

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to introduce the present study. It firstly presents the background of the study in which the topic is introduced and the importance of conducting this study is briefly discussed on the basis of practical and academic concerns. This chapter further presents the formulation of the research problems, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of some key terms, and the outline of this thesis.

1.1 Background

The status of the English language as the language medium for international communication and affairs leads to the importance of this language in vocational schools because of the demands from many industrial sectors including the aviation industry. It is mentioned in the book series of Vocational Schools Revitalization in 2017 that English is used officially by international organizations for aviation. All aviation industries require English competence in the recruitment process as well as during the working period since it involves international affairs. Therefore, needs analysis on the coverage of the English language skills formulated in the vocational education curriculum receives central attention in recent years.

Since the English language subject is considered crucial within the context of aviation industry, this study aims to examine the needs for English in the industry and how the needs are accommodated in the KTSP Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. This study, therefore, is driven by the theory of English for

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Specific Purposes (ESP). The focus of ESP in vocational schools is to enhance the students' English skills, which are useful at the target workplaces. This study aims to inculcate specific target language skills that are directly related to the aviation industry. The purpose of ESP at secondary education level is to build the students' knowledge and skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Halim, 1976 in Petrus 2012, p.6). Meanwhile, the Aviation Study Program is

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among the 122 vocational programs mentioned in the Decision of General Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Educational Management No. 251/C/KEP/MN/2008. It is mentioned that every study program has to include English as a foreign language in the curriculum besides other foreign languages such as Chinese and France. English in vocational curriculum is applied as a major foreign language program. Therefore, English, which is taught as an adaptive subject, is always examined in the National Examination (UN).

ESP itself is translated into the English language teaching and learning program in vocational education as specified by the government through the Ministry of Industry in 2017. The policy implements the concept of link and match between the industry and vocational schools (reported in Kompas.com, 22 April 2017). The concept refers to a program to involve the industry's needs in the education system by synchronizing the schools program with the industry's needs. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) has an agenda to establish more vocational schools known as *Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan* (SMK) in order to provide more proficient graduates.

Furthermore, the MOEC outlines competence standards in the Content Standard or *Standar Isi* (SI) as a guideline for the vocational schools to design their syllabus or curriculum, which was first established as the School-Based Curriculum or *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP). The MOEC has attempted to establish a higher standard to be achieved by the graduates. However, a gap is still noticed between the students' achievements and the high expectation of the vocational curriculum with regard to the mastery of English in specific areas (see Donna, 2005; Kubanyiova, 2006).

The importance of needs analysis with regard to the English language subject for the Aviation Study Program at vocational schools in Indonesia is related to the benefits of mastering good English proficiency in the aviation

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industry. The mastery affects the employees' position levels in the company. Thus, vocational graduates who have high English proficiency level can help not only themselves to be successful employees in the industry, but also the nation to succeed in the aviation affairs (Emilia 2005, p. 3 in Petrus, 2012, p. 4). Besides, the English language recently becomes one of the major languages in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and this emphasizes the role of English as one of the requirements of being skilled workers (Araminta & Halimi, 2015, p. 10). The graduates who have good English proficiency are preferred in the globalization era.

The English language plays a central role in learning or in developing a learning environment. There are several functions of the English language based on Alwi and Sugono (2000, p. 221 in Petrus, 2012, p. 3). First, it is used for wider communication among nations and becomes the global language to achieve the economy and trade targets and to bridge relationship among nations (Emilia, 2005, p. 3 in Petrus, 2012, p. 4). Second, English can be used as a means to obtain and understand science and technology, which becomes an integral part in the aviation vocational schools. Therefore, English becomes a subject that is useful for their studies and professions (Schutz and Derwing, 1981).

However, vocational schools and the forum of vocational schools realize that the English mastery by vocational schools' graduates has not yet accommodated the industry's needs. Some contributing factors might include lack of learning resources, such as specific English textbooks and language laboratory, to facilitate the teachers and students in implementing the curriculum, although the facilities are sometimes available in several schools (Kelvin in Marwan, 2009, p. 6). Good facilities and students' learning motivation can help the teachers to design and implement an effective ESP program, particularly for aviation.

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Research in ESP has addressed needs analysis (NA) in the vocational fields (such as Chambers, 1980; Berwick, 1989; West, 1994; Lambert, 2010; Zohrabi, 2011; Petrus, 2012). They conducted the research at secondary and tertiary education levels in the fields of engineering, nursing, medicine, and technology. They recommended that all graduates of vocational schools should have a license or professional certificate as a standard to work widely in the world. “ASEAN countries have agreed on Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) that professionals in several fields including nursing and engineering need a professional license signifying professional certification and standardization” (Araminta & Halimi, 2015, p. 10). Thus, the graduates of aviation schools must also be able to obtain such an acknowledgement.

Although the ongoing English syllabus in aviation vocational schools has included the vocational competence, knowledge of career and life, and language competence based on the Government Regulation No 17/2010 article 76, it has not specifically accommodated the international needs of the aviation industry. Considering the importance of a proper ESP learning design in enhancing the students’ English language competences to face the future demands in the aviation industry, intensive attention needs to be paid to needs analysis of English language competences for the Aviation Study Program by looking closely at a gap between what the vocational schools provide and what the aviation industry requires. Viewed from the previous literature, there is still a missing continuation of knowledge related to needs of English language competences for the Aviation Study Program. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the meeting point between the industry’s demands and the vocational schools’ ESP curriculum. A proposed program of English language learning in the vocational ESP curriculum is expected to address the problems regarding the quality of English language mastery by the vocational school graduates.

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1.2 Research Questions

On the basis of the practical and empirical concerns described above, the problems to be explored in the present study are formulated in the research questions as follows:

1. What are the needs for the English language at the aviation industry?
2. What are the curriculum demands with regard to the mastery of the English language at the vocational schools for aviation?
3. How have the schools met both the curriculum and industry's demands?
4. What kind of program can be proposed to meet both the curriculum and industry's demands?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

With reference to the research questions presented above, the present study seeks to examine:

1. the needs for the English language at the aviation industry,
2. the curriculum demands with regard to the mastery of the English language at the vocational schools for aviation,
3. how the schools meet both the curriculum and industry's demands, and
4. a language program to be proposed to meet both the curriculum and industry's demands.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to both the literature and pedagogical practices with regard to the mastery of the English language at the vocational schools for aviation. A thorough analysis of the needs is expected to inform both

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the field of ESP studies and the practice of English language teaching especially at vocational schools.

The theoretical significance of the present study concerns among others a comparison between the findings posed by similar previous studies and those resulting from this study. An account of similarities and dissimilarities revealed in these studies is expected to result in a wider portrait of needs analysis in foreign language learning, which can further be used as a reference for further research in the realm of ESP and EFL studies.

With regard to the pedagogical significance, the findings of this study are expected to provide a basis for policy makers as well as education practitioners to take relevant measures. Policy makers may use the findings to enhance the curriculum so that it accommodates a wide variety of concerns in order to provide school graduates with relevant competences. Education practitioners may use the findings to enhance their management of teaching-learning processes in order to prepare school graduates for a competitive workplace demands.

1.5 Clarification of Terms

The key terms used in this study include the concepts of needs, needs analysis (NA), and syllabus. The concept of needs refers to a gap between ‘what is’ and ‘what should do’, thus signifying what the real is and what the target is (Berwick, 1989; Witkin et. al. 1995; Mohammadi, et. al., 2013). To limit the discussion, the definition of need refers to objective needs (Berwick’s types of needs), target needs (Nation, 1996), and job needs (Mackay, 1978). Within the context of the present study, the ‘what is’ refers to a description of the existing vocational school graduates’ English mastery, while ‘what should do’ refers to the English mastery with regard to the demands posed by both the curriculum and the industry.

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Needs Analysis (NA) in this study refers to an attempt to investigate the industry's needs and to reformulate the syllabus in order to accommodate the industry's needs. The NA, therefore, refers to a process to identify language use in the aviation industry that should be part of the students' proficiency (see Flowerdew, 2013). This study examines three of West's (1994) needs analyses, which include present situation analysis (PSA), target situation analysis (TSA) and strategy analysis (SA). TSA is applied to investigate the industry's needs in comparison with the PSA through the questionnaires and the interview. Furthermore, SA is used to propose an English program in vocational schools that could accommodate the industry's needs.

The syllabus means a document consisting of 'what will' and 'what should' be learnt (Waters and Hutchinson, 1987, p. 80). The results of NA could contribute to the development of a syllabus design (McDonough, 1984) so that it could function effectively to equip students with relevant competences required in the workplace.

1.6 Outline of the Study

This doctoral thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 serves to introduce the present study. It presents the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the outline of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature including the concepts of needs, needs analysis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), language proficiency, curriculum, and syllabus. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the present study, which includes the research design, the sites and participants, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the results of the analysis with reference to the research questions and the theoretical framework that have been discussed

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previously. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations. It resumes the results of this study and proposes some recommendations for the purposes of further research and pedagogical practices.

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