

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

The incapability of speaking English among high school students is still a serious problem needing to be solved. The researcher, during her observation and interview with the English teacher in SMA Swasta Al-Hidayah, found that most students possess inferior competence in speaking English. This inferiority is further described by the occurrence of several mistakes while students deliver their ideas verbally. The mistakes have come from various aspects of speaking. They are the lack of vocabulary, the insufficient grammar, and the inaccurate pronunciation.

The lack of vocabulary often barricades the students to refer their ideas in target language that is English. Hence, it is difficult for students to build the sentences. This consequently causes the students to engage mother language in delivering the ideas and the worst, for some students, they postpone speaking up instead.

The insufficient grammar refers to the students' inability to create grammatically correct sentences. It is often that students reluctantly convey their thoughts because of the failure in arranging the words in form of correct sentences. It usually relates to the difficulty of differing verbal and nominal structures, the use of tenses, the use of pronouns, and so on.

Therefore, students speak English in inappropriate forms and eventually this somehow encourages the students to remain silent.

Unexpectedly, the researcher also found that other factor halting the students to speak up in the classroom is the inaccurate pronunciation. The hesitance to appropriately pronounce the words can discourage the students to participate in giving opinion in the classroom. Hence, pronunciation plays an important role in teaching speaking as well. Byrne (as cited in Hughes, 2002) explains that the main goal in teaching the productive skill of speaking will be oral fluency. This can be defined as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation.

It can be fair to conclude that based on the elaboration above, these mistakes: the lack of vocabulary, the insufficient grammar, and the inaccurate pronunciation are not only as the problems need to be solved during students' speech but also as the barriers that blockade them to speak up in the classroom. And these barriers however burden the students and affect their psychology. The students are afraid to be wrong in speaking English. They are also shy when they encounter those mistakes. And, they become reluctant to speak up. Consequently, in the end, the students prefer delaying to speak up in attempt to avoid the embarrassment.

The important factor causing the occurrence of those verbal mistakes is the ineffective technique in teaching speaking. The English

teacher in SMA Al-Hidayah Medan in teaching speaking employed passive exercises which provide limited chance for students to actively perform and participate in the classroom. The teacher merely instructed the students to fill in some blank spaces in dialogues with correct expressions. And after that, only some students were assigned to read the dialogue out loud in front of the classroom. This practice allows the students only to understand the use of some certain expressions in filling the incomplete dialogues provided by the textbook and only read the dialogues. This practice obviously barricades the students to exercise in arranging sentences and to creatively speak out their ideas. Therefore, it leads them to have low mastery in employing vocabularies, grammar, and pronunciation.

The failure in speaking English in the classroom keeps occurring since no effective solution treats the students. It has been years that the students have learned English language yet they seem to show insignificant improvement on their speaking achievement. This problem can no longer be ignored.

Role play technique can improve students' speaking achievement.

The excellences of role play technique are the keys to cope the problems of learning speaking English. In practicing speaking English through role play technique, students are required to interact with other players by employing daily expressions in exchanging information and goods. For instance the expression of greeting, asking and offering help, asking and

stating probability, asking and stating promise, giving judgment, and etc. Through this, the students are trained to create sentences by exploring the expressions which permit them to observe new vocabulary, the grammar used, and the natural English. According to Ladousse (as cited in Shen and Suwanthep, 2011) the incorporation of constructive role play activities into the L2 classroom adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production, and also a lot of fun.

Rogers and Evans (2008) state that role-play was vital and central to children's school experience because it helped them to develop social skills, to cooperate with their peers, to interact with others and generally to improve their language development. Role-play was also seen as an ideal medium through which children could express their creativity and develop their imaginations. The 'added value' of role-play was that it could be used to reinforce learning and was also a popular activity for the children and one in which they could explore and express other aspects of their personalities.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the explanation in the background of study the research problem is formulated as follow:

“Is there any effect of Role Play Technique on students' speaking achievement?”

C. The Objective of the Study

In relation to the problem of the study the objective of the study is to investigate whether Role Play Technique has significant effect on students' speaking achievement.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to investigate the second year students of senior high school focusing on the application of Role Play technique in teaching speaking English.

E. The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful for:

1. Teachers are able to expand the knowledge related to Role Play technique and later apply the role play technique in the classroom.
2. Students are motivated to speak up their ideas in the classroom.
3. The readers are able to enrich their knowledge related to teaching speaking English through Role Play technique.