A. Background of the Study

Mastering English requires some skills. For more than six decades now, research and practice in English language teaching have identified the “four skills” as of paramount importance. The four skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Brown 2000: 232). Listening and reading are input skills while speaking and writing are output skills. These four English skills must be mastered by the students in schools and universities gradually.

Nowadays, the ability of English is really needed either passively or actively. Passive English ability means an ability in which someone can receive messages from someone’s utterances or writings in English. Meanwhile, active English ability means an ability in which someone can use and practice English actively. This ability is required not only for academic but also other purposes like business, tourism, and some jobs like steward/stewardess, waiter/waitress, marketing officers, receptionist, operators, and so on.

Recently, many references and literatures are written in English. As we know, most of all experts’ works in many subjects in the world like science, linguistics, history, anthropology, medical, economy, politics, international relationship and laws have already been translated from their original languages to English. This is an effective way to make people from many countries who speak
different languages comprehend those experts’ works. The function of English as an international language clearly eases people to communicate widely so that studying all languages to learn certain subjects is not needed. Therefore, students need to be able to master passive English ability. Active English ability is also needed not only for communication but also some other purposes like jobs when they are already graduated. Recently, many companies’ owners will prefer applicants who are able to speak English to join and work in their companies. This cannot be denied for the globalization era nowadays requires us to connect widely to the world, of course, with its’ international language, that is English.

When the students who are the future agents of this nation cannot adapt themselves to the globalization era, they will be left behind by other nations’ human resources. This means that our human resources are really required to prepare themselves to face the modern era. One of the important aspects is the language mastery, especially English which now officially becomes the international language. Also, when the students cannot speak English they cannot interact to the foreigners, exchange their opinions, thoughts and ideas which can help the students to enrich their knowledge and enhance their self development.

According to *Standard of Competence and Basic Competence for SMA/MA 2006*, students, especially in senior high schools are directed to be able to communicate in English in a certain literacy level. Those literacy levels are *performative, functional, informational and epistemic*. In *performative level*, students are able to read, write, listen, and speak with symbols used. In *functional level*, students can use the language to fulfill their daily needs like reading
newspapers and manuals. Meanwhile in informational level, students are able to access knowledge by their language abilities. In epistemic level students can express their knowledge to the target language.

To achieve those literacy levels, especially epistemic level, speaking class is held in senior high schools. The main goal of speaking classes is to make the students able to communicate in English. Students should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

Based on the teaching practice experience in KKN PPL program in SMA N 1 Kasihan Bantul held in July until September 2010, some problems were still found on the students’ ability in English, primarily in speaking. SMA 1 Kasihan Bantul is an RSBI school (Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional - Pilot International School Based) which expects its students to be able to use English in their academic and daily lives. Nevertheless, some of them were not active in expressing their thoughts, opinions and ideas through speaking English. When they were asked by teachers to speak in front of the class, they would bargain the command or even directly refused it. Most of them were still too shy and confused about what to speak. They were not confident to speak English.

The researcher thinks that the students need visual media to stimulate them to speak. Students felt confused when they were asked to speak. When they were confused, they were difficult to imagine or remember things that they wanted to convey. They need an aid of instrument to stimulate and guide them in speaking. Pictures are instruments which can help students to speak. Pictures can create an
illustration in which students’ minds are focussed on the meaning and use of the language being taught and the language experienced by the students as essential to their participation in the activity. Miarso (1999) says the functions of pictures as media are making abstract concepts concrete, representing objects that are difficult to find, representing objects that are too big, representing objects that are difficult to use, giving the same experiences and motivating students to learn.

Based on Miarso’s opinion, it can be concluded that pictures are instruments that really can help students improving their speaking abilities. Pictures have some specialities. Pictures can be found everywhere in our daily lives easily like in advertisement, photographs, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, flashcards, and so on. Besides, we can get many pictures with cheap prices or even free. Teachers have wide opportunities in using pictures. They can set, modify and combine pictures with many techniques and games to reach the goal of speaking classes. Teachers can use their creativity as wide as possible in using the pictures. Also, students tend to love visual instruments in which they can directly see and think. Pictures will stimulate and motivate them to practice their English comprehension through speaking. From those reasons, it is clear that pictures are medias that can be used to improve the students’ speaking ability.

Hopefully this study can help the teachers in teaching speaking to the students, especially those who are in class XI of senior high schools.
B. Identification of the Problem

In learning English, students might be able to do the tasks, home work, and even the final examination very well. They can fill the blanks with correct grammar, answer the questions from a text correctly, and rearrange the jumbled paragraph very well, and so on. However, they still face a great problem in speaking. Practicing knowledge is not easy. They should be trained thoroughly.

There are some problems in teaching speaking to the students. Those come from some main factors like the teachers and the students.

There are some problems coming from the teachers. First is the lack ability of the teachers in designing the materials. Teachers sometimes cannot create an atmosphere where the students have to speak. Although some students can practice speaking English well, some other students still do not participate in the tasks instructed by the English teacher. These students are mostly those who sit at the backside of the class. The teachers’ instruction sometimes cannot be understood by some students. Teachers do not use any visual aid to help students to understand the materials.

A teacher as the facilitator in the class has an important role in directing the students’ activities to achieve the learning goals. A teacher directs and leads the students to learn something. Therefore a teacher must be able to create an effective learning. In speaking, teachers must be able to create an atmosphere and activity where the students are expected to speak. The atmosphere can be in the form of contextual activities like role plays, dialogues, monologues, and playing
games. A teacher indeed must be creative in designing the activity. The irony is that not all teachers can create such activity on their classrooms.

Second is the lack of ability of the teachers in motivating the students. Motivation is very important. It is difficult to apply the learning activities when the students do not have any motivation in learning. A teacher is a motivator. He or she can give motivation outside the classroom like in the form of self approaching, suggestions and so on. Nevertheless in the classroom teachers sometimes fail to motivate the students. They are too focused on materials. Although the teacher motivates the students with reward techniques (the teacher notes the students who can answer teachers’ questions correctly), some students are still not motivated to speak. One way to motivate the students is through the material itself. Interesting material design is needed. Teachers actually can create and modify interesting and motivating materials to be applied on their speaking classes through pictures. Pictures are flexible materials that can be used to help students to learn many materials in English.

Meanwhile, students contribute also in speaking learning problems. One of the main problems is the students’ lack of awareness in learning speaking. They don’t realize the needs of English speaking in the real world. They also seldom find a situation where they have to speak English in their daily activities. They just learn English language as their obligation as students. Moreover, nowadays there is no speaking section in national final examination. Students think that learning speaking is just wasting their times. They just want to pass the examination with bright scores. Therefore, they learn more in reading, listening,
grammar, and so on. These are some problems in teaching and learning speaking in classes.

On this thesis the researcher observed one of RSBI (Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional) schools in Jogjakarta, that is SMA 1 Kasihan Bantul. This school has 23 classes with 782 students. It also has a great number of teachers, they are 74 teachers in which 80% of them are certified by the government. Also, this school has facilities that support the English teaching learning process like English laboratory, Computer laboratory, LCD, black and white boards, air conditioned-classrooms and sound systems. There are 16 kinds of extra classes held after school, including English Speaking Club. This school also won some of speech competitions both in regional and national scale. Nevertheless, not all the students have great ability in English, especially in speaking. From those 782 students, only some students in some classes show their great comprehension in speaking English. Most of the classes still need serious treatment, especially in speaking.

This school has great potencies in the quantity of the students and the facilities. However, it still has a problem in increasing the speaking ability among the students. I intend to improve the students’ speaking ability through the using of pictures in SMA 1 Kasihan Bantul.

C. Problem Limitation

Limitation of the problem is needed for the study to have a clear focus. All factors that are mentioned in the identification of the problem seem so general.
This study focuses its discussion on improving the students’ speaking ability by using pictures.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, there is a specific question related to it. The question as the formulation of the problem of this thesis is “How can the students’ speaking ability be improved by using pictures in SMA 1 Kasihan Bantul?”.

E. Objective of the Study

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objective of the study is to improve the speaking ability of class XI IS 2 of SMA 1 Kasihan Bantul.

F. Significances of the Study

The significances of this study are:

1. Theoretically

The research study can be one of the references in creating interesting English speaking classes to motivate the students in speaking.

2. Practically

a. The result of the study can be useful information for teachers, students, schools and general readers about improving students’ speaking ability.
b. The finding of the study will enrich and enlarge the knowledge of improving students’ speaking ability in the English Education Department of Yogyakarta State University.

c. The procedures and findings of the study are expectedly to inspire other researchers interested in replicating a study with a similar theme or purpose.