

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

In the industrial revolution era, everyone on the world can connect to form a relationship. As a result, a universal language particularly English as the primary unifying tool in communication, is required. In today's workplace, human resources with the ability to speak English have become a huge need and are highly sought after. This ability becomes a selling point in the professional sphere, highlighting the point of interest. Effectively as to be able to open up an opportunity to be accepted to work in a good company, not only on a national scale but also on an international scale. Kassim and Ali (2010) state that English has become dominant in a variety of fields, including industry. It is supported once more by the statement from Garner (2012) states that the ability to speak English has become one of the most important qualifications for finding work. According to the findings of their study, Kassim and Ali (2010) concluded that English is mostly used in professional situations and that it is preferable to investigate different types of English used during the real-time interaction in multinational companies, particularly those in the engineering industry.

In accordance with the preceding assertion, the National Education System states that vocational education is a secondary education program that prepares students for a specific job (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003). The vocational education, also known as Vocational School (SMK), has the main goal of preparing the students' competence so that they can compete and work in specific fields based on the competencies required by the business and industrial worlds (DU/DI). This

is in line with the main goal of SMK Negeri 2 Langsa, which is to create excellent students with skills capable of competing in the industrial world. This assertion is supported by data presented by Bakri (2011), which shows that SMK Negeri 2 Langsa is listed fifth as a vocational school in Indonesia. It turns out that the present learning curriculum used in English classes at SMK Negeri 2 Langsa is the 2013 curriculum (Balqis, 2019). However, there were problems faced by high school (SLTA) English teachers during the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. According to Hendriani (2016), the following are some of the issues that English teachers face: there are teachers who are limited in their ability to teach English because the majority of schools do not allow for language specializations. There are not enough hours available to meet the standards, teachers are having difficulties changing their approaches to inactive student learning, and there is no planned matriculation program for students.

This was consistent with the researcher's decision to select SMK Negeri 2 Langsa graduates as the research participants. As it turns out, vocational school students are facing increasing challenges as a candidate for the nation's next generation who is capable of being competitive and having quality in the industrial world. In practice, vocational school curriculums have been combined with the needs of the industrial world, however the industrial world has employee competency standards that exceed the abilities of vocational school alumni. According to Suharno, Pambudi, and Hajanto (2020), vocational school alumni have an absorption rate of 85% in the local labor market. Given the high rate of absorption and the number of alumni seeking for job, vocational schools must prepare their students for the workplace by facilitating the development of various

skills required before graduation, particularly English skills. According to the most recent statistics from the Central Statistics Agency (2021), over 70% of vocational school alumni are seeking for jobs, while the other 30% are continuing their studies at universities in February 2021. However, among all levels of education, vocational school alumni contribute the most to Indonesia's unemployment rate (11%).

The ability to communicate in English is one of the industrial world's competency standards. In the meantime, curriculum changes in Indonesia have impacted English language learning, particularly in Vocational Schools (SMK). It turns out that this has an impact on the textbooks used by students in vocational schools, because the 2013 curriculum includes general English in the teaching materials (Hakim, 2021). Due to the differences in majors in vocational schools, it requires new demands for teachers to differentiate students' needs in learning English and recommends English teachers to teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in accordance with the majors taken by the students. Education experts have a strong mandate to include English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as teaching materials in order to respond to rapidly changing needs (Harper and Widodo, 2017).

According to Santosa and Yamin (2018), vocational education is effective if it prioritizes students who work in a work environment that meets industry standards and have good work competencies. It means that the primary goal of establishing a vocational education is to prepare alumni with soft skill competencies. As a result, simply having hard skills as a *weapon* to increase competitiveness is no longer sufficient. To compete in the age of globalization and

the challenges of the international world, having soft skills, including the ability to speak English as *ammunition*, has become an absolute must. As a result, vocational schools require a program or course as the way to effectively support vocational school students' soft skills, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP courses, on the other hand are designed to meet the needs of learners and other stakeholders in specific disciplines to communicate for occupational or study purposes (Vogt and Kantelinen, 2013).

According to Duyen and Tue's (2020) study results, there is a misalignment between teaching and learning English and real workplace needs. More emphasis should be placed on developing teachers' and students' understanding of English language requirements in a real-world work setting. Given the continuous changes in the labor market in an era of technological advancement and industrialization, strong connections and cooperation with companies are emerging as one of the most hopeful ways to improve ESP-based English education. Finally, one of the most effective ways to support students in vocational schools is to include stakeholders who are intimately familiar with the role of the relevant field in question in curriculum renewal, in addition to teachers and academics. In research from Henrick, Cobb, and Jackson (2015) emphasized the importance of active participation of relevant stakeholders in their large-scale instructional improvement project. In this case, stakeholders would share their perspectives on the skills that alumni lack or require in terms of English language skills. It is hoped that the findings of these studies would be used in the future to update the English language learning and English teaching materials in vocational schools. Based on the background above, the researcher is interested in the

research with the title “**A Review On Stakeholder Perspectives Towards Vocational School Alumni**”.

### **1.2. Problem of the Study**

1. How does the stakeholder perspectives at Schneider Electric Manufacturing Batam on the English skill qualifications demanded of SMK Negeri 2 Langsa alumni?
2. How do alumni realize that English language skills were required to survive in the industrial world?
3. How does vocational school alumni perspectives towards the learning process based on English For Specific Purposes (ESP) in SMK Negeri 2 Langsa?

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

1. To analyze the stakeholder perspectives at Schneider Electric Manufacturing Batam on the English skill qualifications demanded of SMK Negeri 2 Langsa alumni.
2. To know how do alumni realize that English language skills were required to survive in the industrial world.
3. To know the vocational school alumni perspectives towards the learning process based on English For Specific Purposes (ESP) in SMK Negeri 2 Langsa.

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

Researcher focused specifically on conducting research related to the presentation of competencies required in the industrial world, which required perspectives from industry stakeholders, particularly alumni of SMK Negeri 2 Langsa who are currently working at Schneider Electric Manufacturing Batam.

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

The writer hopes the result of this study would provide research-based information about vocational school alumni preferences for epistemic modalities of the English language learning in the face of the industrial world revolution. It has two major significances: theoretical and practical significances:

##### **A. Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, to provide more knowledge about the industrial world's requirements for the most recent competency standards for vocational school alumni.

##### **B. Practical significance**

Practically, this research would specifically benefit the following individuals and organizations:

##### **1) Vocational School Alumni**

This study aims to support future generations of the industrial world, particularly vocational school alumni, in enjoying the alignment of the English language learning and teaching materials with the needs of the industrial world.

2) **The teachers**

Data and results gathered in this study would help teachers prepare the English language learning material for each learning modality they would handle, allowing them to provide the best teaching methods with the latest innovations from the perspectives provided by stakeholders and provide education quality to students from each of the different majors.

3) **In the industrial world**

The findings of this study are expected to serve as a guide for vocational school alumni, making it easier for relevant agencies to recruit vocational school alumni because their human resources have met the standard requirements, namely the ability to speak English.

4) **Other researchers**

This study will contribute to the knowledge framework that other researchers can use as reference material to determine where gaps in the literature exist for future studies on the relevant topic.