

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The teaching of English to prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) can be fundamentally situated within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP is not merely a branch of English language teaching, but rather an approach that emphasizes the alignment of instructional content with learners' specific goals and contexts. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions regarding content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning. This definition highlights that ESP is inherently learner-centered, as it prioritizes relevance and practicality over generalized language competence. In contrast to general English instruction, which often focuses on broad linguistic knowledge, ESP is designed to equip learners with the specific language skills required in domains. Within this framework, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) emerges as a specialized branch of ESP that focuses specifically on workplace communication and job-related language use. In the case of prospective IMWs, this domain involves real-life communication situations related to domestic work and daily interaction in an English-speaking environment. Therefore, ESP, with its occupational orientation through EOP, serves as a crucial foundation for designing instructional materials that are both purposeful and contextually appropriate.

A key principle in ESP is the implementation of needs analysis, which acts as the cornerstone for developing effective teaching materials. Needs analysis is defined as a systematic process of identifying what learners need to

be able to do in the target language, ensuring that the learning objectives are directly aligned with real-world demands. Nahartini et al. (2021), in their study developing English training materials for IMWs candidates in Indonesia, found that existing materials at government training centers (BLKLN) failed to address the actual communication needs of migrant workers, including practical vocabulary and scenario-based dialogue. Their study called for materials that are contextually relevant, learner-centered, and communicatively oriented. This finding reinforces the importance of designing ESP materials that are grounded in authentic needs, rather than relying solely on standardized or theoretical content. In line with this perspective, the present study adopts a need-based approach through the analysis of existing government modules and direct interviews with prospective IMWs at LPKS, ensuring that the developed materials are both relevant and applicable.

2.1.1.1 English for Occupational Purpose

Within the broader framework of ESP, the teaching of English for prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) can be more specifically categorized under English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). EOP focuses on equipping learners with the language skills required to perform effectively in a particular profession or workplace setting. According to Evans and John (1998), EOP specifically addresses the language required by people who are already working or preparing for work in a particular field. This perspective underscores the practical and goal-oriented nature of EOP, as it emphasizes communication tasks that are directly linked to job performance and professional responsibilities. For IMWs, especially those employed as domestic workers in Singapore, the required language competencies include giving and understanding instructions, managing household-related conversations, interacting with employers, and handling

everyday communicative situations in an English-speaking environment.

The primary objective of EOP is to bridge the gap between classroom language learning and workplace language use. Rather than teaching English as a general subject, EOP promotes contextualized learning experiences that enable learners to develop the linguistic competencies required for effective job performance. Through exposure to realistic workplace scenarios and communicative tasks, learners are encouraged to apply language skills in situations that closely resemble their future professional environments.

2.1.2 Learning Book

Learning books, or textbooks, are flexible instructional media that play an important role in supporting the language learning process across a wide range of educational contexts. According to Belawati (2006), teaching materials, including textbooks, hold a very important role in supporting the learning process for both students and teachers, functioning not only as a source of information but also as a tool to provide motivation and encourage the development of learners' potential. By providing structured and relevant materials, teaching materials can help create a more effective learning atmosphere and increase learner engagement. Furthermore, according to Supriadi (2006), textbooks play an important role in improving the overall quality of education, as well-designed textbooks can contribute to active, dynamic, and enjoyable learning situations, encouraging deeper learner involvement and supporting better learning outcomes. Supporting this view, Hattie and Yates (2014) emphasized that visual representations of real world objects and contexts enhance episodic memory encoding, making it easier for learners to retrieve and apply newly acquired vocabulary. Taken together, these

perspectives highlight those learning books, when thoughtfully designed, function not merely as containers of content but as active instruments that shape motivation, engagement, and the depth of learning achieved

2.1.2.1 Instructional Material Design Principles for EFL Learning Books

The design of instructional materials for EFL learners requires careful attention to both content and physical layout. According to Tomlinson (2011), effective language learning materials should achieve impact by being visually attractive and engaging, thereby capturing learners' attention and motivating them to participate in the learning process. Materials should also help learners feel at ease by presenting content in familiar and meaningful contexts. Furthermore, language materials should maximize learners' potential for learning by providing varied and meaningful input that supports language acquisition. In addition, they should offer opportunities for practice and self-assessment, enabling learners to monitor their progress and develop greater autonomy in their learning. These principles contribute to the creation of pedagogical activity and learner-centered language learning materials.

2.1.2.2 Audio as the Pronunciation Support

Mastering pronunciation is both a crucial and the most challenging aspect for adult learners. Without a reliable model, learners risk adopting incorrect pronunciation, which can lead to miscommunication in the workplace. Providing audio models in learning materials offers self-directed, repeated access to correct input. According to Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010), phonetic support aligned with the learner's phonological framework can reduce cognitive

load and accelerate the development of clear speech. Therefore, instruction should not rely solely on complex symbols such as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), but rather pair audio models with simpler notation systems.

Theoretically, Krashen (1982) in the Input Hypothesis states that language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible auditory input. Empirically, Korat and Shamir (2012) demonstrated that book with audio narration are far more effective than text-only materials in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Their research identified the “triple coding” effect: when text, images, and audio are presented together, each modality reinforces the learner’s memory, creating a more lasting memory trace compared to single-channel input. This provides a strong rationale for integrating audio and visual features into English language materials for beginner-level adult learners.

2.1.3 Design Principles

The integration of visual elements in learning materials is aligned with established principles of instructional design that emphasize learner engagement and contextual relevance. According to Tomlinson (2011), effective language learning materials should achieve impact by being visually appealing and should help learners feel at ease by presenting content in familiar and meaningful contexts. This principle reflects a broader understanding that the physical and aesthetic qualities of learning materials are not secondary concerns, but are integral to how learners initially receive, process, and respond to instructional content. When materials are designed with visual intentionality, they create an environment in which learners are more likely to engage with the content attentively and sustain that engagement across extended periods of study. This is particularly relevant in vocational and adult learning contexts,

where learners often approach instructional materials with specific practical goals and limited time, making the clarity and visual accessibility of materials a critical factor in determining learning outcomes.

This view is further supported by cognitive evidence from Dzulkifli and Mustafar (2013), who assert that colour functions as a powerful information channel to the human cognitive system and plays a significant role in enhancing memory performance. Drawing on multiple experimental studies, they explain that colour aids memorization primarily by elevating attention levels, and that the degree of attention directed toward certain stimuli raises the probability of that information being transferred and stored in longer-term memory. In their review, they reference findings indicating that coloured presentations consistently resulted in better attention and memory performance compared to non-coloured alternatives, suggesting that the presence of colour in instructional materials is not merely aesthetic but serves a measurable cognitive function. Furthermore, Dzulkifli and Mustafar (2013) note that warm colours such as yellow, red, and orange have been found to produce a greater effect on attention compared to cooler tones, which implies that colour selection in materials design should be deliberate and informed by an understanding of how different visual stimuli affect learner cognition. They also highlight the concept of emotional arousal as a mediating variable, noting that colors can trigger emotional responses that further enhance the encoding and retention of information, particularly in long-term memory storage. This connection between visual design, emotional engagement, and memory consolidation reinforces the argument that well-designed instructional materials can meaningfully support the cognitive dimensions of the learning process.

Beyond individual visual elements, the broader architecture of instructional materials must also reflect sound pedagogical design principles. Franco and Bidarra (2022) argue that effective instructional material

development requires a balance of three interdependent dimensions: multimedia design, which involves the thoughtful integration of text, image, and other supporting elements; interactive design, which enables meaningful learner engagement with the content; and learning design, which ensures that all components are aligned with clearly defined pedagogical goals. Although these dimensions are discussed in the context of digital learning environments, the underlying principles are equally applicable to the development of print-based instructional materials, as they address the fundamental question of how content should be structured, presented, and sequenced to maximize learning effectiveness. The multimedia dimension finds strong theoretical grounded by Mayer's (2001), which posits that learners process verbal and visual information through separate cognitive channels, and that meaningful learning occurs when these channels are engaged simultaneously and in a coordinated manner. This theory suggests that the deliberate pairing of written text with relevant visual elements in printed materials is not redundant but cognitively complementary, as it allows learners to construct richer mental representations of the content being studied.

2.1.4. Characteristics of Adult EFL Learners

Adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners possess distinct characteristics that differentiate them from young learners, particularly in terms of age, prior experience, and learning orientation. Purwati et al. (2022) explain that adult learners, generally categorized as those aged 25 years and above, tend to have more varied life experiences compared to children, which contributes to their capacity for self-directed learning. This finding aligns with O'Shea's (2016) study, which found that age significantly influences self-directed learning, with adults aged 25 and older demonstrating a higher degree of independence in managing their own learning process. In addition, Purwati et al. (2022) highlight that adult learners are typically self-oriented rather than

curriculum-oriented, meaning that they tend to direct their own learning based on personal needs and goals rather than simply following a fixed syllabus. Regarding motivation, Bierema (2014, as cited in Purwati et al., 2022) points out that not all adult learners are driven by intrinsic motivation alone, as external factors such as job responsibilities or mandatory training often play a significant role in encouraging adults to learn. These characteristics are particularly relevant to prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) as adult learners, since their motivation to learn English is largely shaped by practical, work-related needs rather than academic requirements alone.

2.1.4.1 Characteristics of Adult Low-Proficiency EFL Learners

Prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers represent a specific learner profile that has significant implications for material design. The majority of IMWs come from rural areas with limited formal schooling (Soenjun and Manulun, 2021), meaning that many have had little or no prior exposure to English. As adult learners in the age of 25, they differ from younger students in several keyways, they bring real-world experience and practical motivation to learning, but they also face cognitive habits formed around their mother tongue (Indonesian language or regional languages), which can create interference patterns in pronunciation and grammar acquisition. Adults tend to be goal-oriented and learn best when material has immediate relevance to their lives and work (Knowles, 1984). This principle of andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn, is a cornerstone consideration, which anchors every vocabulary set and dialogue in real domestic work scenarios.

Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis provides a theoretical basis for understanding how language learning occurs among this population. Krashen (1982) proposed that language acquisition happens when

learners are exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current competence level described as “i+1.” For zero-beginner IMW learners, this means the book must begin with the most basic and immediately useful language, such as greetings, common instructions, and household object names, before progressing to more complex sentence structures. Furthermore, Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights that high anxiety, low motivation, or low self-confidence creates a “filter” that prevents language input from being acquired. The Smart Migrant Book addresses this by incorporating encouraging visual design, for pronunciation guidance in the shape of audio voice, and contextually familiar scenarios to reduce anxiety and build learner confidence during the LPK training period.

2.1.5 Indonesian Migrant Workers

Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) are legally defined by Law No. 18/2017 as Indonesian citizens who work outside the territory of the Republic of Indonesia and receive wages for their labor. This definition encompasses those working for legal entities, individual employers, or households, as well as seafarers and fishing crews seeking better economic opportunities. Statistics show that the majority of these workers, over 72% originate from rural areas, driven by limited local job availability to seek employment abroad. Referring to Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, it was stipulated that migrant workers were every Indonesian citizen who would, was, or had done work by receiving wages outside the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. In this context, migrant workers included those who worked for legal employers, individual employers or households, as well as seafarers and fishing boat crews with the aim of seeking employment opportunities or better economic conditions. Manulun (2021) stated that the majority of Indonesian migrant workers, more than 72%, came from rural areas. They sought

employment abroad due to limited job opportunities in their home areas, reflecting the economic motivation behind their decision to become migrant workers.

The contribution of IMWs to Indonesia's national economy is substantial and serves as a vital pillar of financial stability. In 2023, Bank Indonesia reported that state income from IMW remittances reached Rp230.81 trillion, accounting for approximately 10% of the nation's total foreign exchange reserves. These funds do not only bolster national reserves but also act as a critical source of capital for rural development and poverty alleviation in the workers' home regions. The Role of Preparation and Language Mastery.

Despite their significant economic role, many IMWs face challenges due to their educational backgrounds and the demanding nature of international labor markets. The protection of these workers is managed by the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI), which oversees their welfare before, during, and after their placement abroad. In 2023 alone, BP2MI recorded a 36.93% increase in placements, totaling 274,695 workers, with continued growth seen in early 2024. Given that a large portion of these workers such as the 79,344 placed in formal sectors in early 2024 rely on their ability to communicate with international employers, language proficiency becomes a non-negotiable skill. Mastery of English directly impacts their ability to compete and ensures their safety and effectiveness in the workplace. Therefore, providing targeted instructional materials like the "Smart Migrant Book" is not just a pedagogical need, but an economic imperative to protect and empower the individuals responsible for 10% of the nation's foreign exchange.

2.1.6 Domestic Workers

Before examining studies specific to Indonesian domestic workers, it is useful to first establish what domestic work entails as an occupational category.

According to the International Labor Organization's Domestic Workers Convention (No.189), domestic work refers to work performed in or for a household, encompassing tasks such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, and caregiving for children, the elderly, or sick household members. Domestic workers are estimated to make up a substantial share of the global care workforce, and migrant domestic workers contribute significantly to remittance economies in their countries of origin. Despite this economic importance, domestic work has historically been undervalued and under-regulated compared to other forms of employment, largely due to the private life in nature of the workplace, which limits external oversight and makes workers more vulnerable to isolation and exploitation. These structural characteristics distinguish domestic work from other occupational sectors and carry direct implications for how language training should be designed: because domestic workers typically work and reside within a single household with limited contact with the wider community, their opportunities to practice English outside formal training are considerably more restricted than those of workers in more public-facing occupations. This context reinforces the importance of equipping prospective domestic workers with practical, self-contained English learning resources prior to departure, since opportunities for organic language exposure once they begin working are likely to be limited.

2.1.7 LPKS Nur Mutiara Bangsa

Established in 2018 in Kebumen, Central Java, LPKS Nur Mutiara Bangsa is an accredited vocational training center dedicated to preparing prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) for employment overseas. Since its inception, the institution has successfully facilitated the deployment of over 800 migrant workers to key international destinations, including Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore with Singapore remaining one of the most highly sought-after choices among applicants.

Because effective workplace communication is essential, language requirements vary significantly depending on the destination country. While IMWs bound for Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia must learn Mandarin, Cantonese, and Malay respectively, those heading to Singapore rely on English as their primary tool for daily and professional interactions. Consequently, English proficiency is a critical asset for these workers. This specific linguistic demand makes LPKS Nur Mutiara Bangsa the ideal environment for developing the Smart Migrant Book, a targeted resource designed to equip prospective IMWs with the essential English communication skills needed to succeed in Singapore.

2.1.8 The Destination of Singapore

Singapore has long been one of the primary destination countries for Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs), particularly those employed in the informal sector as domestic workers or domestic helpers. Over the years, the demand for domestic workers in Singapore has steadily increased, driven by high female labor force participation and the growing dependence of urban households on domestic support services. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower (2024), Singapore ranked fifth among destination countries for IMW placement, recording 5,068 workers by mid-2024. Earlier data reported by Sediksi (2023) placed Singapore in sixth position, with 6,153 Indonesian migrant workers. Although Singapore was not among the top three destination countries, it remained an important labor market, especially because a large proportion of Indonesian migrant workers there were employed in the domestic sector. Furthermore, data from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) indicated that more than 60% of Indonesians living in Singapore worked

as domestic helpers, highlighting the country's significant role as a destination for Indonesian workers in this occupation.



Figure 1.1 Singapore Map

In a study entitled “Indonesia's Cooperation with Singapore in the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) in Singapore,” identifies Singapore as one of the principal destinations for Indonesian migrant workers (Bill et.al 2020). According to Lee (1996), several common factors determine why they chose to work abroad. First, from an economic standpoint, Singapore offers significantly higher wages compared not only to Indonesia but also to several other destination countries in the region, enabling migrant workers to remit income and improve their families’ standard of living. Second, the country’s modern infrastructure and efficient transportation system contribute to a more convenient daily life, while well-established safety regulations ensure relatively secure and structured working conditions. These advantages collectively enhance Singapore’s attractiveness as a workplace destination.

In addition to economic and structural factors, linguistic and socio-cultural considerations further reinforce Singapore’s position as a preferred destination. The widespread use of English as a primary working language is

perceived as relatively accessible for Indonesian workers, given that English is commonly introduced in Indonesia's formal education system. This familiarity reduces barriers to communication and facilitates workplace integration. Moreover, Singapore's membership in the ASEAN region fosters a sense of cultural proximity, as Indonesian migrant workers may encounter shared regional values, social norms, and cultural practices. As a result, adaptation to the host environment becomes comparatively easier. Taken together, these economic, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors systematically explain why Singapore continues to be a strategic and favorable destination for Indonesian migrant workers.

2.2 Previous Studies

Several researchers have explored the development of English language materials for migrant workers, highlighting a consistent need for contextually relevant resources. (Nahartini et al.2021) conducted a pivotal study evaluating the English training materials provided by government training centers (BLKLN) for Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs). Their findings revealed that existing government modules were often too formal, academic, and lacked the practical vocabulary necessary for real-world workplace scenarios. This study emphasized that materials to be understandable, they must move away from standardized theoretical content and instead be grounded in an authentic needs analysis that reflects the lived experiences, and communication demands of the workers.

Nernere, Astuti, and Kristianto (2023) conducted English training for beginner-level Indonesian migrant workers and identified a significant problem in the participants' language ability. Most of the workers had very limited English skills before the training, which made it difficult for them to communicate in basic workplace situations. This lack of English proficiency was seen as a serious obstacle, as workers often struggled to understand instructions, respond to their employers, and carry out simple conversations in English. The study found that without proper English training,

beginner-level migrant workers were highly vulnerable to miscommunication, which could negatively affect both their work performance and their safety abroad. Their findings highlight the urgent need for structured English training programs that are specifically designed for workers with little to no prior English background.

The examined the English language challenges faced by Indonesian migrant workers in Brunei Darussalam and found that many workers experienced serious communication difficulties in their daily work environment (Maliki et al.2022). The workers often could not understand instructions given by their employers, had trouble asking for help, and were unable to express themselves clearly in English. This communication barrier not only affected their job performance but also led to misunderstandings that caused stress and conflict in the workplace. The study emphasized that most of these workers had never received formal English training before going abroad, which left them unprepared for the language demands of working in an English-speaking environment. These findings point to the importance of providing practical and context-based English training before workers depart for their destination countries.

Afriani and Maimunah (2020) highlighted the English language problems faced by Indonesian migrant workers in Cirebon and noted that most participants had very low English proficiency when they entered the program. Many workers reported feeling anxious and unconfident when they had to use English, especially in situations involving their employers or workplace supervisors. The study found that this lack of confidence was closely linked to their limited vocabulary and poor understanding of basic English expressions used in everyday work settings. Without adequate English skills, the workers were often unable to advocate for themselves, report problems, or understand their rights and responsibilities as workers abroad. The findings of this study underscore the critical need for English learning programs that not only build language skills but also address the confidence and communication needs of migrant workers in real workplace contexts.

While existing literature highlights the significance of English language preparation for migrant workers, most of the research has focused primarily on training programs and skill development rather than the creation of structured educational products. Furthermore, there remains a distinct shortage of studies dedicated to developing English learning materials tailored specifically for prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) entering the Singaporean domestic work sector.

To bridge this gap, this study introduces the **Smart Migrant Book**, a targeted English learning resource tailored for prospective Indonesian Migrant Workers (IMWs) pursuing domestic employment in Singapore. The core content of the book is structured around a comprehensive needs analysis involving both learners and industry stakeholders, guaranteeing that the instructional sequence aligns with real-world communication demands faced throughout the recruitment and employment phases. The material integrates highly practical topics, including self-introductions, employer interviews, workplace directions, caregiving terminology, and everyday conversational English. To enhance the learning experience, these units are paired with QR-code-accessible audio materials. As Law and So (2010) note, QR codes provide rapid access to multimedia resources, fostering a more engaging and interactive educational environment. Ultimately, this research offers a highly contextualized, needs-based learning tool engineered for the precise professional and linguistic realities of IMWs in Singapore.