

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong is located in Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. As a vocational high school, this institution aims to prepare students with both academic knowledge and practical skills that are relevant to the needs of the workforce. Most of the study programs offered by the school are related to technical and vocational fields, making technology an important element in the learning process.

The growing integration of technology in education has changed the way teaching and learning activities are conducted. Through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Deep Learning Curriculum, teachers are expected to incorporate technology into classroom instruction to support students' learning experiences. This expectation applies to all subjects, including English, where technology can be used to facilitate communication, provide authentic learning materials, and create more engaging learning activities.

However, based on preliminary observations conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong, there appears to be a gap between these expectations and the reality of classroom practice. As a vocational school with technical programs, the school is often assumed to have sufficient technological facilities to support technology-based learning. In practice, several challenges are still encountered.

Internet access is not always available in all areas of the school, some teachers still rely on their personal mobile data, and technological resources cannot always be accessed easily during classroom instruction. At the same time, teachers are expected to integrate technology into their teaching as part of current curriculum requirements.

These conditions make the issue of technology integration particularly important to examine. The challenge is not only about whether technology is available, but also about how teachers perceive the need to combine technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge in their teaching practice. In a vocational school context, this issue becomes even more relevant because students are expected to develop digital skills alongside subject-specific competencies that will be useful in their future careers.

For this reason, understanding English teachers' perceptions of the urgency of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) at SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong is important. Exploring these perceptions may provide a clearer picture of how teachers respond to the increasing demand for technology integration, the factors that influence their views, and the challenges they face in implementing technology-supported English language teaching. The rapid digital transformation has profoundly reshaped global education since the COVID-19 pandemic, embedding technology as a core element of classrooms worldwide through platforms like Zoom, AI-driven tools, and adaptive learning apps (UNESCO, 2023). In English language teaching (ELT), this enables

enhanced engagement, authentic exposure via multimedia, and skill development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing amid rising demands for digital fluency. In Indonesia, this is reinforced by regulations such as Permendikbudristek No. 16 Tahun 2021 on teacher certification and the Merdeka Belajar platform (2022 onwards), which mandate technology-infused pedagogies for 21st-century skills (Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong was selected as the research site not only for its contextual relevance to the topic but also because of the school's demonstrated culture of excellence and professional achievement. The school has built a notable reputation both at the regional and national levels, marked by meaningful accomplishments among its teaching staff. In particular, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, together with a dedicated team, participated in an international professional training program organized through a collaboration between the Indonesian and French Ministries of Education at the Campus des Métiers et des Qualifications Énergies et Efficacité Énergétique, Cité scolaire de Fécamp, France. Among the English teaching staff at SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong is a teacher whose professional achievements illustrate the high caliber of educators present at this school.

These circumstances may influence how English teachers perceive the urgency of TPACK in their teaching practice. While curriculum policies require teachers to integrate technology into learning activities, the availability of facilities, previous experiences with technology, and professional support may

affect how teachers view the importance and necessity of TPACK. Some teachers may consider TPACK essential for effective teaching, while others may see it as difficult to implement because of contextual limitations. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions becomes important in order to gain a deeper understanding of how they respond to the increasing demand for technology integration in vocational education

B. Focus of the Study

Previous studies have examined TPACK from different perspectives. Some focused on measuring teachers' TPACK competence levels using quantitative surveys, while others examined how TPACK is implemented in specific classroom activities. A number of studies have also explored teachers' general perceptions of technology use in teaching.

However, studies that specifically explore teachers' perceptions of the urgency of TPACK remain limited, particularly in vocational school settings. Most prior research has either measured whether teachers possess TPACK competencies or examined classroom implementation outcomes. Very few studies have investigated how teachers come to perceive TPACK as urgent or necessary in the first place, and what factors shape that perception. This gap is particularly notable in the Indonesian EFL context, where vocational schools present a distinct instructional landscape that has not been adequately represented in existing TPACK research.

In addition, the context of vocational schools differs substantially from that of general secondary schools. English teachers in vocational settings must align language instruction with students' specific vocational programs, integrating content that is both linguistically and professionally relevant. This added layer of contextual complexity makes the question of TPACK urgency particularly meaningful in vocational EFL contexts, yet it remains underexplored in the literature.

SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong provides a contextually rich site for this study. As a vocational school operating under the demands of the Deep Learning curriculum while facing real infrastructure limitations, the school represents a setting where the gap between curriculum expectations and classroom realities is clearly visible. This study is therefore delimited to four English teachers at this school who have direct experience integrating technology into their teaching, and does not extend to measuring TPACK competence levels or evaluating student learning outcomes.

C. Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem is what factors influence English teachers' perceptions of the urgency of TPACK at SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong.

D. Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study is to identify and describe the factors that influence English teachers' perceptions of the urgency of Technological

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) at SMK Negeri 1 Rejang Lebong. While the study recognizes that all four participants consistently perceive TPACK as important and necessary in English language teaching, the central aim is to examine what contextual and professional factors shape that perception, including their teaching experiences, instructional environments, school infrastructure, student characteristics, teacher competence, and policy contexts. By employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study provides a grounded account of the factors that make TPACK feel more or less urgent and actionable for English teachers in a vocational high school setting.

E. Significance of the Study

This study offers theoretical significance by deepening the understanding of teachers' perceptions of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in English Language Teaching. In line with the research questions, this study does not aim to assess teachers' competence or measure TPACK levels, but rather to explore how English teachers perceive the urgency of TPACK, how they interpret its role in their teaching practices, and how they make sense of technology integration within their instructional context. By focusing on teachers' perceptions, this study contributes to the TPACK literature from the perspective of teacher cognition, particularly in English language education.

Practically, this study is significant in providing descriptive insights into English teachers' views, attitudes, and challenges related to TPACK-based instruction, as addressed in the research objectives. The findings are expected to

help teacher educators, school administrators, and policymakers better understand how teachers perceive the necessity of integrating technology, pedagogy, and content in English teaching. Such understanding may support the design of professional development programs and instructional support that are more responsive to teachers' perceptions, contextual realities, and instructional needs, rather than relying solely on prescriptive or technology-driven approaches.

F. Definition of Key Term

1. Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions refer to English teachers' views, beliefs, understanding, and interpretations formed through their teaching experiences and professional contexts. In this study, teachers' perceptions relate to how English teachers view the urgency of integrating technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge in English language teaching.

2. Urgency

Urgency refers to the degree to which a concept or practice is perceived as important, necessary, and relevant to be implemented in current educational contexts. In this study, urgency refers to English teachers' perceptions of the necessity of applying the TPACK framework

in response to the increasing integration of technology in teaching and learning processes.

3. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

TPACK refers to a framework that describes the interaction among teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge in supporting effective teaching.

4. English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching (ELT) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a target language for learners whose first language is not English. The term encompasses both instructional practices and learning processes, integrating aspects of language pedagogy, learner needs, and contextual factors. In contemporary educational contexts, ELT involves the use of various technological tools to support instruction, enhance learner motivation, and facilitate language skill development (Crompton et al., 2024). In this study, ELT is used as an inclusive term that represents the teaching and learning of English supported by technology within formal educational settings.