

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 English in Hospitality Vocational High School

In Indonesia's education system, vocational high schools (*SMK*) serve a specific role at the secondary level. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 34 of 2018 concerning the National Standards for vocational high schools (*SMK*) and Islamic vocational high schools (*MAK*), vocational schools are intended to produce graduates prepared to work in industry. The regulation emphasizes that industries require employees with practical workplace competencies. As a result, vocational graduates must possess specialized skills, especially in English, to be competitive in the workforce.

The hospitality industry is one of the sectors in which English plays a crucial role. English is used to communicate with international guests and clients. Since hospitality is strongly linked to global tourism, professionals in this field must be able to communicate effectively in English to provide quality service. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector contributed approximately 6% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022, and the number of foreign tourists continues to rise. This indicates a growing need for hospitality students to strengthen their English communication skills if they want to succeed in the future workplace. In line with this need, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should be integrated into vocational education. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as a branch of English language teaching focusing on learners' specific needs in professional fields such as medicine, law, business, and hospitality. ESP enables teachers to guide students in achieving career-specific communication goals (Sarmiento et al., 2018, as cited in Sari & Wirza, 2021).

In order for English teaching in vocational schools, especially in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), to be effective, it is important to understand how students learn English. Understanding how students learn a language helps teachers design more effective lessons, especially in practical

settings like vocational classrooms. One of the most widely used theories in this field is the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory developed by Stephen Krashen (1985). This theory explains how students acquire and process a second language, as well as the factors that can influence their success in learning. It consists of several hypotheses, three of which are closely related to English learning in vocational hospitality schools.

First, the Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis distinguishes between *acquisition*, which is the subconscious development of language through real-life communication, and *learning*, which is the conscious study of language rules. Acquisition occurs when students use English in real situations without focusing on grammar rules, for example, during guest service roleplays. On the other hand, learning takes place when students study explicit grammar rules in the classroom. In vocational contexts, these two processes often occur simultaneously, particularly during hands-on activities and simulations.

Second, the Input Hypothesis states that language acquisition happens when students receive comprehensible input, language that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency ($i+1$) but still understandable with the help of context. For this reason, English learning materials in ESP should be closely aligned with real-world workplace situations in the hospitality industry, allowing students to naturally develop their language skills through meaningful input.

Third, the Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that emotional factors such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety can affect how open students are to language input. If students feel confident and comfortable, language acquisition is more likely to occur. However, if they are anxious or stressed, these emotions may act as a filter that blocks language input from being processed effectively.

Understanding these hypotheses can help hospitality English teachers design communicative and relevant learning activities that are both industry-oriented and sensitive to students' emotional needs. Krashen's (1987) theory help connect ESP teaching with how students naturally pick up language in real-life situations.

This idea is also supported by behaviorist theory. Operant conditioning, as explained by Skinner, emphasizes that behaviors, like using correct service phrases, can become habits when students receive immediate feedback, such as praise or correction (as cited in *Simply Psychology*, 2025). This approach fits well in the hospitality classroom, where repeating and reinforcing language patterns can help students internalize functional expressions quickly.

2.1.2 English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching of English tailored to meet the specific needs of learners in academic, professional, or vocational contexts. Unlike General English, which focuses on broad language skills, ESP is goal-oriented and practical, preparing learners for real-life situations relevant to their career or study fields (Rahman, 2015, as cited in Kardijan, 2017). This approach ensures that students acquire the language skills necessary for success in their chosen professions. ESP is particularly relevant for vocational education or career-oriented students, including those in fields such as law, medicine, business, and hospitality (Chang, 2009; Tsao, 2011, as cited in Kaharuddin et al., 2019). For instance, hospitality students must master English vocabulary and communication techniques in guest services, reservations, and customer interactions (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017).

As a theoretical foundation, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which the content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. They argue that ESP is not a product, but a learning-centered approach, which emphasizes the importance of how learners learn in addition to what they learn. This framework places learners' professional needs at the core of curriculum design and promotes contextualized learning that mirrors real-world use of language in specific fields. Therefore, ESP is viewed as a dynamic approach that adapts to the evolving demands of various industries. This view shows that ESP is flexible and can be adapted to fit the needs of each field, including hospitality.

Describe ESP as a subfield of English Language Teaching (ELT) designed for specific professions or industries. Its content aligns closely with learners'

professional tasks and communicative needs. Robinson emphasizes that ESP is a goal-directed approach where learners are trained to perform job-specific language functions, such as writing emails, conducting interviews, or explaining procedures in English (1989, as cited in Grapin, 2017). ESP is different from General English because it focuses more on specific situations students will face, making it more contextual and functional. Learners practice English through role-plays, simulations, and case studies that mirror workplace scenarios. Basturkmen (2010) notes that ESP courses are typically developed based on needs analysis, which identifies the specific skills learners must acquire. In the context of Indonesian vocational schools (SMK), ESP is essential. Since SMK graduates are expected to join the workforce immediately, English becomes a core skill in many industries. Therefore, ESP equips students with the communicative competencies needed in their future workplaces, particularly tourism and hospitality (Wicaksono & Rukmini, 2019). This makes ESP highly relevant for vocational students who will directly face English-speaking guests in their future jobs.

2.1.3 Students' Perception

Perception can be defined as the process through which individuals interpret sensory information and form an understanding of their environment. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (as cited in Qiong, 2017), perception refers to: (a) how people think about something; (b) how they notice things through their senses; and (c) the natural ability to understand or recognize something quickly. Bernstein et al. describe perception as an active process influenced by one's knowledge and awareness (1988, as cited in Ansow et al., 2022). Mar'at further explains that perception originates from cognition and is shaped by environmental and informational stimuli (2005, as cited in Oom & Syamsudin; 2019). Both personal and structural factors influence it. Personal factors include experience, motivation, learning, and knowledge, while structural factors involve environmental conditions, societal values, legal systems, and cultural norms.

Students' perception refers to how learners interpret and evaluate their learning experiences in educational settings. It encompasses their opinions,

feedback, and emotional responses to classroom interactions, teaching styles, and subject matter (Shidu, 2003, as cited in Ansow et al., 2022). Students often form perceptions based on their experience of the teacher's knowledge, behavior, and pedagogical strategies (Adidewura, 2007, as cited in Ansow et al., 2022).

Walgito (1981) categorizes perception into three types: (1) social perception (perception of other people), (2) non-social perception (perception of objects or phenomena), and (3) self-perception (how individuals see themselves). This study primarily focuses on self-perception to examine students' personal views regarding their English learning.

According to Walgito (1981), perception is a process that happens to an individual when they give meaning to objects or situations based on their observations. This process is not only influenced by external stimuli, but also by the individual's own experience, knowledge, needs, and internal conditions.

Walgito (1981) identifies three components of perception:

1. Cognitive is related to mental processes such as memory, problem-solving, and critical thinking.
2. Affective is related to feelings or emotions, such as pride, anxiety, or interest.
3. Conative is related to motivation, desire, and behavioral intention.

These three aspects are connected and influence the way a person perceives things. In the context of learning, students' perceptions of a lesson or learning experience can be strongly influenced by how they think, feel, and behave towards the lesson. The threefold model aligns closely with the traditional Indonesian philosophy of *cipta* (thought), *rasa* (feeling), and *karsa* (will), as introduced by Ki Hadjar Dewantara.

2.2 Study of the Relevant Research

Before conducting this study, the researcher reviewed existing literature on English language education in vocational high schools in Indonesia. The first significance of English in this context is highlighted by Zein et al. (2020), who explained that Presidential Decree Number 28/1990, enacted during the New Order regime (1967–1998), formalized the role of English by making it a compulsory

subject in secondary schools, including *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK)*. Second, Mahbub (2020) emphasizes the importance of effective English instruction in vocational high schools, noting that English proficiency is essential for students' success in the global job market. Third, Hua and Beverton (2013) examined both general and vocational English courses in Taiwan and their impact on students' communication skills. However, their study primarily focused on the broader benefits of English education and its influence on students' future career prospects. Fourth, Kardijan et al. (2017) identified a gap between learning needs and the implementation of English for Hospitality Specific Purposes programs, raising concerns about the mismatch between what students need and how English is taught. Fifth, studies by Mahbub (2020) and Sari & Wirza (2021), which focus on needs analysis in vocational English, indirectly support this gap by emphasizing the importance of understanding students' specific learning needs, which shape their perceptions. Sixth, research such as that by Ansow (2022), which explores general perceptions of English learning, and by Bury and Oka (2017), which investigates undergraduate students' views on English in tourism and hospitality, highlight the need for more research that distinguishes between general, higher, and vocational education contexts. Although these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in research specifically exploring the in-class English learning experiences of hospitality vocational high school students, particularly about their perceptions of the importance of English in their field.

This study aimed to fill this gap by focusing on hospitality vocational students in Tasikmalaya Regency, Indonesia, a context that has not been sufficiently explored in previous research. Given the importance of English in vocational high schools, particularly within hospitality majors, this research seeks to explore the perceptions of hospitality vocational high school students regarding their English learning experiences.