

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented seven topics related to this study, included background of the research, formulation of research problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key term.

A. Background of the Research

Language is the main core in communication both orally and in writing. According to Sapir (1921) language is a method or tool for finding ideas, for expressing feelings and desires by using a system of symbols that are produced intentionally and voluntarily. Language is used by members of social groups to collaborate, communicate, and express themselves. In Indonesia, there are several languages that people learn and use to communicate, namely regional languages, national languages and international languages. Regional languages are usually taught to children from an early age by their parents, followed by Indonesian and English which are widely taught in schools. English is a language that has been designated as an international language, so it is not surprising that this language is the second language that will be taught formally to students at the school and university level after the mother language. English is the main key that connects all continents, as well as people in the world. Not mastering English is the same as limiting yourself to communicate with the outside world.

Learning English is very complex because English consists of four skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening which are mutually sustainable and need to be learned at the same time. To master it, many aspects need to be learned, such as adding new vocabulary, grammar, as well as how to pronounce (Megawati, 2016). Among the four skills, speaking is the skill most needed to communicate directly. In everyday language activities, it cannot be denied that more than half of people's time is used to talk and listen to other people's conversations in various contexts and situations (Effendi, 2007: 141). Therefore, speaking skills are needed by humans to socialize so that they can express themselves in society. Not infrequently people judge someone from the way they speak (Win and Colleagues, 2008: 11). However, mastering speaking skills is not an easy thing to do, especially a foreign language that is rarely used in everyday life. According to Tarin (1998: 43) speaking skill is a mechanistic skill. The more often a person uses a language in speaking activities, the better his language skills will be.

In Indonesia, especially in the world of education, the use of English in conversation is still rare when compared to Indonesian or regional languages. In the practice of teaching English, sometimes the teacher has to explain material in two languages so that students who are more used to their mother tongue can understand the material face to face. When doing an internship at SMPN 3 Kedungwaru and conducting pre-observations from November to December 2022, the researcher found that speaking was

the most difficult skill for seventh grade students to be mastered. Of the 62 seventh grade students who practiced self-introducing speech in semester one of the 2022/2023 school year, the average score was 74/100, and around 60% of students scored above average. The aspects assessed were knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, how to pronounce words, and students' fluency when speaking, in accordance with the learning achievement guidelines of the independent curriculum phase D. Even though they could write and work on English questions well, they seemed hesitant to communicate themselves use English both inside and outside the classroom. They are hesitant to answer questions in English orally, and still often mix English with other languages such as Indonesian or Javanese. Learning speaking skills seems still not meet the goals that have been targeted by the teacher according to the curriculum, where at the end of learning it is expected that students can use spoken, written and visual texts in English to interact and communicate in more diverse contexts, in formal and informal situations.

Based on a brief chat between the researcher and several seventh grade students at SMPN 3 Kedungwaru, there are several factors that make it difficult for students to speak English. Firstly, the lack of knowledge of vocabulary makes them confused when they want to express their opinion, secondly, they feel afraid if their pronunciation is wrong, thirdly, they are unsure about the grammar that should be used. As for other factors outside of skill mastery, students feel afraid of being ridiculed by their friends if

they make mistakes when speaking, and lack of initiative to practice outside school. This is in line with Brown's theory (2000: 142) which states that there are two factors that affect students' speaking ability. The first is the intrinsic side. These are internal factors that exist within a person in learning a language, for example their motivation and knowledge. The second is extrinsic factors, such as the social environment or student learning environment. Also according to Hanifa (2018) and Humaera (2015), there are two main factors that hinder students from speaking. First, affective factors are triggered by the student's environment which affect student motivation and self-confidence. Second, cognitive factors that are influenced by students' knowledge in English.

In terms of the learning environment, teachers also play an important role in creating a comfortable, effective and efficient learning environment, by using learning strategies and media according to students' needs. Moreover, seventh grade at SMPN 3 Kedungwaru is the first batch to use an independent curriculum, where the methods, techniques and learning steps depend more on the creativity of the teacher in developing the formulation of learning outcomes (CP) into a flow of learning objectives (ATP).

Previously, research was conducted regarding the difficulties experienced in speaking English by other researchers, with the aim of knowing about the difficulties that arise and what can be done to overcome them in the future. Asrobi (2013), examined how the effects of information

gap techniques and achievement motivation toward the speaking abilities of the students. This research was conducted using a quantitative experimental method, and the results showed that the information technique gap and achievement motivation had a positive effect on the speaking ability of the student. Gaya Tridinanti (2018), examined how the correlation between speaking anxiety, self-confidence, and speaking achievement of EFL students. The research was motivated by the phenomenon of students having difficulty developing speaking skills. The study used a correlation quantitative technique, with the aim of finding out whether there is a correlation between students' emotional states and their speaking achievement. As a result, speaking anxiety has no correlation with students' speaking achievement, but students who have self-confidence have a high correlation with speaking achievement. Hidayat & Taufik (2019), conducted a study on the development of an English speaking pocket for traders in the Plaosan temple tourism area. The researchers designed a book for traders with the consideration that in tourist areas there are many foreign tourists while local traders are not fluent in speaking English, and do not have time to take courses. After being tested, the English speaking pocket that was developed by researchers proved to be effective in improving students' ability to speak English with a significant increase of 74%. All of these studies started with findings of difficulties in speaking English in society, but were developed with different research methods and objectives. In the research that the researchers conduct at SMPN 3 Kedungwaru, the research

method that that used is descriptive qualitative with the aim of clearly and concretely describing the difficulties students faced in speaking English.

Other researchers have also conducted research on students' difficulties in other areas of English skills. Yoandita (2019), analyzed students' abilities and difficulties in writing descriptive texts. As a result, it was explained that the most difficult thing for students was the lack of vocabulary knowledge. Diora & Rosa (2020), examines the difficulties students experience when listening. The main factor that causes students difficulties mostly is lack of motivation and fear of asking questions when they don't know how to pronounce a word. Hidayati (2018), examined students' difficulties in reading and found that students had difficulty understanding vocabulary, poor mastery of grammar, and difficulty understanding long sentences. Of the four English skills, the researcher examined students' speaking difficulties. The researcher uses the results of previous research as a reference, because after all four English skills are interconnected, and all of them are supported by the same basic knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Similar topics have been used by other researchers, with different levels of research samples. Tambunan, et al (2020), researched about improving elementary school students' speaking skills using picture learning techniques. In each meeting, it is known that there is an increase in students' speaking skills, so it can be concluded that picture learning techniques help students experience difficulties in speaking. Suryani et al (2020), examined

the difficulty of speaking English for senior high school students and found that the problem was in students' self-confidence and knowledge of vocabulary. Rahayu, et al (2021), examined the difficulty of speaking English at Pasir Pengaraian University students and found that students found it difficult due to a lack of vocabulary which affected confidence when speaking.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher decided to research the title "The Difficulties in Speaking English Faced by the Seventh Grade Students' at SMPN 3 Kedungwaru". This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method, with the aim of finding and explaining the difficulties experienced by students when speaking, especially difficulties that are influenced by affective and cognitive factors.

B. Formulation of Research Problem

Based on the research background above, this research is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' cognitive difficulties in speaking English?
2. What are the students' affective difficulties in speaking English?

C. Objective of the Research

This research is intended to obtain information which affects students' speech through analysis and studies that have been previously mentioned in the research problem formulation, namely:

1. To know students' cognitive difficulties in speaking English
2. To know students' affective difficulties in speaking English

D. Significance of the Research

1. Theoretically

The results of this study are expected to provide information about students' difficulties in speaking English, and can be used as a consideration for determining new alternatives to develop students' speaking skills.

2. Practically

a. For student

The results of this study will provide additional information about aspects that cause difficulties in speaking, by knowing more deeply about the difficulties students are expected to find solutions to overcome them.

b. For teacher

The findings in this study are expected to assist teachers in considering what kind of media and learning programs can help overcome students' speech difficulties.

c. For other researchers

The findings in this study are expected to be used as comparative data for other researchers who are researching similar topics.

E. Scope and the Limitation of the Research

In this study, the researchers only focused on observing the difficulty of speaking English in seventh grade students of SMPN 3 Kedungwaru. Researchers limit the difficulty in two aspects, ability of students themselves and outside influences.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Speaking

Speaking is the skill of uttering strings of words so that what is in the mind can be clearly described and accepted by the listeners. The art of speaking plays a very vital role in communicating in the social world.

2. Student difficulty at learning speaking

Student difficulties are something that is hard to do or understand that is faced by students. Usually related to behavioral or emotional disorders, or certain difficulties in learning (Paris: 2004). Speaking difficulties are based on several factors, such as the lack of mired's ability to understand aspects of material that support speaking skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Another factor, is the psychological condition of the students themselves which are influenced by the surrounding environment.