

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

#### **A. Research Background**

English plays a crucial role in the hospitality industry, where effective communication is essential for delivering quality service and creating a welcoming atmosphere (Kaur & Clarke, 2020). Hospitality workers often need to greet international guests, respond to various requests, and adapt to different cultural expectations (Prachanant, 2012). These situations require not just general English skills but also the ability to use language that is specific to hospitality contexts. For students in vocational school preparing to enter this field, learning English that aligns with their future work environment becomes highly important. In response to these needs, educators and researchers have explored various English teaching approaches designed not only to improve students' language proficiency but also to equip them with the communicative skills necessary for real-life workplace situations.

English teaching approaches in vocational education should focus on enhancing students' specific skills relevant to their majors, preparing them for future careers (Mahbub, 2018). In the Indonesian education system, *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK), or vocational high schools, are defined under Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Article 18) as secondary-level institutions designed to prepare students for employment in specific fields. As institutions tasked with producing a skilled workforce, SMKs are expected to equip graduates with the competencies demanded by the labor market. This mandate is further emphasized in the Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 22 of 2006, which outlines that vocational education aims to enhance students' intelligence, knowledge, personality, character, and practical skills to enabling students to live

independently and pursue further education in alignment with their vocational programs. Such objectives align closely with the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in designing language learning to meet the skill requirements of students' future careers. This concept is relevant to the goal of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP focuses on tailoring language instruction to meet specific needs, making it highly relevant for vocational schools preparing students for industry-specific careers. ESP is a method for improving language learning that is based on the principles of language acquisition. Furthermore, Anthony and Laurence (2018) state that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one type of language learning that focuses on professional or academic goals. ESP learning focuses on specific skills or genres to meet students' needs, using specialized materials and learning methods. The increasing demand for English proficiency in the hospitality industry highlights the critical role of ESP in vocational education. As globalization continues to shape the hospitality sector, English is no longer just a skill but a fundamental requirement for effective communication, particularly in customer service and international tourism.

In this context, teaching English for hospitality emerges as a vital area to ensure that students acquire the necessary language skills to excel in their future workplaces. In the era of globalization, the ability to speak English has become a vital skill in numerous professional fields, including the hospitality industry. As an international language, English serves as the primary means of communication for interacting with guests from diverse countries. Therefore, English skill is an urgent need for students preparing to enter the workforce in this sector. However, in reality, not all students in vocational schools have adequate access to English language learning that is relevant to their professional context.

In vocational high schools, particularly in the hospitality major, English language learning should be designed to meet the specific needs, as it is becoming increasingly important in the Indonesian hotel industry (Billet, 2011).

To begin, according to Al-Tarawneh and Osam (2019), an increase in the number of foreign visitors to Indonesia necessitates the need for skilled workers who can communicate in English. In business and industry, English is the primary language used for communication and transactions, including emails, memos, reports, and international correspondence. Especially in the hotel industry, English is beneficial for situational analysis related to hotel services. A person who speaks English will find it easier to communicate and interact with others in the hotel environment. They will learn by clarifying, providing appropriate explanations, and engaging with others. Therefore, English is essential because employees in the hospitality sector need to acquire specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve customers effectively (Warwas & Hem, 2018).

Behind all the important aspects related to English in the hospitality sector, the implementation of ESP in this context also faces various challenges, such as the limited availability of appropriate teaching materials, a lack of teacher training in teaching ESP, inadequate needs analysis, and low English competencies (Iswati & Triastuti, 2021). Various studies indicate that the primary challenge in implementing ESP in vocational schools is teachers' limited understanding of the specific needs of students and related industries. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), teaching ESP requires a different approach from teaching general English because it must be adapted to the needs of students in a particular professional context. However, in many vocational schools, teachers often lack specialized training in ESP, making it challenging to provide relevant and practical learning materials (Widodo, 2016). Apart from that, limited supporting facilities, such as language laboratories and technology-based learning resources, are also significant obstacles in creating a conducive learning environment for ESP (Rahman, 2015). These challenges can hinder the achievement of learning goals that prepare students to compete in the global workforce.

Based on the description above, this study focuses on examining the challenges that exist in English teaching practice for hospitality majors at SMK

Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka. The title "Exploring a Teacher's Challenges in Teaching English for Hospitality Major: A Case Study at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka" was chosen to highlight the significant role of English in the hospitality industry and the challenges it faces. This sector continues to evolve in the era of globalization. SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka was chosen as the research location because this school offers a vocational hospitality program that requires mastery of professional English communication skills.

This research is also based on research gaps found in previous studies. Most research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) focuses on the development of teaching materials (Widodo, 2016) or general industry needs (Kassim & Ali, 2010). However, not many have studied in depth the implementation of the teacher challenges in teaching ESP for hospitality in the vocational education context, especially in Indonesia. In addition, previous research more often highlights students' needs without exploring how teachers face challenges in teaching ESP (Rahman, 2015). Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to hospitality majors at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka. Through this research, the results obtained can become a reference for teachers and students in developing more effective ESP learning methods and materials.

## **B. Research Questions**

This research examines several research questions, as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English for hospitality major related to the teacher's own teaching practice at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka?
2. What student-related challenges does the teacher face in teaching English for hospitality major at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka?
3. What are the environmental factors that create difficulties for teachers in teaching English for hospitality major at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka?

### **C. Research Purposes**

The purpose of the study goes as a result:

1. To explore the teacher's challenges in teaching English for hospitality major related to the teacher's own teaching practices at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka.
2. To identify student-related challenges the teacher faces in teaching English for hospitality major at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka.
3. To analyze the environmental factors that create difficulties for the teacher in teaching English for hospitality at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka.

### **D. Research Significances**

This study is provide contribution both theoretically and practically, as outlined below:

#### **a. Theoretical Significance**

This research has a theoretical contribution to the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) studies, especially in the context of vocational education. By analyzing the challenges in teaching English for hospitality majors, this research fills the gap left by previous studies that focused more on material development or industry needs in general. The results of this research will provide insight into effective ESP teaching practices and strategies relevant to teachers' difficulties in vocational schools, especially in Indonesia. In addition, this research also enriches theoretical references regarding appropriate approaches to teaching ESP in specific professional contexts.

#### **b. Practical Significance**

This research provides practical contributions that benefit several parties. For teachers, the findings can serve as a reflection tool to identify their challenges in teaching English for the hospitality major and to develop more effective strategies that address those challenges. This also helps teachers design classroom activities and materials that are more aligned with

the specific demands of English for hospitality. For the school, particularly SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka, the results can be used as an input to improve the implementation of ESP in the hospitality major, such as through teacher development programs, curriculum adjustments, or support facilities. At a broader level, this research can inform vocational education stakeholders about the realities teachers face in ESP classrooms, providing insights to strengthen support systems for teachers in similar contexts.

#### **E. Research Scope**

This research focuses on exploring the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language teacher in teaching English for the Hospitality major at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka, located at Jl. Rd. Dewi Sartika No.119, Cicalengka Kulon, Kec. Cicalengka, Kabupaten Bandung, Jawa Barat 40395, Indonesia. The research aims to identify and analyze the teacher obstacles encounter in delivering English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in the hospitality major, and how these challenges affect the teaching and learning process.

Specifically, the research investigates three key aspects of challenges: those related to students, teachers own teaching practices, and environmental or external factors. The study will examine an English as a Foreign Language teacher who teach in the Hospitality program and 11th-grade students majoring in Hospitality at SMK Ma'arif Cicalengka. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design (Yin, 2018) to provide an in-depth understanding of the teaching challenges. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) will be used to analyze the collected data. The research will investigate variables such as pedagogical challenges, students' learning difficulties, and external factors that impact teaching effectiveness.

The data collection process will involve semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Institutional documents, teaching materials, and lesson plans will also be analyzed to assess the alignment between the curriculum and industry expectations. By focusing on a single vocational school, this study aims to provide a contextualized

understanding of English for Hospitality instruction in Indonesian vocational education and contribute to the improvement of ESP teaching strategies. The research findings are expected to offer valuable insights for English as a Foreign Language teacher, curriculum developers, and policymakers in enhancing ESP education, particularly in the hospitality sector.

## **F. Conceptual Framework**

This research aims to explore the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English for Hospitality at Ma'arif Cicalengka Vocational School, drawing on theories of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In this context, the challenges faced can be grouped into three main categories, namely, challenges related to teachers, challenges related to students, and challenges related to the environment or external factors (Setyarini, 2018).

### **a. Teacher-Related Challenges**

Teachers play a crucial role in ESP teaching, particularly in terms of the knowledge and skills they possess related to a specific industry. Many English as a Foreign Language teachers in vocational schools may not have a specific background or training in teaching ESP for the hospitality sector. This limitation aligns with ESP theory, which emphasizes the importance of teacher expertise in understanding industry needs to teach relevant material (Belcher, 2009).

### **b. Challenges Relating to Students in teaching English for hospitality**

The biggest challenge faced by teachers is understanding the specific needs of students related to the hospitality industry. This challenge is related to ESP theory, which posits that language learning should be tailored to the specific needs of a particular profession or field (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In vocational schools, students often have varying language abilities, which can influence their understanding of the material taught. Some students may struggle to connect what they are learning to real-world practice in the hospitality industry. The theory

underlying this is that teaching English for specific purposes should focus on the practical application of the language in real work situations (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998).

c. Challenges Related to the Environment or External Factors

Environmental or external factors also play an important role in teaching English for hospitality. Limited infrastructure and facilities, such as inadequate classrooms or insufficient technology to support language learning, are often significant obstacles. ESP theory reminds that teaching must support situations that allow students to engage in real-world contexts (Hyland, 2006).

This research aims to provide deeper insight into the challenges faced by teacher in teaching English for hospitality, as well as how these challenges interact with existing factors. Through a deeper understanding of these challenges, solutions will be identified to enhance the quality of English teaching at SMK Ma'arif Terpadu Cicalengka, particularly in the hospitality sector.

## **G. Previous Studies**

The participants of this sResearch on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has consistently addressed the various challenges and needs faced by teachers and students in diverse educational and professional contexts. The following studies provide insights into these challenges, highlighting the importance of aligning teaching practices with specific language requirements and contextual needs.

Ma'fiah and Sumardiono (2023) explored the English language needs and challenges in the context of hotel services within vocational secondary schools. Their findings indicated a mismatch between the teaching materials and the actual needs of the hospitality industry, resulting in graduates who lacked adequate English proficiency for the workplace. Students struggled with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, while teachers faced difficulties in aligning the curriculum with industry requirements. The study recommended

more contextually oriented and practice-based ESP materials to better prepare students for careers in hospitality.

Iswati and Triastuti (2021) investigated the challenges faced by ESP teachers in non-English departments at higher education institutions in Indonesia. Their qualitative study revealed significant issues, including a lack of knowledge about students' disciplines, inadequate ESP training, insufficient needs analysis, large class sizes, and diverse English competencies among students. The study emphasized the importance of equipping ESP teachers with relevant content knowledge and professional training to address these challenges effectively.

Setyarini (2018) found that novice teachers experienced various difficulties in teaching English to hotel staff. These challenges include poor time management, inadequate teaching facilities, differences in English language proficiency levels among hotel staff, and low staff self-efficacy in learning the English language. This research highlights the importance of needs analysis and the design of an appropriate curriculum, enabling the learning process to run more effectively. In addition, research by Hoa and Mai (2016), cited by Setyarini, groups ESP teaching challenges into three broad categories: challenges related to students, teachers, and external or environmental factors.

Dewi (2015) developed an ESP learning model with a communicative competency approach based on character education. This research highlights the significance of integrating language learning with real-world contexts in the field, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This learning model successfully increased students' motivation for learning English and encouraged them to become more confident in using the language in professional settings. The results of this research demonstrate that an approach relevant to students' needs and the world of work can effectively address several challenges in ESP teaching.

These studies offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing ESP teachers, particularly in the context of teaching English to the hospitality industry. However, no research specifically examines difficulties from a

teacher's perspective, therefore this research was conducted to explore the challenges faced by teachers at SMK Ma'arif Cicalengka, who also face difficulties related to students, teachers, and external factors in teaching English for hospitality major. Study had been selected from the 11th grade of the Hospitality major and had consisted of three students with different levels of English proficiency in their class: one with the highest proficiency, one with the lowest, and one with a moderate level. These three students had been recommended by their English teacher based on their observed English performance in class.

