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The Role of Collaboration Between schools and Industry in enhancing The Relevance of English language Instruction in PPLG Department at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of collaboration between schools and industry in enhancing the relevance of English language instruction in the Software and Game Development (PPLG) Department at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil. Despite the growing demand for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) competencies in the technology sector, previous studies have largely focused on vocational curriculum alignment and workplace readiness without specifically examining how school-industry collaboration shapes English language instruction in vocational technology programs. This research addresses this gap by exploring the integration of industry needs into English learning practices within the PPLG context. The study employs a qualitative case study design supported by quantitative descriptive data to strengthen the interpretation of findings. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentation analysis, and student questionnaires involving English teachers, productive subject teachers, industry representatives, school management, and students. Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while quantitative findings were used to complement and validate qualitative interpretations. The findings reveal that school-industry collaboration is implemented through industry-informed curriculum development, internship programs, guest lectures, and project-based learning activities. Quantitative data indicate that 84% of students perceive English instruction as more relevant and aligned with workplace communication needs after the implementation of collaborative programs. Qualitative findings further demonstrate improvements in students' professional email writing, technical documentation, presentation skills, and contextual understanding of industry communication practices. However, challenges remain, including limited teacher time for curriculum adaptation, differing stakeholder perspectives, and dependence on specific industry partners.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to the demands of the workforce, particularly in the field of Software and Game Development (PPLG) (Patmanthara et al., 2023). The digital industry today requires not only technical skills but also effective professional communication skills, including proficiency in English. English

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English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

functions as an international language used in cross-cultural communication, understanding technical documentation, and global collaboration within the technology industry. Therefore, English proficiency has become one of the key competencies that vocational education graduates must possess in order to compete at both national and international levels (Suhaili & Mohama, 2022).

Vocational High Schools (SMKs) are expected to prepare students with competencies that correspond to labor market demands. However, studies have consistently reported a mismatch between vocational English instruction and workplace communication requirements. English courses in many vocational schools remain focused on General English rather than English for Specific Purposes (ESP), resulting in limited exposure to authentic workplace communication tasks (Karakaya Yıldırım & Gedik Bal, 2023). As a result, students often graduate with insufficient competence in professional communication practices required in technology-related occupations.

The gap between English language learning in schools and industry needs indicates a problem in the relevance of the vocational education curriculum. Students tend to learn general English, while the workplace requires English for Specific Purposes (ESP), such as professional email writing, technical documentation, project communication, and business presentations. This condition leads to vocational school graduates not being fully prepared to meet communication demands in technology-based work environments (Arfandi et al., 2024).

To address this challenge, the ESP approach has become a relevant solution in English language learning in vocational schools. ESP emphasizes language learning that is tailored to the specific needs of particular fields, including technology and software engineering. In addition, the Teaching Factory model and collaboration between schools and industry are important strategies for aligning the learning process with workforce demands, as they connect classroom theory with real-world practice.

Collaboration between schools and industry in vocational education not only functions as a means for students to gain work experience but also serves as a foundation for developing a more contextual curriculum (Hiim, 2022). Through this collaboration, industry partners can provide input regarding relevant English competencies, while schools can adapt learning materials accordingly (Cahyani & Priastuti, 2025). As a result, the learning process becomes more applicable and oriented toward real-world work situations.

The importance of ESP in vocational education has been widely recognized in previous research. In vocational contexts, ESP enables students to develop language competencies directly related to their future careers, including technical writing, workplace interaction, professional presentations, and digital communication. Nevertheless, the successful implementation of ESP requires close alignment between educational institutions and industry stakeholders to ensure that learning objectives reflect current workplace expectations.

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of school-industry collaboration in vocational education. Such collaboration contributes to curriculum development, work-based learning opportunities, internships, and competency alignment with labour market requirements. Other studies have reported positive outcomes of industry involvement in improving students' employability and practical skills (Cahyani & Priastuti, 2025). However, these studies primarily focus on vocational curriculum relevance and workforce preparation in general. Limited attention has been given to how school-industry collaboration specifically influences English language instruction, particularly within technology-based vocational programs such as Software and Game Development (PPLG).

Furthermore, existing studies often examine ESP implementation and school-industry partnerships as separate domains. Research on ESP tends to emphasize curriculum design and language needs analysis, while studies on school-industry collaboration focus mainly on technical skill development and employability outcomes. Consequently, there remains limited empirical

understanding of how collaboration mechanisms can support the integration of industry communication requirements into English language teaching practices. This gap is particularly evident in vocational technology programs where English functions as both a communication tool and a professional competency.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the role of school-industry collaboration in enhancing the relevance of English language instruction in the PPLG Department at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of ESP perspectives with school-industry partnership frameworks to examine how industry collaboration contributes to curriculum adaptation, instructional practices, and workplace-oriented English competencies. By focusing on a technology-oriented vocational program, this study extends existing ESP and vocational education literature while providing practical insights for developing industry-responsive English learning models.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyse how school-industry collaboration is implemented in English language instruction and how such collaboration contributes to improving the relevance of English learning to workplace communication demands in the digital technology sector.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine in depth the role of collaboration between schools and industry in enhancing the relevance of English language learning in the Software and Game Development (PPLG) program at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil. This approach was chosen because case studies enable researchers to understand a phenomenon holistically within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its social context cannot be clearly separated. In this study, the primary focus is directed toward how the collaboration process is designed, implemented, as well as its impact on English language learning based on industry needs.

The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil, specifically in the PPLG program, which has established partnerships with various industry partners in the field of information technology. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that the school has implemented various forms of collaboration, such as industry classes, internship programs, as well as project-based learning integrated with workforce needs. The participants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, by considering the direct involvement and experience of informants in school-industry collaboration programs. The participants consisted of English teachers, PPLG productive subject teachers, school management including the principal and the industrial relations coordinator, as well as representatives from partner industries. All informants had at least one year of experience in collaboration programs, therefore they were considered capable of providing relevant and in-depth information. In addition, snowball sampling was also used when necessary to reach additional informants based on recommendations from initial participants.

The data in this study were collected through several techniques to obtain a comprehensive and complementary understanding. The first technique was semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and evaluations of participants regarding the implementation of school-industry collaboration in English language learning. These interviews focused on aspects such as the relevance of learning materials, forms of collaboration, as well as the impact on students' competencies. The second technique was participant observation, which involved directly observing the English learning process integrated with industrial contexts, including project-based learning activities, industry classes, and student internship activities in the workplace. The third technique was documentation study, which included analysis of official documents such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the school and industry, the learning curriculum, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) modules, lesson plans, as well as reports on the evaluation of collaboration programs.

E-Link Journal, Vol. 13, No. 01,
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English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

Data reduction was conducted by selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from the field so that it aligned with the research focus. The data were then presented in the form of thematic narratives that grouped findings into main categories such as forms of collaboration, impact on learning, supporting factors, and implementation challenges. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which was carried out gradually and continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the findings.

The validity of the data in this study was ensured through triangulation techniques, including source triangulation, method triangulation, and technical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various parties such as teachers, students, industry representatives, and school management in order to obtain a comprehensive perspective. Method triangulation was carried out by combining interviews, observations, and documentation in the data collection process. In addition, member checking was also conducted by reconfirming the findings with several informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was consistent with field conditions. These strategies were employed to enhance the credibility, dependability, and validity of the research in accordance with the principles of rigorous qualitative research.

Furthermore, this study also considered aspects of dependability and objectivity by ensuring intensive researcher involvement in the field over a sufficiently extended period, which is known as prolonged engagement. This was intended to achieve a deeper understanding of the research context and to minimize bias in data interpretation. Continuous observation was also conducted to ensure that the data accurately reflected real conditions in the field. From an ethical perspective, all participants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives and gave their informed consent, and their identities were kept confidential throughout the research process.

RESULT

The findings of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies related to the implementation of collaboration between SMK Negeri 1 Bangil and its industry partners in English language learning in the Software and Game Development (PPLG) program. The findings indicate that school and industry collaboration has been implemented in various structured forms, has contributed to the relevance of English language learning, and is supported by several institutional factors, although it still faces some implementation challenges.

Forms of School and Industry Collaboration

The findings indicate that collaboration between SMK Negeri 1 Bangil and its industry partners has been implemented through several structured activities, including curriculum synchronization, industrial internships, guest lectures, industrial visits, and project-based learning. These activities are designed to align English language instruction with communication demands in the Software and Game Development (PPLG) industry.

Table 1. Forms of School and Industry Collaboration in English Language Learning

No	Form of Collaboration	Description of Implementation	Impact on Learning
1	Industry-based curriculum development	Discussions between teachers and industry to determine ESP materials	Learning materials become more relevant to workplace needs
2	Internship program	Students engage in direct practice in technology industries	Improvement in professional communication skills
3	Guest lecture	Industry practitioners deliver technical English materials	Increased understanding of terminology and industry context
4	Project-Based Learning	Industry-based project tasks such as emails, reports, and presentations	Improvement in English for workplace skills

Interview data revealed that industry representatives were involved in identifying communication competencies required in the workplace.

"Students need not only technical skills but also the ability to communicate professionally in English, especially through email correspondence, technical documentation, and project presentations." (Industry Representative, Interview 3)

Similarly, an English teacher explained:

"The collaboration helps us adjust learning materials to workplace realities. We now include professional email writing and presentation tasks that were not emphasized before." (English Teacher, Interview 1)

Observation data further showed that English learning activities incorporated authentic workplace scenarios. During classroom observations, students were required to prepare project presentations using English terminology commonly found in software development environments.

Document analysis also supported these findings. The curriculum synchronization document indicated that several ESP-oriented topics had been incorporated into the English syllabus, including technical vocabulary, business communication, and project presentation skills.

In this process, English teachers, productive subject teachers, and industry representatives regularly conduct discussions to identify the types of language skills most needed in the information technology sector (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024). The results of these discussions are then used as the basis for developing English for Specific Purposes (ESP)-based materials, so that the content taught is no longer general in nature but directed toward professional contexts such as project communication and technical documentation.

The internship program also contributes significantly to strengthening students' English skills (Agbevivi & Acquaye, 2024). In its implementation, students are not only involved in technical activities within the industry, but are also required to use English in real situations, such as communicating with industry mentors, preparing work reports, and understanding instructions based on technical language. This makes the learning experience more authentic and contextual.

The Impact of Collaboration on the Relevance of English Language Learning

Participants consistently reported that collaboration improved the relevance of English learning to workplace needs.

Questionnaire data showed that **84% of students** agreed that English instruction became more contextual and relevant after the implementation of collaborative programs.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of the Relevance of English Language Learning

Student Responses	Percentage	Interpretation
Learning is more relevant and contextual	84%	Very high
Learning is moderately relevant	11%	Moderate
Less relevant	5%	Low

Students highlighted several improvements in their communication skills.

"Previously, we mostly learned general English. Now we learn how to write emails, present projects, and understand technical terms used in software development." (Student Participant 5)

Classroom observations confirmed that students actively engaged in tasks related to workplace communication. Several learning activities required students to simulate professional interactions, such as presenting project progress and responding to workplace communication scenarios.

Documentation from internship reports also demonstrated that students frequently used English when accessing software manuals, reading technical documentation, and communicating with

E-Link Journal, Vol. 13, No. 01,
June, 2026
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English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

external clients or team members. More specifically, this increase in relevance can be seen from the changes in students' learning experiences in the classroom. Previously, English learning focused more on mastering grammar and understanding general texts. However, after the implementation of collaboration with industry, learning has shifted toward professional communication needs, such as writing formal emails, preparing project documentation, and presenting work results in English. This change has also led to increased student engagement in the learning process. Students have become more active because the materials they study are directly related to the world of work they are interested in, particularly in the field of information technology.

Changes in the Orientation of English Language Materials

The results of the observations indicate a significant transformation in the orientation of English language learning, from General English to English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This change does not only occur in the learning materials, but also in the instructional approaches used by teachers.

Table 3. Changes in the Orientation of English Language Materials

Aspect	Before Collaboration	After Collaboration
Type of material	General English	ESP (Technology and Industry)
Learning focus	Reading comprehension	Communication and workplace English
Main skills	Basic grammar and vocabulary	Email writing, reporting, presentation
Context	General academic	IT and PPLG workplace

This shift in orientation indicates that English language learning in the PPLG program has undergone a more strategic reorientation. Learning materials are no longer positioned as isolated language knowledge, but rather as part of professional skills required in the information technology industry.

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Collaboration

The results of the study also identified several factors that support the successful implementation of school and industry collaboration.

Table 4. Supporting Factors of School and Industry Collaboration

No	Supporting Factor	Description
1	Shared commitment	Agreement between school and industry in developing graduates
2	Formal MoU	Clear regulation of roles between school and industry
3	Supporting facilities	Industry-standard computer laboratories
4	ESP integration	ESP is incorporated into the PPLG curriculum

In more detail, shared commitment between the school and industry serves as the primary foundation for sustaining collaboration programs (Lee et al., 2025). Although collaboration has generated positive outcomes, several implementation challenges were identified.

Teachers reported limited time to revise learning materials according to rapidly changing industry demands.

"Technology changes very quickly, and adapting teaching materials requires additional preparation time." (English Teacher, Interview 2)

Industry representatives also noted differences in expectations between schools and companies.

"Sometimes schools focus on academic requirements, while industry prioritizes practical communication skills that can be directly applied at work." (Industry Representative, Interview 2)

E-Link Journal, Vol. 13, No. 01,
June, 2026
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English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

Observation findings revealed that the intensity of collaboration depended largely on the availability and commitment of specific industry partners. Document analysis further showed that formal collaboration agreements varied in scope and duration, potentially affecting program sustainability.

This commitment is not merely administrative, but is also reflected in the consistent implementation of learning activities. Meanwhile, the availability of learning facilities allows students to engage in practices that closely resemble real industrial conditions. The integration of ESP into the curriculum also becomes a key factor in ensuring that English language learning remains relevant to the needs of the PPLG program (Virginiya et al., 2025).

Challenges in the Implementation of Collaboration

Although it shows positive results, the implementation of collaboration also faces several significant challenges.

Table 5. Challenges in School and Industry Collaboration

No	Challenge	Impact
1	Limited teacher time	Curriculum adaptation is not optimal
2	Differences in perception	Misalignment of competency priorities
3	Dependence on certain partners	Limited variety of industrial contexts

Teachers must balance administrative duties, teaching responsibilities, and the development of industry-based materials. Differences in perception between the school and industry also pose a challenge, particularly in determining the priority of English competencies that students must master (Sya et al., 2025). While the school tends to emphasize pedagogical aspects, the industry focuses more on practical and functional aspects. Dependence on certain industry partners also limits the diversity of students' learning experiences, therefore expanding collaboration networks is necessary so that learning contexts become more varied and more representative of the real working world.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of School and Industry Collaboration in English Language Learning

The findings of this study indicate that collaboration between the school and industry at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil does not merely function as a supporting program, but has developed into an integrative mechanism within the English language learning process in the PPLG program. The forms of collaboration, which include industry-based curriculum development, internship programs, guest lectures, and project-based learning, can be interpreted as a concrete implementation of the school and industry linkage concept that emphasizes the direct connection between the education system and workforce needs (Lesman et al., 2023).

From the perspective of vocational education, these forms of collaboration reflect the implementation of work-integrated learning, which is an approach that combines academic experience with real work practices in industry. Industry-based curriculum development, for example, demonstrates a process of knowledge negotiation between the school and industry, where the need for professional communication competencies in the field of information technology is translated into English learning materials based on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This indicates that the curriculum is no longer static, but dynamic and responsive to changes in the needs of the digital industry.

Furthermore, the internship program can be understood as the most concrete form of contextual learning integration (Ngobeni & Nekhavhambe, 2024). In this activity, students are not only participants in technical training, but also active users of English in authentic situations. Interaction with industry mentors, the use of workplace documentation, and communication within real projects strengthen the role of English as a professional communication tool, rather than merely an academic

E-Link Journal, Vol. 13, No. 01,
June, 2026
P-ISSN:2085-1383; E-ISSN: 2621-4156
English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

subject.

Guest lecture activities involving industry practitioners also play a strategic role in expanding students' understanding of the use of English in workplace context. The presence of industry practitioners enables direct knowledge transfer regarding technical terminology, global communication standards, as well as collaborative practices in software development projects. Theoretically, this reinforces the concept of situated learning, where knowledge is acquired through social context and real practices, rather than solely through classroom instruction.

In this context, students are required to produce learning outputs such as professional emails, technical reports, and project presentations in English. These activities not only improve language skills, but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork abilities, which are key competencies of the twenty-first century.

Overall, the various forms of collaboration identified in this study indicate that English language learning at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil has moved toward a model that is more integrated with the industrial world. This collaboration not only strengthens the relevance of learning materials, but also transforms the role of English from merely a subject into a functional competency that supports students' work readiness in the field of information technology. Therefore, this form of collaboration can be regarded as an essential foundation in developing an adaptive and industry-oriented vocational learning ecosystem.

Implementation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the PPLG Program

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of school and industry collaboration directly drives the transformation of English language learning from a General English approach toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This change does not occur instantly, but rather emerges as a response to the needs of the digital industry, which requires English communication skills that are functional, technical, and contextual. In this context, ESP is not only a learning approach, but also the main framework in designing learning materials and activities in the PPLG program.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the concept of ESP proposed by Dudley-Evans and St. John, which emphasizes that English language learning should be oriented toward the specific needs of particular professional fields. In this study, these needs are identified through the involvement of industry in curriculum development and learning implementation. Industry provides input regarding the types of language skills required, such as professional email writing, project communication, technical documentation, as well as presentations in software development contexts. This indicates that ESP is implemented not only as a pedagogical concept, but also as a result of real collaboration between the school and the workplace (Hanapiah et al., 2026).

The implementation of ESP in the PPLG program can be seen in the substantial changes in learning materials. Before the collaboration, English learning focused more on structural aspects such as grammar and reading comprehension in a general context. However, after integration with industry, learning materials began to focus on real workplace contexts, such as preparing software project reports, team communication through email, as well as simulations of presenting application development results. This transformation indicates a shift in orientation from language learning for knowledge toward language learning for performance.

In addition, the findings also show that ESP is not only applied to learning materials, but also to teaching methods. Teachers have begun to adopt project-based and industry case study approaches to create more authentic learning situations. In this context, students do not only learn language as a system, but also as a communication tool in professional situations that resemble the workplace (Razali et al., 2025). This reinforces the principle of ESP, which emphasizes the importance of contextual relevance and learners' needs analysis.

Furthermore, the implementation of ESP in this study also demonstrates an implicit needs analysis process carried out through collaboration with industry. Input from industry practitioners

E-Link Journal, Vol. 13, No. 01,
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English Education Department, Universitas Islam Lamongan

serves as the basis for determining the language competencies that PPLG students must master (Miština & Fedorová, 2025). This process indicates that the English curriculum is no longer top-down in nature, but rather the result of joint construction between educational institutions and the industrial sector. Therefore, ESP in this context functions as a bridge between the academic world and the world of work.

Overall, the implementation of ESP in English language learning at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil demonstrates that school and industry collaboration play a crucial role in creating learning that is more relevant, contextual, and oriented toward professional needs. This transformation confirms that ESP is not merely an alternative approach in language learning, but rather a primary strategy in vocational education to enhance students' work readiness in the digital industry era.

The findings of this study support previous research on contextualized English learning in vocational education. Isnavira and Sujannah (2023) reported that vocational students demonstrated positive perceptions of English learning when classroom activities were aligned with their vocational specialization through task-based learning. Similarly, the present study found that school–industry collaboration increased the relevance of English instruction by connecting classroom learning with authentic workplace communication in the software and game development industry. These findings indicate that contextualization, whether through task-based learning or industry collaboration, plays a significant role in enhancing students' engagement and perceived usefulness of English learning.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that school–industry collaboration significantly enhances the relevance of English language learning in the Software and Game Development (PPLG) program at SMK Negeri 1 Bangil. Through industry-based curricula, internships, guest lectures, and project-based learning, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is implemented more effectively, enabling students to develop professional communication skills that align with workplace demands in the information technology sector. The study contributes to the literature on ESP and vocational education by highlighting collaboration as a key mechanism for connecting English instruction with industry needs.

Despite these benefits, several challenges remain, including limited teacher time, differing perspectives between schools and industry partners, and dependence on specific industry collaborations. Therefore, sustaining effective partnerships requires continuous institutional support and broader industry engagement. Future research should investigate the long-term impact of such collaboration on graduates' employability and explore its implementation across different vocational programs and educational contexts.

In addition, this collaboration has an impact on improving the relevance of learning and strengthening students' professional communication skills, which is reflected in the dominance of positive student perceptions toward industry-based learning. English language learning is no longer understood merely as an academic subject, but as a vocational competency that supports work readiness in the digital industry era. However, the implementation of collaboration still faces several challenges, such as limited teacher time, differences in perception between schools and industry, as well as dependence on certain industry partners. This condition indicates that although collaboration has been effective, aspects of sustainability and partnership expansion still need to be strengthened.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of school–industry collaboration on graduates' employability and professional performance, as well as examine its implementation across different vocational programs and educational contexts.

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