

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the background of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of the study as well as the significance and the scope of it. The clarification of the terms used and the outline for the organization of this thesis are also highlighted.

1.1 Background of the Study

Limited classroom meeting ideally must trigger every teacher to create teaching strategy to promote their students' autonomy. Autonomous learners will continue to study outside the classroom even though they are not ordered to do so. Autonomous learners should be able to determine the general focus of their learning, take an active role in the management of the learning process, and have freedom of choice with regards to learning resources and activities (Nunan, 2000).

Classroom meeting in vocational school (SMK) level is relatively considered limited due to several reasons. First, that in the second grade, all the sophomores must follow the *praktek kerja industri - prakerin* (Industrial practical training) program for six months in the industries which are related to their programs. For example, students of hotel accommodation program will be assigned to learn and work in certain hotels, students of restaurant program will be assigned to learn and work in certain restaurants, students of hair and skin beauty

will be assigned to learn and work in skin-care centers or hairstyling centers and soon.

The time allotment for *prakerin* is precisely written in the curriculum of SMK, which four hours of practicum working in industry equals to one hour of classroom meeting (See: <http://smkmulia.webnode.com/news/praktek-kerja-industri-dalam-rangka-pendidikan-sistem-ganda-psg/> *Undang-undang No. 2 Tahun 1989 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, Peraturan Pemerintah No. 29 Tahun 1990 tentang Pendidikan Nasional, Peraturan Pemerintah No. 39 Tahun 1992 tentang Peran serta masyarakat dalam Pendidikan Nasional, Keputusan Mendiknas No. 080/U/1993 tentang Kurikulum SMK*).

The second reason is that, if we compare the Standard of Competences (SK) and Basic Competences (KD) required to the available time sometimes is not balanced. Let us take the second semester program (*Prosem*) of 2010 for the first grade as the example. There is only one SK for the first grade, which is *Berkomunikasi dengan Bahasa Inggris setara level novice*. But there are four KDs: *Menjelaskan secara sederhana kegiatan yang sedang terjadi* (22 meetings), *Memahami memo dan menu sederhana, jadwal perjalanan kendaraan umum, dan rambu-rambu lalu lintas* (22 meetings), *Memahami kata-kata dan istilah asing serta kalimat sederhana berdasarkan rumus* (22 meetings), and *Menuliskan undangan sederhana* (18 meetings), so the total meeting is 84 meetings.

From the educational calendar 2010 given by the *Dinas Pendidikan Kota Bandung*, we see that there are 26 weeks in one semester, which is deducted by six non-effective weeks (see the educational calendar 2010), so the total effective weeks is only 20 weeks (20 x 4 meetings = 80 meetings). So, we can see that the time allotment available is not balanced. In vocational school levels, the classroom meeting for English subject is only four hours per week, in which one hour lasts only 45 minutes. It is usually divided into two meetings per week which last 2x45 minutes each. It is a limitation for English teachers because the material needed to be delivered to students is more than the time available.

As stated by Harmer (2007), "to compensate for the limit of classroom time and to boost the chances for successful language learning and acquisition, students need to be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies so that as far as possible, they become autonomous learners." One of the strategies to promote students become autonomous learners is by establishing Self-Access Language Learning Center or it is more familiar with the term Self-Access Center (SAC). SAC is an educational facility designed for student learning with self-directed method. This way of learning is also famous with certain similar expressions: Learner-Centered Approach, Learner Autonomy or Self-Directed Learning.

In the SAC mode, students make important decisions regarding the level, speed, and content of their work. Students also have an opportunity to work in their preferred mode which encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning, thereby helping them to move towards autonomy. Research also

suggests that students have distinct learning strategies and learn best when individual differences are taken into consideration (Gremmo & Riley, 1995).

SAC in this vocational school provides some Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) facilities which can be accessed freely and chosen based on the students' needs and wants. It is expected that the facilities used in the SAC can compensate the limitation of certain classroom meeting.

This vocational school in which the subjects are concentrated in tourism fields (hotel and restaurant, fashion and design, pastry and beauty department) has already provided SAC as one of the students' facilities. The location is on the second floor besides the library building. Even though it is still considered as a very simple SAC, but at least it has been equipped by several learning media used in common SACs, such as internet access, television, magazines, newspaper and so on.

Thus, this study is concerned with investigating the typology of SAC in this vocational school which is compared to that by the experts in order to gain the comprehensive portrait of an ideal SAC. Furthermore, the researcher also will investigate the students' perception on the use of SAC itself, whether it has optimally offered opportunities for learning and how it is valued by them. And at last, the researcher will also investigate the Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) in this SAC, whether it can optimally promote students' autonomy.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

This present study aims to:

1. Investigate the typology of Self Access Center (SAC) which is used in one vocational school in Bandung
2. Investigate the students' perception on the use and facilities of SAC, whether it has optimally offered opportunities for learning and how it is valued by them
3. Investigate whether the Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) activities in this SAC can promote students' autonomy

1.3 The Research Question

In order to accomplish the purposes above, this study is therefore designed to examine the following research questions:

1. What is the typology of the Self-Access Center (SAC) in this vocational school?
2. How do students perceive the use and facilities of the SAC?
3. Can the Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) in the SAC promote students' autonomy?

1.4 Scope of the Study

In conducting this research, the scope is set up in order to specify the study. The first is related to the typology of Self Access Center (SAC) in this vocational school which is compared to that by the experts. The next is the students' perception on the use of SAC in relation to the practical ways in enhancing the students to learn autonomously. They independently choose and use SAC facilities based on their interest and needs, such as finding related resources from the internet to do homework or assignments from their teachers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be of great contributions to three crucial aspects: theoretical, academic and practical aspects. Firstly for the theoretical aspects, the results of the study are hoped to enrich the literature and later enhance the use of Self-Access Center (SAC) which is implemented in many schools in Indonesia. Academically, the significance of the study is to provide readers (especially school managements and stakeholders) information about the result of the evaluation of the SAC use and also the students' perceptions on it in this school. This information will be compared to the theories that are expected may provide comprehensive portrait on the SAC which should be implemented. Therefore, practically, the portrait of SAC may become guidance for the teachers to indirectly guide their students to learn independently in the SAC, and the SAC tutors to give better service for students as the costumers of SAC, which may

influence in enhancing students' autonomy in learning English through SAC facilities.

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis will be organized in five chapters. The current chapter is a general introduction. Chapter 2 describes the theory of Self-Access Center (SAC), perception and students' autonomy. Chapter 3 discusses research methodology, data collecting procedure, and data collecting technique. Chapter 4 elaborates findings and discussion. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis and offers suggestions.

1.7 Clarification of the Terms

To avoid the readers' misunderstanding, it is likely better to first of all define the keywords used frequently in this study.

a. Autonomy

Holec (1981) defines autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning'. Meanwhile Dickinson (1987) accepts the definition of autonomy as 'a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his/ her learning and the implementation of those decisions'. Later, Little (2000) defines it as learners accepting responsibility for their learning and sharing in the decisions and initiatives that give shape and direction to the learning process. It is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action.

b. Self-Access Center (SAC)

Self-Access Center is an educational facility which promotes the approach where students study independently choosing among different resources that are available. SAC is the place where Self Access Language Learning (SALL) conducted. Dickinson (1987) states that SALL is learning a language through the use of a self-contained learning environment which provides an independent study program with readily accessible materials, makes available a form of help, either through answer keys or through counseling, and possibly offers the latest technology.

c. Students' Perception

Forgus (1996) mentions that the process in which human beings extracts information are called perception. Desiderato and Jackson (1976) describe that there are three elements of perception – expectation, motivation and memory- which form a dynamic process. Expectation directs human being perceive something based on the needs. Motivation functions as the energy to determine the perception. At the final process, memory records the perception becomes fact or knowledge that will be used as the guidance to behave or act in his environment. Therefore, students' perception here means also students' need and expectation to the ideal SAC perceived by them.