CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates background of the study, identification of the problems that the study deals with, aims and research questions, significance of the study, and organization of the thesis.

1.1. Background of the Study

Motivation has been understood as one of the important and determinant aspects in promoting students' success in learning. It is because motivation can increase the possibility for the students to commit their time and efforts to achieve their learning objectives (Bong & Clark, 1999).

Specific to the language teaching, some experts have commented on the important position of motivation for in the teaching. For example, Rost (2006) considers motivation is more important than teaching methodology. According to Rost (2006), there are two main reasons why motivation is so important. The first is that motivation arouses students' interest. The second is that motivation helps the students keep their enthusiasm.

What might be assumed from Rost's view is that a good method will not automatically result in good learning outcomes, but they depend on how the motivation of the students is. Such important role of motivation, therefore, has then led to numerous studies attempting to search possible measures in order to promote students' motivation in learning.

One of the latest studies in relation to improving students' motivation relates to the Contextual Teaching Learning (henceforth CTL). Lynch & Harnish

(2003) specify that many studies have indicated that CTL could be an appropriate choice for teachers especially for those who have problems with their students' motivation. Specifically, Lynch & Harnish (2003) report that CTL enabled teachers to manage, motivate, and ultimately teach students effectively. They also pointed out that the students engaged in their studies also rated CTL classes as more interesting and more engaging which then was effective to maintain the students' continued engagement in learning activities. Similarly, Brand (2003) reports that CTL can increase students' motivation to learn (see also Lamborn, 1992; MacIver, 1990; Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). Other studies by MacIver (1990), Melchoir and Orr (1995), Luchs (1980), and Brill (1994), also affirm that exposure to CTL can positively affect students' motivation as measured by their attendance.

Inspired by those studies, the current study presents collaborative action research at a junior high school located in Jampang, West Java. The study focuses on how students' motivation, especially in speaking, can be improved through CTL which so far has not much been investigated.

1.2. Problem Identification

Following preliminary investigation of two English teachers as well as some students at the school, the writer discovered some problems which this study is concerned with. The first was that the teachers did not frequently offer speaking activities to their students due to the unenthusiastic reaction of the students when they were asked to get involved in speaking activities. The fact indicates that the teachers at the school seemed 'powerless' to raise their students' motivation in

speaking. Consequently, they just gave minor emphasis on speaking which is one of the important skills in learning English. The second problem which might be the answer to the first problem was that the teachers found it difficult to provide an effective model for teaching speaking. As a result, the teachers used to switch speaking activity with other activities like writing and vocabulary enrichment. The last problem was that the students at the school really wanted to be able to speak but their teachers' way of teaching was not supportive for their speaking skill enhancement. Consequently, they felt uninterested and unenthusiastic each time their teachers asked them to participate in the speaking activities.

This preliminary investigation has clearly informed the writer that the teachers at the school were not capable of providing an instruction of speaking that is desirable for their students.

1.3. Aims and Research Questions

The study has two aims. The first is to investigate how students' motivation in speaking can be improved through contextual-teaching learning, and the second one is to provide a teaching model resulted from the study that can be implemented in the teaching of speaking through CTL.

For these aims, there are two questions to be addressed:

1. How can students' motivation in speaking be improved through CTL?

2. What model can be implemented in the teaching of speaking through CTL?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The important role of motivation in promoting students' success in learning is undeniable. Therefore, this action research study of how to improve students' motivation is not just valuable for English teaching and learning but also may be useful for the teaching of other subjects. Moreover, the research's findings may help other teachers of English improve their language teaching.

Specifically, it is expected that the study can be useful for English teachers especially in terms of enhancing their students' motivation and engagement in learning. A model for teaching speaking through CTL resulted from this study also may be valuable and useful for English teachers especially in helping them understand how to implement CTL teaching practices in the teaching of speaking in their classrooms.

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter covers preliminary investigation, aims and research questions, significance of the study, and organization of the thesis. The second chapter covers four main categories of literature studies: general concept motivation including the self-determination theory, Contextual Teaching Learning and its relevancies with the self-determination, and speaking. The third chapter covers research methodology, objectives of the study, meaning of action research and justification of its use, action research procedures, action research phases, data collection, data analysis, and research cycles. The fourth chapter covers the discussion and findings. The

last or the fifth chapter presents conclusion, implications, and recommendation related to the research's findings.