CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief description of the introduction of the research which includes background of the research, research questions, purposes of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, and clarification of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

Facing the globalization era or better known as the free market, each individual is required to prepare himself with the qualified skills, especially in communication. In this case, the role of English is needed as a means of global communication. People are required to be able to use English actively for the communication purpose. Considering the role of English in Indonesia is as a foreign language, not many people use English in their daily life. Thus, their chance to use English is very limited.

Most of Indonesian students begin to learn English since they are in elementary school. Even though the status of English is just as a local subject, the teachers are expected to explore the students' spoken and written language skill. In reality, students' speaking skill becomes a problem towards the language learning since there are a number of school graduates who cannot communicate in English (Alwasilah, 2000). Tutyandari in Widiawati and Cahyono (2006) identifies many students keep silent during the speaking activities because of three factors. Those are lack of self-confidence, lack of prior knowledge about topics, and poor teacher-learner relationship.

In an EFL classroom, not all students or teachers realize the importance of the use of the target language. Some of them also prefer to use Indonesian rather than use English. As a consequence, the students are not accustomed to the language learning classroom atmosphere. They do not have much exposure towards the use of the target language. Therefore, there is a phenomenon in which the students are shy to use English even though the teachers ask them to use it. A

research conducted by Yulia (2013) shows that most of the teachers in Yogyakarta Province use Indonesian even Javanese during the classroom instructions. It happens because of the low motivation between the teachers and the students towards the foreign language-learning context.

Due to these problems, the term communicative approach is relevant to the students' communicative language improvement. The aim of communicative language learning is to develop students' communicative competence by engaging them in a meaningful interaction (Iftakhar, 2012). Moreover, based on the Government Regulation No. 19 year 2005 about National Education Standard that English classroom activities for elementary students must be conducted through interactive and inspirational ways. It means that the language learning must be conducted through communicative tasks which support the use of the target language and challenge the students' skill. In practice, some of the language tasks cannot measure the students' speaking skill. Some of the tasks fail to achieve the language learning objectives since the students are passive during the classroom activities. Moreover, as stated before, the students get limited chances to experience the target language. The students are not motivated to use English actively.

Crookes and Gass (1993a) indicate that one of the approaches in communicative language learning is task-based language teaching approach. Task-based approach is a teaching approach which employs tasks as its main pedagogical tools to structure language teaching (Hismanoglu, 2011). It means that tasks are used as a means to know students' achievement in language learning. Tasks are used to improve students' language competence through an assessment process. In other words, communicative tasks are suitable devices for such an approach (Hismanoglu, 2011). Through communicative tasks, the teachers are not only asked to design tasks which are relevant to the students' needs but also to construct an appropriate assessment which can measure the students' speaking competence. A serious problem occurs when there are many teachers who consider pronunciation as the only element which must be corrected during the speaking assessment. In fact, there are other elements, such as fluency,

comprehension, tasks, vocabulary, and grammar which must be taken into consideration. Thus, scoring criteria are suggested to be well constructed before conducting the assessment. Through the scoring criteria, the teachers are able to assess the students' competence thoroughly (Wolf & Stevens, 2007).

In line with the elaboration above, this study aims to analyze the communicativeness of the tasks and the appropriateness of the speaking scoring criteria in children's speaking skill assessment. The findings of the study are expected to be one of the references for the teachers in designing the communicative tasks and contructing the appropriate speaking scoring criteria for assessing children's speaking skill.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the focus of the problems' elaboration above, the research questions are formulated. The problems of the research are formulated as follows:

1. How communicative are the tasks to assess children's speaking skill?
2. How appropriate are the speaking scoring criteria in children's speaking skill assessment?

1.3 Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions formulated above, this study is conducted to investigate:

1. The communicativeness of the tasks againts children's speaking skill assessment.
2. The appropriateness of the scoring criteria in children's speaking skill assessment.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This study focuses on the communicativeness of the tasks during the speaking assessment. This study is also limited to analyze the scoring criteria constructed by the English teacher in assessing children's speaking skill. It only involves an English teacher and children of class 3B and 4C. Thus, the research

result cannot be generalized since it is only conducted in a certain elementary school in Bandung.

1.5 Significance of the Research

After conducting this research, the results of the research are expected to help English teachers in understanding more concepts of designing the communicative tasks for speaking assessments, theoretically. In addition, related to the second statement of the problem, this research is expected to enrich the literature on constructing the scoring criteria for assessing children's speaking skill.

Practically, this research is expected to give a significant contribution to others, especially the English teachers of children. This research may help the English teachers of children to figure out some difficulties they face in designing speaking tasks and scoring criteria which can assess children's speaking skill

1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms

There are some key terms which are related to the study. The following are the key terms and their definitions:

1. Tasks in this study means a set of classroom activities designed by the teachers which requires the students to perform their communicative competences through contextualized language learning materials.
2. Children's speaking skill in this study refers to children's productive skill in experiencing the target language use in the purpose of transferring meaning through a simple dialogue.
3. Speaking assessment in this study is a kind of teacher's activities in evaluating the students' communicative speaking skill through a meaningful students' interaction as stated by Government rule No. 19 Year 2005 on children's classroom activities.
4. Rubric assessment in this study is defined as a teacher's guideline which contains several speaking scoring categories as proposed by Brown (2001)

and Heaton (1989) for assessing the students' communicative speaking skill.