

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Classroom activities aim to provide an experience to improve students' communication skills. According to Huang & Hu (2016), classroom activities can engage students in the learning process, facilitate learning by doing, and practice their communication skills. These activities provide many benefits, such as giving immediate feedback to students and allowing experimentation with a model of the real environment.

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measurement of knowing the language that defines fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, listen, or to write (Fitrawati, 2015). Thus, speaking activity in the classroom has an important role to influence the development of students especially freshmen's communicative competence. Speaking activities such as discussion, role play, brainstorming, storytelling, interviews, reporting, picture describing are the examples of classroom activities. These kinds of activities allowed students to draw on their experience and use their imagination (Clément & Wen, 2015). In 2006, the government of Malaysia revealed that 45,000 college graduates were unemployed, and this was mainly caused by a poor command of the English language (Kassim & Ali, 2010). Thus, it is really important how speaking need to be learnt.

Meanwhile the purposes of speaking activity itself is to help students be able to deliver their opinions, give suggestions, feel comfortable when they speak English, and solve problems. It also encourages students to become more critical and have a good self-confident in speaking. Several activities such as information-gap activity, role plays, brainstorming and simulations can provide students how to talk for sharing and obtaining information as well as in the real world transactions (Richards, 2006).

A study on speaking activity reveals that most of the speaking was done by teachers, and only 9.28% of the class was dedicated to students' speaking activity, students talk only when addressed or questioned by teachers (Sani, 2014). Students seldom asked questions to their teacher, which means that they become passive students. In contrast, communicative competence only can be reached through students' active participation in interactive activities in the classroom. It is important to create an interactive classroom activity for students so they can learn the language communicatively and express themselves in the class. For example, by dividing students into small groups or in pairs, students will have a chance to deliver their opinions.

Catalano & Catalano (2015) said that speaking activity is not only the main factor in achieving oral proficiency but also the competence of the teachers' and the materials that teacher gives to the students. Problem with grammar and pronunciation, insufficient vocabulary, inability to participate in certain conversation, and slow speaking rate are also a number of reasons that make speaking ability is limited (Burns & Siegel, 2018). The willingness of the students themselves to

communicate in English can affect students to be able to speak in English (Clément & Wen, 2015).

Even though they are exposed to English outside the class that mostly through the media, but students actual use of the language is primarily at school (Siegel, 2018). Thus, speaking classroom activities can play an essential role in language classes and increase learners' interest in learning and motivation. The researcher chose Functional Communicative Speaking class since it contains a lot of activities that students has to learn.

1.2 FIELD OF THE STUDY

This research is related to the field of applied linguistics.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on the students' perception and the kinds of activities that students prefer the most in English speaking classes. The researcher conducts this study by interviewing and distributing questionnaires to freshmen in the Functional Communicative English speaking classes at Faculty of Language and Arts.

1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

This researcher formulates problems related to the speaking analysis in the speaking English classes as follows:

1. What are students' general perception of classroom activities commonly used in English speaking classes?
2. What kind of activities do students prefer the most?
3. What kind of activities do students perceive as the most beneficial for the improvement of their speaking skill?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Regarding to the problems above, this research is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To investigate students' perception of classroom activities commonly used in English speaking classes.
2. To explore the kind of activities that students prefer the most.
3. To find out the kind of activities students perceive as the most beneficial for the improvement of their speaking skill.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is to find out students' perception and the kind of activities that students prefer the most in English speaking classes. Hopefully, the result of the study will help the next students to improve their speaking performances in the future. Furthermore, the writer expects that this research can also be used by teachers who teach speaking course in order to the improvement teaching and learning process in English speaking classes.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definition of terms of this study can be stated as follows:

a. Perceptions

Perception is the recognition and understanding of particular material things present to sense through sight, hearing, and touch (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

b. Speaking

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts (Kayi, 2006).

