

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an extensive overview of the study. It encompasses the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Teaching competency is a crucial part of becoming a teacher. Every teacher should possess standard teaching competence. Akoul et al. (2020) stated that teachers must maintain high qualifications and competencies for educational institutions to offer high-quality instruction and for students to succeed. Competence is a set of abilities that supports and enhances a job's effectiveness or performance. Therefore, teacher competency is the skills, knowledge, and abilities a teacher needs to perform their job (Abrar & Syahputra, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, teachers should meet four standard competencies. They are pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence (The Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14, 2005). The four competencies are very important to ensure that teachers not only master subject matter but also create an effective learning process, build good relationships with students and the community, and become role models who can inspire students. By possessing these four competencies, a teacher can fulfill their role as a quality educator and professional and facilitate the growth and development of students in various aspects of their lives.

While the standard of teachers' competence has been set, there is still a phenomenon where teachers take a position that does not match their educational background. This phenomenon is known as out-of-field teaching: a phenomenon when teachers teach a subject outside of their expertise or educational background (Ingersoll, 1998; Weldon, 2016). Hobbs and Törner (2019) argued that there are many factors that influence why people teach outside of their expertise. One of the most common factors is a lack of qualified teachers (see The Phenomenon of Out-

of-Field Teaching). Roxas (2022) discovered that teachers handle subjects outside their expertise due to a shortage of teachers who match the subjects taught.

This phenomenon affects both students and teachers. Du Plessis (2013) found that students taught by out-of-field teachers appeared to be dissatisfied with their success in learning and felt anxious. This is because the teachers face emotional challenges, such as feeling insecure and anxious (Anselmo & Anselmo, 2024), which affects their students. Roxas (2022) found that out-of-field teachers have challenges when it comes to lesson planning, creating activities, and mastering subjects that are outside of their areas of competence.

In Indonesia, out-of-field teaching is known as non-linearity or mismatch, which refers to the unsuitability between the teachers' educational background and the subject they teach (Jakaria, 2014). This phenomenon occurs in various fields, including ELT, where English teachers have no background in English education. The researcher found there is a teacher with an Islamic Communication and Broadcasting background who teaches English at a Private Islamic Junior High School in Cimahi, West Java. This is because there is a significant shortage of qualified English teachers, which has led to the hiring of teachers from various educational backgrounds, including those without formal training in English or education. It affects students' learning achievement, especially in pronunciation, writing, and vocabulary mastery (Nurkhasanah et al., 2023).

Studies found that teachers with English educational backgrounds have better teaching performance compared to those with non-educational backgrounds (Amalia et al., 2021). According to Dewi et al. (2023), teachers with English education experience were more knowledgeable about curriculum creation concepts and understood the theory of ELT than teachers without a relevant background. Utami (2022) reported that non-English educational background teachers faced some challenges in teaching English, such as developing lesson plans, communicating in the language, and implementing student-centered activities. In addition, Nurfadillah (2015) also found the challenges faced by these teachers, including struggling with pronunciation, facilities, students' resistance to studying in English, vocabulary, and creative teaching techniques. Teachers also

admitted that formal professional development had no significant impact on their teaching (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2024; Utami, 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that teachers should meet the indicators of teachers' competencies mentioned in the Attachment to the Minister of National Education's Regulation Number 16 of 2007 (*Permendiknas* No. 16 of 2007).

Research on the pedagogical aspects, the application of pedagogical competence, and the challenges of non-English educational background teachers has been investigated in previous studies (Dewi et al., 2023; Dewi & Kurniawan, 2024; Nurfadillah, 2015; Utami, 2022). Nevertheless, there are still little study that focuses on how non-English educational background teachers demonstrate their professional competence outlined in the Attachment to the Minister of National Education's Regulation Number 16 of 2007 in their teaching. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the professional competence of a non-English educational background in ELT by using five indicators of professional competence described in the Attachment to the Minister of National Education's Regulation Number 16 of 2007.

B. Formulation of the Problem

The following research question is proposed based on the previously described background.

1. How does an English teacher with a non-English educational background demonstrate her professional competence in her teaching practice?

C. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstandings of this study, the following are three operational definitions related to this study provided by the researcher.

1. ELT : English Language Teaching (ELT) refers to the activity of teaching the English language to students with Bahasa Indonesia as their first language at a Private Islamic Junior High School, grades 7-9, in Cimahi, West Java, Indonesia.

2. Professional Competence : Professional competence is the ability to master a subject matter or field of study, which includes having a deep understanding of the subject matter, mastering competencies standards, developing creative learning materials, continuously developing professionalism through reflective action, and utilizing technology for self-development
3. Non-English Education Background : Non-English education background refers to the teacher who has no background in English education yet teaches English in the classroom.

D. Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the professional competence of an English language teacher with a non-English educational background in teaching English.

E. Significance of the Study

This study contributes empirical data to a greater understanding of how non-English educated teachers demonstrate professional competence in their teaching by looking at the actual situation of an English language teacher in Indonesian culture. The findings may identify unique strategies or gaps in existing teaching practices.