

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Speaking is a basic skill in communication, which enables a person to interact in different contexts. Speaking is defined as the verbal process of conveying messages in a specific manner so that the listener can comprehend them. According to Wulansari & Uyun (2023), speaking is the ability to pronounce articulatory sounds or words for express, state and convey thoughts, ideas and feeling. According to Brown (2004), speaking is a productive skill which encompasses meaning making through participation, and to be able to utilize language in authentic interactions, they need to master fluency and accuracy. In line with this opinion, (Halidu & Etango, 2021) also said that speaking is one aspect of productive language (capable of producing) meaning an ability that a person has to convey ideas, thoughts or feelings so that the ideas in the speaker's mind can be understood by others. This implies that speaking involves expressing and communicating thoughts, ideas, and emotions through spoken words.

Speaking ability is an important aspect in learning English as a foreign language, especially in today's global context, which requires effective communication. Rao (2019) believes that speaking ability is very important considering its relevance in daily communication and work. In both academic and professional settings, people with good speaking skills find it easier to cope with the demands of the environment and express their opinions appropriately. In

the context of second language learning and teaching, AlSobh and Alkhasawne (2016, p. 182) emphasize that speaking "appears to be the most crucial skill required for communication." The primary goal of teaching speaking is to enhance students' communicative abilities in engaging with others. When acquiring a language, learners do not merely study the structure and meaning of grammatically correct sentences in isolation. Instead, they also develop an understanding of how to use these sentences appropriately to achieve communication objectives. Speaking is one of the most important language skills and is often emphasized in the teaching curriculum to prepare learners for effective communication in real-life situations.

One of the text types commonly used to develop speaking skills in junior high school is recount text, which is aimed at retelling past events. According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), a recount is a text which retells events or experiences in the past with the purpose of informing or entertaining the audience. It aims to inform or entertain the audience through personal or factual recounting. Recount text has schematics that consist of orientation that provides the setting and introduces participants, events which tell what happened or in what sequence, and re-orientation as the closure of events. In the context of teaching speaking, recount text provides students with the opportunity to narrate real or imagined past experiences, which helps them develop fluency, coherence, and confidence in speaking. It is often chosen by teachers because of its relevance to students' lives and its potential to stimulate meaningful communication.

However, many learners still experience problems in speaking English due

to insufficient vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation and infrequent practice. Teaching speaking has several obstacles, including the students' lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and difficulty in composing sentences (Richards, 2008). Referring to the problems that occur above, therefore, strategies in teaching speaking are very important. Teachers should use effective teaching methods to improve students' speaking skills. These involve interactive activities, such as discussions, role-plays, and project-based learning, which encourage students to practice their speaking skills in meaningful contexts (Haryanto, 2019). The teacher's role is very important in helping students enhance their communication skills by building a student-centered learning environment.

In teaching speaking, teachers must make learning plans based on the applicable curriculum. The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements containing objectives, content and learning materials as well as methods that will be used as guidelines in organizing learning activities to achieve educational goals (Susetyo, 2020). Curriculum is the most important part of education. In line with the educational progress that continues to increase at all types and levels of education in Indonesia. In 2021 to 2022 the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a new policy regarding the use of the K13 curriculum, Emergency Curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum. Dynamics and changes in the field of education, especially the curriculum which is experiencing dynamic changes, namely based on the rapid progress of technology and information (Sopiansyah et al., 2022).

In current situations, many schools in Indonesia have implemented Merdeka

Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational reform in Indonesia designed to encourage flexibility in learning and foster students' critical thinking and creativity. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2021), this curriculum aims to provide a more personalized learning experience, allowing students to explore subjects according to their interests and needs. One of the main characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum is its focus on competency-based learning, which prioritizes the development of important skills over rigid memorization of content.

Nawawi (2005) explained that success in implementing reforms depends on how teachers implement them. In other words, a new change will occur if teachers implement all these reforms in the learning process in the classroom, because the teacher is the leader of interactive learning. According to Aprilia & Mustika (2024), Teacher competency plays a very important role in implementing an merdeka curriculum, especially to achieve educational goals. Professional teacher competence is very necessary in guiding, motivating and teaching students according to the needs of the times. Teachers are not just transmitters of knowledge but play an important role in creating a student-centered learning environment. In teaching speaking, teachers can provide various interactive activities such as discussions, role plays, and project-based learning to increase students' self-confidence and communication skills. Furthermore, according to Syakur et al (2020) stated that the quality of education is influenced by the quality of teaching and learning activities. Effective teaching strategies and a well-structured learning environment play an important role in determining student success. In the context

of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers who actively engage students in interactive, student-centered learning experiences can significantly improve their speaking skills through collaborative discussions and real-world communication scenarios.

In fact, during collecting preliminary data, the researcher found that many eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan still have difficulty in developing their English-speaking skills. Although the Merdeka Curriculum has been officially implemented, which prioritizes student-centered and active learning, its implementation in teaching-learning activities is still less than optimal. During the learning process, the teacher mostly involved traditional methods such as reading aloud which did not fully engage students in interactive activities. Teachers faced several challenges that hinder the implementation of effective communicative and task-based learning approaches.

Several studies have examined the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching speaking. Oktavia (2024) found that strategies such as group discussions and the use of digital media helped improve students' speaking skills. Widianari & Mandarani (2024) identified challenges for teachers, including adapting teaching methods and using technology. Latifa et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of structured learning steps in supporting the effectiveness of speaking teaching. Meanwhile, Ayuningtyas (2023) found that role playing, and question and answer strategies were effective, although obstacles such as students' lack of self-confidence were still a challenge. Wilson & Nurkhamidah (2023) also noted the need for teacher training to deal with differences in students' ability levels in learning to speak. These findings indicate

that although the Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility in speaking learning, there are still challenges that need to be overcome so that its implementation is more effective.

The researcher is interested in conducting this study to explore how the teaching of speaking is implemented in SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan under Merdeka Curriculum. As teaching speaking is an important aspect of language learning, understanding the challenges and outcomes of its implementation can provide valuable insights for educators and policy makers. Therefore, the researcher will conduct a study in SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan entitled “The Implementation of Teaching Speaking in Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan”.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Research problem is an issue or concern that needs to be addressed through a study. He emphasizes that clearly defining the problem is essential for guiding the research process (Creswell 2018). In line with the background above, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. How does the teacher implement the teaching speaking for Recount text through teaching activities in Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan?
2. What challenges does the teacher face in implementing the teaching speaking for Recount Text in Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Research objectives are clear and simple goals that help guide the study. They define what the research will focus on and what it aims to achieve (Kothari 2014).

Following the problems above, the research objectives of the study formulated as follow:

1. To analyze how the teacher implements the teaching speaking for Recount text through teaching activities in Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan.
2. To identify the challenges that the teacher faces in implementing the teaching speaking for Recount Text in Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is one teacher who teaches English in eight grade class of SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan as the participant of this research. This study focused specifically on live observational data from authentic English classroom activities in teaching speaking through Recount Text. This study aims to explore how the teacher implementing the teaching speaking for recount text in Merdeka Curriculum for eight grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Percut Sei Tuan through classroom activities. As well as to identify the challenges faced by the teacher in implementing the teaching speaking for recount text in Merdeka Curriculum.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The significances of the study lie in its relevance to establishing boundaries for various audiences who could derive benefits from reading and applying the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research outcomes of this study are anticipated to offer benefits and contribute to the enhancement of both theoretical and practical aspects of the English teaching and learning process:

1. Theoretically

The findings of this research will provide new insights in terms of teaching activities and teaching challenges in teaching speaking. Identifying the challenges in teaching speaking can inform the teacher to provide or create appropriate teaching method or strategies.

2. Practically

- a. The students

Students are expected to be actively involved in English class interactions and develop greater motivation to improve their speaking skills. Through the application of the Merdeka Curriculum, students can experience a more flexible and student-centered learning approach that increases their confidence in speaking. In addition, they will receive meaningful feedback from teachers to help them improve their speaking abilities.

- b. The teacher

The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers about effective strategies for teaching speaking under the

Merdeka Curriculum. By understanding how to implement this curriculum effectively, teachers can improve their teaching methodology, make it more interactive, innovative, and responsive, and responsive to student needs. The research also aims to assist teachers in managing their classrooms more effectively to encourage better and better student participation in speaking activities.

c. The researcher

This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of teaching speaking with the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring similar topics. The study also encourages further investigation using alternative research methods to expand knowledge in the field of English teaching.

