CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Status of English language in Indonesia is as a foreign language. Being a foreign language, English is not spoken by most of Indonesian people in their daily activities. However, it is present in all of formal education levels as an obligatory or even as a local content subject (see Indonesian 2013 Curriculum, the newest curriculum in Indonesia).

As this is mostly present in classroom context, most of students do not have opportunities to practice their target language outside the classroom particularly for exploring their speaking proficiency for communicative purposes. This limited target language exposure probably results low speaking proficiency students (see Kirkpatrick, 2007).

In addition, the learning and teaching activities in the classroom tends to focus on learning the rules of the target language, rather than using the target language for communicative purposes (Sawir, 2005) which in turn lead the teacher and the learning materials provided in the classroom as the only sources of learning and teaching activities (Mbato, 2013).

Considering the importance of speaking proficiency as well as the effective way on instruction the target language for communicative purposes, it is essential to find and use an instructional method which can accommodate classroom learning and teaching activities to develop students' speaking proficiency.

This present study aims at finding out the effectiveness of the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in improving students' speaking proficiency based on some considerations of the following English language facts.

1

Firstly, the fact that speaking skill is a high demand skill and often associated with the extent of successful language learning (see Brown, 2001; Hughes, 2003; Richards, 2008), a foreign language learner will then be asked about how s/he can speak in the target language as s/he has devoted his/her time learning the target language (see Brown, 2001). Richards and Renandya (2002) state that 'a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking' (p. 201). However, being skillful in speaking cannot be taken for granted considering a number of aspects involved in reaching it (see Richards and Renandya, 2002).

Secondly, the pervasiveness of formulaicity in language. Based on research, it takes a great proportion of native speakers' language (Natsumi, 2012) ranges from 20% (Sorhus, 1977) to 50% (Erman & Warren, 2000). Furthermore, Jesperson (1968 (1924), p.18) as cited in Aijmer (1996, p.1) has introduced a formulaicity aspect that every language has as the following:

> Some things in language – in any language – are of the formula character; that is to say, no one can change anything in them. A phrase like 'How do you do?' is entirely different from such a phrase as 'I gave the boy a lump of sugar.' In the former everything is fixed: you cannot even change the stress saying 'How *do* you do?' or make a pause between the words. … It is the same with 'Good morning!' 'Thank you,' 'Beg your pardon,' and other similar expressions. One may indeed analyze such a formula and show that it consists of several words, but it is felt and handled as a unit, which may often mean something quite different from the meaning of the component words taken separately.

Formulaicity is "a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray, 2002, p.9)." It is present in language use and easier to process (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012; Dillon, 2015).

Although it has long been acknowledged, it is one of the big issues in the field of applied linguistics in recent years (Natsumi, 2012; Wei & Ying, 2011; Wray, 2000) and widely acknowledged that the appropriate use of formulaicity is

prerequisite for proficient language use (Sinclair, 1991 & Wray, 2002) as it provides good model for language construction for L2 learners (Dillon, 2015).

Formulaicity term is called differently by many linguists, Wray (2002) has listed 58 terms to refer to formulaicity such as amalgams, automatic, chunks, clichés, co-ordinate constructions, collocations, complex lexemes, composites, conventionalized forms, F[ixed] E[xpressions] including I[dioms], fixed expressions, formulaic language, formulaic speech, formulas/formulae, fossilized forms, frozen metaphors, frozen phrases, gambits, gestalt, holistic, holophrases, idiomatic, idioms, irregular, lexical simplex, lexical(ized) phrases, lexicalized sentence stems, listemes, multiword items/units, multiword lexical phenomena, noncompositional, noncomputational, nonproductive, nonpropositional, petrifications, phrasemes, praxons, preassembled speech, precoded conventionalized routines, prefabricated routines and patterns, ready-made expressions, ready-made utterances, routine formulae, schemata, semipreconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, sentence builders, set phrases, stable and familiar expressions with specialized subsenses, stereotyped phrases, stereotypes, stock utterances, synthetic, unanalyzed chunks of speech, stock utterances, synthetic, unanalyzed chunks of speech, unanalyzed multiword chunks, units (Wray, 2002).

Those two facts of English language as well as the burning issues of the study became a starting point for me to do a study in dealing with improving students' speaking proficiency by implementing Task-Based Learning (Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1996; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003), a new tradition method within modern English language teaching (Littlewood, 2004) under the general umbrella of Communicative Language Teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) i.e. (1) the use of real communication activities in language learning; (2) the use of target language to carry out meaningful tasks; and (3) the use of useful language to support the learning process (Willis, 1996) with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in English as Foreign Language (EFL) speaking classroom context in Indonesia.

Based on a literature, Task-Based Learning (TBL) has been first acknowledged by Prabhu on his Communicational Teaching Project in 1979 in Bangalore, India and in the early 1980s American Government Language Institutions followed suit (Shehadeh, 2005). This method was theoretically, pedagogically, and empirically found valuable to the contribution of second language (L2) learning (Ellis, 2003; Willis and Willis, 2007; Samuda and Bygate, 2008; Foster, 2009; Van den Branden et al., 2009).

Additionally, a number of more current studies have also been conducted related to the implementation of TBL. Albino (2017) assessed how learners of EFL in Luanda improved their speaking fluency in a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method. This was a case study conducted at a high school with forty participants chosen randomly from three hundred and sixty students. The findings showed that the learners improved in terms of speaking fluency by maximizing their speed of production, increasing grammatical accuracy, elaborating on their utterances, and developing interactional language. Furthermore, from learners' perspective on TBLT method, the findings indicated that the learners felt encouraged to speak, believed in their potentials to use the target language, expanded their vocabulary, and recognized the relevance of the TBLT approach.

Another study was conducted by Susan (2016). She investigated the implementation, the advantage, and the limitation of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in ESP classroom in Indonesia. The design of the study was qualitative which involved twenty seven aircraft engineering students of a higher education and a teacher as the participants of the study. The data were collected through observation, questionnaire and interview. The findings revealed that TBI promoted learning by doing, promoted communicative learning, and improved students' speaking skill.

Some reasons make this TBL remains attractive, challenging, and worthy to be researched; firstly, there is no particular consensus of how the task looks among some experts (see Ellis, 2003), moreover in the level of its implementation

4

in the classroom is not always straightforward (Calvert and Sheen, 2015); secondly, as it is argued that task-Based Learning is difficult to be implemented in large class (Ellis, 2009), based on my own survey held in January 2017, it is not difficult to find a large class in state schools in a big city in Indonesia that range from 40 to 47 students in a classroom. This study was conducted in a large class which consists of 46 students; thirdly, this method is in line with the newest Indonesian curriculum i.e., 2013 curriculum which is developed through the completion of thinking system (see Permendikbud No. 70 tahun 2013), including: (1) teacher-centered becomes student-centered; (2) one way learning system (teacher-students interaction) becomes interactive learning (teacher-students-society-nature-other resources interaction); (3) isolated learning becomes networking learning (students can acquire knowledge from whoever and from everywhere that can be accessed including from internet); (4) passive learning becomes inquiry learning; and the last but not the least, there is still few research on focus on form during the post-task phase in Task-Based Learning method (Van de Guchte et.al., 2016) as well as on instruction or the effectiveness ways of teaching formulaicity (Alali & Schmitt, 2012).

Thus, this present study is in an attempt to fill the gap of the limited studies on Task-Based Learning and formulaicity aspect of language. This study aims to find out the effectiveness of the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in improving students' speaking proficiency in a secondary level school in Indonesia done by practitioner researcher, a researcher played role as a researcher as well as a teacher (Menter et al., 2011), and to figure out students' attitudes toward the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitude during the study in their EFL speaking classroom.

1.2   Research Questions

In this study I have formulated two research questions as follows:

1. Is the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material effective in improving students' speaking proficiency?

2. What are the students' attitudes toward the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of attitude?

1.3   Research Hypotheses

There were one dependent and one independent variables in this study. Dependent variable is the variable which the researcher observes and measures to determine the effectiveness of the independent variable. In this study the dependent variable was speaking proficiency. Meanwhile, the independent variable is the variable which is selected, and measured by the researcher. In this study, it was the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material. This study aims to reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0) where there is no difference in speaking proficiency between experimental and control groups after the treatment.

1.4   Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give positive contributions to the theory and practice of teaching and learning English as foreign language.

Theoretically, the findings of this study are able to fill the gap of the lack of the research on Task-Based Learning and formulaicity aspect of language in EFL context especially in Indonesia. Thus, this study will enrich literature about

Task-Based Learning and formulaicity aspect of language especially in secondary level in improving EFL speaking proficiency.

Practically, the results of the study are expected to be beneficially useful for teachers, and also for readers who are interested in teaching English especially in EFL context in Indonesia. For teachers, the findings provide information whether Task-Based Learning with English conversation gambits as its language focus material effective or not in improving students' speaking proficiency. If it was effective thus the benefits and the basic principles can be applied in the classroom. Additionally, the results are expected to offer a new strategy in improving students' speaking proficiency especially in EFL context in Indonesia.

1.5   Definition of the Terms

There are four key terms which are necessary to be defined in order to avoid misunderstanding on the study. The four key terms include Task, Task-Based Learning, English Conversation Gambits, and attitudes. Those four key terms are explained as follows:

1. Task in this study is defined as a learning and teaching activities where the target language is used by the students for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve a learning and teaching objectives.
2. Task-Based Learning in this study refers to Task-Based English language learning and teaching activities which includes three phases: pre-task phase; task phase; and language focus phase, where the task is used to achieve the learning and teaching objectives.
3. English Conversation Gambits in this study refer to ready-made, idiomatic expressions materials for learning and teaching activities which are used during the language focus phase of the method implementation

4. Attitude in this study is defined as the students' perception, understanding, beliefs or experiences of learning English during the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is restricted to find out the effectiveness and the students' attitudes toward the implementation of Task-Based Learning with English Conversation Gambits as its language focus material in their EFL speaking classroom in improving their speaking proficiency. For the sake of the study, it involved one State Senior High School in Bandung Regency as the population of the study.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter I

The first chapter is an introduction to what the research project is all about and covers the background of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, definition of the terms, scope of the study, and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter II

The second chapter contains a review of related literatures to understand the whole idea of what the projected study is trying to communicate. The chapter includes the theories and some previous studies on the problem studied.

Chapter III

This chapter provides the elaboration on the designed research methodology. It mainly contains the description of research design and details of data collection and data anlyses procedures to conduct the study.

Chapter IV

This chapter outlines the general description of the study data units, as well as outlining the analyses and discussions of the study findings.

Chapter V

This is the last chapter of the thesis which summarizes what has been found out and discussed throughout the study processes. Following this,some recommendations are addressed to some parties that relate to the findings of this study.