

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter involves background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

English materials are not always appropriate to a certain group of learners, particularly a group of learners with specific need of English such as students of vocational high school. This group of learners is prepared to work after graduating from school. Also, the students are expected to be knowledgeable and skillful at their field of expertise to get a job they desire. One of the study programs at vocational high school demanding the students to have English skill in the workplace is Office Administration. The graduates of the study program must be able to read and write various office documents in English, and this requirement is explicitly stated in Indonesian National Working Competency Standards (*Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia*, henceforth SKKNI). Because students need those skills to work, it is important to use English materials reflecting their future job. Unfortunately, the English materials used at vocational high schools are those used at general high schools which cover General English and are irrelevant with students' needs for workplace-English skills (Mahbub, 2018).

In support of that statement, some researchers found the irrelevancy between the existing English materials with those actually needed by the students for doing

job in the future. Susanto and Latief (2016) state that midwives sometimes deal with foreign patients who speak English, but the existing materials for teaching midwifery students do not have clear objectives and do not focus on improving students' oral communication skills. Likewise, Rahmiani et al. (2018) assert that the existing English materials used by Vocational Tourism Education (VTE) cover few topics which specifically relate to local cultures and destinations. Meanwhile, the students are required to become skilled personnel in tourism industry in that area. Specifically related to Office Administration, Sumarsono et al. (2017) note that the used materials provide various kinds of texts, but they are inauthentic and do not represent the future jobs of students majoring in Office Administration study program.

Moreover, based on informal interview with an English teacher of vocational high school in Karawang on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2019, the teacher said that he used English textbooks are not appropriate for Office Administration students who will work after they graduate from school. The textbooks entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK* contain texts and tasks in general context, and the objectives specified in the textbooks do not align with working competencies stated in SKKNI for Office Administration. The teacher also said that the school continues using the textbooks due to government's mandate, even though they are unsuitable for Office Administration students. He added that the content of the textbooks is General English because they are also provided for Senior High School students who are not prepared to work after graduating from school.

The textbooks entitled *Bahasa Inggris SMA/MA/SMK/MAK* for Grade X, XI,

and XII contain reading texts and writing tasks with topics for General English. In the textbook for Grade X, the reading texts comprise descriptive texts, recount texts, and narrative texts with writing tasks involving students to write these texts. The reading texts and writing tasks are covered in topics such as Let's Visit Niagara Falls, My Idol, The Battle of Surabaya, Issumboshi, Malin Kundang. In the textbook for Grade XI, the reading texts comprise explanation texts and analytical exposition texts with writing tasks involving students to write these texts. The reading texts and writing tasks are covered in topics such as National Disaster-An Exposition and Explain This. Then, in the textbook for Grade XII, the reading texts include factual report and news item with writing tasks involving students to write these texts. The reading texts and writing tasks are covered in topics such as Read the Nature, Students Don't Bully, Who Was Involved, What's the News, and so on. If referred to SKKNI, these topics, texts types, and writing tasks are inappropriate for students of Office Administration who are required to read and to write office documents when working in a company.

Meanwhile, SKKNI requires vocational high school students majoring in Office Administration to have English reading and writing skills at a basic operational level. The competencies involve basic daily activities of reading and writing various office documents such as reports, emails, facsimiles, letters, diagrams, brochures, and recognizing common signs at workplace. As revealed in Evans' study (2010), working documents frequently written in English include external/internal emails, letters, reports, memos, faxes, and minutes. Similarly, a study by Sumarsono et al. (2017) suggested that the needs of Office



Administration students related to reading and writing materials cover the topics such as press release, advertisement or announcement, business letter, personal letter, job vacancy, proposal, report, employment agreement, company profile, and memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Due to the fact that the materials are inappropriate for the students, it is important to prepare English materials addressing the needs of Office Administration students for having English reading and writing skills in the workplace. Undeniably, materials have a fundamental role in English teaching and learning at Office Administration study program. Garton and Graves (2014) assert that the used materials are supposed to meet the aims and objectives of particular programs. This suggests that materials should be appropriately prepared based on what students need to learn according to their program aims and objectives. In Office Administration program, English materials should be relevant with the need to read and to write office documents in English at workplace. Therefore, preparing the materials must be started with the investigation of what the needs at workplace are in relation to reading and writing office documents in English.

As it is stated by Harsono (2007), the needs of students are the first things to start in developing materials of learning with a specific purpose. If the needs are failed to compile, the materials which are expected to be effective on the target learners cannot be produced (Darici, 2016). It implies that needs analysis should be carefully conducted in order to provide appropriate learning materials. In that regard, a comprehensive analysis on work performance that students need to conduct should become the basis for producing English reading and writing

materials for students majoring in Office Administration. Seeing the importance of needs-based learning materials, a systematic way should be carried out in order that the required materials can properly meet the needs of English at workplace. This systematic way can be conducted by a research focusing on materials development with needs analysis as part of the process. Several studies have been conducted to provide learning materials that match with the needs of English skills which will be used in students' future jobs.

Susanto and Latief (2016) undertook materials development for midwifery students that focused on oral communication skills. They firstly examined students' needs for the materials by distributing questionnaires. Then, they developed the materials based on CLIL approach and the national standards for midwifery. The final product is speaking materials that consist of five sections: Snapshot, Conversation in Context, Language Function and Grammar, Video Viewing, and Word Power Exercise. Next, Rahmiani et al. (2018) developed supplementary materials for vocational tourism students by initially conducting needs analysis through questionnaire and interview. The researcher did not explain how the materials are sequenced, but they mention the unit titles i.e., Introduction, Cultural Sites, Festival and Attraction, Art and Craft, Accommodation and Transportation.

Additionally, Erfiani et al. (2019) conducted supplementary English reading materials development for vocational high school students majoring in multimedia. At first, the researchers analyzed the needs for reading materials through observation, interview, questionnaire, and document analysis. Then,

materials were developed based on English basic competencies for Grade XI in which the content was adjusted to multimedia topics. The final product is two units of reading materials and each unit consists of Warm Up, Let's Read, and Evaluation with five additional features (Enrichment, Reflection, Summary, Some Facts, and Word Vault). In relation to office administration program, Sumarsono et al. (2017) developed an English textbook for Office Administration students by integrating three skills (reading, writing, and speaking). First, they investigated the needs for materials through interview and document analysis. Then, they produced the textbook consisting of ten chapters based on Curriculum 2013 and implemented authentic materials principles.

As it can be seen, previous studies attempted to provide appropriate learning materials for work-oriented students. The studies by Susanto and Latief (2016), Rahmiani et al. (2018), Erfiani et al. (2019) and Sumarsono et al. (2017) were respectively done to develop English materials for students majoring in Midwifery, Tourism, Multimedia, and Office Administration. The researchers have successfully developed materials that support students to acquire English skills required in the workplace. However, they have not yet implemented the national working competency standards. The information for needs analysis was primarily driven from practitioners, teachers, and students. Even if the researchers performed document analysis in doing needs analysis, the documents exclude Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards (SKKNI).

For that reason, further study needs to set out to develop English materials based on English competencies stated in SKKNI. Due to the lack of studies on



materials development for Office Administration students, so the study should provide English materials for students majoring in that study program. The study should be focused on English reading and writing materials because Office Administration students will mainly need reading and writing skills in the workplace, and it has been confirmed by the English teacher from informal interview. He said that the workplace at which Office Administration students will have to perform the tasks requires primarily reading and writing skills. Therefore, the study should be aimed at developing English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration based on the competencies stated in Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

As explained in the background of the study, a study is needed to develop English reading and writing materials for Office Administration students based on Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards. Therefore, the researcher formulated research questions to conduct the study. The research questions consist of main and sub-research questions. The following is the main research question.

How are the English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration developed based on Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards?

The main research question is then divided into two sub-research questions as follows.

1. To what extent are the existing English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration relevant with Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards?
2. How are the English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration developed based on Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the proposed research questions, this study was conducted to achieve the following aims:

1. To analyze the extent to which the existing English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration are relevant with Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards.
2. To develop English reading and writing materials for Vocational High School students majoring in Office Administration based on Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

As explained earlier, the objectives of this study were to analyze the existing English reading and writing materials used by Office-Administration High-School students and to develop English reading and writing materials for the students. In order to achieve the first objective, the researcher analyzed the existing materials



to figure out the extent to which the materials are relevant with SKKNI. The analysis was focused on seven aspects i.e., learning objective, topic, text, language skills (reading and writing), language content (grammar and vocabulary), activity, and instruction. Then, to achieve the second objective, the researcher developed English reading and writing materials based on the standards stated in Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards (SKKNI) for Office Administration. The standards were emphasized on English reading and writing competencies at basic operational level.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the model of materials development by Jolly and Bolitho (2011) and the model of materials design by Tomlinson (2013a) were applicable for this study. By applying Jolly and Bolitho's (2011) model, the findings of this study provide advantages to the readers to get insights about Office Administration students' needs of English reading and writing skills in the workplace based on Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards. The findings also give the readers ideas regarding the procedures to develop English reading and writing materials for High-School students that meet Indonesian-National Working Competency Standards for Office Administration. Moreover, the findings of this study present the application of materials design model by Tomlinson (2013a) in developing unit sequence of English reading and writing materials for Office Administration students.

Practically, the findings on the analysis of the existing English reading and writing materials suggest that the materials are inappropriate for Office-Administration High-School students who are required to have English reading and writing competencies in the workplace. Then, the findings on materials development suggest that both teachers and Office Administration students as the end-users benefit from the developed English reading and writing materials. For teachers, the materials can be used for teaching English reading and writing skills to prepare students to perform well in doing English reading and writing tasks in their future jobs. For Office Administration students, the developed materials are useful to familiarize themselves with reading and writing tasks that are similar to their future job. This enables students to get used to the tasks before they start working in the real workplace.

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