

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates research background, research questions, the purposes of the research, research significances, conceptual framework, hypothesis and previous studies.

A. Background of The Research

As one of the basic skills of English, speaking has an important role in the language learning process. Fulcher & Reiter (2003) said that Speaking is defined as the use of language verbally to communicate with others. Maxom (2012) stated that speaking is the most crucial skill in English school teaching. Students express their thoughts, feelings, and desires to others by speaking. At school, students learn to speak English more easily because they have teachers and friends who act as facilitators and partners in learning English. Speaking is the ability of people to communicate with others using spoken language.

According to pre-observation it is known that many students, especially those at SMP AL-MA'MOEN believe that speaking is the most difficult skill to master because it requires not only knowledge the terms of vocabulary and grammar but also a desire and confidence to speak English, which must be practiced as well as learned. The problems arise in the desire of students to practice speaking in English. Most of them don't have the desire to speak because they feel they lack vocabulary and feel less in grammar so that makes them afraid to speak up. When the teacher asks them to speak, they choose to be quiet and say nothing. Some students at school have a problem with speaking. Jo McDonough and Christopher Shaw pointed out that: "In many contexts, speaking is often the skill upon which a person is a judge "at face value". To put it another way, people may frequently judge our language proficiency based on our speaking rather than from any other language skill (McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

According to researcher's observation at the eighth-grade students of SMP AL-MA'MOEN, the researcher found speaking ability problems the problems were from students and the teacher. The students continue to struggle

with verbalizing their thoughts in English. When the teacher invites them to engage in English in the classroom, they appear to remain quiet. The students were low motivated toward speaking English. These issues can be due to the characteristics of the students and the styles of teaching approaches used by the teacher to provide the materials, which are nevertheless teacher centered. This strategy is unsuccessful in inspiring students to feel highly motivated and make students were bored in the learning classroom because the English teacher only used Textbook and whiteboard as teaching media in the learning process.

To overcome this problem, the teacher must find a suitable method to ease the learning process, to make students enjoy learning English, the teacher should use the appropriate teaching methods and strategies. Students will more easily absorb the materials if effective methods or strategies are used in teaching English. As stated by Richards and Renandya, teachers should consider all the skills conjointly as they interact with each other in natural behavior (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Effective interactive activities should be involving learners in using English for a variety of communication purposes. From the information that I found through observation and based on my experience in learning and teaching, there are methods that students like and are often applied by teachers when teaching in the classroom. This is a small group discussion. Small group discussion is one of the most effective methods for learning to speak a foreign language, in this case particularly English. This method can help students improve their speaking abilities. Students will have the opportunity to use English in groups to express their opinions and practice with their peers. Speaking with their friends will increase their confidence in saying a few words without worrying about getting it wrong. Furthermore, learning in groups will help them improve their vocabulary mastery.

For these reasons, I discovered a solution by using small group discussions as an effective way to aid in the teaching and learning process of English, particularly in speaking at the eighth grade of SMP AL-MA'MOEN. Hopefully through this technique, students can be more understand the material

that the teacher taught and students can avoid some mistakes in speaking and also no longer afraid to speak up.

B. Research Questions

Referring to the research problems mentioned above, the research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What is the students' speaking skills before using a Small Group Discussion?
2. What is the students' speaking skills after using a Small Group Discussion?
3. How significant is the difference between students' speaking problems before and after using Small Group Discussion?

C. Research Purposes

The purpose of the research are formulated as follows:

1. To find out the students speaking skills before using a Small Group Discussion.
2. To find out the students speaking skills after using a Small Group Discussion.
3. To find out the significant difference between students' speaking skills before and after using a Small Group Discussion.

D. The Significances of the Research

This research is expected to provide useful practical and theoretical input. In fact, this research is important for researchers, teachers, and students:

1. For English teacher, the result of this study provides English teachers with appropriate strategies and methods for teaching speaking and overcoming students' language problems.
2. For students, the results of this research may provide appropriate strategies for overcoming language problems. This makes it easier for students to understand the content as they speak.
3. For researchers, this study may provide additional information and references, especially for researchers expected to pursue similar studies. Theoretically, this research provides findings that can contribute to the English teaching process by enhancing the theory, methods, and techniques

of active learning strategies to overcome the speaking problems that arise in EFL classes, especially at the Junior High School.

E. Research Scope

Many researchers have studied group work as an active learning strategy as a learning activity that can enhance speaking ability and its effect on students speaking performance. In comparison, this research focuses on improving the eighth grade EFL students' speaking ability using Small Group Discussion activity as a teaching method at SMP AL-MA'MOEN CIANJUR.

F. Conceptual Framework

Speaking is one of the most important skills in language teaching and learning. Speaking is the exchange of information between the speaker and the listener. This must be practiced and developed because students must broaden their knowledge of everything. The goal of speaking instruction is to help students use the target language. The teacher must have a unique technique in the teaching and learning process to improve students' skills, particularly in speaking. It is essential to understand because teaching is the process of passing on knowledge from the teacher to the students. Teaching students to speak in class can be successful if the teacher creates a friendly classroom environment and interesting classroom activities that encourage students to speak freely.

A small group discussion technique appears to be effective for teaching students' speaking skills. Small group discussions allow students to speak more intensively because there are fewer group members. The presenter must encourage other group members to freely participate while keeping the topic of discussion on track. During the discussion, the presenter must help participants understand the topic and express their opinions on it. Small group discussions are used in research studies to improve students' speaking skills. Small group discussions are an alternative method for motivating students to speak English well. And this can change students' perceptions of English as a difficult language to learn, particularly in speaking. As a result, a small group discussion technique can be used in or out of the classroom to increase student motivation in learning English, particularly the practice of speaking to others. When

students participate in small group discussions, they use their speech organs. All students have the opportunity to debate verbally during small group discussions. Hopefully, by mastering the method, the competition's goal can be achieved.

G. Hypothesis

In research, the hypothesis is one of the important elements. It becomes the tentative statement of the result. According to Arikunto (2006: 71) "Hypothesis is a tentative assumption of research problems, and the result will be seen until the evidence of the data that was collected". This research has two variables. The first is students' reading comprehension as independent variable (X) since this variable was measured to determine the effect from the independent variable. The second is using Small Group Discussion was considered as a dependent variable (Y) because this variable could influence or have effect to the dependent variable.

There are two kinds of the hypothesis of the research; the first is an alternative hypothesis (Ha) and the null hypothesis (Ho), as follows:

Ha: There is a significant difference in students' speaking skills before and after using a small group discussion.

Ho: There is no significant difference in students' speaking skills before and after using a small group discussion.

The hypothesis was proposed by testing the validity with a statistic to collect the data.

H. Previous Study

There have been several studies that have been conducted on teaching speaking using small group discussion techniques. One of them was carried out by Muhammad Alfiansyah from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta with the title of the thesis "Group discussion techniques as a way to develop students' speaking skills: case studies in the third grade of Islamic Darussalam Middle School". In this study, the author focuses on how to implement speaking teaching using group discussion techniques. The conclusion in this study is that teaching speaking through discussion techniques is more effective than through traditional techniques, arguing that this technique

provides more stimulation to students and makes students feel more enthusiastic in learning and provides confidence to express their opinions and participate actively (Alfiansyah, 2008).

The next research was from Azhar Aziz Lubis, a University of Character Building student. In 2010 he conducted a study of speaking skills in his thesis entitled "Improving student achievement in speaking through the application of small group discussion methods (SGD)". The subjects in this study were 10th-grade students consisting of 44 students. The conclusion of this study is the increase in student scores from evaluation I 2.27% who passed the KKM, then evaluation II 88.63% and in evaluation III 100% of students who passed the KKM. Thus it can be concluded that this small group discussion technique can improve student achievement in speaking ability (Lubis, 2010).

The last is a research from Ali Syafaat who is a student of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta with the title of the thesis "Improving the Effectiveness of Small Group Learning in Speaking Ability: An Experimental Study at Second Grade Learners of Waskito Junior High School Pamulang, Tangerang". This research is a quantitative study conducted to determine the effectiveness of learning with small groups as a technique in developing students' speaking skill using the subject of second-grade students of Waskito School. This research was conducted by giving a pre-test to the students then the students were given treatment using small group learning, and at the end, the authors gave a post-test. The conclusion of the results of this study is that the results give a significant difference in scores between classes the controlled class and the experimental class. The experimental class taught by small group learning techniques shows that students' speaking skills are very significant. So it can be said that small group learning is more effective than large groups in improving students' speaking abilities in class (Syafaat, 2009).

From three previous studies above, it leads the writer to do research about applying Small Group Discussion Technique to Develop Students' Speaking Skill. As we can see, the results of the studies that have been successful with the same quantitative research design method. This study has

the same technique to develop students' speaking skill, except that this study has different samples that taught for seventh grade, meanwhile another studies taught for ninth and tenth grade.

