CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Speaking is a major skill to be learned by learners of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. In relation with the importance of English language in all aspects of life today, Indonesia as a developing country has an educational curriculum which includes the instruction of English as one of the important subjects to be taught from Junior high school to university level. As a compulsory subject in school, the Indonesian government always develops the English lesson in school. The purpose is to improve students' communicative skills. So, the students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

Speaking is a crucial part of foreign language learning and teaching in Indonesia. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogue enjoyable. Speaking is a fundamental and yet demanding skill to be mastered by learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Compared to other language skills, speaking has been given less attention in second language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment. Therefore, recent pedagogical research on teaching students conversation has provided some parameters for developing objectives and techniques.
Speaking in the foreign language has always been considered the most demanding skill to develop in the learners of the target language compared to such other skills as listening, reading, and writing. This is in part due to the fact that it involves more than simply knowing the linguistic components of the language. Of course, knowledge of the linguistic components such as vocabulary and grammatical structures seems essential but not sufficient. English speaking is very important to be able to participate in wider world of work. The speaking skill is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the language. This reality makes teachers and parents think that speaking ability should be mastered by their students and children.

Speaking is the most important skills that a learner should be acquired. On the latest curriculum, the curriculum 2013 mentions that the students are expected to have good ability in speaking. Thus, speaking must be taught in the classroom appropriately. Furthermore, speaking is an essential skill for junior high school students. They need to acquire a good speaking skills in order to make them communicate by using English. English speaking ability has concerned on teaching about the English language. The emphasis is not only on linguistics competence of the language learners but also on the development of their communicative ability. In order to develop the learners’ communicative ability, the teacher needs to create a scenario to teach the target language in a vibrant, active and interesting manner.

In non-speaking English country like Indonesia, English speaking ability is still considered difficult to learn. The students in junior high school students
still have low competencies in speaking ability. Good speaking is characterized by some factors of the most important one is fluency, but many students are hesitant and often make long pauses when they are speaking. In addition, students are demanded to speak accurately but many students make mistakes whenever they speak up. Students are also expected to speak appropriately but many students may use inappropriate language expressions, registers, implicatures, and other sociolinguistic features in certain contexts when they are expressing their ideas. Pronunciation including stress patterns, intonation, and articulation is also an important aspect of speaking. However, many students still mispronounce words because they do not get an appropriate model of English. These problems may be caused by many factors such as the methods and techniques applied by the English teachers and the media used in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the curriculum, the primary purpose of the English teaching in junior high school is to achieve communicative competence. Students are expected to speak and communicate in English in daily life, both in the written and spoken form. However, many teachers are not really aware of the problems in teaching speaking. They tend to emphasize more on receptive skills especially reading. They also tend to use textbook only in their English teaching. Appropriate English models to teach speaking are rarely presented. The teachers are the only models for students to learn pronunciation, fluency, accuracy and appropriateness in classroom setting because interactive media such as videos, movies, songs, realia, etc. are not optimally used in the
teaching and learning process. The lack of media can cause boredom so that students do not feel interested in learning English and they cannot improve their language competence.

One of the factors that can improve the students’ speaking ability is the strategies in learning English. It is supported by Suwanarak (2012, p.3) that “language learning strategies are what learners do to learn language and relate to learners’ characteristics, learning styles and learning achievement”. Then, according to Green & Oxford, 1995; Khaldieh, 2000; Wharton, 2000 states that language learning achievement or proficiency had also been consistently linked to strategy use. Learning strategies is one of essential part in learning process for the students in achieving the learning objectives. Learning strategies have some techniques, and approaches are used during learning. In accordance with Oxford (1990) stating that learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Learning strategies are defined as systematic plans, design, procedure or maneuvers used during learning.

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are defined as systematic plans, design, procedure or maneuvers used during learning. Learning strategies deal with all aspects of subject which are learned in all levels of education and become one of the aspects in getting achievement. It includes English proficiency and achievement. Language learning strategies research has consistently established a positive link between language proficiency and strategy use. This is in line with Khalil (2005); Magogwe & Oliver (2007); Park (1997); Shmais (2003). They state that language learning strategy also showed strong, positive correlations between strategy use and EFL proficiency.

Based on the preliminary research that has been conducted at SMPN 1 Perhentian Raja on March 2017, the researcher found some problems dealing with the teaching and learning processes. The students had low motivation in learning English, especially in speaking activities. The researcher also found that the students were still not familiar to the English sounds and pronunciation. It can be seen when the students repeated the teacher or answered the teachers’ questions. The researcher also found the problem in the teacher’s strategy in teaching. The teacher only used whiteboard for teaching English and the activities were less varied that made the students bored in the classroom. Related to this case, based on an informal discussion, the teacher believed that such classroom did not satisfy the requirements of a successful teaching and learning process. The teacher then found a reference which was related to a successful teaching and learning process. She agreed that most students seemed to be less motivated in the class. The teacher also confirmed
that there were some students, which were very difficult to speak to and always refuse to join the activities. She had some difficulties in persuading all of the students to speak. Based on the discussion with two collaborators of research, the effort to improve students’ speaking skill as well as the teachers’ ability needs to be enhanced to motivate the students.

Many factors can cause the problem of the students’ speaking skills namely the students’ interest, the material, and the media among others including the technique in teaching English. Many techniques can be applied including role play because many research findings say that this technique is effective to use in teaching speaking. Role play is very important in teaching speaking because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. In addition, it also allows students to be creative and to put themselves in another person’s place for a while. According to Stephen D. Hattings based on his observation in the conversation class, the role play would seem to be the ideal activity in which students could use their English creatively and it aims to stimulate a conversation situation in which students might find themselves and give them an opportunity to practice and develop their communication skill.

Role play is a technique which leads the students to have an opportunity to involve in thinking about how to act and react in real world situation. Indeed, it is one of the strategies to teach speaking skill to the students that lead them to practice directly. Role-play is established as a teaching technique for organizing controlled, pre-communicative language practice. Role play can be
used to encourage general oral fluency or to train student for specific situation, especially where they are studying for specific purpose. For example, the students in vocational school are drilled to practice several function to book a hotel’s room. This activity leads the students to play such a drama. The student will playing role to be another person in certain situation. It is important to train the students to be aware to speak in a certain situation. Of course when people speak they have to know the setting or where the conversation happens and what situation it is.

SMP N 1 Perhentian Raja is one of schools that is located in Kampar Regency Riau Province. This school has been applied School Based Curriculum (KTSP) as their guidance in teaching learning process. In this school, the basic competence stated in the syllabus of SMP N 1 Perhentian Raja for second grade refers to the capability of students to express the meaning of monologue texts or essays that use various oral language accurately, fluency, and contextually in the form of text such as monologue of narrative, spoof, and hortatory exposition. English has been taught since the first year of English teaching period. English is taught twice a week with time duration about 45 minutes for one lesson hour.

Based on the reasons, the writer is interested to conduct a classroom action research with entitle “IMPROVING STUDENTS SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH ROLE PLAY METHOD OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS AT SMP N 1 PERHENTIAN RAJA”
1.2 Identification of the Problem

The primary purpose of the English teaching in junior high school is to achieve communicative competence. Students are expected to speak and communicate in English in daily life, both in the written and spoken form. But based on the researcher’s observation before conducting this research, the researcher found some problems in students’ speaking ability at SMP N 1 Perhentian Raja. The first problem frequently found is that the students have less opportunity to practice speaking English in the real communication activity in their daily conversation. They usually use their mother tongue to answer the question from their teacher. An opportunity is an important factor to improve the students’ speaking skill. Without practicing language that they learnt, the students’ speaking skill cannot improve. The second problem is the students have a limited vocabulary mastery since they learn English as a foreign language. They do not find English outside the classroom. There are a lot of vocabularies that they are unfamiliar with and it caused problems because the communication only happens when both of the speaker and the listener understand what they are talking about. The students need to enrich their vocabulary much more to get the conversation to run well communicatively, especially in mastering tourism vocabularies. The third problem is mispronunciation. The students are not able to pronounce some words because they are still confused on how to pronounce them. The wrong pronunciation may cause misunderstanding between the speaker and the
listener. For the example, when the students pronounce “morning” to be /marning/.

The next problem is related to the students’ anxiety. They fear of being laughed by their friends and have less confidence with their own ability when they studied in the class. It makes bad effect for them. They cannot prepare themselves to be the best guides when they graduate from the junior high school. The last problem is the method used by the teacher. The teacher gives little opportunity to students to express their idea. The materials learnt by students are not appropriate too. It is not suitable with the basic competence topic of eleventh grade of junior high school, because the teacher often teaches grammar. Based on the reality above, the writer decides to conduct classroom action research to overcome the problems of the students in learning English, especially in practicing speaking English. The writer tries to conduct a communication activity that is role play. As one of activities for speaking, role play activities give the students lots of opportunity to communicate in different social contexts and roles, especially for handling and serving foreign guests.

1.3 Focus of the Problem

In this research, the researcher limits the scope of the research into the strategy that will be applied in teaching to improve students’ speaking ability. The researcher will apply role play method in teaching to improve students’ speaking ability. The components of the speaking ability that will be measured
such as pronunciation that focus on Speaking in unambiguous sound and use appropriate intonation and pauses. Grammar that focus on using simple and complex grammatical structure correctly. Vocabulary that focus on using many vocabulary variations and appropriate word choices. Fluency that focus on Speaking fluently in natural hesitations. And comprehension that focus on understanding language experience.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the research, identification of the problem and limitation of the problem, the problem is formulated as “How and to what extent is role play strategy taught and used at SMP N 1 Perhentian Raja?

1.5 Objective of the Research

This research aims to investigate how and to what extent is role play strategy taught and used at SMP N 1 Perhentian Raja.

1.6 Significance of the Research

1. Teacher

This research was expected to be the source of information to improve the teaching activities in encouraging students to speak English. Practically, this research is expected to help the teacher to know the use of role play activity in the process of teaching-learning of speaking.
2. Students

This research was expected can improve students’ speaking ability in English speaking and they can enjoy the learning activity of speaking by doing role play.

3. Researcher

This research can give a practice in developing her knowledge and skills in problem solving teaching-learning process.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

1. Improving

In Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, improving is making or becoming better; making good use of something. Or it can be said that improving is doing in any way in making something better, or becoming increased. (A. S. Hornby, 2000)

2. Speaking Ability

Speaking ability is a skill to communicate a speech articulation or to express and convey messages or ideas. (Tarigan, 1981)

3. Role Play Method

Role-play is established as a teaching technique for organizing controlled, pre-communicative language practice. The role-play will give opportunity to learn language as natural as possible (Littlewood : 1981).