

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Language is a fundamental tool for communication and interaction. There are many languages around the world, and these different languages are used in different countries. English is chosen as an international language that people use to communicate with others around the world. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. There are four skills that have to be mastered in English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Brown (2001) defines speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving spoken language. Despite its importance, many students struggle to develop speaking skills. This difficulty often stems from several factors, such as anxiety, limited vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Zhang, 2009). These psychological barriers inhibit students from participating actively in speaking activities, thereby hindering their progress.

Furthermore, classroom practices frequently emphasize grammar instruction and written exercises more than communicative speaking opportunities. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that traditional language teaching often focuses on form-based instruction and neglects the importance of fluency and oral communication. As a result, students become proficient

in grammar and writing but remain hesitant and unconfident in speaking English in real-life contexts.

According to Murad, Assadi, and Badarni (2023), digital storytelling significantly improves EFL learners' speaking skills by fostering students' engagement and motivation. Nair and Yunus (2021) also emphasize that storytelling helps students develop oral fluency and self-confidence, especially when it is integrated with multimedia tools. Research by Rahmawati and Sari (2020) further supports the idea that storytelling, particularly when combined with technology, increases vocabulary acquisition and speaking performance. Similarly, Salman, Rabiah, and Mazhud (2024) observe that storytelling activities in senior high schools lead to noticeable improvements in students' fluency and confidence.

While these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of storytelling in improving speaking skills, most existing research is conducted in urban or technologically supported school environments and predominantly at the senior high school or university level. There is still a lack of research focusing on the implementation of storytelling in junior high schools, particularly in private institutions such as SMP Swasta Pahlawan Nasional. In addition, few studies explore students' perceptions of storytelling and the challenges faced by teachers in schools with limited resources.

Based on the researcher's preliminary observation at SMP Swasta Pahlawan Nasional, grade VIII students experience difficulty expressing themselves in English. They often feel nervous when speaking in front of

others, lack sufficient vocabulary, struggle with grammar and pronunciation, and hesitate to participate in speaking activities. These conditions highlight the need for an innovative, engaging, and supportive technique for teaching speaking skills.

Storytelling, when effectively implemented, transforms speaking practice into an enjoyable and meaningful activity. It encourages students to express ideas, build narratives, and communicate with greater confidence. As Hidayati (2019) explains, storytelling provides a safe and structured context that helps students develop fluency and reduces speaking anxiety.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by examining the implementation of storytelling in teaching speaking skills at SMP Swasta Pahlawan Nasional, specifically focusing on its effects on students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking performance, as well as the practical challenges faced by teachers in this context.

Based on prior observation, the researcher finds that many students have difficulty expressing their ideas and feelings or delivering messages in English. Several problems are identified. First, students feel afraid and nervous when they speak or communicate in English in front of their classmates. Second, students lack ideas or initiative to speak unless the teacher asks questions, and even when they have ideas, they do not know how to express them. This condition is caused by limited vocabulary, lack of understanding of grammatical patterns, and insufficient practice in speaking English. Third, students frequently make mistakes in pronouncing English

words due to the influence of their native language. Fourth, problems with prosodic features such as intonation, stress, and other phonological aspects often cause misunderstanding or communication breakdown. These problems make students reluctant and unmotivated to speak.

Moreover, many students struggle with speaking because they lack confidence, possess limited vocabulary, and fear making mistakes. This issue frequently arises because written exercises and grammar rules are prioritized over interactive and communicative methods.

Furthermore, storytelling fosters a supportive learning environment that motivates students to participate actively and overcome their fear of speaking. Although storytelling offers potential benefits, its application in teaching speaking skills remains underexplored, particularly in secondary education.

This research aims to examine how storytelling is effectively used as a technique to enhance students' speaking skills, focusing on its impact on students' engagement, confidence, and overall speaking performance.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of this research are formulated as follows:

1. How is storytelling implemented in teaching speaking?
2. What problems are faced by teacher in implementing storytelling in teaching speaking?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

On the basis of the problems of the study, the objectives of his study are to:

1. To describe the implementation of storytelling in teaching speaking
2. To analyze the problems faced by the teacher in implementing storytelling in teaching speaking

1.4 The Scope of Study

This study focuses on the implementation of the story telling technique in teaching speaking skills to EFL students. It is limited to two main aspects: how storytelling is applied in the classroom, and the challenges faced by the teacher during implementation. The research is conducted at SMP SWASTA PAHLAWAN NASIONAL to the 2024/2025 semester 1 grade VIII students.

1.5 The Significance of Study

This research holds significance for both educators and students. For educators, this research provides insights into the practical application of story telling as an innovative technique in teaching speaking skills, helping them create a more engaging and effective learning environment. This research also identifies the challenges that teachers may face and offers strategies to overcome them. For students, this research demonstrates the potential of storytelling in enhancing their confidence, engagement, and speaking skills, making learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. Moreover, the findings of this research contribute to the field of language

education by providing a deeper understanding of how creative technique like story telling can enhance the teaching and learning process.

By examining how storytelling can be effectively implemented in the classroom, teachers can gain a better understanding of how to create a more engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning environment that fosters active participation and meaningful communication. The study highlights various storytelling technique, materials, that can be used to enhance students' speaking proficiency, making the learning process more dynamic and enjoyable.

Additionally, this research is significant in identifying the challenges that educators may encounter when incorporating storytelling into their teaching practices. These challenges may include selecting appropriate stories that match students' language proficiency levels, maintaining students' attention and interest, addressing diverse learning needs, managing classroom participation, and assessing speaking.