering English is considered indispensable for every graduate entering the workforce (Ubaedillah, U., Pratiwi, D. I., Mukson, M., Masrikhiyah, R., & Nurpratiwiningsih, 2020).

Ponmozhi and Thenmozhi (2017) argue that rural residents face obstacles in learning English due to environmental factors. Many families in rural areas prioritize regional languages over English, which limits students' exposure to the latter. Additionally, unfavorable family circumstances can distract students from focusing on their studies. Susanthi (2020) adds that students encounter difficulties in English due to their limited understanding of the language and the complexities of English spelling and pronunciation. Vocational High School students face difficulties in acquiring English language skills at the workplace, finding the lessons challenging to comprehend. Their motivation for learning English is lacking, as they perceive it as primarily important for job application writing, leading to disinterest in the subject. Teachers also observe students' relatively low academic performance, partly due to insufficient resources like teaching materials and internet access. Despite teachers' efforts, the curriculum tends to focus on grammar practice for mid-semester exams and class advancement.

The researcher posits that one of the key factors contributing to the challenges in learning English is the environment where the language is practiced. The study delves into the obstacles encountered by 11th-grade pharmacy students at PangkalanBun Muhammadiyah Vocational School when learning English. This research aims to shed light on the factors hindering English learning among these students. Focused on Central Kalimantan, the research selects Muhammadiyah PangkalanBun Vocational School for its

proximity as a KKN-DIK area, facilitating data collection from students and faculty. Moreover, being a Muhammadiyah school in PangkalanBun adds significance to the study. The research is titled " **DIFFICULTIES OF LEARNING ENGLISH BY STUDENTS AT MUHAMMADIYAH VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN PANGKALAN BUN** "

B. Statement of the Problem

In line with the little research, the research problem raised is stated as follows

1. What are the factors that hinder the learning of English by students of class XI Pharmacy at the Muhammadiyah Vocational School in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan?
2. What are the students' perception of English learning method of class XI Pharmacy at the Muhammadiyah Vocational School in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The goals of this research are :

1. To find out the difficulties of eleventh grade pharmacy students in learning English at Muhammadiyah Vocational School, Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan.
2. To determine the students' perception of English learning method of class XI Pharmacy at the Muhammadiyah Vocational School in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan.

D. Significance of the Study

This research is hoped to give the following benefits.

1. Theoretical Benefit

This can be useful as a reference for future researchers who conduct relevant research on difficulties in learning English. This also contributes to exploring knowledge and solutions to these problems.

2. Practical Benefit

- a. To the teacher

This research can be useful as a reference to help English teachers overcome difficulties in learning English.

- b. To the student

The researcher hopes that this research can be useful for increasing students' knowledge, especially those who have difficulty learning English.

- c. To the reseacher

The result here can be used as a reference for other research