CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the introduction of the research which consists of the background of the study, problem identification, research questions, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is basically belonging to people who historically and morphologically use it as their main language (Widdowson, 1994). However, in this modern world, it is supposed to be Possessed by anybody who communicates in English for academic or occupational purposes and for those who currently speak English as a lingua franca to connect themselves to other people in the world with different language backgrounds. The ability to communicate and understand English is now very much needed in various sectors of work and industry, one of which is the tourism industry. Learning English in the tourism industry has started from a very basic level which is generally taught in vocational schools. The role of learning English for vocational school students is to support the main skills related to their future work targets.

The senior vocational high school or in Indonesia is widely known as *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK) was established by the government so that learning can focus on situations needed in the field. In the sphere of education, this is also known as vocational education. Vocational education can be defined as anything designed to prepare students with skills that match the needs of the present

or future work (Russell, 1938; Clarke & Winch, 2007; and Shavit & Muller, 2000). Basically, vocational education is dominated by practical learning activities. The learning activities commonly prioritize practice over theory. It is done to familiarize students in their future work environment. However, the learning process at the present situation must be adjusted to the current conditions related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The learning process in schools, which was initially implemented face-to-face, has been replaced by distance learning or online learning. This was conveyed in the circular of the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia on March 17, 2020 (*36962 / MPK.A / HK / 2020*). In the current Covid-19 pandemic, students may have new needs or problems in their learning activities. According to research conducted by Zaharah, Kirilova, and Windarti (2020), which discussed the effect of Covid-19 on teaching and learning activities in Indonesia, there were several constraints faced by the students in the implementation of online learning. These constraints were related to internet access, students' ability in technology, teachers, and parents' backgrounds.

In this case, an in-depth analysis of the needs of students in their current condition will be very useful. The present study sees the importance of this problem to be studied more deeply. One method deemed appropriate to be used is the application of needs analysis. Need analysis can be defined as an academic process that is used to obtain information related to the subject and learning object. Based on the theory proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the scope of the Needs

analysis can be in the form of the students' needs (necessities), wants (subjective needs), constraints, as well as the learning design and the teachers involved in it.

There are several studies that apply needs analysis as a basis for designing or developing learning materials. As in the research conducted by Basri, Jannah, & Ampa (2016), Kaharuddin & Arafah (2017), Safitri & Baehaqi (2017), and Menggo, S. et. al (2019), who focused their studies on analyzing students' needs for English speaking skills and using them as a basis for developing learning materials. The research subjects of the four studies were university students majoring in English education. In addition, the needs analysis was also applied by several researchers to determine the needs of students in the tourism sector. Research conducted by Prachanant (2012), Yasmin, Sarkar, & Sohail (2016), and Mahardika (2019) implemented needs analysis to assess the needs of students in the tourism department. The subjects of this study were also university students. Moreover, similar research was also carried out by Kaharuddin, Hikmawati, & Arafah (2019), Khalida & Refnaldi (2019) and Asrifan, et. Al, (2020) but the subjects in this study were vocational school students. The objective of the previous studies was to develop the course material for the tourism department.

Based on the results of previous research, the needs analysis was widely implemented as a basic reference for developing learning materials according to students' needs. The majority of these studies were carried out before the Covid-19 pandemic, in which teaching and learning activities were still carried out conventionally or in face-to-face meetings. The needs analysis which was carried out before the Covid-19 pandemic found the needs of students in the normal

situation without being influenced by the pandemic situation which required them to take online learning. The studies conducted during the pandemic may provide different information regarding the needs of students. The previous studies were also dominantly focused on studying university students as research subjects. There was only one study was found that made hotel receptionists as the research subjects. However, it was only limited on finding out their English needs related to language functions and expressions.

To fill the empirical gap, the present study focuses on studies in the tourism department on front office subjects. Compared to the other course subject in vocational school of tourism, the need for English in the front office course is certainly very crucial, which is supporting students' professions in the future. In the initial observation, the study obtained information from English teachers who teach at SMK Negeri 4 Denpasar regarding the problems faces by students in learning English. It was done to find out what constraints were experienced by the students during the implementation of online learning. In addition, it was also done to discover which classes were experienced problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the English teachers, the students in front office classes were needed special attention. They are supposed to be able to practice more in English, both in terms of pronunciation and how to convey information in English. However, English learning activities that should be carried out through direct practice, were obstructed since they cannot hold face-to-face meetings.

The students in the front office class should be able to communicate in English starting from the most basic things related to language functions in English.

This should be studied further to determine the needs of students in-depth, both the needs in the target situation (target needs) and learning situation (learning needs). During the pandemic, there may be other needs for front office staff in carrying out their work. Therefore, the target needs are required to find out what students need in the front office class in the target situation, which in this case is in the hotel environment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, learning needs are needed to find out the needs of students in their learning environment both at school and at home. During the implementation of online learning, students may have other needs or constraints related to the English learning process.

1.2 Problem Identification

The problems that are identified from the background of the study are related to the needs as well as the constraints of the students in learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the learning mechanism in schools, which was initially carried out face-to-face and then turned into distance learning or online learning. SMK Negeri 4 Denpasar as one of the vocational high schools was also experiencing problems in the learning process. Teaching and learning activities in vocational high schools, which are basically more dominant in carrying out practical activities, must be temporarily suspended due to the pandemic.

The analysis of student needs found in the majority of previous studies examines the needs of English for college students. It means that the object was studied in English for academic purposes. Not many studies have been found that implement needs analysis to assess English for specific purposes (ESP) used for

tourism vocational education in the front office course. Moreover, previous research also analyzed students' needs on their English-speaking skills. It is considered too specific for senior vocational school students who learn English from its functions and ways of communicating it.

Another problem found was in the initial observation where the teachers provided information regarding the problems experienced by the students in the front office class. The teachers said that the need of English for the students in the front office class was higher than other subjects such as housekeeping or food and beverage. This is because the task of the front office staff will deal directly with hotel guests. However, the policy regarding online learning makes it difficult for teachers to carry out practical learning activities. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic may also have made changes to hotel policies, especially in Bali. These changes may not be known by the students in the front office class. The role of target needs here will be very useful to find out the needs of students at the front office class in the target situation.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions in this study can be stated as follows;

1. What are the target needs of senior vocational school students during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. What are the learning needs of senior vocational school students during the Covid-19 pandemic?

3. What constraints are faced by the senior vocational school students in learning English during the Covid-19 pandemic?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to identify the English needs of senior vocational school students at the front office course in Denpasar, Bali. This study investigates the students' target needs and learning needs. It also describes out the constraint faced by the students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of this study are as follows;

1. To identify the target needs of senior vocational school students in front office class during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. To identify the learning needs of senior vocational school students in the teaching and learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. To find out the constraints faced by the senior vocational school students in learning English during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic in which the teaching and learning process was mostly conducted online. The limitation of this study was related to the subjects and objects as follows:

1. The subjects of this study were limited to three groups, they were front office staffs, the English teachers of the front office subject, and the

students. There were only two classes and one vocational school participated in this study.

2. The objects were also limited to the needs of students in the target situation, their needs of English in the learning situation, and their constraints during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Students' needs in the target situation were limited to several aspects, namely, reasons for learning English, medium of using English, channel in using English, type of discourse, interlocutors, physical setting, language functions need, and English needed in services.

4. Students' needs in the learning situation were limited to several aspects, such as student's personal information, available learning resources, course setting, students' preference in learning, and students' motivations.

5. Students' constraints were limited to several aspects, including learning performance, English comprehensions, understanding the teacher, online learning, and face-to-face learning.

1.6 Significant of the Study

The findings in the present study are expected to carry theoretical and practical significance.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study will contribute to provide additional information related to student needs in front office subjects, student needs in the learning process, and obstacles experienced by students during the

Covid-19 pandemic. The findings are also expected to be useful as theoretical support for the teachers, course designers, and other researchers who are involved in the tourism vocational school environment.

1.6.2 Practical Significant

The results of this study are expected to be useful for various parties such as:

1. Students

The findings related to the needs of students in the target situation would help the students to know further regarding the use of English for their future job as the front office staff. The students would know the reasons why they need English and the implementation of English in various aspects, such as medium, channel, type of discourse, interlocutors, physical setting, language functions need, and English needed in services.

2. Teachers

The findings related to the needs of the students in the learning situations would help the teacher to evaluate previous learning activities. The teacher would know the additional information regarding students' personal information, available learning resources, course setting, students' preference in learning, and students' motivations.

3. The school

The findings related to the constraints experienced by the students are expected to provide additional information to the school and able to provide solutions to overcome the problems that occurred.

4. Course designer

The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial for the course designer or certain organizations to develop English teaching materials for students in front office courses. It may also be able to help the designers to develop teaching materials that suit the needs of students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Further researchers

The findings of this study are expected to be useful as one of the references for other researchers who are probably interested in conducting a study with a similar topic.