

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem identification, research limitation, research question, research objectives, specification of the product, research significance, assumption, limitation of the development, definition, and key term.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning was not conducted as usual. The government issued many policies to support the learning process from home. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture Circular No. 4 of 2020, regarding the implementation of educational policies in the emergency period of the spread of the Coronavirus, students are not burdened with demands to complete all curriculum achievements for class advancement and graduation. Learning was carried out to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. It focused on life skills education regarding Covid-19. Assignments and activities were tailored to students' interests and conditions and considering gaps in access and learning facilities at home.

Schools in Indonesia use the 2013 curriculum, which aims to respond to an increasingly advanced and growing era. As the times evolve, information technology continues to develop. In addition, in the 21st-century, learning is also developing. Education in the 21st century has several characteristics, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity and innovation. In general, communication can be defined as sending and

receiving messages, news, or information between two or more people, aiming that the messages in question can be understood by each other. In communication, students must understand, manage and create effective communication in various forms and contents orally, in writing, and multimedia. Students are required to know and understand communication tools used in various fields, especially in the development of communication technology. Students are also allowed to use their abilities to express the ideas they have. In this 21st century, communication can be carried out abroad using increasingly sophisticated and developing technological devices. The use of the internet is very helpful for humans in communicating, especially abroad. Many social media, internet networks, and internet applications can be used to communicate. It is an important and good means to train and improve students' communication skills in learning activities. For example, when students respond well to teacher explanations, ask questions, answer questions, or express opinions, this activity is communication in learning activities.

In the learning process, schools play a role in implementing learning in the 21st century, namely improving school policies and skills development plans, developing new curriculum directions, implementing new and relevant teaching strategies, and forming school partnerships at the regional, national, and international levels. In addition, the role of the teacher is very important as a facilitator and guide for students in the learning process. Learning activities are designed so that students understand and can apply this learning in everyday life. Often in class, some students are very critical, ask many questions, and often express opinions. This reflects student curiosity and high critical thinking. If students do this, the teacher should provide opportunities for students to ask

questions, express opinions, and facilitate students to express their ideas. After these activities are carried out, the teacher invites students to conclude what they have discussed and make a joint reflection. Student questions and responses at the HOTS level are a form of students' high-level critical thinking skills.

This 21st Century learning places a greater emphasis on students' ability to perform Higher Level Thinking Skills (HOTS). HOTS can be achieved when students can understand and integrate knowledge with their experiences. Efforts to improve the ability to do HOTS are student-centered and the teacher strategies (Kaur Swaran Singh et al., 2019). Teacher strategies are very helpful for connecting students' thinking skills when learning in class (Kaur Swaran Singh et al., 2019). For this reason, learning must be very well designed to be meaningful and following the objectives of what students need to prepare for their future. Developing higher-order thinking skills is very difficult, especially in learning to write (Nofrion & Wijayanto, 2018). The teacher has problems finding the right time to apply high-level thinking skills in teaching writing. The teachers do not know how to teach high-level thinking skills to some students simultaneously; the teacher is unaware of utilizing and overcoming students' thinking skills. Teaching writing is a complex process that requires time, effort, and practice. Students must go through a complex and routine writing process and keep practicing, making writing a monotonous and boring subject for students.

Maidinsah, Jizad, Wahab, & Osman (2019) suggest that teachers first need to understand what is needed by HOTS. Then, they can only apply this knowledge in teaching HOTS to students, especially when teaching productive skills. Many factors, such as the teacher's orientation towards teaching, such as many changes in curriculum requirements and issues or myths about teaching

writing, hinder higher-order thinking skills (Maidinsah et al., 2019). A recent study by Tan & Halili (2015) evaluating teacher perspectives revealed that teachers believe they did not undergo sufficient training about integrating HOTS in their lessons. Using HOTS in class also requires more than giving students high-level thinking questions; instead, students must be taught how to make thinking visible, which can be done with the teacher's guidance (Tan & Halili, 2015). The method that can be applied to improve students' high-level thinking is making them take responsibility for their learning. This method will encourage participation, critical thinking, problem-solving, various activities, group work, and meaningful interactions (Alsowat, 2016).

Therefore, learning designs must be changed from teaching to learning to remember - to teach to learn to think (Kaur Swaran Singh et al., 2019). HOTS should be an initial habituation activity in the learning process at school. The above facts form the basis of research on the need for appropriate learning strategies to improve thinking skills and student learning outcomes. Students' thinking skills can be seen when students can question problems, reflect, assess, give their perspectives about something, and apply the new information they receive.

So, it is time for teachers and educators to apply new techniques in teaching by integrating higher-order thinking skills in their lessons. This study clearly shows that it is necessary to conduct more extensive research on HOTS and document findings to help future teachers and students improve performance among particularly weak students. If more research is done on HOTS, the effect will be clear, resulting in more appropriate teaching strategies to improve English language competence and proficiency which are now fading at an alarming rate

among students. It can be concluded that, overall, students have a positive view of the HOTS module in helping them to improve their mindset. This research can also act as a guideline for teachers, especially teachers whose form is lower. This finding is more suitable for weak and middle-level students who will start the learning process. Teachers may need to modify questions and approaches that are appropriate for their students' level of expertise. The findings show that the HOTS module used in this study can improve student learning because it offers an interesting approach to teaching and learning better using HOTS.

Therefore HOTS is an important aspect in the learning process to train students' way of thinking to be more critical in solving problems. According to Alsowat (2016), HOTS is a skill that every person or individual needs in education. For example, in this 21st century, which fostered the rapid development of information technology and communication based on a knowledge economy and an increasingly fast-moving world? Suppose every student or individual does not know HOTS. In that case, that person cannot keep up with the times and hardly behave or critically analyze information appropriate to the current development. According to Raiyn (2016), HOTS skills involve information to determine the problem, evaluate the problem and create solutions that can solve the problem and apply it. If students already understand the HOTS skills, they will find it easier to understand the information received. Teachers can use many media to train students' HOTS skills, including specific application exercise books, photos and videos, etc. According to Northrop and Andrei (2019), smartphones can facilitate the learning process to access various language and vocabulary applications, which can improve students' HOTS and can be applied in classroom learning. More and more students practice to



improve their HOTS skills, so students will quickly get maximum learning results and following what is expected. The teacher must also know what HOTS attachments need to be taught and preparation methods and strategies to learn to think critically. The teacher can also motivate students so that students get maximum results.

The study took data from one of the schools in the Buleleng Singaraja Regency. The researcher interviewed an English teacher whose SW was initially (29 July 2020). In addition, to become an English teacher, the teacher also works as a homeroom teacher at the school, the teacher acts as an English teacher and the homeroom teacher. The teacher gives information that in her school there are no English teacher who only teaches English subject. As the homeroom teacher at school, the teacher teaches all subjects except subjects of religion and sport. The teacher also provides information to the researcher that English lessons are no longer included in the compulsory subjects. English lessons are subjects that are not required to be taught in school. She teaches English once a week and with 2 hours of learning, or equal to 70 minutes a week. When the teacher teaches English, the teacher has guidelines which are books given by the school only. The book contains material that the teacher will give to practice the questions and several other explanations. Teachers use books provided from the school for temporary guidance in giving questions during the midterm in providing material questions and exercises. Teachers look for questions on the internet and other sources. At the end of the semester exam, questions are given from the school. In teaching, teachers have a syllabus based on KTSP, not in the 2013 curriculum. The teachers in these schools in teaching English do not use syllabus references because English learning does not include compulsory subjects. Only books that

are obtained from schools are used only and compile material directly from the manual only.

In teaching grade 4 elementary school students, not all teachers know and understand what HOTS is. Many teachers do not know about the explanation and use of HOTS. The government has conducted English teacher training on the HOTS system for primary schools, but not all teachers can conduct training. The government conducted the training, but only 1 English teacher could participate in the training to represent his school. But with this training, most teachers are reluctant to attend training because, at that school, the teachers think that conducting training cannot improve their position. In addition, the teacher said that the HOTS application was difficult to apply to students. During English lessons, the teacher only gives a game to introduce English learning to students. Students only want to learn English by playing games because learning English is very difficult and boring. The teacher has given exercises to students and used the HOTS technique, but students are very difficult to understand what the question means. When given exercise questions about HOTS, students ask the teacher about the meaning of the problem and ask the purpose of the problem. The teacher concluded that students were difficult to be given activities or exercises containing HOTS from the practice questions given to students. But sometimes, the teacher also gives training questions to students based on HOTS. Hence, students know more challenging activities and the teacher can know the extent of thinking ability possessed by students. In this school, new students get English lessons from grade 4 to grade 6 only.

In addition to finding information from one public school in Buleleng Regency, the researcher also looked for information data from another public school not far from the first school. The researcher interviewed one of the teachers in the school who was an English teacher and did not simultaneously become a homeroom teacher and was originally a BR (30 July 2020). This teacher only teaches English, not teaching other subjects. In this school, English teachers get training so that English teachers in the school know what HOTS is about and how to apply it to students. At school, students have been given English lessons from first grade to grade 6th. First grade to grade 3rd are the stage where the teacher introduces English lessons to students. In introducing English lessons, the teacher provides vocabulary; the goal is to know the meaning of these words. After that, grades 4th to 6th start providing related material from C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, to C6. After the teacher gives the material to students, the teacher gives practice questions about the material that has been given. When the teacher gives HOTS-based questions, sometimes students can do it, but sometimes students also ask the teacher when he does not understand, and the teacher will tell and guide students so students can understand the purpose of the problem. Students can understand and can work on HOTS questions given by the teacher because the teacher has given English lessons to students from grade 1 to grade 3 in elementary school, and grades 4 to grade 6 the teacher introduces students' thinking at a high level and trains high-level student ways of thinking.

It can be concluded from two different sources and schools that learning English by applying HOTS is not all the same in 1 district of Buleleng. Significant differences can be seen from the teacher's knowledge about HOTS



and the provision of English lessons in HOTS-based classes. From the information obtained by the researcher, it can be concluded that before the teacher gives an explanation of HOTS and the activities that will be given to students, the teacher must know the whole about HOTS. There are many ways for teachers to know and understand HOTS, by being given training by the government and related schools, reading information about HOTS, and finding other sources about HOTS. If the teacher is already familiar with HOTS, the teacher will design activities that will be given to students. After that, the teacher can explain and give examples to students. After students understand the explanation and examples of HOTS, the teacher can give HOTS-based questions to students. HOTS-based practice questions are useful, so students understand and understand more about higher-order thinking skills. In addition, with two information obtained by the teacher-researcher, the teacher should be given more training on HOTS and how to develop HOTS using learning activities based on HOTS.

### **1.2 Problem Identification**

In learning, elementary school students, teachers have different ways of teaching. Before starting learning, teachers must prepare the materials to be taught, and teachers also design the lessons that will be given to their students. Designing learning makes students do not feel bored in following the lesson. A problem that is often found in learning is that teachers cannot develop activities, especially in HOTS learning. Many factors can affect why teachers cannot or struggle in developing HOTS-based learning activities. Because of these problems, the researcher interested in knowing more about developing activities, especially in HOTS learning. So in this research can be useful for teachers to

know how to develop HOTS learning activities, especially on students in Grade 4 first semester.

In this study, the researcher sought information sources from two different schools in Buleleng Regency, and the teachers interviewed were also different. In school A, the teacher provided information that English lessons at the teacher's school were not compulsory subjects. There is no English teacher in school A, the homeroom teacher becomes the English teacher. The teacher at school A said that she relies on textbooks and the syllabus if she teaches English lessons. Learning English is applied once a week for two hours of lessons or about 70 minutes. When learning is taught, teachers tend to provide more games so that students are interested in learning English, so that in school A, learning English using the HOTS-based method cannot be applied. In addition, the English teacher at school A did not understand HOTS-based English learning. The researcher concluded that learning English using the HOTS-based method had not been implemented in school A because not all teachers knew HOTS-based learning so that learning English using the HOTS-based method could not be implemented.

The researcher was not only looking for one source of information, but also looking for information in school B. School B is also located in Buleleng Regency, which is not far from school A. In school B, there is an English teacher who specializes in teaching English. The teacher at school B informed that the English teacher at the school had received training on HOTS-based learning so that the English teacher at school B could apply HOTS-based English learning to students. The teacher in school B teaches using the books given from the school and the syllabus. In school B, students have received English lessons from grade 1 to grade 6. Students are taught basic English material in grade 1 to grade 3, and in

grade 4 to grade 6, the teacher provides material based on C4, C5, and C6. When the teacher provides HOTS-based material in grades 4 to 6, sometimes the teacher guides students to work on questions to do HOTS-based learning. From the information obtained at school B, the researcher concluded that HOTS-based English learning could be applied in school B.

### **1.3 Research Limitation**

As described in the identification problem, the researcher also limited the research that he made. The researcher selected a fourth-grade elementary school object in the first semester. He considered that in elementary school learning activities in the fourth class in the first semester activities were very interesting, especially in learning activities based on HOTS skills. He found out about the basic competencies of one of the teachers in Buleleng Regency, who taught in the fourth grade, as well as guardian teachers. He conducted the study on two different fourth-base English teachers. Those teachers were ready to be interviewed by the researcher and willing to provide data in the form of a syllabus. Syllabus is used to be a reference in teaching and learning activities. The syllabus is described in several learning activities, from study activities in the syllabus and field data obtained by researchers in interviewing teachers. From the interview, it can be concluded that the data in the field does not correspond to learning activities based on the syllabus. From the data, the researcher conducted the study and made the final product in the form of HOTS-based learning development design, especially in elementary school fourth graders in the first semester. This study was done in six months.

### **1.3 Research Question**

In line with the background of the study, the research question of the study is:

1. How to develop HOTS-based learning activities for the fourth-grade first-semester elementary school students?

### **1.4 Research Objective**

#### **1.4.1 General Objectives**

The general objective of this research is to design and develop HOTS-based English learning offline, especially for grade 4 Elementary School students in the first semester.

#### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

To identify the developed HOTS-based English learning activities quality for grade 4 Elementary School students in the first semester.

### **1.6 The Specification of the Product**

The specification of the research product is formulated as follows:

1. The HOTS-based English learning activities for the grade four elementary school students in the first semester are designed to be used by the teacher in elementary school.
2. The first semester's HOTS-based English learning activities for the grade four elementary school students contain exciting and authentic learning activities.

## **1.7 Research Significance**

### **1.7.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study contributes to HOTS-based English learning activities for fourth-grade elementary school students in the first semester.

### **1.7.2 Practical Significance**

#### **1.7.2.1 For the Readers**

This study is expected to provide readers with an understanding of what HOTS is, what theories are developed, the realities of society, and how it develops critical thinking and is developed in HOTS-based English learning.

#### **1.7.2.2 For the Teachers**

With this research, it is expected that teachers will be more familiar with what HOTS skills are. Teachers can develop student thinking to be more critical in HOTS-based English learning and apply it to students through the questions and problems given to measure student competence.

#### **1.7.2.3 For Indonesia Government**

The government can use the results of this study as it is even more active in providing training to teachers on HOTS so that teachers know, understand, and can apply it to students.

#### **1.7.2.4 For the Students**

The study is the students are expected to have good skills, knowledge, and attitudes. It is expected that students can have a high level of thinking ability in solving problems.



## **1.8 Assumption and the Limitation of the Development**

Textbook and teaching materials are currently used to identify activity topics used for worksheets and design HOTS-based English learning development activities, especially in grade 4 Elementary School in the first semester.

- a. The product is designed and developed based on the syllabus textbook and the characteristics of grade 4 Elementary School students.
- b. The products were designed and developed only for grade 4 Elementary School in the first semester.

## **1.9 Definition and Key Term**

To avoid misunderstanding, the key terms used in this research are explained as follows:

### **1.9.1 Conceptual Definition**

According to (Prahani et al., 2020), 21st-century learning and the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 require human resources with competency standards for students directed at high order thinking skills (HOTS) and innovative learning, including critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, literacy, collaboration, decision making, creative thinking, responsible, and able to learn independently. Based on these competencies, education in Indonesia has a significant role in striving for the quality of learning processes and outcomes following the demands of the 2013 Curriculum and KTSP, including HOTS-based student learning processes and outcomes through effective and efficient learning.

According to the Cambridge English Language Knowledge Test Teaching, The University of Cambridge (2015), Higher-Order thinking skills (HOTS) are cognitive skills such as analysis and evaluation that can be taught by teachers to students (Wijayasari et al., 2020). HOTS is related to the ability to solve problems, think critically, and think creatively. Higher Level Thinking Skills (HOTS) are significant in teaching and learning. Thinking skills are very important in the educational process. A mind learner can influence learning ability, speed, and learning effectiveness. Therefore, thinking skills are associated with learning methods. (Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020)(Wijayasari et al., 2020).

### **1.9.2 Operational Definition**

High Order Thinking Skill is very important because it gives students the competence to compete and excel in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. Therefore, the urgency of HOTS must be truly strengthened through innovative learning models in Indonesia. It is strengthened by the results of research that show that the learning process still uses the Teacher Center and emphasizes more on transferring knowledge so that it has not been able to materialize students can construct knowledge. The low HOTS of these students is thought to be related to the learning process used. The learning model used, namely the conventional learning model, cannot

facilitate the development of HOTS-based student learning outcomes, so it can be suspected as the cause of the low learning achievement. Therefore, improving the quality of student learning outcomes in Indonesia under the demands of the 2013 Curriculum and KTSP in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and facilitating the learning process of HOTS-based student learning outcomes effectively and efficiently learning, alternative solutions need to be sought. One alternative solution to the problem, among others, is to develop innovative learning models that can enhance students' HOTS.

Muhadjir Effendy, the former Minister of Education and Culture, said, "Education in Indonesia still needs to be strengthened in using higher-order thinking skills as one of the international standards recognized by Indonesia. HOTS standards involve many elements in education, starting from improving content, methodology, learning, teachers, student readiness, facilities, and infrastructure. The implementation of HOTS in Indonesia is currently limited to an assessment of the HOTS model for UNBK. This is a challenge for teachers and students, while learning still uses concepts as usual, but when faced with UNBK questions, students must use HOTS to answer them. If you pay attention, there is a kind of gap that could occur. This difference can be minimized if, in daily learning practices, teachers and students are accustomed to applying HOTS.