

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, problem identification, research limitation, research questions, research purposes, and research significances.

1.1 Research Background

The existence of English as an international language or also known as lingua franca gains the popularity of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in education field. Karimi & Vahdani (2014) state that the educational stakeholders are required to establish ESP as a language learning approach for preparing the students to compete in this globalization era. It is due to the rapid development of technology which makes all the fields use English as a communication means (Dinamika et al., 2016; Kusni., 2013; Purwanti., 2019; Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). Implementing ESP as an approach allows English teachers to conduct a learning process covering students' needs for professional purpose. It leads students to have communicative competence to obtain a well-paid job in the future (Ghafournia & Sabet., 2014; Handayaniingrum & Setiawan., 2013; Tabatabaei & Mokhtari., 2014). The demand of English in all the fields of humans' life influences the establishment of ESP for improving students' English skills based on their specific area.

English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is a language approach bridging students' special needs for particular work areas with their language skills. Kamruddin et al (2021) argue that ESP focuses on students' needs of language and skills relevant to a certain profession in work industry. ESP does not only fulfil English as an

academic achievement for accessing scientific information but it prepares students to use their English skills in conducting professional duties of prospective working environment (Belyaeva, 2015; Lee, 2016). Liton (2012) previously shows that ESP generally involves the development of students' English skills relevant to the workplace tasks and purpose. It indicates that ESP provides students a language learning process underlined by the connection between students' language skills and professional needs.

In Indonesia, ESP learning process is commonly found in vocational high schools as what has been framed in *Merdeka* curriculum. It is a recent curriculum applied in Indonesian education system viewed as a flexible curriculum which allows the stakeholders or teachers conducting the learning process connecting gap between business, industry, and higher education (Maipita et al., 2021). The ministerial decree published by Indonesian Minister Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56/M/2022 shows that English categorized as a vocation subject for vocational students. It means that English subject is functioned to form the students as an individual with a competence based on the needs of work industry including the knowledge, technology, art and culture (Damayanti & Muhroji, 2022). *Merdeka* curriculum supports the existence of English learning process in vocational high school considering that vocational high school has been long categorized as an education level which adapts English as a technical skill taught for preparing students' professional development (Berman et al., 2020; Hiim., 2017; Lestari and Priyana, 2020; Liljedahl, 2008). Therefore, English learning

process conducted in vocational high schools is commonly recognized as ESP relevant to Merdeka curriculum.

Merdeka curriculum also brings a change towards ESP learning process in vocational high schools where the learning system is conducted in the different form. Sadieda et al (2022) state that Merdeka curriculum is implemented to adjust the learning condition in Indonesia after Covid-19 where the learning process in all the subjects conducted in blended learning. Blended learning is widely perceived as a learning process integrating conventional learning and online learning (Olivier, 2013). Resmiaty et al (2021) add that blended learning combines online-based learning and conventional learning instruction supporting its implementation in vocational education. It is supported by The Ministerial Decree Number 2, 2022 published by the Indonesian Minister Education, Culture, Research and Technology. It is regulated that *Merdeka* curriculum allows the stakeholders and educators to conduct a limited face to face learning by conducting 50% distant learning. Sangadji and Sopiah (2021) argue that blended learning has been long implemented in some vocational high schools by conducting 20% online learning and 80% offline learning for the practicum. The implementation of blended learning as a realization of Merdeka curriculum is a change towards ESP learning process in vocational high school.

Even the ESP learning process is conducted through blended learning as the impact of new curriculum but it is still underlined by the students' needs. Prayoga et al (2021) argue that it is a necessity for the teachers and other stakeholders to develop ESP learning instruments relevant to students' needs whether it is

conducted in online or offline context. Amon and Rajib (2021) also add that the application of *Merdeka* curriculum depends on the learning instruments; learning objective guideline, teaching module, learning media, and learning materials arranged by the teachers and stakeholders based on students' needs. A well-structured needs analysis becomes a parameter assisting vocational teachers to prepare the learning instruments used for conducting ESP learning process (Sukarni., 2020; Bhuiyan .,2021; Pertiwi & Pusparini, 2021;Ramadania & Aswadi, 2020). Needs analysis consists of the students' needs towards the language skills and the demands of world industry can be used as a reference in arranging the learning process including learning instruments (Inderawati et al., 2021; Marwan., 2018;Sari & Wirza, 2021). It can be seen that students' needs still become the underlined the learning instruments used for conducting ESP learning process related to the new curriculum.

The current situation shows that the use of learning materials in conducting ESP learning process-based *Merdeka* curriculum still becomes a problem faced in vocational high schools. Putra et al (2021) state that the current facilities towards English learning materials provided in vocational high school become a quite serious challenge for realizing the ESP learning process based on *Merdeka* curriculum. The ESP learning materials are not only designed based on the students' needs but it is also used for supporting the online learning process and maximize the practicum conducted by students in the offline learning (Barlian & Solekah, 2022). Aini and Kurniawan (2022) state that the existing ESP learning materials used in some vocational high school is not relevant for supporting the recent

learning condition (blended learning). It is also found out that some of vocational high schools still use the previous government-published textbooks as learning materials which still employ the previous curriculum (Erfiani et al., 2019; Islama et al., 2022). The existing textbook is in the form of printed learning materials which is not designed based on *Merdeka* curriculum. In addition, the learning material is not adjusted with the students' specific needs in work industry (Hajar & Triastuti, 2021; Ghofur et al., 2021). Therefore, it becomes a challenge for ESP teachers in applying *Merdeka* curriculum in ESP classrooms.

This recent problem is also found at SMKN 1 Sawan, Buleleng as one of vocational high school which implements *Merdeka* curriculum. The preliminary observation shows that blended learning is implemented in the form of conventional learning and distant learning (online learning). The English learning process is conducted through online learning meanwhile competence-based learning is conducted in conventional environment for practicum activities. It is found that the students use the existing English textbook provided in the school library as a learning material. The existing English textbook is in the form of printed textbook published by the government by using the core competent in the previous curriculum (2013 curriculum). The existing English textbook consists of the learning materials for vocational high school students of all majors. It employs the general English topics such as; offering and asking suggestion, asking and giving opinion, invitation, and writing report. The activities in that textbook emphasizes the four language skills such as; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The existing textbook is not specifically designed for a certain major that provided how the language used in that specific area. For instance; the students of hotel accommodation study program study English by using the existing English textbook which is generally used for all majors. The preliminary observation also shows that the students study housekeeping as their specific area by using the textbook in form of Bahasa. The students are only taught English for housekeeping spontaneously in the practicum sessions meanwhile they study housekeeping by using textbook written in *Bahasa* during the online learning process. The housekeeping textbook used at SMKN 1 Sawan only focuses on students' technical skills not their language skills or communicative competence, such; skills of maintaining and cleaning hotel's areas, tools and chemicals, and public areas.

Based on the preliminary observation, it can be seen that developing learning materials of English for housekeeping is needed at SMKN 1 Sawan. It is due to the existing textbook used as learning materials is designed based on the previous curriculum and it is not specifically designed for the students' language needs towards housekeeping. Developing learning materials of English for housekeeping is also needed related the demand of tourism industry which obligates people to have good English communication skills to understand the cultural differences and communicate with foreign people (Aristyawati et al., 2020; Leslie & Russell, 2006). Islama et al (2022) state that communication skills are not only referred to the skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing but it is more on the communication skills in the working environment, for instance; greeting the guest, handling guest request, giving direction, etc.

The developed textbook as a learning material is not only suggested to meet students' needs towards work industry. It is suggested that the textbook is required to fulfil the criteria of *Merdeka* curriculum where the learning process is not only conducted in the classroom but also outside of the classroom (Supriati et al., 2022). It is supported by Banggur et al (2021) argue that the textbooks can be designed by using technology-based as a solution in ESP learning process conducted in the form of blended learning. The technology-based textbook becomes a continuous form of e-learning where students can access it after the online learning ends. It means that the textbook can be accessed not only in online environment (Fahrezi & Susanti, 2021). Therefore, developing English materials for ESP learning which fulfils students' needs and adaptable for blended learning is required.

The development can be in the form of supplementary learning materials since the students have been provided by the previous English textbook which does not optimally supports their needs and the current condition. Supplementary materials are defined as additional learning materials which deal with more intensive skills not provided in the existing course book (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Riasati and Zare (2010) also perceive supplementary materials is appropriate to overcome topics, learning needs, and learning styles provided in a textbook which are not relevant with the students' needs. The supplementary materials can be formed with technology-based to support blended learning, for instance; flipbook. Flipbook is recognized as electronic learning materials that support blended learning in which it can be simply accessed through computer, smartphone, and other digital devices (Mardikaningsih & Kurniasari, 2018; Munandar et al., 2019). Purwaningsih and

Hadianti (2022) state that the combination of various media contained in the Flipbook can be used as a stimulus for enhance students' language skills, such as; the audio, picture, or video in the flipbook can show students how the language is used. Supplementary materials of English for housekeeping in the form of flipbook is suitable to be used in blended learning as an innovation and realization of *Merdeka* curriculum.

The innovation related English learning materials development for vocational high schools particularly for tourism students have been conducted through several studies. Rahman et al (2019) develop supplementary English learning materials in the form of e-module for tourism students in polytechnic. It is found out that the developed e-module is feasible to be used in which it improves the communication skills of tourism students. Rahman et al (2022) also develop e-module as English learning materials for the students who take tour and travel study program at Lampung Polytechnic. The result shows that the e-module is developed as a prototype of English materials for tourism that has been published and validated on google play store. The developed e-module provides students' required skills and knowledge attached in SKNNI (Basic Competence Standard) and positively responded by the students. Puspita et al (2019) ever conduct a study which develops English learning materials of housekeeping but the study is referred for college students at PPLP Pansophia Singaraja. It reveals that the developed English learning materials are categorized as good materials for improving students' English skills for housekeeping. In fact, the developed materials are purposed for conventional learning only.

Those previous studies reveal that developing English learning materials for vocational high schools have been long discussed by many researchers. The studies conducted by Rahman et al (2019) and Rahman et al (2022) have brought the influence of technology in developing English learning materials in vocational context but the subjects of these studies are higher education students. The studies also focus on English learning materials for tourism in general. Another study is conducted by Puspita et al (2019) which focus on developing English learning materials for housekeeping to college students. The developed learning materials are only purposed for conventional learning. Considering the recent problem found in ESP learning process, this study is conducted to develop supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping through blended learning in vocational high schools particularly at SMKN 1 Sawan, Buleleng. This study is also conducted due to the limited studies which focus on developing ESP learning materials based on *Merdeka* curriculum in vocational high schools. The developed supplementary materials in this study are in the form of flipbook.

1.2 Problem Identification

The recent phenomenon about the implementation of blended learning towards ESP learning process in vocational high schools as the impact of *Merdeka* curriculum. It brings a challenge for the teachers. The problem shows that providing ESP learning materials is a challenge in realizing *Merdeka* curriculum. It shows that the existing ESP learning materials is not relevant towards the current learning situation and it has not met the students' needs. The relevant problem found at SMKN 1 Sawan, Buleleng which conducts blended learning based on *Merdeka*

curriculum. The students are provided by English textbook designed by using previous curriculum in which it is in printed form. The existing English textbook is not specifically designed based on the students' specific areas but it is purposed for the students of all majors. The students of hotel accommodation study program used that English textbook meanwhile they use the textbook in the form of *Bahasa* for studying housekeeping as their specific areas. The housekeeping textbook does not emphasize the language skills of the students in housekeeping but it is more focused on the students' technical skills, such as; maintaining and cleaning the hotel rooms, equipment and chemical, public area, etc. It indicates that developing learning materials of English for housekeeping which supports the blended learning is required at SMKN 1 Sawan, Buleleng.

1.3 Research Limitation

This study is limited to the development of supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping through blended learning in vocational high schools particularly at SMKN 1 Sawan, Buleleng. The limitation of this study viewed from; the English materials needed, how the English materials are developed, the quality of the developed product, and the effectiveness of the developed product.

1.4 Research Questions

This study is underlined by four questions, such as;

1. What are the supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping needed by the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan?

2. How are the supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping developed for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan?
3. How is the quality of supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping that have been developed for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan?
4. How is the effectiveness of the supplementary learning materials English for housekeeping that have been developed for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan?

1.5 Research Purposes

There are four research purposes underline this study, such as;

1. To identify the supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping needed by the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan.
2. To develop the supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan.
3. To examine the quality of supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping that have been developed for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan.

4. To analyse the effectiveness of the supplementary learning materials of English for housekeeping that have been developed for the students in hotel accommodation study program at SMKN 1 Sawan.

1.6 Research Significances

The significances of this study are divided into two categories that can be seen as follows.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

This study provides theoretical information about English for Housekeeping by confirming and enriching the existing concepts of ESP supplementary material. The provided information in this study also can give readers' inside in developing supplementary learning materials in ESP context.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

Practically, the result of this study gives a contribution for students and teachers in vocational high schools. Students can use the developed supplementary English materials to gain the information about the language skills used in housekeeping department. Teachers can apply the developed supplementary materials as the learning media and strengthen their roles as facilitators in the classrooms. In addition, the result of this study can be used as an empirical source for conducting further research about developing ESP materials.