

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

In recent years, world has become more heterogeneous and inter-connected in 21st century (Afandi, A., Sajidan, S., Akhyar, M., & Suryani, 2019) and new skills, that are definitely different with those skills in the 19th or 20th century, are needed to be successful in education and workplace in this massively changing and challenging era (Suto & Eccles, 2014). Becoming productive citizens at this era requires some new skills under the term of “21st century skills”. P21 (2019) defines 21st century skills the must-mastered skills, knowledge, and expertise in order to achieve success in work and life. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21, 2019) believes that it is a must for students to acquire the important skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration to be successful in the recent era. There is so much evidence supporting that problem-solving skills are the essential skills needed in 21st century. However, there are still very limited of studies that investigated how problem-solving skills are integrated in syllabuses.

As cited from Suto & Eccles (2014), life has rapidly changing and becoming more international, multi-cultural and inter-connected so that the skills to compete in this era are definitely different from those in 20th century. Eaton (2010) also argues, in education, specifically in language classroom focus in 21st century is no longer relevant with those focuses in the 20th century which focuses on grammar, memorization and learning from rote. Instead, the focus of language classroom in 21st century is on the use language and cultural knowledge to internationally connect with others. The traditional teaching learning practices cannot satisfy 21st century students' needs and interests, while it also cannot develop the required knowledge skills they need to overcome the challenges of the 21st century (Devkota et al., 2017). This matter gives educators challenges to be able to incorporate new essential skills into the lesson to help students acquired the needed skills to compete in 21st century. As the consequence, the 21st century skills incorporation into syllabuses began to be massively studied.

Problem-solving is believed to be needed to overcome the challenges in 21st century (Funke et al., 2018) because people should have the ability of applying their knowledge into new situations. Lesh and Zawojewski (2007) as cited in OECD (2013) argues that problem-solving strength gives an individual a “window” into their abilities to use their basic thinking to face challenges in life (OECD, 2013). Additionally, high-quality education can also develop problem-solving skills to give students a preparation for applying their knowledge in unfamiliar situation. (Binkley, M., Erstad, O., Herman, J., Raizen, S., Ripley, M., Miller-Ricci, M., & Rumble,

2012) added that critical thinking and problem-solving have increased its importance in curriculum in many parts of the world. Moreover, large-scale international assessments such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Skills (ALL) have adopted problem-solving in various forms.

In higher education context, academic discourse encourages students to use language for writing, enhancing problems and understanding issues specifically (Hyland, 2009). Particularly, in English Language Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, “English in Academic Discourse” is taught as a compulsory course. The course expected students to be able to distinguish some features of various academic discourses, specifically research articles, and lectures. This has led the assumption of the possibility of problem-solving skills incorporation in the course.

The incorporation of 21st century skills has been widely studied. Boe (2013) conducted a study to discover the extent of incorporation of 21st century skills into the academic programs of study at a small, private, church-related university located in the southeastern United States. The study was conducted using a survey of 21st century practices to measure the incorporation level of eight 21st century practices (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation, self-direction, global connection, local connection, and use of technology as a tool). The result of the study shown that 21st century skills instruction was available in all eight domains with various levels of instruction or incorporation between domains and

between the specific practices in each domain listed. Additionally, critical thinking and self-direction are proven to be the areas with high student engagement with many of the specific practices reports. However, other areas such as collaboration, creativity, and innovation skill were not being generally implemented.

Another study was conducted by Hamid & Sulistyningrum (2019) which aimed to design ICT competencies – integrated syllabuses of speaking course. The result of the study discovered that the integration of ICT competencies are mostly found in the component of Teaching Method or Classroom Activities and Learning Media in the syllabuses. However, the integration of ICT competencies in the speaking subject syllabuses were mentioned explicitly or implicitly.

The incorporation of 4C skills in lesson plan is also conducted by Radifan & Dewanti (2020). Aiming at describing the incorporation of 4C skills in senior high school English teachers' lesson plan and discovering in which part those skills are incorporated in the components of lesson plan, the study found that 4C skills, including problem-solving, are incorporated in the lesson plan. The study also found that the incorporation of the skills is on four main components of the lesson plan: learning steps, assessment, learning methods, and indicators of competence achievement.

The result of previous studies showed that several 21st century skills such as critical thinking and ICT competencies incorporation have been widely studied. However, less attention has been paid to the incorporation of problem-solving skills

in course syllabus. Since there is less information regarding problem-solving skills incorporation in the syllabus, specifically in higher education context, this study aims to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the incorporation of problem-solving skills in “English in Academic Discourse” course syllabus.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research question is formulated as below:

1. To what extent are problem-solving skills incorporated in the syllabus of “English in Academic Discourse” course in English Language Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Jakarta?
2. In which syllabus components of “English in Academic Discourse” course in English Language Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Jakarta are the problem-solving skills incorporated?

1.3. Purposes of the study

In accordance with the research questions, the purposes of the study are:

1. To describe the extent to which problem-solving skills incorporated in the syllabus of “English in Academic Discourse” course in English Language Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Jakarta.
2. To find out the “English in Academic Discourse” course syllabus components in which problem-solving skills are incorporated.

1.4. Scope of the study

This study focuses only on investigating the problem-solving skills incorporated on the syllabus of “English in Academic Discourse” course in English Language Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The statements on the syllabus that related to problem-solving skills will be highlighted to see the incorporation of problem-solving skills in the syllabus.

1.5. Significance of the study

The result of this study is expected to be significant for English language learning and teaching practices. It is expected to be theoretically beneficial as reference information of the incorporation of 21st century skills in learning and teaching practices. It is also expected to be practically beneficial for educators to be used as additional reference to support curriculum modification in English language education and also expected to be a starting point for further research on 21st century learning and teaching, specifically in higher education setting.

*Mencerdaskan dan
Memartabatkan Bangsa*