# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, operational definitions, and the organization of the study.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

The 2013 curriculum has been underway since July 2013 in schools limited for grade I, IV, VII, and X (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 32 Tahun 2013 & Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan No. 81a Tahun 2013). The 2013 curriculum uses three main learning models (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia Nomor 103 Tahun 2014) which are expected to shape the scientific behavior and social behavior, and to develop a sense of curiosity of the students. The models are problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery/inquiry-based learning.

The 2013 curriculum recommends these models of learning to be used in the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Based on those three models suggested in the 2013 curriculum, discovery learning is the most suitable models of learning for the teacher to teach spoken production of descriptive texts (Jusczyk, 2000:25; Budiastuti, 2007; Gómez Burgos, 2015). Discovery learning informs students on how a particular language forms the functions, the way the form is used in native language, and how the features of a given form works to convey meaning (Ahour & Mostafaee, 2015). This process of learning has brought an increased interest to the students as learners in general and as language learners in particular (Bartlett & Burton, 2007:118). This approach changes teacher mindset from teacher-centered into students-centered in learning activities (Garrett, 2008).

Subsequently, there is a central reason the government proposes to implement discovery learning in the 2013 curriculum classroom activities. The

1

instructor focuses on the strategy which is not interesting for the students to learn in the classroom, due to monotonous activities (Budiastuti, 2007). She had a notion that the teacher only absorbs on conceptual knowledge, grammatical concepts, the textbooks, or written language. This process make the students get difficulties to describe objects orally, although they have been given an explicit background knowledge about the texts (Nasution, Zainil & Kusni, 2013). They can not make good grammatical sentences while describing object and producing an appropriate spoken production to the target language (Budiastuti, 2007). It has affected their spoken production competence.

In addressing this statement, previous studies on teacher-centered approaches have criticized that teaching practices (teacher-centered) seem to be remarkably stable at all levels of schooling through many decades, despite improvements in teacher education and inputs of scholarly knowledge (Aun, 1994; Garrett, 2008). Sawant and Rizvi (2015) also mention that teacher activities using a same approach will make students passively receive the information about the subject matter or academic material. To put it simply, the teacher needs to change their mindsets from teacher-centered learning or traditional learning into students-centered or autonomous learning. The most appropriate methods to recommend by the government as mentioned in the 2013 curriculum is discovery learning.

Discovery learning is well-known as a constructivist-based approach. According to Bruner (1961:24), "discovery in learning has precisely the effect upon the learner of leading him to be a constructivist, to organize what he is encountering in a manner, not only design to discover regularity and relatedness, but also to avoid the kind of information drift that fails to keep account of the uses to which information might have to be put". This means the constructivist approach makes the students learn more effectively by constructing their own knowledge. It is a learning approach where the students take an active part in the

learning process in which they have a maximum measure of freedom and self-determination.

Discovery learning was introduced by Jerome Bruner in the 1960's. This popular theory encourages learners to build on past experiences and knowledge, use their intuition, imagination and creativity, and search for new information to discover facts, correlations and new truths. Learning does not equal to absorbing what was said or read, but actively seeking for answers and solutions. Additionally, Heydari states that

> Discovery learning contributes to the development of such cognitive skills such as connecting, generalizing, and hypothesizing, helping learners to become better monitors of their own and other peoples output, helping learners to become independent and autonomous, helping learners to develop positive attitudes towards the TL, and equipping the learners with the means to gain more from their language exposure outside of classroom and after language course is of paramount important to discovery learning. (2015:11)

With regard to the teaching spoken production for students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the discovery learning emphasizes the students' contribution through active learning and autonomous learning of the target language. The active participation of the students in learning process is to engage learners become good thinker, hearer, and to require them to find out the information, not informed. As quoted in Ahour and Mostafaee (2015), foreign language education stresses the significance of the students' own contribution to their language learning through initiative-taking and active involvement. This means, students as learners and language users need to take charge of their learning in order to enhance their autonomy.

There is positive impact of using discovery learning in teaching and learning English. Research has been done on discovery learning related to teaching English as a Foreign Language. One of them is from Ögeyik (2011) who focused on the using of discovery learning method for teaching poetry and linguistics items. It was found that discovering explicit knowledge in poetry will raise learners'

awareness and make them learn linguistic items within a context. Rahmi and Ratmanida (2014) investigated the use of discovery learning in teaching reading report texts. The results indicate that, the teaching and learning implementing procedures (stimulation, problem statement, data collection, data processing, verification and generalization) of discovery learning enrich the fundamental knowledge and vocabulary of students, motivate them to learn, increase students' curiosity, make students more creative, teach them knowledge at the same time in the four language skills and increase the confidence of students.

Though there have been numerous studies conducted overseas, the issue of teaching spoken production of descriptive texts has not much been explored in the Indonesian context. In line with that, Hanafi (2015) also tried to find the effect of discovery learning models on students' listening outcome in the 2$^{nd}$ semester of 10$^{th}$ grade 5$^{th}$ science class at public high school. The result showed that the implementation of discovery learning with three phases of listening can improve students' listening skill along with their social attitude.

Based on the background above, there are positive results of the implementation of discovery learning in teaching English as a foreign language; thus, inspiring the present study to fill the gap in conducting research which aims to discover vocational high school English teachers in implementing discovery learning (DL) for teaching descriptive texts. The implementation includes how the stages of discovery learning for teaching spoken production of descriptive texts implemented in classroom, the teacher opinions about the implementation of discovery learning comprising the strengths and the weaknesses, and the students' attitude toward the implementation of discovery learning in producing a spoken descriptive text.

## 1.2    Research Questions

The research focuses on the following questions:

1.    How is descriptive text taught through discovery learning?

2.  What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation discovery learning in teaching spoken descriptive texts as perceived by teachers?

3.  What is the students' attitude toward the implementation of discovery learning in teaching spoken descriptive texts?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims:

1.  To describe the process of implementing discovery learning for teaching descriptive text in a vocational high school.

2.  To investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of discovery learning as perceived by teachers in teaching spoken descriptive texts.

3.  To find out the students' attitude toward the implementation of discovery learning in teaching spoken descriptive texts.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

By writing this study, it is hoped that the result of this study would be contributory on several aspects; theoretically, practically, and professionally.

*Theoretically*, this study is expected to enrich the literature on language learning strategies in teaching speaking which still receives a little attention in Indonesian EFL context. *Practically*, this study would provide students with the information related to appropriate language learning strategies in developing speaking skill. By using the information provided in this study, it is hoped that the students will gain self-direction. *Professionally*, the result of this study would provide some information to EFL teachers. Thus, it is expected that EFL teachers could support their students' success in providing the reference and knowledge about descriptive text learning by using discovery learning, especially to encourage their speaking skill.

## 1.5 Operational definition

In order to give a clear view on this study, the definition of key terms is provided as follows.

a. *Discovery Learning* (**DL**) is "a type of learning where learners construct their own knowledge by experimenting with a domain, and inferring rules from the results of these experiments" (Van Joolingen, 1998:386). In this study, discovery learning is the method used to teach spoken production of descriptive texts in one of vocational high schools in Koba.

b. **Teaching the spoken language production** is "largely conceived of as teaching students to pronounce written sentences" (Brown & Yule, 1983:2). In this study, students are not only taught to pronounce, but they are also given practices in speaking and listening, i.e. the examples of good spoken English.

c. **Descriptive text** is "kinds of text that social functions to describe a particular person, place, or thing" (Gerrot & Wignel, 1995:208). In this study, descriptive text was used to link the learners' ideas when producing spoken language of short descriptive texts. This shown the listener the message which reflects the speaker's particular style (Jaramillo Urrutia & Medina Gutiérrez, 2011). Descriptive texts are created orally to provide the speaker with enough descriptors to make an idea, message, mentally clear to describe something in a spoken language (Smith, 2000).

d. **Speaking** is "ordinarily a constant movement of the vocal organs, it is convenient to view speech as a chain composed of individual segments, one after another" (Kreidler, 2004:11). When someone is speaking, anyone who is close enough can hear – the sound waves set up in the air by the speaker reach the eardrums of the hearer. But only a person who

knows the language can understand what is said. In this study, speaking or spoken language production is used by the learner to express some expression of descriptive texts in the teaching and learning process.

e. **The Attitude** is "a mental and emotional entity that inheres in, or characterize, the person" (Perloff, 2003:38). In this study, students' attitude is a combination of what the students believe in or expect from certain objects, and how they feel about the implementation of discovery learning for teaching and learning spoken production of descriptive text that is undertaken.

## 1.6    Organization of the study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. First, chapter I introduce the research background and the purpose of the study. It also provides the research questions, and the definitions of key terms used in the whole study.

Next, Chapter II is a review of the most recent literature in the context of discovery learning, descriptive text, and speaking activities. More importantly, it explains several theories related to the foundation of the research, for example, the process of teaching through discovery learning, some definitions related to discovery learning, and so on. Chapter III of this thesis discusses the research methodology which encompasses the research design and method used, research site and participants, data collection used, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

Then, Chapter IV presents and interprets the results of observation checklist, with regards to the implementation process of discovery learning conducted by the teacher in teaching descriptive texts. It further elaborates on the strengths and weaknesses found toward the implementation of discovery learning related to the teaching descriptive text and explores the student's attitude toward the implementation of discovery learning to their spoken production of descriptive texts. Finally, Chapter V of this thesis focuses on the conclusions and

recommendation on using discovery learning for teaching spoken production of descriptive texts related to the research findings.