CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the research, the research questions, the research purposes, and the research significance.

1.1 Background

The background includes the status and functions of English in Indonesia, the teaching of English in all levels of education, and the reasons for choosing the research topic.

English is one of the languages widely spoken in the world. Graddol (1997: 10) mentions that there are three levels of English-speakers: (a) the first-language speakers to the number of 320-380 million, (b) the second-language speakers to the number of 150-300 million, and (c) the foreign-language speakers to the number of 1 billion. Tonkin (2003: 16) assumes that the only people who think that one can conduct all of one's affairs in this world through the medium of a single language are speakers of English. They feel as they do because of the notable spread of the English language in modern times to almost all corners of the globe and almost all domains of human endeavor. English is also the world's most studied language: there are hundreds of millions of people across the world who are studying or have studied the language.

In Indonesia during the Dutch colonization, English was the language of commerce and one of the compulsory subjects in secondary education (Nasution, 1995). In 1955 after the Indonesian independence, Frits Wachendrofff, the First Chief of Center Inspectorate, announced that English was the first foreign language in Indonesia (Kartono, 1975). Since then, English has been a foreign language in Indonesia. The status of English as a foreign

language has not, however, been officially stated by a decree although the 1993 State Policy Guidelines explicitly asks for the improvement of foreign language mastery to meet the needs of globalization.

Determining the standing of a language in a community refers to status planning which is part of language planning. Status planning refers to the allocation of languages or language varieties to given functions, e.g. medium of instruction, official language, vehicle of mass communication (Cooper, 1989: 32). Language allocation is "authoritative decisions to maintain, extend, or restrict the range of uses (functional range) of a language in particular settings" (Gorman, 1973: 73). Stewart (1968) provides a list of language functions as targets of status planning: official language, provincial language, national language, international language, capital language, ethnic/group language, educational language, school subject, literary language, and religious language. The Indonesian Center for Language Cultivation and Development (*Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa*), however, differentiates language status from language function. Language status refers to the relative status of language as a system of cultural value symbols formulated on the basis of social values related to the language; language function refers to the role of language in the community of language users (Alwi & Sugono, 2000: 219).

Foreign languages refer to all the languages used in Indonesia, apart from the Indonesian language, vernacular languages, and the Malayan language family (Alwi & Sugono, 2000: 218). In terms of the intensity of use, there are three kinds of foreign languages in Indonesia: (a) English as the primary foreign language which affects all aspects of life, (b) Arabic as the language of Islamic religion and culture since more than

90% of the Indonesian people are Moslems, and (c) Japanese, German, French, Chinese, etc. which influence certain aspects of life, such as commerce and communication.

As the primary foreign language, English has the following functions in Indonesia (Alwi & Sugono, 2000: 221):

(1) English is a language for wider communication (among nations) in all aspects of life. The decision to choose English to become the language for wider communication is based on the following reasons (Huda, 2000: 68): (a) English has a very good internal linguistic weight, (b) there is a large number of speakers of English as the first, second and foreign language, (c) English has the widest geographic distribution, (d) English is widely used in the fields of science, technology, culture, and politics, (e) English-speaking countries dominate in the world's economy, politics, and culture.

(2) English is a tool for making use of science and technology development to accelerate the national development. Since most of the scientific books are written in English, Indonesian people who know English could absorb, transfer, make use of, and distribute science and technology progress to improve the quality of the nation. English mastery will subsequently improve the quality of human resources. English competence, once attained, becomes a highly effective tool of intellectual discourse and learning of the world's knowledge (Gonzales, 2003).

(3) English is used as a source to develop the Indonesian language. English is an international language spoken by many people in the world because it is, among others, a standardized language. A standardized language is "a language which has a single, widely accepted norm which is felt to be appropriate with only minor modifications or variations for all purposes for which language is used" (Ferguson, 1962 in Cooper,

1989: 134). English will help develop Indonesian to become a standardized and modern language in terms of not only lexis but also grammar. Incorrect word formation, double subordinating conjunctions, dangling structure, etc. can be avoided.

Considering the functions of English in Indonesia, the government has emphasized the importance of English language teaching in the country. The Department of National Education with regard to the Competence-Based English Curriculum states the rationale of the curriculum as follows (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2001, translated into Indonesian in Emilia, 2005: 3):

> As a language which is used by more than half of the world's population, English is ready to carry out the role as the global language. Apart from being the language for science, technology and arts, this language can become a tool to achieve the goals of economy and trade, relationship among countries, socio-cultural purposes, education and career development for people. The mastery of English can be considered as a main requirement for the success of individuals, the society and the nation of Indonesia in answering the challenges of the time in the global level. The mastery of English can be acquired through various programs, but the program of English teaching at schools seems to be the main facility for Indonesian students.

The Indonesian Language Congress VII/1998 in Jakarta also stresses the prominence of English as a foreign language, and considers that the skills of English cannot be separated from the development of human resources in facing the globalization era. The decisions of the congress, regarding English as a foreign language, are as follows (Erdina, 2001 in Emilia, 2005: 3): (1) The improvement of English skills is an inseparable part of the development of human resources in facing the globalization era; therefore, the availability and the use of the facilities as well as educational technology which can support the

acquisition of the target language (English) need to be accorded a special importance, and (2) The facilities and human resources for the teaching of English in tertiary education need to be developed to strengthen the position of the language as an effective tool in the international constellation.

English as a foreign language in Indonesia is taught at all levels of education. The department in charge of teaching or education is the Ministry of National Education and Culture. The following are some of the English language acquisition policies in primary, secondary, and tertiary education

In primary education, on the basis of the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 060/U/1993, from 1994 to 2006 English was taught as a local-content subject starting from the fourth-grade of primary-school. Local-content subjects are complementary subjects chosen by schools in accordance with the local needs and conditions. Since 2007 the Ministry of National Education has indicated that English as a local-content subject may be taught from the first-grade to the sixth-grade of primary school. The Regulation of the Ministry of National Education No 23/2006 specifies the standard competencies of primary-school pupils who learn English, as follows: (a) the pupils understand very simple oral instructions, information, and stories about their school and environment, (b) the pupils orally give very simple instructions and information about their school and environment, (c) the pupils read aloud and understand very simple written instructions, information, pictorial texts about their school and environment, and (d) the pupils write very simple words, expressions and texts with correct spelling and punctuation. These competencies include the four language skills.

In secondary education, on the basis of the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 096/1967, since 1968 English has been taught as a compulsory subject in junior and senior high schools. As stated in the decree on the functions and objectives of English language teaching at secondary schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture (in Halim, 1976), the objective of teaching English at secondary schools is to equip the students with a working knowledge of English which includes reading, listening, writing, and speaking abilities. The Regulation of the Ministry of National Education No 23/2006 specifies the standard competencies of junior-high-school students who learn English, as follows: (a) the students understand simple oral interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in everyday life contexts; (b) the students express simple oral interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in everyday life contexts; (c) the students understand simple written interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in everyday life contexts; and (d) the students express simple written interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in everyday life contexts. Besides, the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education No 23/2006 specifies the standard competencies of senior-high-school students who learn English, as follows: (a) the students understand oral interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review, in everyday life contexts; (b) the students express oral interpersonal and

transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review, in everyday life contexts; (c) the students understand written interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review, in everyday life contexts; and (d) the students express written interpersonal and transactional, formal and informal, discourses in the forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review, in everyday life contexts.

In tertiary education, Paragraph 1 Article 7 of the Decree of the Ministry of National Education No. 232/U/2000 on the guideline for tertiary education curriculum and students' learning assessment states that the curriculum for tertiary education which becomes the basis for the organization of a study program consists of a core curriculum and an institutional curriculum. Paragraph 2 Article 10 of the decree further states that institutional curriculum could include Indonesian, English, Basic Social Sciences, Basic Cultural Sciences, Basic Natural Sciences, Philosophy of Science, Physical Education, etc. Besides, Paragraph 2 Article 37 of the National Education Law No. 20/2003 states that the curriculum of tertiary education should include religious education, civics education, and languages. Languages in this case include the Indonesian language, local languages, and foreign languages, especially English, as English is an international language used in global communication. Furthermore, Paragraph 2 Article 9 of the Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on national standards of education states that the curriculum in higher

education for undergraduate students should include such subjects as religious education, civics education, Indonesian, and English. Therefore, English is one of the subjects taught in tertiary education.

English language teaching in tertiary education is not promising (Alwasilah, 2007: 58). Given that English at secondary schools is designed to equip students with basic knowledge and skills, college English should aim at building academic or study skills which can help students to digest textbooks and references as an integral part of developing professionalism and specialization of their choice. In other words, college English should be taught as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP), not English for General Purposes (EGP). From a survey, Alwasilah (2004 & 2007) found some weaknesses of the English course at the college level: (1) No needs analysis is conducted so that the course does not meet students' expectations, (2) The class is relatively big and heterogeneous, (3) The course is taught by young inexperienced instructors, (4) There is a repetition of what has been taught at secondary schools, (5) There is no selection and classification based on competencies and students' needs, (6) There is no coordination among intra- and inter-institutions. Kusni's (2004) study also found the following: (1) some ESP courses in three universities in Indonesia were actually general English courses, (2) The instructors were mostly untrained subject-matter lecturers, and (3) There was no collaboration among the stakeholders in designing an ESP course.

Based on the researcher's observation when he was once an English language instructor at a state university in South-Sumatra, the conditions of the English course at the institution were not far from those described by Alwasilah (2004 & 2007) and Kusni (2004). English is a compulsory course at the university. At the Faculty of Teacher

Training and Education, it is a compulsory 2-credit course for the freshmen in the first or second semester. This discouraging practice motivated the researcher to explore and improve the conditions. Therefore, he proposed to conduct a qualitative study of the English language teaching at the faculty in order to describe the conditions of the English course, to find out the students' needs, and ultimately to design a better course.

1.2 Research Questions

There has been a growing trend in course design with the focus shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered activities in recent years. In this regard, a lot of attention is being given to need-based language courses. The emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contributes to this trend. ESP is "an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 21). Since ESP is driven by learner needs, the first step for ESP curriculum design is to identify the specific needs of learners. Needs analysis, therefore, comes into the picture.

Needs analysis is a device to identify the learner needs in order to develop a course with a reasonable content for exploitation in the classroom. Needs analysis is therefore a process for identifying and defining a valid curriculum in order to facilitate learning in an environment that is closely related to the real-life situations of the student (Fatihi, 2003: 39). According to Iwai *et al*. (1999), the term 'needs analysis' generally refers to the activities involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students. Christison & Krahnke (1986: 78) state that sound curriculum design in ESL programs for academic preparation should be based on empirical data that reflect what is really useful to students and not only

on the intuitions and experience of the teaching personnel. Atai (2000: 30) believes that curriculum development should not take "a one-way top-down approach".

To help design a better language course, this research which took place at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of a state university in South Sumatra did a needs analysis through the implementation of questionnaire, interview, observation, and review of documents. In this respect, the problems of the research could be formulated into the following questions:

(1) How is the present practice of English language teaching at the institution in terms of such aspects as institutional goals, class management, instructional materials, instructors, teaching methodology, and evaluation?

(2) What are the students' needs and the faculty's expectations of the English course?

(3) What course design can be proposed for the English language teaching at the institution on the basis of the expected goals?

1.3 Research Purposes

The goals of the research were consequential, which means that the achievement of the previous purpose would be the basis of reaching the next purpose.

The results of the interview, along with the observation in the classroom and the review of documents, would give a portrait of the present English course at the faculty. The portrait would depict the existing conditions of the course in terms of such aspects as institutional goals, class management, instructional materials, instructors, teaching methodology, and evaluation.

The second purpose of the research was to find out the students' needs and the faculty's expectations of the English course through needs analysis. The needs analysis for the students by using a questionnaire included target situation analysis, present situation analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis, and deficiency analysis. The interview with the instructors and the faculty's management provided the information about the importance of the English course, the objectives of the course, the educational backgrounds of the instructors, the instructional materials, the evaluation system, and the facilitating and inhibiting factors in the implementation level.

The findings from the questionnaire and those from the interview, observation, and review of documents would become the basis of designing a better course for the students.

1.4 Research Significance

Since the institution has never evaluated the English course before, this research would be the first empirical study carried out in that course. This research would therefore contribute to the professional sources in English language teaching at the institution in particular and English language teaching in higher education in general. Several variables should be put into consideration in the language teaching, such as the status of the course, the number of credits allocated, the class size, the students' English proficiency levels at present, the students' interests, the course objectives, the instructional materials, the evaluation system, and the instructors.

Besides, this research would address some of the problems of English language teaching at the faculty. This empirical study became one effort to improve the quality of the English course at the faculty in particular and at the university in general. Other studies

on other faculties in the university are recommended as the conditions at other faculties may be quite different.

This research would also show the importance of needs analysis in the process of designing a language course. There was never before a formal needs analysis conducted by the university's language institute as the coordinator of the English course. The course was designed on the basis of the intuitions and experience of the teaching staff. Language courses or programs developed by taking into account learner needs tend to achieve better instructional outcomes.

In relation to the needs analysis, this research would indicate the involvement of stakeholders of the English course. Besides the students and the university's language institute, the stakeholders include the instructors, the heads of study programs, the heads of departments, the associate dean for academic affairs, and the dean of the faculty. The participation of the faculty's management (i.e. in determining the direction of the course and providing good facilities) would prove important and useful to improve the quality of the course, which would subsequently improve the English proficiency of the students.