CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Recognizing English as International language, the demand toward English mastery is continuing to increase. Especially vocational school as sub system of senior high school has a goal to prepare the students for entering the work fields and being able to develop professional skill. The students are expected not only to merely master written English but also spoken one. Spoken form uses speaking as a means of communication. According to Wright (1989), there are some of the main reasons for communicating:

- Giving or asking for factual information
- Expressing what person thinks or finding out what someone else thinks
- Expressing what person feels and finding out what someone else feels
- Expressing what someone thinks is right or wrong
- Apologizing someone
- Being sociable

Facilitating vocational school students to learn English, the government put English as a major subject in teaching and learning process. Unfortunately, many English teachers still spend the majority of class time on reading and writing practice almost ignoring speaking and listening skills. If students do not learn how to speak or do not get any opportunities to speak in the language classroom they may soon get de-motivated and lose interest in learning. Furthermore, students are

usually forced to write rather than convey their ideas into spoken language, whereas speaking a language is far more important than writing it. (Yunzhong, 1985:12). Outside the classroom speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing (Rivers, 1981). On the other hand, if the right activities are taught in the right way, speaking in class can be a lot of fun, raising general learner motivation and making the English language classroom a fun and dynamic place to be.

Concerning the problem above, a research called the classroom action research will be conducted. Based on Ebbut (Hopkins, 1992:33), classroom action research is a systematic study which attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own reflection in each cycle. By employing that study, the students are expected to be able to speak in target language and motivate them to learn English.

In order to support the action research, Task-based language teaching is one model to maintain a learning process especially speaking skill. In task-based, students participate in communicative tasks in English. Tasks are defined as activities that can stand alone as fundamental units and that require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language while attention is principally paid to meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989).

Tasks have been used by the teacher for hundreds of years. Task usually given to the students as a follow-up to a series of structure/function or vocabulary based-lessons. It becomes extension activities as a part or graded and structured. Different from Task-based language teaching, the tasks are central to the learning activity. Developed by N Prabhu in Bangladore, Southern India, it is based on the

belief that students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task rather than on the language they use.

Along with Scarcella & Oxford (1992), task-based language teaching is advantageous to the students because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication, and often provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. Although the teacher may present language in the pre-task, the students are ultimately free to use what grammar constructs and vocabulary they want. This allows them to use all the language learned rather than just the 'target language' of the lesson. Furthermore, as the tasks are likely to be familiar to the students, they are more likely to be engaged, which may further motivate them in their language learning.

In relation to the benefits of task-based language teaching, classroom action research will be conducted in SMK Negeri 1 Bandung. This study addresses some concerns related to the improvement, teacher's problems, and students' responses on the use of task-based language in teaching speaking.

1.2 Statement of the problems

The study investigates the following questions:

1. To what extent task-based language teaching can improve students' speaking ability?

2. What problems occur when the teacher teaches speaking by using task-based language teaching?

3. What are the students' responses on the use of task-based language teaching?

1.3 Aims of the study

The aims of the study are to find out:

1. The improvement on the use of task-based language teaching toward students' speaking ability

2. The teacher's problems in teaching speaking by using task-based language teaching.

3. The students' responses toward task-based language teaching.

1.4 Research Methodology

Classroom action research is used in this study. Ebbut (cited in Hopkins, 1992) stated that action research is the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of their own reflection upon the effects of those actions. According to Zuber-Skerritt (1982: 15) [available at http://InformationR.net/ir/1-1/paper2.html]:

"Through systematic, controlled action research, higher education teachers can become more professional, more interested in pedagogical aspects of higher education and more motivated to integrate their research and teaching interests in a holistic way…"
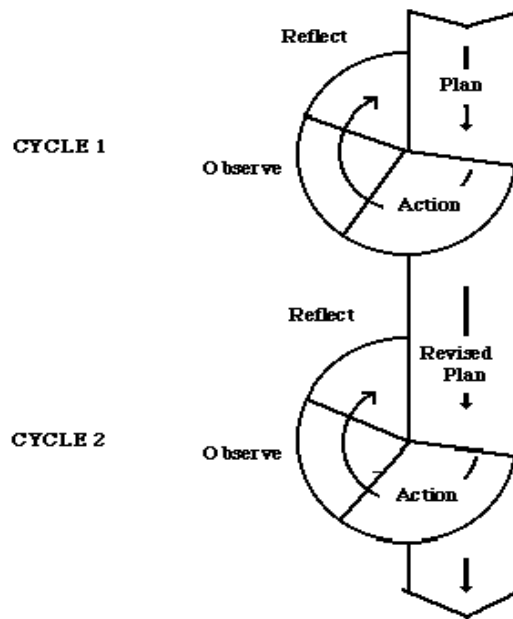
Figure 1.1
Action Research Kemmis and Mctaggart (1988)

1.5 Significance of the study

The results of this study are expected to contribute and give some informative input in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language especially in teaching speaking skill.

1.6 Clarification of terms

For avoiding oversight or misunderstanding on this research, the writer needs to describe some terms as follows:

1. Task-based language teaching focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language (wikipedia). The basic point is the task; which is organized as a sequence of tasks, and it is tasks that generate the language to be used, not vice versa (Estaire and Zanón, 1994).

2. Student's response is an answer; a statement (either spoken or written) that is made to reply to a question or request or criticism or accusation (wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn).

3. The Classroom Action Research

   The car is a research which is carried out in the class to improve the quality of instructional practices.

1.7 Paper Organization

This paper is divided into five chapters. The paper of the research will be organized as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the research method, the clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Review

This chapter includes foundation of theories that support the study. This chapter focuses on the review of related theories and literatures.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter provides the application of the research based on the methodology that was explained previously in chapter one.

Chapter 4 Analysis and Discussions

The results found in chapter three are analyzed and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Suggestions

The conclusions and suggestions of this study are served in this chapter