CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the problems of the study starting with the Background of the study, which describes the issue of teaching English at non-English departments of higher education institutions. This chapter also elaborates the Research Questions, Scope of the Study, Research Design, Organization of the Thesis and Concluding Remarks.

1.1 Background of the Study

English constitutes one of the compulsory subjects offered, not only at the secondary schools, but also at the higher education institution, i.e. at university level in Indonesia. In the non-English departments of higher education institutions, English course falls under the subject group under the name of Mata Kuliah Dasar Umum (General Basic Subject). English is offered to all students from every department for only two semesters worth of four credits. This is also applied in the higher education institution where this research was conducted. It is interesting to know how English is dealt with by this institution by considering the complexities of language learning and the limited time allocation to learn it.

The main objectives in teaching English at this institution are to increase students’ ability in understanding the four language skills. It is expected that in this kind of institutions the English taught belongs to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since the materials are related to their field of study (economics). ESP is defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1989:21) as “an approach to language teaching which aims
to meet the needs of particular learners”.

Therefore, a lecturer is required to provide appropriate materials or texts related to the students’ department to be learnt because they will influence the teaching learning English process. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:106) add that: “materials writing is one of the most characteristic features of ESP in practice, rightly or wrongly, materials writing is a fact of life for a large number of ESP teachers, it may help to make teachers more aware of what is involved in teaching and learning”. Based on the aforementioned statements, this study seeks to find out how this institution deals with English teaching.

1.2 Research Questions

Referring to the background described above, the research problems have been formulated in the following questions:

1. What are students’ needs in learning English for developing their skill?
2. Are their needs accommodated by the school syllabus?
3. How has syllabus been developed to produce the material to meet their needs?
4. What are the students’ perceptions about the syllabus in relation to their needs?

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study tries to observe the needs of the students which focus on the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. All of these skills are in
line with their academic studies and their future professions. Also, this study attempts to reveal the syllabus accommodation of students’ needs, the syllabus development and the students’ opinion on the syllabus.

1.4 Research Design

This study applies a qualitative research design. It is in line with what Mc. Millan (1992:214) states that "qualitative research is carried out in a natural setting. It is taken from one kind of descriptive research, e.g.; a case study". Bogdan and Biklen, (1992 as cited in Mustafa 2000:35) say, "a case study is a detailed information of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of document or one particular event."

Based on the statements above, it is clear that the use of a qualitative case study is to know, to describe, and to analyze the phenomenon of teaching and learning English process in this institution, in this case, the problems focused on what appropriate materials the lecturer gives to students, how she or he explains the lesson and provides the suitable materials, how has the syllabus been developed to produce the material to meet their needs and what the students’ perceptions about the syllabus in relation to their needs are.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. This chapter introduces the present study. Chapter two discusses the theoretical accounts relevant to the
present study. Chapter three elaborates the research methodology. Chapter four presents the data analysis and the discussion of its findings. Finally, chapter five draws the conclusion and suggestions.

1.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has elaborated the Background of the present study, the Research Questions, the Scope of the Study, The Research Design and the Organization of the Thesis are also included in this chapter discusses the literature review of related theories to research findings.