

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Entering the post-modernism era, the problem of speaking still occurs. Speaking as one way to communicate verbally is still need to be improved in the context of secondary school students' achievement. Many students are difficult to speak English even though the government has created a slogan in 2009 sounds "SMK BISA!" to motivate them. While doing her teaching training program in SMK N 1 Merdeka in Berastagi, the researcher found that there were only four or five of thirty eight students who were interested in learning English. She asked the reason to them. They said that English is a boring subject. They did not speak English because the teacher herself was seldom to do that. She taught them by only asking them to read the book, do the exercise and drill the conversation. There were no communication activities in order to make the students more communicative. The curriculum demand is not fulfilled by the method used by the teacher.

As a foreign language in Indonesia, there are four skills that should be achieved namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of the four skills, speaking is the most important skill that needs to be developed in a classroom activity. Speaking serves either a transactional function, in that its primary purpose is to convey information and facilitate the exchange of goods and service, or it serves an interpersonal function in that its primary purpose is to establish and maintain social rela-

-tions. The students are expected to have a good English communication in speaking either in the transactional or interpersonal function. They need it to follow the development of the world globally.

In Indonesia, there are two categories of Secondary School, namely Senior High School and Vocational High School with two different purposes as well. Senior High School has a goal to prepare the students to enter a university. Meanwhile, Vocational High School has a goal to prepare the students to enter a job field. Thus, the Vocational High School students need a specific English lesson to reach that goal. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 3) state that English for specific purposes is based on designing courses to meet the learners' needs.

Government has determined a curriculum as a guideline. In the curriculum of KTSP 2006, it is stated that the purpose of teaching English in Vocational High School tends to be more communicative; especially when they get a job training (PKL). However, the fact is contrary to the expectation as it is stated above that the curriculum demand is not fulfilled by the method used by the teacher.

Meanwhile, speaking deals with uttering words. It needs practice a lot. According to Maxom (2009), speaking is the most important skill in English language teaching. She also says that mastering any language without speaking it up is impossible. In order to gain the ability of speaking, the students should communicate the language itself.

Learning English should be fun to make the students interested. When a class is monotonous, then the possibility of learning English will not be effective (Slameto, 2003 in strategi-belajarmengajar.blogspot.com). Therefore, the class

should run interactively. Actually, at the speaking level the emphasis of learning should be on free communication. The teacher supervises a role play, while the activities in the classroom are dominated by the students. The goal of playing the role actively is that the students have more chances to use the language.

An old proverb said that practice makes perfect means the more the students practice the words, the better improvement of speaking they get. It is very important to create communication activities in the classroom in order to make the students more communicative. Communication activities are the activities in which the students are situated into a condition which requires them to use the target language in doing something to achieve a communicative purpose.

Role play technique is a way to apply that communicative purpose in the classroom. This technique concerns more to the problem brought in the play, not to the ability of the students to run the play. They focus more on the content and purpose than on the expression (Saragih, 2005: 40 as quoted in Simatupang, 2007: 2). There are many things that can be achieved by the students if the teachers can create communicative activities:

1. They can improve oral fluency.
2. They can gain confidence to use English to express their thought and ideas.
3. They get opportunities to develop interactive skills.
4. They can gain enjoyment and motivation which is conducive to language acquisition.
5. They can gain chances for new conscious learning.

6. They can develop monitoring skills through working together in groups and constantly checking and revising what they are doing.
7. They can gain the valuable educational experience of working in teams and stretching their imagination.
8. They can gain the vital skills of thinking in English.

Considering that the vocational students are mostly learning about the topics that have something to do with social circumstances, this technique would help to ease the process of learning speaking. With this technique, the students will be stimulated to be active and they will receive the material better because the learning atmosphere will be enjoyable, fun and direct them to a free communication. This will create a natural conversation atmosphere where they can speak what they really want to speak according to the role play.

In relation to the problem, the researcher would like to apply this technique. Hopefully, the students will be interested to communicate in English and get improvement in speaking.

B. The Problem of Study

Based on the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows: “How does Role Play technique significantly improve vocational students’ speaking skill?”

C. The Objective of Study

In line with the problem, the objective of this study is to find out the improvement of the students' speaking achievement by using Role Play technique.

D. The Scope of Study

The study is focused on the students' achievement in speaking. It is limited to the elementary level and focused on interpersonal speaking.

In vocational school, there are three levels of competence namely novice level, elementary level and intermediate level. There are six types of speaking; they are imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal and extensive speaking.

The researcher uses Role Play technique. This research will be conducted through Classroom Action Research.

E. The Significance of Study

The results of this study are expected:

1. To be useful for the teacher in improving their quality of teaching speaking and their knowledge to be creative in teaching the various English materials.
2. To be useful for the students in learning speaking.
3. To be useful for those who are interested in doing research related to this study.