CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter serves a general overview of a case study concerning the implementation of scientific approach to nursing students in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This chapter is initiated with background of the study, followed by aims of the study, research question, the teaching of English in the research site and significance of the study, summed up with organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

Scientific approach in Indonesia has become a new buzzword in education especially since the release of the 2013 curriculum. This approach entails observing, questioning, experimenting or exploring, associating and communicating or networking to promote students’ participation in the process of teaching and learning (Komara, 2013; Kurniasih, 2014; Sudrajat, 2013). Detailed description of scientific approach with its basic principles will be provided in chapter two.

Scientific approach is considered relevant to the aims of the teaching of English in Indonesia especially in secondary school where the ability to communicate is emphasized to share ideas and knowledge (Fahrawati, 2014). Some researchers state that scientific approach is effective to promote active learning and collaborative work (Argawinata, 2013; Firmansyah, 2013; Widiasih, 2013). However at the tertiary level, especially at the research site, scientific approach has not been paid attention. Therefore, this study attempts to implement scientific approach to one of the Institutes of Health in the context of ESP.

This study is also an attempt to replicate fruitful learning experiences of the former researchers and scholars in relation to scientific based learning and all its kind such as problem based learning, discovery learning, project based learning.
and discovery learning in assisting students on constructing knowledge. Building upon earlier work by Gerde, Schachter & Wasik (2013); Stoddart (2011); Rogers (2006) and Baker (1994), as will further be discussed in chapter two, concerning the use of scientific method which were mostly in the context of multidisciplinary and integrated learning on language, science and mathematics, this study, on the other hand, attempts to apply scientific approach in the context of language teaching and learning. Owing to insufficient previous related studies of scientific approach to language teaching-learning, particularly in the context of ESP, the present study strives to fill the gap by bringing scientific approach into play in language teaching as the complimentary to previous studies with respect to scientific based learning across multidisciplinary and integrated learning on language, Science and Math.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study is aimed to uncover the effects of scientific approach on students’ ESP learning where healthcare communication and medical terminologies are the foremost concern; discover the students’ progress on TOEIC score which signifies their English proficiency; reveal more information on how students perceive scientific approach in their ESP learning, the drawbacks or challenges, if any, that might be encountered by the students regardless its advantageous.

1.3 Research Question

As will be discussed in chapter two that scientific approach emphasizes process rather than product, accordingly, the process of teaching-learning within scientific approach framework and the students’ opinions towards its implementation are the major interest of this study. Meanwhile, the students’ improvement in TOEIC, considered as the product, will be the last attention. The present study probes the following research question:

1. What are the effects of scientific approach on students learning of English
for Specific Purposes (ESP) particularly in terms of healthcare communication?

1.4 The Teaching of English in the Research Site

English teaching in this institute of health comprises mainly of medical topics and terminologies, apart from general English, which focuses more on the ability to communicate in healthcare setting as suggested in the research site syllabus (see appendix 1). The syllabus stresses on healthcare communication especially short dialogue or short functional text in performing nursing duties in a hospital setting. Further discussion will be presented in chapter three and chapter four. In the research site, there are three different courses related to English, namely English for Nursing I, English for Nursing II, TOEIC/TOEFL Preparation and English NCLEX as will also be provided in detail in chapter three.

Based on the researcher’s informal talk with some nursing students was found that the nursing students’ confusion, anxiety, and lack of interest in the teacher’s teaching strategy are the most leading factor of failure at creating an encouraging class environment and improving the nursing students’ English proficiency. Confusion was found in recognizing different terms such as labor, passage, blood vessel, outpatient clinic, etc which is somewhat different from that in general English. Another sign of confusion was denoted by variety of abbreviations or acronyms in health care such as TPR stands for Temperature, Pulse and Respiration instead of Total Physical Response.

Anxiety, however, is the most prevailing problem that is encountered by the nursing students in language learning. It can apparently be seen from how they seemed to be relatively nervous to try talking when they were appointed to and avoid participating in question and answering session. Regarding inadequate interest in participating, the teacher’s teaching strategy deserves to be evaluated because the lecture based teaching which is normally employed in all classes contributes negative effect on the nursing students’ interest and participation to
complete the learning tasks. Hence, to accomplish successful and effective teaching and learning that meet the learning goals, a more encouraging approach is strongly required.

Most frequently, on the informal talk, the nursing students told ad nauseam about how English for General Purposes itself has been being very difficult since they first studied in secondary school. Moreover English for Specific Purposes that provides specific terminologies on medical English. As the result, the nursing students’ stance on this issue of difficulties in both general English and Specific English are very common to hear. This issue is very likely affecting their test performance. As a matter of fact, gaining satisfying score of either TOEIC or TOEFL in this research site is compulsory as one of the requirements to graduate from the institute and to apply for a job overseas.

The researcher, who also serves as a teacher for years in this research site, recognizes the failure of traditional instruction to promote students’ participation in the teaching-learning process which is more often lecture-based. For this reason, this study is expected to improve the nursing students’ communicative skills particularly in health care communication in form of short functional text, short report, and short dialogue through the implementation of scientific approach in order to see whether or not observing, questioning, experimenting, associating and communicating or networking activities offer positive effects or contribution.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is claimed to be significant for both theoretical and practical considerations in that (1) it attempts to portray perspectives of scientific approach, as the most current issue in the 2013 national curriculum of Indonesia, in the context of ESP teaching. (2) It sheds light on an answer to contemptuous debate concerning pros and cons of scientific based learning to language teaching as it is mostly intended to Science and Math teaching. (3) It is expected to enrich the literature of scientific approach from theoretical perspective. (4) It provides
informative data concerning the effects of scientific approach to ESP teaching in terms of healthcare communication which serves as beneficial contributions to English teachers and ESP practitioners in implementing scientific approach to their teaching.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

- **Scientific Approach** is one of the teaching approaches that involves the students in scientific based activities by following several scientific stages such as observing, questioning, associating, experimenting and networking (Hanauer, 2006: 18).

- **ESP**, stands for English for Specific Purposes, “is designed to meet specific needs of the learner” (Harding, 2007: 6) and related to specific technical vocabulary that best suits the learners.

- **English for Nursing**, categorized into English for Medical Purposes or known for English for Nursing Purposes as specializing English in medical area (Ying Lee, 56)

- **Healthcare Communication**

  Healthcare communication consists of “…interpersonal communication activities focused on improving the health of individuals…” (Ishikawa & Kiuchi as cited in Naconovich & Langdon-Neuner, 2011: 140).

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis pictures an exploratory case study which encompasses five chapters. The first chapter presents general background information on the study, aims of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the thesis. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature and previous related studies with regard to the implementation of scientific approach in the teaching and learning. Chapter Three describes a conceptual framework consisting research design, method of data collection, research instrument and data analysis. Chapter Four serves the result or the findings of the study. Chapter Five concludes the restatement of the
research problems and the findings, discusses what have been found in the study in relation to the current issues and recommends for further research.