

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

2.1.1 The History and Definition of ESP

In the newly commerce-driven world, many recognized the importance of learning English as the accepted international language. According to Ramírez (2015), English for Specific Purpose (ESP) emerged as a discipline in the 1960s due to shifts in global marketplaces. Presently, ESP stands out as one of the most significant and influential areas in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Asfihana, 2017) This development is closely linked to the rise of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and its increasing use across various academic disciplines and professional fields (Wulandari et al., 2019).

Poedjiastutie (2017) contends that the increasing need for English customized to specific professional requirements presents considerable challenges for EFL educators. They must create language teaching activities that directly address learners' practical objectives. As a result, integrating ESP into classrooms, particularly within Indonesia's educational institutions, has become unavoidable.

Along with its growth, ESP has been defined in various ways by different scholars. Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Robinson (1991), Strevens (1988), and Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) all emphasize that ESP is not a product but an approach to language teaching. This view implies that ESP is not limited to specific teaching materials or methods, but is primarily shaped by learners' needs. Ibrahim (2019) reinforces this idea by stating that the core of ESP lies in its learner-centered, needs-based orientation. Similarly, Anthony (2018) defines ESP as an educational approach that focuses on the specific academic or professional language requirements of learners, emphasizing relevant genres, vocabulary, and skills. It aims to

support learners in achieving their goals through the use of both general and discipline-specific content.

2.1.2 The Importance of ESP

In the era of globalization, the role of the English language in career advancement is highly significant. Although English proficiency is not the sole determinant of professional success, its value in the corporate sector is widely acknowledged. This is particularly evident in countries like Indonesia, where limited English skills often hinder the career opportunities of many recent graduates. Although lower-paying jobs may not demand high-level English skills, many companies expect graduates to have at least an intermediate level of proficiency to perform their duties effectively. Recent studies highlight the strong connection between English proficiency and employability worldwide. In today's global market, employees are often required to engage in daily business communication with professionals from various countries. Tasks such as writing emails, participating in online chats, and delivering business presentations demand more than basic English skills to ensure clear and accurate communication among all parties involved (Clement & Murugavel (2018)).

Those factors highlight the importance of learning ESP and have led many educational institutions to incorporate ESP courses into their curricula. Without targeted language training that focuses on the knowledge and skills needed for communication in specific contexts—such as understanding particular discourse, genres, vocabulary, and texts related to a professional field—students or professionals may struggle to reach their full potential and succeed in their chosen careers (Stefanova, 2021). Therefore, ESP serves as a foundation for equipping students with the English language skills required to adapt effectively in both academic and professional settings.

2.1.3 The Role of ESP at Tertiary Education

As one of the key pillars of education in Indonesia, higher education institutions play a significant role in developing qualified human resources with both technical expertise and language proficiency. In response to current global demands, universities are expected to prepare graduates who are capable of competing in an increasingly open and interconnected world. As global interaction intensifies, especially through the influx of foreigners and international collaboration, the need for foreign language proficiency—particularly in English—becomes essential. Consequently, university graduates are now expected to possess strong English language skills as part of their professional competence (Ekayati et al., 2020).

However, in reality, many Indonesian graduates still lack sufficient English proficiency, which remains a critical weakness in the country's human resource development. To address this issue, improvements in English language instruction at the tertiary level are urgently needed. Historically, English courses in Indonesian universities have undergone significant changes. During the early post-independence period until the 1970s, English was considered a supplementary subject. It later became a general course in the 1980s and was eventually integrated into the general basic subjects (GBS). Today, universities are granted the autonomy to design their own curriculum, including the structure and focus of English language instruction (Afriazi, 2016).

In response to these challenges, ESP has gained recognition as a more targeted and effective approach to teaching English at the tertiary level. In contrast to General English (GE), which generally addresses all language skills equally, ESP emphasizes only the specific language components required by learners based on their academic or professional fields. The linguistic elements, instructional materials, teaching methods, and course design implemented in ESP classes are specifically developed to align with learners' particular needs and objectives (Zohrabi, 2010, as cited

in Gestanti, Nimasari, & Mufanti, 2019). This makes ESP not just an alternative, but a necessity in shaping English instruction that is both purposeful and profession-oriented in higher education.

2.1.4 The Characteristics of ESP

One of the key theoretical aspects in the field of ESP is establishing a clear definition of what ESP entails. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, as cited in Belyaeva, 2019) ESP can be described through both absolute and variable characteristics. The absolute characteristics include the fact that ESP is designed to fulfill learners' specific needs, incorporates the methodologies and practices of the target discipline, and focuses on the relevant grammar, vocabulary, skills, and discourse associated with those fields. The variable characteristics suggest that ESP may be tailored for particular disciplines, may apply different teaching methods than GE, and is usually intended for adult learners—typically those in higher education or professional settings. Additionally, ESP courses are often developed for students at intermediate or advanced levels, although in some cases, they may also be adapted for beginners who already have basic knowledge of English.

2.2 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an important part of learning foreign languages, especially in ESP (Farea & Singh, 2024) because it helps identify what learners need and uses that information to create language courses that suit them better (Ejigu et al., 2023). According to Basturkmen (as cited in (Maruf et al., 2021), needs analysis refers to the process of identifying the language and skills required in selecting appropriate ESP learning materials. This process not only supports material development but also helps evaluate students' learning progress. Conducting a needs analysis is essential for designing learning activities that match students' goals, especially when the learners are expected to communicate in specific professional contexts.

Hutchinson & Waters (1987) categorize learners' needs into two major types: target needs and learning needs. Target needs refer to the skills and knowledge that learners must acquire to function effectively in a target situation. These target needs are further divided into three components: necessities, which are what learners must know to perform successfully; wants, which reflect the learners' personal desires or preferences in learning; and lacks, which describe the gap between what learners already know and what they still need to learn. In contrast, learning needs focus on the processes involved in learning itself, such as the strategies and methods that best support learners in achieving their target goals (Febriyanti, 2017).

In this study, the model of needs analysis proposed by Lowe (2009) is adopted. This framework includes several components:

- a. Target Situation Analysis (TSA) of learners: identifies the tasks and communicative activities where English is required.
- b. Wants, Means and Subjective Needs Analysis: gathers personal details about learners, including elements that influence their learning process such as past learning experiences, cultural background, reasons for learning ESP, and expectations.
- c. Present Situation Analysis (PSA): provides information on learners' current English language skills and competencies
- d. Lack Analysis: reveals the gap between learners' current proficiency (present situation) and the demands of their target situation.
- e. Learning Need Analysis: explores how learners can most effectively acquire the necessary language skills and knowledge.
- f. Linguistic, Discourse, and Genre Analysis: focuses on how language and communication skills are applied in professional contexts related to the learners' field.
- g. Means Analysis: information about the setting in which the course will be delivered.

This comprehensive model not only considers the target use of language but also the learners' background and learning environment. These components were

selected because they align well with the goals of this study and provide a solid foundation for exploring the English needs of Food Technology students. Furthermore, the framework guided the development of the research instruments, particularly the questionnaire used in the data collection process.

2.3 Food Technology Department

The Food Technology Department is an academic program that focuses on the techniques and processes involved in transforming agricultural and animal-based raw materials into consumable food products. This program is typically housed under the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Animal Husbandry, or, in some universities, it may exist as an independent faculty. The field integrates knowledge from various disciplines such as microbiology, chemistry, nutrition, engineering, and biotechnology to ensure food safety, quality, and innovation. As the global demand for safe and sustainable food continues to rise, graduates of this department are expected to contribute to food security, public health, and the development of food industries both locally and internationally. This role becomes even more crucial in the face of global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed vulnerabilities in the food system—from primary production and processing to trade and consumer demand—highlighting the need for resilient systems that can ensure long-term food security (Kubatko et al., (2023).

Due to the interdisciplinary scope of the Food Technology field and its close ties with global research, industry, and trade, English proficiency is a crucial skill for students in this discipline. The ability to clearly communicate scientific findings and technological developments in English plays a key role in enabling collaboration with international stakeholders, disseminating knowledge, and keeping up with global standards in food safety and innovation. A study by El Bilali & Allahyari (2018) demonstrates that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can facilitate the transition toward food sustainability by offering innovative tools to assess and visualize impacts, communicate necessary changes, and enhance collaboration among stakeholders in the food supply chain. Since many of these tools, platforms, and scientific resources are developed and

disseminated in English, the ability to understand and use English becomes increasingly essential—not only for operating the technology but also for participating in international discourse on food sustainability. Despite the growing importance of English proficiency in advancing sustainability and global collaboration in the food sector, challenges remain; students in this field often face difficulties in understanding English-language scientific materials, especially due to unfamiliar terminology, lack of background knowledge, and the complex structure of academic texts (Rusanti et al., 2023).

To ensure that students in the Food Technology department receive relevant and useful English instruction, it is important to understand their actual language needs. Poedjiastutie & Oliver (2017) explain that by identifying learners' needs, teachers can reflect on the gap between the materials currently taught and the English skills required in the workplace. In the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this process is known as needs analysis. According to Mamaraimovna (2025), needs analysis is the process of identifying the language and skills students will need in their future professional or academic settings, while also considering their current abilities, perceptions of their own needs, and the teaching environment. The data collected from this process helps to design more appropriate teaching methods and course content. For Food Technology students, needs analysis supports the development of English instruction that enables them to communicate effectively in professional contexts, especially in critical areas like food safety and sustainability.