

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Speaking is a crucial language skill because it enables learners to convey meaningful messages in real-life communication contexts (Vu, 2025). In academic and professional settings, speaking proficiency plays an essential role in expressing ideas, building confidence, and enhancing competitiveness, particularly in fields that require direct interaction such as tourism (Zaman, 2025). Therefore, the ability to speak English fluently is a key competence that vocational students must acquire to meet professional demands.

In the tourism sector, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is highly relevant because it focuses on learners' specific professional needs. Tran and Vo (2023) emphasize the importance of intercultural communication competence in tourism-related English learning, while Vasconcelos (2024) highlights the effectiveness of experience-based learning through practical and market-oriented activities. These findings indicate that ESP-based speaking materials should be contextual, practical, and aligned with real workplace situations.

Despite the importance of speaking skills in tourism education, many students still face difficulties in achieving speaking fluency. Previous studies reveal that speaking anxiety and lack of confidence remain major barriers for EFL learners (Mohamad et al., 2023). In addition, technology-enhanced learning, such as augmented reality, has been suggested as a potential solution to improve speaking practice and engagement (Jim et al., 2025). However, most of these studies are conducted in higher education contexts.

There is still limited research focusing on the development of ESP-based speaking materials for vocational high school students, particularly those in tourism programs. In fact, vocational tourism students are expected to master contextual and communicative English skills to prepare them for the competitive and international tourism industry. Therefore, developing ESP-based speaking materials specifically designed for vocational students is essential to bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional practice.

Preliminary observations conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Bengkulu City on November 10, 2025, revealed several challenges in teaching speaking to eleventh-grade tourism students. Most students showed low participation in speaking activities, lacked confidence, and relied heavily on memorization during performances. Speaking tasks were often assigned without sufficient guided practice or contextual instruction, and classroom facilities were limited to support interactive speaking activities (*Appendix 1 about instrument of classroom observation. Appendix 2 about the results of preliminary research classroom observation*).

Interviews with the English teacher indicated that students' speaking abilities varied significantly. Fear of making mistakes and difficulty in recalling commentary texts were identified as the main obstacles. Although the teacher applied Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PJBL) through field practice, some students still required more structured guidance and continuous support (*Appendix 3 about instrument of teacher interview. Appendix 4 about the results of preliminary research teacher interview*). Student interviews further confirmed that anxiety, limited practice opportunities, and insufficient instructional guidance hindered their

speaking development (*Appendix 5 about instrument of students' interview. Appendix 6 about the results of preliminary research students' interview*).

Based on these conditions, this study entitled “*Designing Local Tourism Based Speaking Materials for the Tourism Program at the Eleventh Grade Students of SMK Negeri 1 Bengkulu City*” aims to develop contextual and communicative ESP-based speaking materials that meet students' needs. The development of these materials is based on the results of a needs analysis, ensuring that the content, language functions, and learning activities are relevant to the students' future careers in the tourism industry. Therefore, the materials are expected to provide meaningful learning experiences and support students in developing practical speaking skills for real-world tourism contexts.

The developed materials differ from the existing teaching materials used in the school. While the previous materials mainly focus on theoretical knowledge and provide limited opportunities for authentic speaking practice, the materials developed in this study integrate the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach. Through project-based activities related to local tourism, students are encouraged to actively use English in communicative and authentic situations. This approach not only enhances students' speaking proficiency and confidence but also develops their collaboration, creativity, and professional readiness for future careers in the tourism industry.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background, the problems identified in this study are as follows:

1. Students encounter psychological obstacles include low self-esteem, a fear of making mistakes, and a lack of desire to speak English.
2. Students' ability to effectively communicate concepts and arguments is still lacking.
3. The current speaking materials are not yet tailored to the demands of tourism students.
4. Prior ESP research primarily examined college students rather than high school students pursuing vocational education.
5. Instructors do not have useful ESP-based speaking resources appropriate for tourist courses.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted only with eleventh grade students of the Tourism Program at SMK Negeri 1 Bengkulu City, so the results cannot be generalized to other contexts. Second, the focus is limited to designing ESP-based speaking materials for tourism purposes. Third, the effectiveness evaluation was carried out within a short period. Fourth, the needs analysis data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, which may be influenced by respondents' subjectivity.

D. Research Question

Based on the research problems described earlier, the following research questions are formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the needs of the eleventh-grade students of the Tourism Program at SMK Negeri 1 Bengkulu City regarding ESP-based speaking materials?
2. How are ESP-based speaking materials for the Tourism Program designed based on the students' needs?
3. To what extent are the designed ESP-based speaking materials valid based on expert judgment?

E. The Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions formulated earlier, the objectives of this study are designed to provide a clear direction for achieving the intended research outcomes as follows:

1. Identify the speaking material needs of the eleventh-grade students of the Tourism Program at SMK Negeri 1 Bengkulu City related to ESP-based speaking materials.
2. Design ESP-based speaking materials for the Tourism Program based on the students' needs.
3. Determine the validity level of the designed ESP-based speaking materials based on expert judgment.

F. The Significance of the Research

Vocational students, particularly those enrolled in Tourism Programs, are required to master English speaking skills that are relevant to their future professional contexts. This research is significant because it focuses on the development of ESP-based speaking materials that are designed according to students' specific needs and validated through expert judgment. By emphasizing needs analysis, instructional design, and validation, this study contributes to narrowing the gap between English language instruction and the professional demands of the tourism sector at the vocational education level.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), especially in relation to speaking material development for vocational high school students. The findings enrich existing literature on needs-based and contextual ESP material design without emphasizing classroom implementation or learning outcomes. This research may also serve as a reference for future studies employing Research and Development (R&D) approaches, particularly those adopting the Borg and Gall model up to the expert validation stage.

Practically, this research provides valuable insights for teachers and material developers by offering a systematic framework for designing ESP-based speaking materials tailored to tourism students. The validated materials can serve as a reference for teachers in selecting and preparing appropriate instructional content. For educational institutions, this study supports vocational education objectives by contributing academically sound and professionally relevant learning resources that align with the needs of the tourism industry.

G. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation, the following key terms are defined operationally to clarify the concepts and scope of this study:

1. *English for Specific Purposes (ESP)* is a method of teaching English that makes learning more applicable and useful by catering to learners' particular professional demands, such as those in the tourism industry.
2. *Speaking skills* are useful language skills that prioritize accuracy, confidence, fluency, and contextual appropriateness in oral communication.
3. *Tourism program* is a vocational field that equips students with communication skills and practical knowledge to engage with both domestic and foreign tourists.
4. *Instructional materials* To enhance students' academic and professional competency, instructional materials are created learning resources such texts, films, and modules.

5. *Vocational education* is to educate students for particular vocations, such as tourism, by emphasizing the development of contextual and practical skills.

