

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

English is important in Thailand, because Thailand is a developing country with many famous tourism places so the people are demanded to speak English well. It is also important in teaching learning process. The students from Elementary School until University study English as a foreign language. English as a foreign language serves as an important medium for communication, education, knowledge, livelihood and understanding of cultures and visions of the world community (Basic Educational Core Curriculum B.E 2551 Thailand, 2008:266).

In this global era, every person must be able to speak English as a foreign language if they want to upgrade their knowledge. It becomes the reason why the students in Thailand are studying foreign language. They are learning English as a foreign language in order to be able to communicate with other people from other countries, seek knowledge all over the world, have a higher education and have a relationship with the community in the world. So, they will have better understanding in global condition.

In studying English, there are four important skills, but speaking skill is a crucial part of the language learning process because you learn the grammar and some vocabulary and make sentences which you pronounce properly (Thornbury, 2009:1). Furthermore, many students find speaking as the most difficult skill in

learning English. It is supported by Palmer (2014:3) who states that occasionally make the students speak in front of the class does not automatically make them good speaker. In speaking, the speaker must add life to the words, and the lesson must focus on pacing, pausing, and adjusting speed for effect.

Based on the Thailand's curriculum (2008:279-280) the indicators for the seventh grade students in speaking a foreign language are speaking and writing appropriately to ask for and give information and express opinions about what has been heard or read, and speaking and writing to express their own feelings and opinion about various matters around them, various activities, as well as brief justifications appropriately. But in fact, the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School in the 2015/2016 year cannot pronounce words properly. Based on the interview in September 2015, it was found that almost all of the students cannot speak the words which have letter *n*, *s*, *l* as the last letter of the word. For example the word football, they pronounce it become "*futbon*", well become "*wew*", school become "*sekun*", etc. They can pronounce alphabet properly except letter "*v*", they pronounce it become "*wi*" not "*vi*". It is because they use Pha'yan Chanak Thai or Thailand's alphabet which comprise 44 letters and it has similar pronunciation between one word and another, also it is not complete as A-Z alphabet. The other weakness is they cannot make a sentence to communicate with others. They only speak two or three words and are not fluent. So, in this case the students cannot ask for or give information and express an opinion.

There are also many problems of the students to speak English. The students feel that speaking English is hard and they are usually afraid to speak up

in front of other people. They are also not interested in studying English because they think that English is a hard subject to study, and in the English class the teacher usually use dictation method that focuses mainly on teacher's active participation. The teacher mainly gives a task to do and sometimes asks the students to read the dialogs in front of the class. Moreover, students in Southern Thailand learn some languages, they are: Thai, Arabic, Malay and English. It makes students become harder to speak English well, including the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year.

It is important to improve students speaking ability to get more information. Cremin (2009:13) states that talk is a rich resource for learning, it is also a mode of communication with considerable artistic power and potential. The teacher should improve their teaching strategies to make students get interested and develop students speaking ability. It is also supported by Palmer (2014:9) who states that speaking skill is the foundation of so much human interactions.

Role play is one of the methods that can improve speaking ability. This method will make the students active and easy to learn because it keeps the situation enjoyable and fun. According to Lynne (2010:8) Role-plays offer people the chance to actively take part in their own alternate expression of identity, exploring parts of themselves. It is also offer a safe, relatively can sequence-free space where players can develop certain aspects of themselves. For this reason, the researcher is interested in analyzing the use of role play in order to improve speaking ability of the seventh grade students in Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in 2015/2016 academic year.

1.2 The Problem of the Research

Based on the background of the research mentioned above, the problem of the research are:

1. How can the use of role play improve students' speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year?
2. How can the use of role play can improve students' activeness in participating the class of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year?

1.3 The Objective of the Research

The objective of the research referring to the research problem above are:

1. To know whether role play can improve the English speaking ability of the seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year.
2. To know whether role play can improve the students' activeness in participating the class of seventh grade students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand in the 2015/2016 academic year.

1.4 Operational Definition of the Terms

The operational definition will guide the reader to understand the concept about the research. It enables the researcher and the readers to get mutual understanding of the concept studied. It is necessary to define operationally role play and speaking ability.

1. Role Play

Role play in this research is changing students' behavior to assume a role. The students are pretending to be someone else and in other condition as a part of learning English speaking skill.

2. Speaking Ability

Speaking Ability in this research is students' ability to express their idea orally which comprises fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

3. Students' Activeness

Students' activeness in this research is the students are paying attention to the teacher, asking or answering the question, giving opinion or suggestion, and doing the task that given by the teacher.

1.5 The Significances of the Research

The result of the research is expected to give the following benefits:

1. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for teachers as a consideration in teaching speaking English in classroom.
2. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for students in learning speaking English, especially using role play method.
3. The result of the research can be beneficial reference for other researchers who want to observe how to improve students speaking ability by using role play.

1.6 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the use of role play on speaking ability and students activeness in participating the class. The subjects of the research are the students of Darul Mahdeeyah Private School Songkhla Thailand who still sitting in the first semester in the 2015/2016 academic year that consist of 16 students.