

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to investigate the implementation of Task-based instruction in teaching speaking to a vocational school in Cimahi. As an introduction of this study, this chapter is started by description of background of the study, aims of the research, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, definitions of key terms, and outline of the thesis. Each of which will be explained in turns.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning to speak has become increasingly important in both English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) context due to the position of English as an International language for communication (Aleksandrzak, 2011; Bashir, Azeem, & Dogar, 2011; Hasan, 2014; Malihah, 2010; Oradee, 2012). In this global era, around 85% of international organizations use English speaking as working language (Crystal, 1997). Therefore, it is not surprising that speaking skill becomes one of important requirements when applying for a job especially in International companies. This situation also occurred in Indonesia, where many global industries and workplaces demand their workers to have English speaking ability. As a result, education puts the speaking mastery as one important measurement in determining students' success learning English (Richards, 2008).

Although a number of studies have been conducted to help students master speaking, many language learners still find difficulties in speaking. Febriyanti (2011) points out that students' lack of exposures, lack of confidences, and lack of motivations are the reasons why speaking is difficult. In other words, the students should be given opportunities in the classroom to explore their speaking in order to increase their confidence and motivation to speak. In addition, speaking skill is also considered challenging because students need more time to think the utterances and should have courages to speak (Bashir et al., 2011; Oradee, 2012). Harmer (2007)

adds the reason why the students are reluctant to speak is because they feel nervous in expressing themselves in front of other people. Considering the difficulties faced by many students in speaking English, it is essential to find and use an instructional method that can facilitate classroom activities to develop students' speaking skill.

Such condition is often found in a speaking classroom in an Indonesian context. Based on preliminary observation at one vocational school in Cimahi, most of the students refused to use English which led them to have little speaking practices in using the target language. Some students were reluctant and looked nervous to speak in English. The observation also found that few students were active in the teaching learning process which is showed few numbers of students who raised hands to answer teacher's questions. The observation showed regardless of how many hours of English class the students have attended, it was likely difficult to develop their speaking skill and self-confidence if they did not have opportunities to practice speaking. This situation is supported by an interview with an English teacher from the school. The teacher stated that the students at vocational school are encouraged to have good speaking ability since they are prepared and trained to work at companies after graduating from school and speaking skill becomes one of requirements in the industrial world. However, in the 2013 curriculum, English subject only has two hours in a week. In other words, it was quite challenging to encourage every student to speak due to large classes.

Therefore, it is noteworthy for organizing instruction which can accommodate the need of practicing English speaking. In other words, it is prominent in having a teaching-learning process which encourages the students to speak English. The above condition is in line with a decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No 70/2013 which states that teaching-learning processes in the 2013 Curriculum require instructions which focus on learner-centered activities and interaction among students; involve students as active participants; provide students to work collaboratively in groups; and use multimedia as the teaching media. In relation to speaking skill issue, the English teacher in this study is required to conduct

instruction which encourages the students to be actively engaged in doing tasks either individual or collaborative tasks by using a target language.

Task-based instruction, henceforth TBI, is one of alternative methods which is expected to fulfill the aforementioned expectation. TBI is defined as an instruction which promotes learner-centered (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; J.C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and uses tasks as the center of instruction and language to complete the tasks (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Littlewood, 2007; Schmidt, Platt, & Schmidt, 2003 as cited in Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010). In other words, TBI provides students natural context of language use and opportunities in using the target language. Therefore, it is expected that TBI can be a platform for students to start practicing their speaking in the target language.

Further, TBI is selected because the implementation of TBI in teaching English has been done by the researcher of this present study, Stepani (2011), in writing skill. The study was entitled “The implementation of task-based language teaching in teaching writing skill at junior high school”. This action research study was revealed that the students’ writing skills were developed from cycle 1 to cycle 3. The writing skills’ improvement can be seen from the use of vocabularies in sentences and the structure of the sentences. In addition, the study was also revealed that most of the students responded positively toward the implementation of task-based language teaching. The students considered the learning environment through Task-based were enjoyable and could encourage their motivation. The results of this previous study encouraged the researcher to administer a study focusing on how a teacher implemented TBI in teaching speaking in a vocational school context.

A number of studies have examined the implementation of TBI on students’ speaking skill in the EFL context. The research in the Turkish context showed that TBI develops students’ speaking and engages meaningful interaction among the students (Kırkgöz, 2011). Additionally, TBI also has beneficial effects on students’ learning process, enhances the interaction among students, gives the students opportunity to practice target language, and gives a relaxed atmosphere with

enjoyable activities (Ismaili, 2013). In Thai context, Uraiwan (2010) found that TBI helps the students improve their English-speaking and gives positive opinions such as learning with TBI was fun, interesting, and relevant to real-world language. Further, in China, Xiongyong & Samuel (2011) explored the implementation of task-based language teaching among 132 secondary schools EFL teachers in China which showed that most of the teachers had positive attitudes toward TBI implementation, but many teachers did not employ this method. Further, in Korea, Yim (2009, cited in Wichitwarit, 2014) revealed that TBI could increase class participation and enhance students' confidence in speaking English. Regarding the students' opinions, they had positive attitudes towards learning English.

This study was further supported by the results of previous related studies in the Indonesian context. Gunawan (2013) conducted a study in a university level in order to seek how a task-based instruction affects the students' speaking skill. The results showed that there was significant improvement in students' speaking skill after learning using task-based instruction. Further, Rohani (2012) conducted research on the implementation of TBI to a tertiary English language class. The results showed positive responses towards TBI which was indicated by the increase of students' self-esteem, risk-taking behavior, and motivation to learn English. Besides, the students also showed improvement in using strategic competence in oral communication skills.

The aforementioned studies have explored the implementation of TBI along with teachers' and students' responses. However, they exposed gaps in carrying out the research such as they did not (1) apply fully tasks suggested by Willis (1996); (2) describe the process of how the teacher implements task-based instruction in classroom practice, and (3) apply a research at vocational school context. Therefore, this study is concerned with investigating how an English teacher implements a task-based instruction in the teaching speaking at a vocational high school level.

1.2 Aims of the Research

This study is aimed to;

1. Explore the process of Task-Based Instruction in teaching English speaking;
2. Identify the benefits and challenges encountered by the teacher and the students toward the implementation of Task-Based Instruction in teaching speaking.

1.3 Research Questions

With reference to the aforementioned aims, the study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. How does the English teacher implement Task-Based Instruction in teaching speaking?
2. What are the benefits and challenges encountered by the teacher and the students toward the implementation of Task-Based Instruction in teaching speaking?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on investigating the task-based instruction in teaching speaking skill to a group of vocational high school students. It is limited to the implementation of task-based instruction in teaching-speaking regarding the teaching-learning process applied by the teacher. Moreover, this study reveals the benefits and challenges of Task-Based Instruction in teaching speaking encountered by the teacher and the students.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be beneficial theoretically, practically, and professionally. Theoretically, the findings of the research are expected to contribute to the literature on the implementation of Task-Based Instruction in an EFL classroom. Practically, this study is expected to be applicable for teachers and readers who are interested in

TBI. For the teachers, the findings are supposed to provide information about the alternative way in teaching English using TBI. Professionally, this study is expected to help teachers develop materials in teaching-learning activities by implementing TBI.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

The followings are several key terms in this study which include task-based instruction and speaking ability. First, the Task-based instruction (TBI), in this study, is a method which involves three stages, i.e. pre-task, task cycle, and post-task. At task cycle stage, there are three steps here, including task, planning, and report. Meanwhile the post task consists of two steps, i.e. analysis and practice. In this study, TBI is defined as a student-centered approach (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). TBI also includes goal, procedure, and a specific result (Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003), and supports content-based as well as meaning-based tasks (Littlewood, 2007).

The second-term deals with speaking ability. In this study, speaking ability is concerned with the students' ability to speak using the target language. There will be no assessment of this speaking ability in this study. This ability only focuses on the students' fluency in speaking English.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The paper consists of five parts arranged as follows:

Chapter I

This paper begins with an introduction which consists of background, research questions, the aims of the study, and the significance of the study. Additionally, this part ends with the clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

Chapter II

This part begins with the explanation about definitions of Task-Based Instruction (TBI), basic principles of TBI, the benefits of TBI, and the previous research of TBI

in teaching speaking. Moreover, it also covers the connection between speaking skill and task-based instruction in the form of related previous research.

Chapter III

This chapter presents the elaboration of the methodology used in this study. It covers the research question, research design, research method, site and participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV

It shows the result and discussion that deals with the first and the second research questions which use multiple techniques of data collection, i.e. classroom observations, a teacher's interview, and students' questionnaires. The result and discussion are presented at the same part in order to connect the result and the theory.

Chapter V

It describes the conclusions of the study involving the explanation about the result of the present study. Then, it explains recommendations for the teaching practitioners and further researchers.

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