

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

English language has become the most salient and germane language in the world. In almost every kind of situation, English serves as the intermediary means of communication between persons not sharing a mother tongue, no matter what their vernacular languages are. Harmer (2002:1) argues, English as a *lingua franca*. He adds “it is a language widely adopted for communication between two speakers whose native language is different from each other’s and where one or both speakers are using it as a second language”.

English began its path to the title of the *lingua franca* with the rise of the British Empire and its far-reaching influence many nations in the world. The main reason for such a dominance that English today enjoys over numerous other languages is the outcome of World War II and the ensuing influence of the Western countries with the United States at the forefront. An enormous expansion in scientific, economic and technical activity on the global scale led to the creation of the world dominated by technology and commerce, which soon generated a need for an international language. With the economic power of and cultural and technological exports from the USA, and the UK in a lesser degree, English slowly became the predominant language of international correspondence and communication (Walters, 2002).

In fact, English has nowadays become the language of international communication. According to Li on her journal *Theoretical Base and Problems in Business English Teaching in China* quoted from Robert Phillipson (1992) points out, English has a dominant position as the most widely learnt foreign language in science, technology, medicine, and computers also in research, books, periodicals, and software as well as in transnational business, trade, shipping, and aviation; in diplomacy and international organizations; in mass media entertainment, news agencies, and journalism; in youth culture and sport and in education system.

In line, it is obvious that today English is not learned only for the pleasure and prestige of knowing a foreign language, but also because of the fact that it has become the language of international currents in technology and commerce. As Hutchinson and Water states that English became the accepted lingua franca of modern technology and commerce, a lot of learners with specific reasons learn English such as businessmen who wanted to sell their product, doctors who needed to keep up health or their field development, a number of students who needed to use textbooks and journals available only in English, and engineers who needed to stay in touch with the new developments in their respective fields. That is how many different reasons for studying English sprang out all of a sudden (Hutchinson and Waters, 2000).

English is regarded as the lingua franca of international business, economy, science, and technology. As far as engineering disciplines are concerned, English plays the same role as in other similar fields, being the most important language in conveying knowledge and new inventions on the

international scale. Being constantly utilized in all aspects of such a broad discipline as mechanical engineering is, it is crucial for the students to understand and perform well in the language for variety of reasons, mainly those concerned with their career advancement and scientific development (Tasic,2009).

Mechanical engineering plays a dominant role in enhancing safety, economic vitality, enjoyment and overall quality of life throughout the world. Mechanical engineers are concerned with the principles of force, energy and motion. The men and women who work as mechanical engineers are professionals with expert knowledge of the design and manufacture of mechanical systems and thermal devices and processes. Some examples of products and processes developed by mechanical engineers include engines and control systems for automobiles and aircraft, and etc. and English has an important role to add value to their work besides it also helps engineers to achieve higher efficiency of collaboration.

Thus, because of importance of English, English is taught in many classes. In same case, many institutes, college and universities require English as compulsory subject. One of colleges that require English as compulsory subject that have to be taken is Banjarmasin State Polytechnic. Mechanical Engineering major of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic provides English as their compulsory subject since the establishment of the college, exactly in 1987 with other former name was Polytechnic of LambungMangkurat University.

Providing English as one of compulsory subject for Mechanical Engineering students is in line with their vision that want to be superior

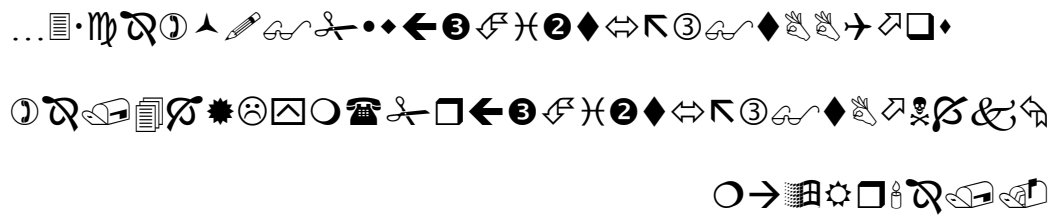
mechanical engineering in producing professional manpower who able to counterbalance the knowledge and technology improvement, *“Menjadi Jurusan Teknis Mesin Unggulan dalam mencetak tenaga kerja menengah profesional yang mampu mengembangkan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi”*.

Mechanical Engineering has two classes, namely automotive class and Production class. The researcher chooses automotive class of Mechanical Engineering as the subject of the research because this class is one of the favorite class in Banjarmasin State Polytechnic. Besides, this class also provides four credits for English --two credits in first semester and two credits for second semester-- that should be taken by their students while the others class just provide three credits for example Production class of Mechanical Engineering. It just provides three credits from first through third semester that has just one credit for each semester.

Since English as one of compulsory subject in Mechanical Engineering of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic that is taught for students who sit in first until second semester especially for Mechanical Engineering students, it means every second semester student has been studying and mastering English, especially English for Mechanical Engineering.

English subject in Mechanical Engineering of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic is designed for specific purpose as appropriate as students' need. It provides mechanical purposes for Mechanical Engineering students. Besides, it provides some skills that are related to students' major. Moreover, English material

in this major includes many topics that are related with students' professional skill. In short, it helps students to fulfill their needs to make a progress in order to improve their quality of their life or work as this verse of Holy Qur'an, Ar-Ra'd(13): 11



That verse explains that verily never will Allah change the condition of people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).

B. Statements of Problem

The problems of the study can be formulated as follow:

1. How is the second semester students' mastery in English for Mechanical Engineering at Mechanical Engineering (Automotive Class) of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic academic year 2012/2013?
2. What are the internal and external factors that influence the second semester students' mastery in English for Mechanical Engineering at Mechanical Engineering (Automotive class) of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic academic year 2012/2013?

C. Objective of Study

Based on the problems above, the purpose of this research are:

1. To obtain the mastery level of second semester students of Mechanical Engineering of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic academic year 2012/2013 in English for Mechanical Engineering.
2. To find out what the internal and external factors that influence the second semester students' mastery in English for Mechanical Engineering at Mechanical Engineering(Automotive class) of Banjarmasin State Polytechnic academic year 2012/2013 are.

D. Significance of Study

The result of this research is expected to contribute to the field as follow:

1. Providing information about the students' mastery in English for Mechanical Engineering in the effort of improving students' mastery.
2. Giving some information that might have influence to increase and to improve teaching and learning process especially for teaching and learning English for Mechanical Engineering.
3. Enriching the researcher's knowledge and experience in this specific research.
4. Giving information and knowledge regarding importance of English for Mechanical Engineering for particular students.
5. Providing information and considerations for future researchers.
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7. Enriching literary source of theBanjarmasin State Polytechnic's library.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation the researcher needs to clarify the title as follow:

1. Mastery is great skill or knowledge (Oxford Dictionary, 2008: 271).
2. English for Mechanical Engineering is a skill-based course designed specifically for students of mechanical engineering.
3. Automotive class is class that provides subjects for automotive.
4. The second semester students of Mechanical Engineering in Banjarmasin State Polytechnic mean the students who are sitting in the second semester of Mechanical Engineering in Banjarmasin State Polytechnic academic year 2012/2013.