

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

There are many reasons for studying English. First, the position of English as an international language which is used by nearly every nation to communicate with other nations. A traveler who can speak English will find somebody who can understand him wherever he may go. According to French (1963:1), anyone who can read English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his own home. Second, English is now taught as the "second language" in schools in nearly every country in the world; east, west, north, and south. Third, according to Finocchiaro (1973-1978:1), "English is required on many occasions such as: developing knowledge, finding a job, managing tourism, ... ". Those are some reasons why the students are interested in learning English. For them, English is a language that they need to learn at school. Sometimes, they feel hard to master the language even though they have joined informal and/or formal schools.

There are some other reasons or aims to learn English. One of the aims to learn English is being able to speak English well. It is because language is one of the means of communication, and spoken language is the main means.

Richards and Rodgers (1986:7), argue that speech, rather than written work, was the primary form of language. In Indonesia, the objectives of teaching speaking in junior high school are to develop oral skills of the students and enable them to use simple English correctly in everyday situations.

Actually there are four language skills taught namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Among those four skills, speaking is viewed as the most difficult skill. It is also said by Brown and Yule (1983:25), "Spoken language production, learning to talk in foreign language, is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help the student with". Nevertheless, however difficult speaking is most people are willing to learn it since it is needed in the society.

Speaking English is so important that many people try hard to develop it by taking English courses. To accommodate people's needs, English courses stress on the spoken language skill, speaking ability. They think that English written ability has been learnt in formal education. Thus, English courses have different materials from the ones in formal education. The material in English courses is more pragmatic emphasizing the language use in the form of speaking. To make the students to be able to speak and express their ideas, the writer would like to suggest using cooperative learning.

“Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that enables students to work collaboratively together in structured heterogeneous groups toward a common goal while being held individually accountable.” (Wishler and Williams, 1990:6)

Cooperative learning can be characterized in the following Chinese proverb: **“Tell me, and I’ll forget. Show me, and I’ll remember. Involve me, and I’ll learn.”**

Calderon (1987) said, **“Cooperative learning can be defined as a strategy for the classroom that is used to increase motivation and retention, to help students develop a positive image of self and others, to provide a vehicle for critical thinking and problem solving, and to encourage collaborative social skills.”** It means that cooperative skills must be learned and humans are not born instinctively knowing how to cooperate with others. In the classroom, students must be taught how to start cooperative group skills because they have not been taught to work effectively with others. **“Traditional forms of education do not encourage cooperative activity; students work independently and compete for recognition with their peers” (Slavin 1979).** Eventhough collaborative skills are not generally used in traditional forms of education, they are nevertheless important.

“There is no way to overemphasize the importance of social skills. They are keystones to building and maintaining a stable family, a successful career, and a stable group of friends”. (Johnson and Johnson 1975)

The activities must be structured so that students can cooperate and talk to each other. If they want to have a conversation with someone, they need to talk face-to-face. That is why, the physical and spatial arrangement of the classroom will affect cooperative work. Besides that, peer support and group dynamic also make the group successful. The members in the group are the ones who determine how well the group will function. Will the group share responsibilities or will some group members monopolize the time? Will they respect each other? Will low-performing group members be included? These problems must be solved with the cooperation and support of peers in the group and through well-structured teacher guidance. There must be a careful balance between pressure for learning cooperative skills and support for doing so. “The earlier students can be taught these skills, the easier it will be for them to learn how to cooperate” (Johnson and Johnson 1975).

“Cooperative learning is a goal structure in which students work in mixed-ability groups and cooperate with one another to learn academic materials. The groups are usually rewarded according to how much all group members learned.” (Slavin 1991:354)

Such way of teaching fill participation of both teacher and student and the interaction of student with student. So, the teaching method focuses on the students' involvement, participation and aggressiveness. It is called "Cooperative Learning."

One of the most prominent bodies of research and practice concentrating on changing the traditional classroom in order to improve learning and social relations among classmates is that "Cooperative Learning".(Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1980). Cooperative learning was designed to provide teachers with small group techniques for daily instruction in the classroom.

Based on the writer's observation, she found that most of the students were not so cooperative in learning. As foreign language teachers, we sometimes made decision without having all the facts. This could be the case when the teachers made decision about using small groups and cooperative learning. Some teachers decided that cooperative learning was not for the students or for them. They also commented that it was too noisy or it took so much time and effort to do cooperative activity. These comments suggested that many language teachers did not have all the facts about cooperative learning. Because of that, the students found it difficult to understand the mastery of English when the teacher taught them.

The difficulties that the students had were caused by several reasons. First, the teachers did not become an advisor who could help the students in understanding the material that they were learning. Second, there was no interaction and cooperation between student with student in doing their learning activity in the form of groups. So, a decision to use cooperative learning or not is based on a more complete understanding of the process. Based on the reasons above, the writer looks that there is no cooperation in the class and she considers that cooperation needs to start at the classroom level because that determines the organizational climate and atmosphere in the district.

To anticipate these problems, language teachers should be aware of the importance of their way of teaching. In this case, the writer focuses on non linguistic factors especially the materials of teaching speaking. The students' attention mostly depends on the student's interest toward materials which are given by the teacher. It seems that the participation and the material such as picture stories and situational practices might be good for teaching speaking as they could motivate and encourage the students to communicate in the language they are learning. So, the teacher expects cooperative learning to be effective for positive peer pressure as the cooperative system encourages everybody to work, to top capacity. Besides that, what they need are useful

ideas, suggestions, explanations, demonstrations and examples of teaching strategies that have been designed by pedagogists. The best of all is not merely the goal, the students, the content and the teachers but rather the best teaching process which involves students with different background to work and learn a language together. The result, of course, can guarantee and the success based on Wilbert Mc-Keachie's theory stated in Johnson (1990:11),

"The best answer to the question, 'what is the most effective method of teaching?' is that it depends on the goal, the student, the content and the teacher. But the next best answer is, "students teaching other students. There is a wealth of evidence that peer teaching is really effective for a Wide range of goals, content and students of different level and personalities." (Johnson, 1990:11)

Considering the effective way of teaching, the writer would like to suggest the teaching using cooperative learning .

1.2 Statement of the problem

Based on what has been explained in the background of the study, the writer has constructed the problem concerning with the teaching and learning process through cooperative learning: "How can cooperative learning improve students' speaking ability?"

1.3 Objective of the study

After mentioning the problem above, the writer now intends to put forward the objective of this thesis. The objective is to show the technique of improving students' speaking ability by using cooperative learning through STAD.

1.4 Significance of the study

The writer works on this study with the expectation as the contribution to the teaching of English as a foreign language. She expects to present more knowledge and perception in improving the student's abilities in speaking through "Cooperative Learning".

1.5 Theoretical Framework

According to Elizabeth Coelho, Lise Winer, and Judy Winn-Bell Olsen (1989:3), Cooperative Learning is an approach to education and a repertoire of teaching strategies based on the philosophy that students can learn effectively in small groups. The groups and the learning experiences are organized so that 1) students become accountable for each other's learning, 2) students acquire effective group skills and learning strategies. Students learn how to assist each other.

Cooperative learning is qualitatively different from what is often called "group work". In group work, students sit and sometimes work together. Student contributions may be unequal, and some students may not contribute, participate, or learn at all. This kind of group work, which does not create interdependence and accountability, often produces results similar to those of the traditional classroom. That is to say, the gap between high and low achievers remains more or less constant or grows wider in each successive grade, while the different racial and cultural groups in the school grow farther and farther apart.

"Speaking is an activity that is always an integrated part of social behavior. Each time that people speak together, in addition to making choices about what they are going to say, they must also decide how formal, how deferential, how direct, and how silent they should be" (Kayfetz, 1992:viii).

1.6 Limitation of the study

The study is dealing with "Cooperative Learning" in teaching speaking through picture stories. The pictures are taken from "The New Idioms In Action". Picture stories here refer to pictures of situations in which persons are doing something with objects. The use of a series of picture stories are directed to the first level of Junior High students as an extra-curricular

activity. Since they are in the first level, it is the first time they have taken the speaking class, they need techniques which can make them creative in the classroom, and the teacher can also improve their teaching and make the speaking class more interesting, and the students can communicate in English well. Therefore, the writer focuses her discussion on the application of cooperative learning in a foreign language teaching and learning process.

1.7 Methodology of the study

In writing this thesis, the writer chooses a library research. In other word, the writer has thoroughly studied many books, papers, and articles to complete her study. Most of them are from Widya Mandala University.

1.8 Definition of the Key Terms

Some definitions of the key terms are needed to avoid misunderstanding:

a. Cooperative learning is a way of teaching that has been designed in such way to involve students' participation in the learning activities.

b. Speaking, defined by Philip Bobcock (1976), giving oral expression of thoughts, opinion, or feeling, engaging in conversation. The term "speaking" used in this study means conversing / communicating in a given situation.

c. "Extra-curricular Activities are taken and done outside the regular course of academic work or studies" (Hornby, 1983:302). In other words, extra-curricular activities are additional activities. The extra-curricular activities here are focused on the teaching of speaking skills.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis which discusses "Cooperative Learning Study", consists of five chapters with the following organization.

Chapter 1 is the introduction which consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, limitation of the study, methodology of the study, definition of the key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter 2 deals with the language learning. Chapter 3 discusses about cooperative learning. Chapter 4 discusses the application of cooperative learning. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion which includes summary and suggestions.