

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, uses of the research, and scope of the research. In order to avoid misunderstanding, definitions of terms are provided in the last part of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Problems

English is used by a great number of people in the world since it has become an international language. As an instrument of communication, English is important for accessing information, absorbing and developing knowledge, technology, and culture to engage relations with other nations (Kepmendiknas, 2006). Therefore, Indonesian Department of National Education declares English as the first foreign language.

English is the most crucial means of international communication and it dominates all aspects of communication nowadays. It is a universally accepted language with a widely important role. It means that English is used as a mean of communication by most of countries in the world. It is used both in spoken and written in their relationship. In general, the ability to communicate is actually the ability to

understand and/or produce spoken text and/or write that are realized in the four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In Kepmendiknas (2006 : 22), it is explained that the purpose of learning English is to make students to have the ability to develop their competence for communication in oral form to accompany the act (language accompanying action) in context of school. It means that oral communication is the main goal of learning English. Speaking as an oral communication ability is important because speaking is one of the ability to carry out a conversation in language.

Lado (1961) defines speaking as ability to converse or express a sequence of ideas fluently. It means that in the process of speaking there must be at least two people, the speaker and the listener. The general aim of speaking is to communicate efficiently. Having good speaking ability helps students communicate fluently to express the idea and build good social relationship with others. That is why the students should be successful in learning the second language.

However speaking in foreign language is difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions. Different situations have distinct aspects and thus can influence the way in which the speaker uses language (Cook, 1989: 32). Therefore, in order to design speaking activities, teacher should recognize the different functions of speaking performs and its different purposes in daily communication.

However, in formal environment between teachers and students, they have to always interact to make communication because in fact most of our daily communication remain interactional. It can be said that interaction in language is essential. Moreover the communicative approach to language teaching emphasizes the use of language, meaning and language as a communication tool and hypothesizes that learners become proficient by using the language and not just by learning about the language. Therefore, language instructors should provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communicative behavior about relevant topic by using interaction as the key to teach language for communication.

Interaction that occurs in a classroom shows that there are stimulus and response. According to Slavin (2000:143), the stimulus is what is given to a students by the teacher, while the response is reaction of students to the stimulus. Ideally, in active learning process the stimulus which is given by the teacher gets positive response from students. While the response which is used commonly in classroom is through speaking because of its spontaneity and efficiency.

In teaching process, students' response shows their participation in learning. While participation means the involvement of learners in attitude, thought, attention, and activity in the process of learning to support the success of the learning process itself (Arikunto, 2005). Mulyasa (2009) states that participation is student's involvement in following an activity. In learning process, students are expected to be able to participate actively. The learning process is successful and qualified if wholly or at least most students are actively involved, physically, mentally and socially in the process of learning, besides indicate high

excitement and self confidence to learn. It shows that students' participation takes big role in students successful learning. Moreover, according to Mc Keachie (1986) students' participation is one of active learning dimension.

Sardiman (2011) reveals that students' participation can be seen from some indicators which is focused on students' oral/ speaking activity such as the willingness of students to ask a question, propose an opinion, do tasks given, answer a questions from teacher, and cooperate with other students. All indicators mentioned relates to capabilities of critical thinking skill as stated by Mertes (1991). He says that critical thinking skill involves a series of integrated capabilities and attitudes such as skill to respond a questions, carefully dig up the situation by way of asking a question and answer relevantly, think for himself and carefully examines the various ideas and reach conclusions that are useful, discuss the idea in a way that is organized for the exchange of ideas to others.

On the contrary, regarding to observation that has been done by the researcher, she found that there was low interaction between students in speaking class and only few students who actively engaged performance or participate in speaking activity. They tended not to express their own idea because they fear for being wrong and considered that there is nothing to say. It might be caused by the fundamental factor, which most teachers tend to ignore, that is the capabilities of their learners. The teachers are often disregard learners' views and opinions, or suppress them without ever giving the learners the chance to express themselves, so that the learners would not be able to train and use their thinking skill.

While, related to the using of critical thinking skill in language learning, Kabilan (2000) believes that by only using and knowing the meaning, learners do not become proficient in the target language. He strongly believes that learners can only become proficient language users if they, besides using the language and knowing the meaning, could display creative and critical thinking through the language. This implies that the learners must be creative in their production of ideas, and critically support them with logical explanation, details and examples.

Then, Yada, et al, (2005) found that critical thinking gave their students an opportunity to think aloud, be motivated and conduct discussions from various perspectives. Then, they believe that critical thinking is a very useful means to activate students to speak in English, by looking at ideas from different perspectives, deepening students' views and providing them with motivation and energy to introduce their ideas verbally. As a result of this, they could stimulate each other and communicate well.

Based on previous explanations, the researcher assumed that finally critical thinking skill contributes to students' speaking participation. In this research the researcher focused on discussion activity. In order to find out whether or not students' low participation in speaking activity that happen in the school was affected by their critical thinking skill, the researcher conducted this research.

1.2 Formulations of the Problems

Based on the statements of the problems above, the research problems are formulated as stated next.

1. Is there any difference in speaking participation between high and low critical thinking skill students?
2. What aspect of speaking participation is the most achieved by high critical thinking skill students?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Concerning to the problems, the objectives of this research are :

1. To find out whether there is a difference in speaking participation between high and low critical thinking skill students.
2. To find out what aspects of speaking participation is the most achieved by high critical thinking skill students.

1.4 Uses of the Research

The uses of this research are addressed to :

a) Theoritically

The result of this research is expected to support the theory which will be explained in the next chapter related to students' critical thinking skill and speaking participation.

b) Practically

1. The result of this research may help the teacher to teach speaking by guiding student to use their critical thinking skill.

2. The result of this research also helps students to improve their critical thinking skill to support their speaking participation.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This research was focused to investigate the difference speaking participation between students with high and low critical thinking skill and to know whether students with high critical thinking skill gain the best score on problem mastery. This research was conducted in SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung. The data of this research were taken by using critical thinking questionnaire and doing observation to know student's participation in speaking activity in the classroom.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Speaking

Speaking is defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997)

Student's Participation

Student's participation is the involvement of learners' attitude, thought, attention, and activity in the process of learning to support the success of the learning process itself (Arikunto, 2005)

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a process by which a person or individual is required to interpret and evaluate information to make a judgement or decisions based on his ability, applying knowledge and experience (Pery & Potter, 2005)