CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. **Background of the Study**

    In the last twenty years, teachers around the world have grown aware of the importance of oral communication skills in school education (Aulia et al., 2018). The importance of oral communication skills for students allows them to build effective communication with teachers, friends, and others. In communication, there are two ways to deliver an information. It can be form speaking or writing. From the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), oral communication or speaking are considered the most important (Daif-Allah & Khan, 2016). It is because when students try to communicate, they are required to organize their thoughts and transform their ideas into structured words in target language.

    However, the struggle to speak in different language was perceived by Indonesian students. It can be caused by the internal factor and external factor. The internal factors such as lack of participation, boredom, low motivation towards English, and students' low interest (Karsono, 2014). In addition, the external factors such as learning environment, learning methods, learning activities are also possible to be experienced by students. It can be seen from the many problems have been rising up during teaching and learning process in English class.

    Consequently, these situation leads to unsatisfactory results in teaching and learning English. The goal of teaching English for young learner is to introduce English as the second language, build a strong knowledge base, and provide encouragement in the learning process. This is done

by taking into account their needs and interest in English in the future (Sofian & Anggraeni, 2021). According to Marzuqi (2019), speaking is not just about getting the words out but also about how to communicate thoughts and ideas to others. Learning English at school provides greater space and opportunity for students to practice their speaking skills. Speaking activities in the classroom are intended to lead students to want to speak (Simamora et al., 2020).

Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researcher on 26th and 27th September 2023 in eighth-grade students at MTsN 3 Blitar, the researcher found several speaking problems faced by the students. First, students' participation in the class was low because the teaching approach and the lack of interesting media contributes to low students participation. It can be seen by the researcher from the lack of students interaction with the teacher in teaching and learning process. In addition, the use of learning media used by the teacher often focused on pictures from the textbook which did not attract students' imagination and attention. Finally, they tend to be passive in the classroom. They seemed to not concentrate on the lesson material, they rarely asked and answered questions from the teacher or contributed in class discussions. Most of the students who are active in the class tend to be dominated by the same students repeatedly, which reduces the motivation of other students to participate, which consequently discourages the development of their English language skills.

Second, the difficulties students face in constructing simple sentences, inaccurate pronunciation, and lack of courage to speak in front of the class are significant

problems made the students' speaking ability was low. Because the lack of speaking practice, they confused about how to convey something in their minds. The lack of vocabulary and they felt unconfident to speak with different pronunciation made them worried for making some mistakes. Based on the interview with the English teacher of eighth-grade students in MTsN 3 Blitar, she realized that she was more intense in giving assignments to the students than conducting speaking practice in the class. Consequently, it affected on students' speaking fluency because the struggle to speak properly.

In addition, most of eighth-grade students' scores were still below the mastery score of 75 in English subject. It supported from the result of students' speaking test in Preliminary Study conducted on 26th and 27th September 2023. The result showed that from total of 30 students, 5 students got the good speaking scores but 25 students got the poor scores. Then, the researcher concluded that students' speaking skill needs to be improved and it becomes the reason for the researcher to conduct classroom action research to improve their speaking ability.

Meanwhile, in mastering EFL, speaking skill has its own challenge. In speaking, the ability to speak fluently and processing an information into understandable words is important for build communication in social society. In addition, in teaching and learning process, speaking skill could help students to develop their critical thingking, effective communication, and gaining their participation in order to liven up the class atmosphere.

One of the success factors in the teaching-learning process depends on the techniques or strategies used by teachers in the classroom (Setiyadi et al., 2018). There are

various technique of teaching speaking that are recommended for teachers to follow including role-playing, language games, pair work, scrambled sentences, and describing pictures. Describing the picture is a type of cooperative learning that supports individualized learning and can be applied to all grade levels (Puspita, 2021).

There were some previous studies about describing picture. A study conducted by Sarina (2018) entitled "The Implementation of Describing Pictures Model in Improving Students' Speaking Ability at SMA Negeri 11 Enrekang". The objective of her study is to improve students' speaking ability in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary by using Describing Pictures as a model of the learning process at SMA Negeri 11 Enrekang. The subject of her research was the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 11 Enrekang in the academic year 2017/2018. The design was Classroom Action Research. The data was qualitative. The result showed that the implementation of describing pictures was successful in improving the students' speaking ability in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. The findings were supported by the means of the students' accuracy scores which had improved accuracy in cycle I is 62.90 and 77.69 in cycle II, an improvement is 14.79%.

Second, the study conducted by Anggia Murni (2018) entitled "The Use of Describing Picture Strategy to Improve Students' English Speaking Skill". The subjects of this study were 2nd-grade students of SMPN Darul Imalah, Aceh Besar with participants were 21 students. This study used a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental research design. Data collection techniques were conducted through pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaires. The result of this study showed that describing pictures can help

improve students' English speaking skills.

Third, the study conducted by Mutiara Sari (2020) entitled "The Influence Of Using Describing Picture Strategy Towards Students' Speaking Ability At The Second Semester Of The Eight Grade MTs Of Hassanudin Teluk Betung In The Academic Year 2019/2020". The study tried to find out the significant effect of using the "Describing Picture" strategy on students' speaking ability. This study used a quasi-experimental research design with the participants 30 students for the experimental class and 28 students for the control class from eighth grade. The data were collected from pre-test and post-test. The study found that there was a significant influence of using Describing Picture on students' speaking ability.

Fourth, Pratiwi and Mutiara Ayu (2023) conducted a study entitled "The Use of Describing Picture Strategy to Improve Students' Speaking Skills". The study was conducted on ten-grade students in Senior High School Surabaya. The research method was a qualitative type of embedded single case study. This study concluded that describing picture strategy could improve students' English-speaking competence. This can be known by the cumulative pre-test and post-test scores.

Moreover, in the current English teaching context, many students face speaking challenges due to the lack of engaging media to stimulate creativity and encourage active participation. Conventional learning media, such as common pictures or illustrations, are often ineffective in attracting students' attention and creativity. To overcome this problem, the use of AI images can be an innovative solution. It is because the dynamic, customizable, and context-relevant nature of AI images has a high potential to

teach the skill (Aktay, 2022). By presenting AI images to students, teachers can design engaging activities and critical thinking skills. Combining with the picture description method, it not only contributes to the improvement of students' vocabulary and sentence structure, but also builds their confidence in communicating using English.

Based on these study, describing pictures has significant impact on students' speaking skill. Therefore, the researcher interested and would like to implement Describing Picture supported by AI-generated images in order to improve students' speaking skill of eight-grade in MTsN 3 Blitar, through Classroom Action Research design. Therefore, the researcher interested to conduct a research entitled "Using Describing Picture to Improve Students' Speaking Skill at Eight Grade at MTsN 3 Blitar".

1.1 Formulation of the Research Problem

The formulation of research problem is "How can students' speaking skill be improved by using describing picture at eight grade at MTsN 3 Blitar ?"

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Based on the formulation of research problem, the purpose of study is: To improve students' speaking skill after using describing picture at eight grade at MTsN 3 Blitar

1.3 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this research can contribute theoretically and practically :

1. Theoritical

   The results of this study are expected to increase knowledge for those who want to do similar research.

2. Practical

   a. For teacher

   This research is expected to be an alternative for teachers in teaching English, especially to improve students' speaking skill.

   b. For students

   This research is expected to increase students' interest in learning English. In addition, students are expected to be motivated to understand English especially in terms of speaking skills.

   c. For the researcher

   The results of this study are expected to increase the researcher's knowledge in teaching speaking and become a provision for the researcher to become a good teacher in the future. Also this

research is expected to be an additional reference for those who want to do the similar research.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is improving students' speaking skill by using describing picture. This study is limited to the use of describing picture to improve students' speaking ability of eight grade students at MTsN 3 Blitar.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1 Describing Picture

Describing pictures is one of the English learning activities where each student gets one picture then they describe it in front of the class (Murni, 2018).

1.5.2 Speaking Skill

Speaking ability is the ability of language users to respond correctly to spoken and written stimuli using appropriate grammatical patterns and vocabulary, and translate from one language to another. (Santoso et al., 2019).