

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background to the Study

As one of the international languages, English plays an important role in the international communication in almost all aspects of life. Many people communicate in English to support the borderless trade among the nations. English has been becoming a compulsory foreign language mastered by local tourism services in Indonesia since it is well known as a tourism destination. In education field, both students and teachers are required to comprehend English in order that they can compete in globalization era.

There are two goals of learning English in vocational high schools proposed by *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional 23 of 2006 (Permendiknas)*. First, students are expected to master the knowledge and skills of basic English to sustain their vocational competency achievement. Second, students are expected to implement their mastery of ability and skills of English to communicate in spoken and written forms at the intermediate level. The scope of English teaching in vocational high schools consists of three levels: novice, elementary, and intermediate.

The three levels promoted by the Ministry of National Education are debatable. According to Brown (2001: 100), the novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with the learning materials. At the elementary level students then produce oral utterances using isolated words and a few high-frequency phrases. The intermediate level is characterised by the

speaker's ability to combine learned elements, sustain in basic communicative tasks, ask and answer questions. Meanwhile, what happens in reality seems different from what has been stated previously. The Novice level is commonly learned by beginners learning English for the first time. The Elementary level is one level above novice, meaning that learners have higher English proficiency than beginners and so do learners of the intermediate level. Those levels have been created in such a way and invite different interpretations. The materials that should be taught according to the standard of competence and basic competence seem inappropriate for the level of the English proficiency of vocational high school students. For example, students have learnt times, days, months, years, physical appearances in the elementary or junior high school. Yet, these materials were taught again in the English curriculum of vocational high schools. Thus, there must be a solution to cope with this problem by combining the materials that will be taught with the students' needs in the tourism program.

Furthermore, ideally English teachers should be able to teach reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in balance. Nevertheless, teachers often ignore to teach speaking skills since it is not tested in the national examination (UN). As a result, many vocational high school students especially the students of the tourism program lack speaking skills though in the future they are required to speak English at work.

Results of the observations, interviews, and questionnaires conducted on November 15th and 16th 2011, it was revealed that the tenth grade students of

the Tourism Program at SMKN 7 Yogyakarta had some problems concerning the English teaching and learning process. The materials taught were focused on teaching grammar although the results of the interviews showed that the students wanted to have more activities related to speaking. Many students seemed unconfident to speak English. They were afraid of making mistakes and shy to express their opinions. The students made a lot of mistakes in pronouncing words. They also lacked vocabulary so that they found difficulty in making a sentence. Their grammar was also still weak. Most students spoke Javanese and Indonesian during the class. They did not have a course book or student worksheet as a resource for learning. The teacher did not give activities that could promote students' speaking skills. She taught fast as well. She did not use any media to support the teaching and learning process. Many assignments were done individually which were mostly grammar tasks. The activities conducted by the teacher did not promote group work although many students said that they enjoyed working together to help their learning.

The facts above had motivated me to conduct classroom action research at the tenth grade of the UJP (Unit Jasa Pariwisata) class of SMKN 7 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2011/2012. After discussing the existing problems and considering the most crucial problem that needed solution on November 23rd, 2011, the English teacher, my colleague, and I agreed to work together to focus on improving the students' speaking skills through cooperative learning. The students need more activities that can promote their speaking skills since their program study obliges them to have a good

proficiency of speaking. Since the students often worked individually whereas they liked working together, my collaborators and I decided to use cooperative learning so that they could enjoy working in groups in order to maximize their learning experience.

B. The Identification of the Problems

In identifying the problems, my collaborator and I carried out three activities, namely observing the English teaching and learning process at the classroom, interviewing the English teacher and students, and giving a questionnaire to the students. The observations and interviews were conducted on November 15th and 16th 2011, while the distribution of questionnaires on November 17th 2011.

Here is the result of observation written according to the teaching and learning process at classroom.

Vignette 1

Day/ date : Tuesday, November 15th 2011

Time : 08.30-9.30 a.m.

Place : X UJP Class of SMKN 7 Yogyakarta

Some students of UJP were chatting outside the classroom. They entered the class when the teacher came. The class started at 8.30. The teacher went to her desk, put her books and asked her students about the last material. "Do you have any question?" Some students said "No one".

The teacher began the lesson. She wrote on the whiteboard, "If I have a million dollar, I will go to Kranggan Market, I will buy a car." After that, she asked the students to make a sentence in turns. The sentence should use the clause made by their friends. One student continued the clause that was already written previously by the teacher. He said "If I buy a car, I will drive car everywhere." All students were busy preparing themselves to make a sentence. They made a noise by asking certain vocabularies to their friends, the teacher, and observer. There were 3 students out of 36 students bringing a dictionary. "*Bu apa Bahasa Inggrisnya berangkat?*", asked one student to the teacher. The teacher helped that student. Suddenly, another student said "If I drive a

car, I will go to school". Next student said "If I go to school, I will smart." The teacher gave feedback about the last sentence, "Do you think Tina's sentence correct?" "No, mam", one student answered. "Benar, jangan lupa taruhkan be setelah kata sifat," replied the teacher".

As many students were busy making a sentence before their turns, they did not notice the teacher explanation and the sentences that other students had made. It took long time for some students to compose a right sentence. When their turns to make a sentence came, they got shy and looked uncertain to express their sentences. "*Aduh, Mbak iki benar ra yo?*", asked one student to her friend. She then read her sentence doubtly, "If I smart, I will happy." "Is the sentence right? Apa kalimatnya sudah benar?", asked the teacher. "No", said some students together. The teacher asked the student who answered no. "Is it right Yuda?" The student did not answer the teacher's question.

After all the students got chances to make sentences, the teacher explained the formula of conditional sentence. All students made a note of the material. She gave an assignment to make five sentences related to conditional sentence. The teacher went around checking the students' works. Before the bell rang, the teacher required all students to collect the works. "Kalo saya sudah keluar kelas, kerjanya tidak saya terima," insisted the teacher. Many students were in a hurry and they did not finish the assignment. Some students just wrote 2-3 sentences. The class was over at 9.30. The teacher left the classroom.

Based on the process described in the vignette above, the collaborators and I discussed some problems that can be found during the teaching and learning process. First, it was related to the students. They were shy to deliver their opinions in English. They preferred to answer questions together or wait until the teacher pointed them out than initiate to raise hand. They did not know how to say and when to say certain expressions. Indonesian and Javanese were the major languages used at the class among the students. The students lacked vocabulary. Their pronunciation and grammar were also still weak. There were only 3 students out of 36 students who brought the dictionary. Therefore, a few students made noises and were distractors for others by asking their friends for some vocabularies. This occurred because they were busy preparing for their turns.

The second problem was concerned with the teacher. The teacher did not give any conclusion at the end of the class. She focused on teaching grammar. She always gave the task about making sentences and reading them aloud. The sentences were not relevant to the students' needs at the tourism program. Furthermore, the sentences made did not relate. Considering that they are at the the tourism program, the materials should deal with English used in the tourism field. Speaking activities need to be increased to encourage them to speak English as much as possible. Grammar activities can be involved but they should be meaningful and contextual.

The fourth problem was about the method which was less likely to engage the students to speak up. The activities given were less communicative. The teaching patterns were mostly about explaining particular grammar rules, giving assignments to make sentences according to the formula given, reading the sentences aloud, and submitting the assignments at the end of the class. Many assignments submitted were not finished yet and mostly done individually. If the teacher put them in groups, it will help their learning and they can finish the tasks.

The last problem was media. The teacher did not use any teaching media such as flash cards, magazines, worksheets, recordings, power point etc. Besides, there were neither course books nor student worksheets. Consequently, the students did not have any learning resources to help them understand the lesson. She explained the material classically by writing on the whiteboard.

Based on the results of interviews and questionnaires conducted with the teacher and students, there were some problems that could be identified. The students were not confident to speak English because they were afraid of making mistakes. Speaking activities took a little portion in the classroom. The teacher seldom taught reading as she thought that it was not really important for the students. The materials taught did not touch the students' needs at the the tourism program whereas they did want English that could be used in tourism, especially speaking skills such as guiding, handling guests etc. Many activities were writing to make notes and assignments. Individual activities were dominant though they enjoyed working together to facilitate their learning.

In conclusion, all aspects related to the students, teacher, material, method and media need to be improved. The improvement can be reached by finding ways which could minimize the problems mentioned above and at the same time improve the quality of the teaching and learning process.

C. The Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identification of the problems above, there are many problems that can be found during the teaching and learning process. This research is focused on improving speaking skills through the use of cooperative learning.

The collaborators and I decided to use cooperative learning with several supporting reasons to improve the students' speaking skills. Cooperative learning may help the students to work together in groups so that they can learn

maximally. By working together, the students can discuss, finish and submit the task given. It means that silent work at the students' desks can be minimized. Sharing information or an information gap is an important element in cooperative learning. There will be a learning resource to assist the teaching and learning process. Feeling unconfident to share any opinions, being afraid of making mistakes, and being lazy to bring dictionaries can be minimized by working as a team.

Besides, the students can support one another to be brave and confident as well. They can remind one another to bring dictionaries. There are opportunities for the students to receive individual assistance from their mates. They can work together to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. They have partners to practice speaking, and get feedback from their friends. The students receive more chances to speak because cooperative learning requires and enhances the students' communication skills.

In addition, cooperative learning supports the use of communicative activities that can encourage the students to speak up. The activities also will place the students in a real context related to their major as the tourism program students. The use of teaching media can be maximized through some cooperative learning methods so that the teaching and learning process will not be monotonous.

D. The Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem, the problem was formulated as follows “How can speaking skills be improved through the use of cooperative learning?”

E. The Objective of the Study

The study is carried out to improve the students’ speaking skills by using cooperative learning.

F. The Significances of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some practical and theoretical significances for the following parties.

1. Practical Significances

- a. As the collaborators, the English teacher of SMKN 7 Yogyakarta and my colleague can use the finding of this study as a source of information in applying some methods in cooperative learning to build speaking activities.
- b. As the subjects of the research, I hope this study can motivate the students of SMKN 7 Yogyakarta at the first grade of the tourism program in improving their speaking skills and help them solve their problems in practicing speaking.
- c. I hope this study will give an experience of teaching through cooperative learning for my colleague as a loyal collaborator.

- d. I hope this study will give invaluable experience as the first study I will conduct. I can transfer all knowledge I have got in university.
- e. My collaborators and I work together to improve the process of teaching and learning. This study can make the class situation more alive and communicative.
- f. As the top leader of school, the principal of SMKN 7 Yogyakarta may use the result of the study as a consideration to determine the school policy in improving the students' speaking skills.

2. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study provides beneficial and referential contributions in giving general knowledge of the way to improve the students' speaking skills through the use of cooperative learning.