

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the most crucial English skills, alongside reading, writing, and listening. According to Siahhan (2008:95), speaking encompasses elements such as intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar in communication. It is a productive language skill, meaning it involves generating sounds that convey meaning and can be understood by others, thereby facilitating effective communication.

With technological advancements and the passage of time, proficiency in English communication has become essential. English, as an international language, is crucial for both educational and professional contexts. In the face of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the hospitality industry is expanding with the increasing number of foreign tourists, necessitating skilled human resources.

This demand has led to the establishment of specialized tourism and hospitality programs at universities and Vocational High Schools (SMKs). One such vocational school in Kupang with a hospitality department is SMKN 3 Kupang.

The hotel industry is a sector that continues to grow and has a high demand for labor. By opening a hospitality major at vocational schools, schools can prepare students to enter this industry with relevant skills and knowledge. The hospitality major offers a variety of job opportunities in various fields, such as guest services, hotel management, hotel marketing, cleaning, and restaurants. By opening this major, SMK provides an opportunity for students to acquire the skills needed in the hospitality industry and increases their chances of getting a good job after graduation. If the vocational school is located in a tourist area or city with lots of hotels, opening a hotel department can be adjusted to the needs of the local market.

As students majoring in hospitality at Vocational High Schools, apart from having extensive skills and insight in the field of hospitality and tourism, they are required to have good English speaking skills. Boroujeni and Fard (2013) state that proficiency in English can ensure success in securing employment, achieving academic goals, and enhancing social life. English language skills are one of the main requirements when students majoring in hospitality carry out practical field activities or when they apply for jobs after graduating from a vocational school. Of course, vocational school students majoring in hospitality will carry out practical field activities and apply for work in a hotel or other company as a receptionist, housekeeper, cashier, food and beverage service, and so on.

Sholichah and Ristati (2020) emphasize that mastering English is essential for vocational high school students, as it supports their ability to communicate accurately and effectively in both spoken and written forms. Since guests at hotels and companies often come from abroad and do not speak Indonesian, employees must be proficient in English. Hospitality students with strong English-speaking skills will face no difficulties in providing directions and serving international guests, making these skills crucial for their future careers.

Several experts have identified factors that contribute to the difficulties EFL learners face in speaking English. According to Richard (2008) and Brown (2001), these difficulties include limited vocabulary, challenges in understanding conversations, poor grammar, pronunciation issues, and lack of fluency. Rahayu (2015) adds that hospitality students in vocational schools may also struggle due to fear of making mistakes, pronunciation errors, insufficient grammar knowledge, limited vocabulary, lack of interest in learning, minimal opportunities to practice English, influence of their mother tongue or dialect, and inconsistent practice and discipline.

From the findings of Richard (2008), Brown (2001), and Rahayu (2015), it is evident that each student has unique challenges in speaking English. Addressing these difficulties requires understanding the specific factors involved. Therefore, the current study, "Factors Affecting Difficulties in Speaking English for the Tenth Grade Students of the

Department of Hospitality at SMK Negeri 3 Kupang,” aims to identify the causes of these difficulties and propose solutions. By doing so, hospitality students at SMKN 3 Kupang can better prepare themselves for practical training or employment in hotels or companies.

1.2 Research Problems

This study aims to address the following questions:

1. What factors cause difficulties in speaking English among students majoring in hospitality at SMKN 3 Kupang?
2. What solutions can help overcome these difficulties for students majoring in hospitality at SMKN 3 Kupang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To describe the factors that cause difficulties in speaking English for students majoring in hospitality at SMKN 3 Kupang.
2. To identify solutions to overcome these difficulties for students majoring in hospitality at SMKN 3 Kupang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

a. Scientific Significance

1. The results of the study can be used as a literature review.
2. The study can serve as a reference for other researchers to develop their research.

b. Practical Significance

In this research, the researcher hopes to obtain results that are beneficial for several parties.

1. For Students:

This research aims to help students, particularly those majoring in hospitality at SMKN 3 Kupang, by providing solutions to overcome the difficulties they face in speaking English. Additionally, the application of these solutions is expected to improve their proficiency in mastering English.

2. For English Teachers at the Researched School:

As facilitators in the teaching and learning process, English teachers can use the findings to become effective consultants for students, aiding them in overcoming their speaking difficulties.