

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The needs of English language are extremely important in the era of globalization especially since the era of *ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)* 2015 and *ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)* have begun. The existence of English language itself as international language or language of communication of the world will assist us to adapt to the rapid development of life which demand those who are in the circle of globalization to participate in it. Accordingly, English language will play an important role to facilitate human to socialize globally in order to be more responsive to the development of various aspects of life. Some of the English language uses nowadays are needed for example in travelling, socializing, business and many more. Notwithstanding, it should be admitted that each of those sectors might have different needs in English usage.

In the same way, English is also taking significant roles in the world of education. One of them is that most of recommended references in learning are presented in English language. Those who do not have proper competences in English language would have difficulties in understanding

those references and there might even misunderstanding in that. Then again, it will be difficult to compete in the world of education because mostly English is used as language of communication not only in national competition but also in international competition. Another key fact to remember is about the position of English language in educational world mainly in Indonesia is that English is taught as a compulsory subject in formal education which means that the subject itself is essentially needed by the students. To that end, this subject itself should be able to assist students to reach the educational goals as well as to fulfill their needs in learning.

The roles of English language in the world of work are also significant at the present time since most of the companies or job vacancy providers demand the employers or the applicants to have good English language skills. This is because they want their employers able to compete globally which will lead to the improvement of the company itself in the future. Besides, by having those skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in English language, it will support their professional skills and can build and expand connection in all over the world. In that case, those who do not have competences in English might be difficult to compete in the world of work especially in the era of *AFTA 2015* and in the era of *AEC* where people from *ASEAN's* countries are free to apply for job in wherever area of Southeast

Asia and those who have English competencies will likely to have better chances than those who do not have.

One aspect of field of works which rapidly grow is in the sector of Information and Technology (IT). It cannot be denied that *IT* is significantly play important part in human life. Most of human's activities nowadays are running well using information and technology especially computer and network. As a result, the demand of employment in this sector is also increasing. There will be problems for those who work in this sector if they do not have skills in English language since most of manuals, system and programs deals with technology and network are served in English Language. Indeed, then, it will be very difficult for *IT* workers to develop a computer-based program and also networking (as part of their job) if their English skills are limited due to technology in *IT* field continues to evolve and most of it using English as language of communication. Therefore, many providers of job vacancy in this sector requires the applicant to have capability in English language both active and passive in either spoken or written language which will demand the ability in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Under these circumstances, the educational institution should provide their students with appropriate English competencies that will support their professional skills in the world of work.

One of educational institution which prepares students to work is Vocational High School or *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK). The function of *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* is preparing students to work independently, especially for working in a particular field in accordance with the requirements of the job market, and its purpose is not only equipping students with vocational competency skills to work in particular field, but should also qualified spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically and have an entrepreneurial spirit in accordance with national education goals. *SMK* does not only offering learning activity and general academic experience that is partly used in general high school but also employment and vocational education which are geared up to equip students with skills that match with the demands of the working world ( Surya Dharma, et al, 2013: 315).

Computer and Networking or *Tekhnik Komputer dan Jaringan* (TKJ) is one of study program under Information and Computer Technique department or *Tekhnik Komputer dan Informasi* (TKI/TI) which is prepared to work in IT sector in the future. Generally, Students in this department are equipped with skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to be competent in computer assembling, installing program and also maintaining and repairing computer and its network. Hence, the students of *TKJ* study program who will be the part of working world in IT sector and directly learn about computer technology

and networking in *SMK* should be equipped with suitable English skills by means of relevance learning materials that can support their expertise. Therefore, It must be admitted that the effect of English learning materials play an important role in English language teaching (ELT).

It is noticeable that the English subject curriculum is needed to be further developed by teachers especially on its English learning materials since every department in *SMK* has different needs. It has been commonly found that learning materials are becoming one of the critical success factors in achieving the learning objective. Above all, the use of proper learning materials that can fulfill students' needs will reflect teachers' knowledge and skills either for teaching and learning process or for preparing and developing their professionalism as teachers of *SMK*. So, it is important for teachers to put into consideration that in order to construct an effective and successful learning, they should be able to choose and use appropriate learning materials for their students. The errors of using inappropriate learning materials will likely to produce any improvement in students' skills on English subject or almost certainly will collapse to reach the learning objectives as well.

It must be recognized that the fact is most of teachers in *SMK* are only teaching based on the national syllabus that is given by government whereas

the syllabus itself is actually given as the basis to develop the learning material that fit the students' needs. Moreover, probably most of teachers could not recognize what actually their students' needs in learning English, in particular English skills that will support the student's major. In that condition, English teachers in *SMK* should be able to choose an English language teaching program that is fit with students' vocation. Therefore, *English for Specific Purpose (ESP)* will be the most appropriate language teaching program that can be applied in *SMK* since its purpose is to enable students to use the language in the target situation where they will use the language, in this case is in their workplace.

Furthermore, in designing an English Language teaching program which is suitable with the purpose of *SMK*, there are several steps that should be conducted. In *ESP* course, the initial part is by conducting needs analysis. Needs analysis is essentially needed since it is a process to investigate the students' real needs in English learning. The result of needs analysis will be used to design *ESP* course itself.

Curriculum of *SMK*, especially in *Kabupaten Kolaka* is using national curriculum that has been set-up by government. Actually it is specifically designed for *SMK* students however it is not too specific for every major that can fulfill students' needs. As stated earlier that students in every major may

have different needs in learning English. General English for *SMK* is probably not enough to meet the needs. This situation is supported by Zhang (2008) who stated that it is impossible to keep using general education in vocational secondary school in the era of economic development that demands a large manpower that has skills. It might be said that indeed the use of *ESP* in vocational school is significant to support the skills of the students. Further, a study by Lo (2012) stated that the implementation of *ESP* in vocational high school majoring in tourism is not only able to merge knowledge and skills of students but also can improve students' English language proficiency. Besides, through implementation of *ESP*, students' motivation in learning English increased.

In addition, several studies of needs analysis had also been conducted. Albakwari (2013) who conducted needs analysis for hotel students in Jordan found that secondary vocational students majoring in hotel were mostly need English teaching materials that related with speaking skills. At the same time, writing, listening and reading were needed as well and ranked next to speaking. Besides, it also showed a large interest from teachers and students toward *ESP* teaching materials that caused the implementation of that needs analysis as the starting point of *ESP* course. Alhusna (2014) further this study by investigating speaking materials of Food and Nutrition

students in 4(four) public vocational schools in Jakarta. She found that the speaking materials that were used in food and nutrition department were not completely relevant with the speaking needs of students because it were only taught for preparing students to face school and national examination. Similar finding also found that food and nutrition students admitted that speaking is the most important competence that they need in work-place.

However, those studies above were mostly only discussed about the application of English learning materials in vocational schools and have failed to investigate more deeply about the real needs of students in vocational high school especially for *TKJ* study program. In addition, those studies were only conducted in Jakarta and it is very rarely conducted in *Kabupaten Kolaka*, in which the needs of students in big city and small city such as in *Kabupaten Kolaka* may differ. Besides, based on the experience of some of *TKJ* alumni especially in *Kabupaten Kolaka* said that most of English learning materials that they got in school are not related with their job. As a result, they have to learn again from the beginning especially those which deal with terms in technology and also manuals that mostly use English language. Moreover, according to several English teachers who teach in a Vocational high school in *Kabupaten Kolaka* stated that basically English learning materials for all students are following the topics provided in national syllabus and no



specification for every major because it will be time consuming, besides it will not suitable with the items in national examination in which the national examination itself is determinant graduation factor of students. In fact, the students of *SMK* are necessarily equipped with skills and competence that can support them in working world after they graduated. Thus, it is obviously important to explore about what actually the real needs of students of vocational high school in this case in *TKJ* study program and the relevance of the English learning materials of *TKJ* study program with the real needs in working world. Hence, additional studies of investigating English language needs of students in *TKJ* study program in vocational high school are needed. Therefore, this study is aimed to find out the actual needs of students in *TKJ* study program in learning English and investigate its relevance with the real needs.

## **1.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

Several things that had become the problem of the study were:

1. The needs of appropriate English learning materials were alarmingly high for *SMK*'s students because it assisted students to face the world of work that demand them to have good language skills.

2. Business owner, company leader and office leader demanded Students of *SMK* to have good English language abilities to be applied when they were conducting work field practice, even more when they graduated and working.
3. The English learning materials used in *SMK* were still general and did not specified based on the students' needs.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the problem above, the researcher comes up with two research question:

1. What are the *TKJ* students' real needs in learning English?
2. Are the current English learning materials for *TKJ* study program relevant to the real needs?

### **1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study was focusing to find out the real needs of students in Computer and Networking (*Tekhnik Komputer dan Jaringan/TKJ*) study program under The School-Based Curriculum (*KTSP/Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*). Besides, it also pointed on the appropriateness of English learning materials provided in syllabus with the real needs of *TKJ*'s students.

## 1.5 PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

This present study aimed to investigate the actual needs of *TKJ*'s students in learning English. Besides, it also investigated whether the English learning materials provided in syllabus relevant with the students' actual needs or not.

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY

The significances of the present study were expected to enrich knowledge of specific English learning materials. Besides, it was also expected able to support the development of English Language Teaching in Indonesia especially in *Kabupaten Kolaka*, Southeast Sulawesi. In particular, the actual needs of *TKJ* students in learning English language and also the fact that the existed learning materials were not relevant with those needs might become the significance issue to discuss through *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP)* for English teachers in *SMK*. In regarding with benefit of conducting needs analysis especially in vocational school in which the students are preparing to face the world of work, it could asserted that this kind of study might become inputs for teachers in developing English teaching and learning materials for *TKJ* study program and also inputs for local or central government about kinds of trainings that vocational schools' teachers might need to develop their knowledge and skills which can support them in developing curriculum of vocational high school. In addition, this study was

expected as a source of information and/or references for further study especially for those who want to conduct research and development in *ESP* programs.