

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Background of Study

It is a fact that nowadays English has become an international language as it is most widely used around the world. In current situation, many commonwealth countries have used English as their second language. Besides, English has become uniting language of people from different countries with different background and culture.

Indonesia government absolutely realizes with that situation, so that, they decide English language as a compulsory subject to learn in formal schools. Particularly at university level, mastering English is urged for learners to prepare them for effective and efficient communication in English in their professional situations.

One of English skill which plays a significant role in mastering English is speaking. Speaking is the most used skill by people rather than the three other skills. According to Jack C. Richards, learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how well they feel they have improved in their spoken proficiency. From Richards' statement above, the writer can say that most language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. Besides, many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can

acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication. This is apparent in Richards and Renandya's (2002) publication where they stated, a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking (p. 201). Moreover, students of second/foreign language education programs are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in the language (Riggenback & Lazaraton, 1991).

On the other hand, speaking is the most difficult part to some people when learning a foreign language. Not many people can practice speaking well, although everyone knows that it is the best way to speak a language fluently. Many language learners may find difficulties in achieving the goal of learning English especially speaking. They may get the problem of less confidence, motivation, or some knowledge related to accuracy in speaking. Moreover, in an EFL learning environment where English is used as a medium of instruction, direct needs for improving English seems less important.

So that, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance. In order to teach learners how to speak in the best way possible, some speaking activities are provided that can be applied to EFL classroom settings such as speeches, information gap, role play, jigsaw, discussion etc. including each goals and contribution in developing learners' speaking skill. In participating the activities, learners can apply learning strategy that can facilitate the

internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the language (Oxford: 1990) which appropriate with their each needs and problems faced related to speaking progress.

Given this background, a relatively large number of researchers have conducted empirical studies to examine the effectiveness of such activities in improving learners' speaking. For instance, Hamzah and Yee Ting (2008) found out that the students felt free to express themselves when interacting in group discussion. In other words, group discussion helped to reduce students' anxiety to speak up in front of the class. Hence, the best time to overcome the speaking problems is through the practice in group work discussion . In addition, Kayi (2006) claimed "Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. With this aim, various speaking activities can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life. These activities make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them".

Thus, the researcher decided to investigate good EFL learners' activities in learning speaking skill and the learning strategy used while engaging the activities. The rationale for electing to focus on this kind of investigation is that as an English learner, the researcher experienced to participate some speaking activities in speaking classes but she doesn't know well how the activity that contributes the greatest deal in developing speaking. Predominantly at university level which learners are pursuing a degree in English or in cognate discipline, their use of English learning strategies and how they employ such activities to help them improve their speaking skill appear to be a topic of interest.

1.2. The statement of Problem

From the background above, the problems that would like to be raised up by the researcher are in the form of these questions:

1. What activities do EFL learners have to support their speaking skill?
2. What are the kinds of learning strategy used while engaging the activities?

1.3. The objective of Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To describe the kinds of activities that EFL learners did to support their speaking.
2. To identify learning strategy used by EFL learners in learning speaking while engaging the activities.

1.4. The significance of study

Theoretical Benefit:

It is expected that the result of this research can be a theoretical input of learning speaking skill for the students especially in University.

Practical Benefit

1. It is hoped that the English teacher/instructor will be able to use such activities in improving learners' speaking in teaching English in the classroom.

2. The learners who have poor ability in speaking skill can take as reference about the realization of good activities to solve their problems in learning speaking.
3. The university can make the policy to maximize the program where the learners can do the activities to increase their speaking skill.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

The scope of the study focuses on the activities in learning speaking. The researcher limited the study on the implementation of activities in learning speaking skill at university environment, either inside or outside the class, done by the university students such as discussion, presentation, role play, conversation, etc. and learning strategies they applied while engaging those speaking activities.

1.6. The definition of key terms

The definition of key term is explained here to avoid misunderstanding in understanding this research. In this point, the researcher lists and defines the key terms as follows:

1. Speaking activities

Activities engaged in by the learner for the purpose of acquiring speaking skills whether guided by an instructor or not. Below are the kinds of familiar speaking activities that mostly used in EFL learning context.

- Discussion : the activity where people can do exchanging reasons, argument or debate to make some decision.
- Information gap : an activity where learners are missing the information they need to complete a task and need to talk to each other to find it.
- Speech : an activity where learners can express their thoughts by words in formal context.
- Role play : an activity where learners can learn speaking through taking a role of a or person and acting it out with the partner, usually in the form of dialog.
- Conversation : a spontaneous communication between two or more people.

2. Learning strategy

The term of way that learners can employ in processing new information to increase learning.

3. EFL learner

An English learner whose first language is not English that expects to develop their skills in English.

4. Speaking

Ability to share meanings, ideas, opinion, and feelings in English effectively in oral form.