CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the foundation and general overview of the study undertaken which consists of the background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the limitation of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, the participants and setting, the data collection, the data analysis, the clarification of terms, the organization of the paper and concluding remarks.

1.1 Background of the Study

The study is conducted based on a main issue that is identifying how English teachers assess English speaking proficiency of the language learners in one Junior High School in Bandung.

The idea to study the issue about how English teachers assess English speaking proficiency of the language learners comes from the PPL (Program Pengalaman Lapangan) program that was joined by the researcher. In the program, the researcher had to teach the first grader students in one Junior High School in Bandung. During the practices, the researcher found that assessing students’ speaking ability is not an easy task. There are difficulties faced by the researcher in assessing the students’ speaking proficiency, namely the way of assessment and the scoring criteria.

The first difficulty faced by the researcher was about how to assess the speaking proficiency of the students. It was not easy to decide the type of assessment to be used which suitable to the students’ characteristics.

The second difficulty was about the scoring criteria. Although the researcher have made the scale of the scoring system, it was still difficult to give an appropriate score for each students. For example, the researcher was in
confusion when determining the standard of pronunciation that can be used to assess the students pronunciation. This is in line with Luoma (2004: 10) that speaking assessment is difficult to do in language assessment. She further believes that it is caused by the people justification about the pronunciation produced by the speaker; whether it is native or non-native like. However, it is still confusing to judge what standard to follow.

Based on those reasons, this study is conducted to see how the English teachers in one Junior High School assess their students’ speaking proficiency.

1.2 Research Question

The study will focus on the way the English teachers in one of Junior High School in Bandung assess their students’ speaking proficiency. To be more specific, the following is the specific research question guiding the study:

1. How do English teachers in one junior high school in Bandung assess the students’ speaking proficiency?

1.3 Aim of Study

Regarding to the problem above, there is one specific aim that conveyed on this research:

1. To find how English teachers in one junior high school in Bandung assess English speaking proficiency of the students.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study is conducted to find out how English teachers assess the students’ speaking ability in terms of the type of assessment used, the instrumentation, the utilization of the instrument, the scoring criteria, and the
difficulties or challenges faced by the teachers when they assess the students’ speaking ability.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly for English teachers to the improvement on how they should properly assess their students’ speaking proficiency.

Assessment, as stated by Brown (2004: 4) as an ongoing process, is important to know the performance of the students in learning English. Through the assessment, it is expected to identify whether the students succeed in their learning process or not. Also, it can be used to evaluate the performance of the teacher as well.

1.6 Research Methodology

Since the research is conducted to find out the way teacher assess the students’ speaking proficiency, this study is conducted as qualitative which emphasizes on words rather than numbers in elaborating its findings and analysis. The data collected will come from the teacher’s views. Creswell (2008: 46) states that:

Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describe and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner.

1.7 Participant and Setting

The participants of the study are three English teachers in one Junior High School in Bandung.
1.8 Data Collection

Since the study employs qualitative method, it requires appropriate instruments to gather information or data. There will be instruments used effectively and efficiently: interview and observation.

The teacher will be interviewed face-to-face by several questions related to the way(s) of the speaking assessment and the scoring criteria that is used in assessing the students’ speaking proficiency. As stated by Griffin (2005: 184), semi structured interview, most likely face to face interview, can be used to gather information from the respondents. The interview process will be recorded to avoid the lost of important information. Beside the interview, the teachers will be observed to gather more data when they do the speaking assessment in the classroom.

1.9 Data Analysis

The data collected from the interview will be analyzed in three major steps. The first step is transcribing the recording. During the interview, the process of interviewing with the teacher will be recorded so there will be no data gone beyond. It will be so useful in analyzing the data. The second step is coding the data to specify the data collected. It is so important to decide which data will be related to the research questions and which data will not. The last step is analyzing the data. Analyzing the data will be the important step because it is the process of answering the research questions.

Besides that, the teachers will be observed during the process speaking assessment to assess their student’s English speaking proficiency. Based on O’Malley and Pierce (1996: 63) believe, there are several steps in preparing for oral language assessment. They are identifying purpose, planning for assessment, developing rubrics and/or scoring procedures, setting standards, involving
students in self- and peer assessment, selecting assessment activities, and recording information.

1.10 Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, ambiguity, or misinterpretation in defining some terms in this research, the definitions of the terms are addressed as follows:

- **Assessment**
  According to Pinter (2006: 131), assessment refers to the process of analyzing the data done by teachers to get information about the students’ achievement in learning English.

- **Speaking Ability**
  Based on the Oxford dictionary (2008: 426) the term speak means to be able to use a language. Speaking ability here refers to the capability of the students to be able to use the language in communication.

- **The teachers**
  Any use of the term students in this study specifically refers to the participants of this research. Three English teachers in one Junior High School in Bandung are selected as participants of the study considering the background of the study addressed in the previous part.

- **Scoring**
  The term scoring in this study refers to the score that is given by the teachers to their students to rate their speaking ability. The scoring is important to grade the students (Luoma, 2004: 173)
1.11 The Organization of Paper

The research will be organized in five chapters as follows:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter provides general information about background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the limitation of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, the participants and setting, the data collection, the data analysis, the clarification of terms, the organization of the paper and concluding remarks.

Chapter II Theoretical Background

This chapter consists of the theoretical background of the study. It provides general view on assessing speaking, preparing speaking assessment, types of speaking assessment, the scoring, and concluding remarks.

Chapter III Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology in conducting the study. It includes the research method, the setting, the participants of the study, the data collection, data analysis, and concluding remarks.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter includes findings and discussion of the study.
Chapter V  Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter consists of the general findings of the study, conclusion, and also suggestion for the next research.

1.12  Concluding Remarks

This opening chapter provides several basic points of the research that is conducted. This chapter is the foundation for the proceeding chapters. The researcher will explain each point in details on the next four chapters. Next, the theoretical foundation of the research will be explained in chapter II.