

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

In Indonesia, vocational high schools are growing significantly. Vocational high schools offer various specialized majors. There are 128 specialized majors in 10 categories of majors in the Merdeka curriculum (Kemendikbud Ristek, 2022b). According to *Badan Pusat Statistik* (2022), the number of vocational high schools in Indonesia is 14.265 schools, and it is spread in all provinces in Indonesia. By using *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KURMER) as the new curriculum in Indonesia. *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KURMER) is different from *Kurikulum 13* (Taufik & Narawaty, 2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka* focuses on essential material and developing character and students' competencies (Taufik & Narawaty, 2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka* is divided into 2 structures for vocational high school, there are Intra-curricular learning and the Pancasila Student Profile Reinforcement Project. In intra-curriculum learning there are two groups of subjects, the first one is the General group and the Vocational group. English courses in vocational high school are included in the General group. Meanwhile, in grades 11 and 12 (Phase F), the focus of this English subject is on the contextual deepening of material on vocational substance in each specialization program (Kemendikbud Ristek, 2022a).

ESP is different from General English, ESP correlates with learning English relating to a specific field or skill. ESP is for specific purposes for intermediate students who already know basic English. Dudley-Evans and John (1998) also claimed that the purpose of the ESP is likely to be to provide adult learners with the tools they need to succeed in a professional work situation. In other words, ESP is designed for intermediate or advanced students. In line with that (Hutchinson & Waters, 1996) stated that ESP works well for specific needs and changes in language and education with the aim of ESP itself helping the students achieve their learning outcomes as vocational high school students that have skills in a specific field. On the other hand, English General Purposes (EGP) are likely to help learners learn general terms in conversation daily. Students of

Vocational High School (VHS) have to possess the qualifications needed in the occupation, therefore, teaching English in vocational schools should stress the development of communication skills that fit the career (Puspitaloka et al., 2024). Therefore, English for Specific Purposes is introduced in Vocational High School. According to Septiana (2019), ESP teachers need to make their own goals, objectives, and learning materials, unlike general language teachers who follow strict rules from the curriculum. Teaching English for specific purposes in vocational high school becomes a crucial trend at this time, as the students are expected to master the English subject to advance in their professional lives. The education of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is becoming increasingly significant (Fadlia et al., 2020).

Contextually, there are two English teachers from a Vocational High School of Agriculture in Tasikmalaya. Their performance in the English classroom is outstanding, they manage the class well. The researcher did a pre-interview with the participants. The first participant (HF) has been an English teacher for five years. He graduated from the English Education Department and became an English teacher in Elementary School, Junior High School, Senior High School, and now in Vocational High school. The second participant (LD) has been an English teacher for more than five years. She also graduated from the English Education Department, at Siliwangi University. In their point of view, Vocational High School has a different teaching approach, they as a teacher needs to prepare the material to integrate the English language with the content of their major, in their school is Agricultural major. In preparing the material before the class there are some challenges in developing an ESP material. HF's way of developing English materials about agriculture is by exploring basic materials from the *Agribisnis Tanaman Pangan dan Hortikultura (ATPH)* major through YouTube channels. He shows examples of Indonesian YouTube videos that match his majors to his students. Before teaching, he prepares the video and then records and translates the language into English and then he provides material about the English vocabulary conveyed in the video. HF said that there are many agricultural materials on YouTube therefore it is easy for him to find materials.

Meanwhile, LD developed the material by searching for English materials that are relevant to agriculture using articles on the Internet. Thus, performing Barkhuizen (2014) with thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) this study investigates the teachers' challenges in developing ESP material in vocational high schools, some solutions have been offered to help minimize these impacts.

Several research studies have been conducted related to the teacher challenges in developing ESP material. For example, a study conducted by Solihah et al. (2023) entitled Challenges on Teaching and Learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Indonesian Undergraduate Students found that the student's vocabulary mastery was an obstacle during their learning of ESP as they are rare to use that vocabulary in daily. Moreover, due to the limited resources, the lecturers need to prepare before they teach ESP, including finding a textbook or articles about specific fields. Meanwhile, another research investigated the challenges that come up in teaching English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in universities by Septiana (2019) entitled The Challenges of Teaching for English Specific Purposes in Higher Education. The finding of this research is the challenges are from teachers, materials development, and learner assessment errors. Nevertheless, there is knowledge about the English teachers' challenges in developing ESP material for vocational high school students, since the previous study only focused on the teachers' challenges in developing ESP for undergraduate students (Septiana, 2019; Solihah et al., 2023). However, there were no explanations about the challenges that English teachers face in developing ESP material in vocational high schools. Therefore, in this present study, the researcher wants to disclose the English teachers' challenges in developing ESP material for vocational high schools. Consequently, the teachers who would teach in vocational high schools or specific fields will have the best preparation to teach with an ESP material approach.

1.1. Formulation of the problem(s)

The research questions addressed in the present study are:

- 1.1.1. What are the challenges faced by English teachers during developing ESP teaching material for the Vocational School of Agriculture?
- 1.1.2. What are the solutions offered by English teachers in developing an ESP teaching material for the Vocational School of Agriculture?

1.2. Operational Definitions

To prevent potential confusion between the researchers and the reader, it is important to provide clear definitions for the following crucial terms:

1.2.1. Teachers' Challenges in Developing an ESP Material

Teachers' Challenges refer to the challenges encountered by teachers while developing ESP materials for vocational high school students.

1.2.2. English for Specific Purposes Material

ESP material is designed to answer the students' needs regarding specific materials. In addition, focus on the learners is one of the reasons for the emergence of ESP.

1.2.3. ESP Material Development

ESP Material Development refers to the process of developing educational materials and resources for teaching and learning English for Specific Purposes.

1.3. Aims of the Research

The purpose of this study is to find the challenges faced and the solutions that are offered by English teachers in developing ESP teaching material for Vocational Schools.

1.4. Significance of the Study

1.4.1. Theoretical Use

This study will expand the evidence about English teacher challenges and solutions in developing English materials in vocational high schools of agriculture.

1.4.2. Practical Use

This study will provide some information about the use of ESP teaching material in vocational high schools. The result of the research can be used as a reference in implementing the ESP teaching material at related institutions in the future.

1.4.3. Empirical Use

This study will provide empirical data on the English teachers' challenges and solutions in vocational high schools in developing their ESP teaching materials.