CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background

English has become the accepted international language of technology and commerce; thus it has created a new generation of learners who must learn English to satisfy the demands of the commercially interconnected modern world. Hence, English is an international language which is learnt as the first, second or foreign language in the world. It plays an important role in human activities. The activities can be related to their jobs. There are many different people with their own jobs, and each job has typical characteristics of vocabulary based on what they have to do. The language is intended to make their communication easy.

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. It is used by many people and the need of mastering English in a job is important. English is used as the medium of business, tourism, science, technology, and education. With the globalization of trade and economy, and the continuing increase of international communication in various fields.

There are four skills in English which should be mastered by people. Those are reading and listening which are called as receptive skills, and speaking and writing which are called as productive skills. Reading is one of compulsory English skills that should be mastered by people. Reading as one of language skill should provide reading materials or text which are interesting...
and motivating. According to Cahyono, et al (2006) by reading people can 1) find information; (2) understand the general information of a text; (3) learn and find new vocabulary; (4) criticize and evaluate respectively.

New insights gained from educational psychology also contributed to the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Instead of viewing learners as blank slates to be filled, learners were seen to have different needs and interests, differences which had a critical influence on their motivation and thereby resulted in the need for different approaches for them to achieve maximum effectiveness in their learning. The demand for ESP has expanded, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

The theory of teaching ESP is not too different from the theory of teaching English for General Purposes (EGP). Hutchinson and Water as stated in Pramono (2012: 3) mention the differences between teaching ESP and EGP. ESP makes the use of vocabulary and tasks related to the fields such as negotiation skills and effective techniques for oral presentation. ESP also increases students’ skills and confidence in using and speaking English. Dudley-Evans (2001) as cited in Lawrence (2007: 2) also explains the differences between ESP and EGP. As the English with general purposes, the students’ needs are difficult to be understood because the materials are more complex. Therefore, the material contents that will be used are more difficult to select. While, ESP is focused on training. English is intended to be used in specific context; selection of appropriate content is easier.
Considering the importance of English, especially in education, Indonesian government has put English in school curriculum as one of main subject. Teaching English in Vocational High School (VHS) is also considered as teaching ESP since they learn English as their means of communication related to their professionalism jobs. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) define ESP is an “approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to context and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning”. ESP is designed to build up students’ skill in order to enable them to communicate in English language and the materials that are included are basically chosen based on the learners’ area of professional expertise (Tarnopolsky, 2009).

In Indonesia, VHS developed rapidly as the purpose to prepare a competence human resource to be able to compete in globalization era. Moreover, the various department are grouped according to the needs of industries that require medium power specialist or experts in the particular field. It is also believed be able to give students more opportunities to explore different disciplines to the maximum. VHS students learn English language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. It is the same as ESP learner’s purpose. They also must have the skills needed for in the demand of jobs.

In Indonesia, parents sent their children to have education in VHS since they believed that VHS will prepare their children to be an entrepreneur or professional worker. It is one of our government missions in preparing good
human resources to be able to compete in the globalization era in getting jobs. Then, Indonesian government made a motto “SMK bisa!”. In VHS, students are taught and prepared to be a professional in their future job. Therefore, the teaching and learning process (TLP) is different from Senior High School (SHS) as EGP. Moreover, VHS provided some majors such as engineering, electricity, medical, technical, art, business, management, science, maritime, multimedia, etc.

Here, authentic reading material is needed since the reading book provided by the government is same with Senior High School. Reading materials for VHS students should be different from SHS because the materials have to be based on the students’ vocational fields.

There is significant difference regarding the presence of authentic materials in the Foreign Language (FL) classroom. In authentic material students can get appropriate actual words to be studied, the interesting topic to be discussed and learnt and thematic choice of language to be activated. (Richards, 2001) It is believed that authenticity has proved it is beneficial role in language teaching and there is no arguments regarding this. Moreover, authentic materials relate to the onset of communicative movements in which there were an attempt to stimulate real world in the classroom. English language and the materials that are included are basically chosen based on the learners’ area of professional expertise (Tarnopolsky, 2009). Thus, VHS students will be facilitated by the material which related to their programs.
Based on the elaboration above, a study will be conducted to find out VHS students’ perspectives towards reading material provided. Therefore, the writer is inspired to write this research entitled “Students’ Perspectives Towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Based Reading Materials (A Descriptive Case Study in SMK N 1 Bawang, Banjarnegara).

B. Reason for Choosing the Topic

Based on the condition above, this research has some reasons in choosing the topic as follows:

1. Reading material is important for Vocational High School (VHS) students. Thus, the reading material should cover the students’ need by providing interesting and comprehensibility material.
2. The student’s perspectives towards ESP based reading materials are urgently investigated.

C. Research Question

This research matter was conducted into a question; the formulated question was:

“How do the students’ perspectives towards ESP based reading materials?”

D. Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the students’ perspectives towards ESP based reading materials.
E. Benefits of the Study

The writer expects that the result of this study provide the following benefits for the readers:

1. The result of the study are expected to be the source of information for language teacher related to reading material for VHS students viewed from ESP students’ need. It will also direct the teacher on how to select appropriate reading material for VHS students.

2. Meanwhile, benefits for the students, it can serve them more appropriate and supporting reading material related to their needs of job professionalism so they will be able to increase their English achievements and reading comprehension.

3. While, benefits for readers, it will probably be used as the reference for those who want to conduct a research in English teaching process, especially reading material in using appropriate reading material which covers their needs in learning English as their communication purpose. It also can be used an input or only a large knowledge in English teaching process.

4. The last, it is expected to so much that other researchers can utilize the result of the study on a bigger scope for a similar research.