

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English speaking skills are crucial for effective interaction, especially in the context of learning at school. The ability to communicate in English specifically enhances students' capacity to express ideas, engage in classroom discussions, and comprehend educational materials effectively. Speaking fluently in English can be done by using conjunctions and transitional phrases to connect the ideas so for example instead of stopping a sentence you could use words like and but or because to continue people thought this could create a more conversational flow, and just remember that in writing especially formal writing punctuation is important to clarify meaning and break up thoughts but in spoken language it can sometimes feel more natural to just keep going and let the ideas blend it is also important to be mindful of tone and pauses to make sure listener can still follow the train of thought even without the visual cues of punctuation. According to Brown (2001), speaking involves the interaction process to make meaning by involving the creation, reception, and processing of information.

Getting students to speak in class might be a simple task. In a good class setting, students who get along with one another and have a necessary level of English will typically engage freely and enthusiastically provided the teacher gives the student a proper topic and task (Harmer, 2007). However, speaking is not an easy thing for students, especially using English. Speaking skills is one of the most challenging abilities for students to master (Pollard, 2008). It can be especially

crucial when one thinks about all the things that go into speaking: thoughts, what to say, dialect, speaking includes the utilizing of language, word choice, and the skill to listen and respond to the person you are speaking to. Developing effective speaking skills is crucial for students as it not only improve their language abilities but also enables them to effectively communicate and interact in different situations they come across. Moreover, proficient speaking skills can boost students' confidence and contribute to their overall success in their everyday lives. Hence, it is imperative to motivate students to learn and refine their speaking skills to pave the way for their future success.

One of the techniques that has proven effective in improving students' speaking English skills is by inviting students to role-play. Role-playing is a safe and effective way to practice speaking skills in the classroom (Nunan, 2003). During role-playing, students are assigned specific roles in the target language. For instance, one student portrays a visitor who calls the police to report his wallet stolen. The other plays the part of a policeman. The officer attempted to assist the tourist in filing a report. Brown (2001) assigning (a) roles to one or more group members is the definition of role-play and (b) setting an aim for players to achieve. He recommends that role-playing can be done individually, in couples, or groups, with each participant assigned a role to achieve a purpose.

During the activity, students get to use new vocabulary and practice their grammar in a context that mimics real-life situations. It's a safe space for them to experiment with the language without the fear of making mistakes. The teacher might start by explaining the scenario and assigning roles to each student. Sometimes, students are given scripts to follow, but more often, they are

encouraged to improvise and come up with their dialogues. As the role-play progresses, the teacher can observe and take notes on common errors or pronunciation issues, which can be addressed later in a feedback session. The main goal is to build confidence in speaking and to help learners become more comfortable using English in various contexts. Role-play also fosters creativity and problem-solving skills as students navigate different scenarios and react to their peers' responses. Overall, it is a dynamic and interactive way to improve language skills, making the learning process both effective and enjoyable.

Recognizing the potential benefits of students' role-playing in improving speaking skills, the researcher aimed to improve their speaking skills with the incorporation of role-playing activities in the teaching of communicating in English with students in eighth grade at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi. By focusing on an engaging and fun learning experience, this study aims to empower students to become more proficient and confident English speakers.

When teaching English speaking, a teacher must provide interesting material for students so that students are not bored when learning, because from interesting material students will be motivated to improve their speaking skills. And also makes it easier for all students in the class to understand what has been taught. Teachers should also advise students to be more confident in speaking English and not be afraid of mistakes. With a supportive and motivating approach, it is expected that students can feel more comfortable and be brave in expressing their thoughts and ideas that they have in English. By creating a supportive environment and providing positive encouragement, teachers can help students to better develop their

speaking skills. Therefore, in teaching English speaking, teachers should focus on allowing students to speak English.

Based on the researcher's discussions with the English teacher of SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi, it was found that grade VIII students' pronunciation needed to be improved in English. One of the reasons is that the problems we encounter in this school have emphasized the importance of knowing why English is important in Indonesian education, especially in mastering students' speaking skills. There is a very important role of English for learning skills and knowledge around the world, developing the skills to communicate, and growing the opportunities for getting a good job in the future. The ideas and lessons you learned in formal English classes will come together in practical, memorable ways that encourage students to improve their speaking skills by understanding the importance of the language. Role-play is one technique that could be implemented. Students will play the character based on the script that should have been prepared. This can be done by creating a friendly atmosphere and giving encouragement, which will help students practice speaking more, especially in English.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the scientific background, the students lack pronunciation and still need to be improved in speaking English. This condition should be addressed immediately with an interesting teaching technique for students. In this study, the researcher chooses the Role-play technique to overcome the problem. Therefore, the researcher's problem can be formulated namely: Can the speaking skills of eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi academic year in the 2024/2025 be improved through the Role-play technique?

1.3 Objective of The Study

By using the role-play technique, it is expected that students can be more actively involved in learning English so that they become more motivated to practice speaking. This study also aims to create a supportive learning atmosphere, where students feel comfortable to practice speaking with each other. In this way, the researcher hopes that students will experience increased confidence in speaking English after participating in role-play activities. The objective of this study is to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi through role-play technique.

1.4 Limitations of the study

Students need to learn to speak English. There are numerous challenges with speech. Additionally, many methods can be used to overcome speech problems. Based on the purpose of this research, the research is limited to improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi through role-play activities in the academic year 2024/2025. This study focuses on the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi. The researcher uses role-play techniques to help students speak English more fluently. The role can be completed in one academic year and students are to be able to implement what is given to them. With this approach, it is believed that students would not only improve their communication skills but also increase their confidence and skill to communicate in English. The emphasis on role-play as a learning method is expected to create a fun and interactive atmosphere for students, so that they can learn more effectively and enjoyably.

1.5 Significance of The Study

This study was conducted to identify how role-playing techniques can help eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi improve their speaking skills in the 2024/2025 academic year. Theoretically, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how role-playing can be an effective language-learning tool. Through role-playing, students are placed in simulated real-life situations, allowing them to internalize language in its appropriate social and cultural contexts. This approach emphasizes the connection between language use and context, which is critical for achieving practical communication skills. Furthermore, the study contributes to the pedagogical theory by exploring how engaging students in active, contextual learning can enhance fluency and speaking accuracy.

Practically, role-playing exercises offer students a platform to apply their speaking skills in scenarios that mimic real-world interactions, such as ordering food, giving directions, or discussing daily activities. This practice builds students' confidence and reduces anxiety when communicating in real-life situations. Additionally, role-playing encourages students to experiment with language, promoting creativity in structuring conversations and problem-solving during dialogue. By integrating these exercises into classroom activities, teachers can help students not only improve their linguistic abilities but also develop critical soft skills such as adaptability, teamwork, and effective communication.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This study will employ several terms related to doing classroom action research. The title of the current research is improving speaking skills. of eighth-

grade students of SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi in the academic year 2024/2025 through role-play techniques. So that there are no misunderstandings about this study, the researcher state two definitions of key terms such as: speaking skill and role-play. The main terminology utilized in this study is clearly defined and briefly discussed, and it is elaborated as follows:

1.6.1 Speaking Skills

Speaking skills are the competencies possessed by students in class VIII D at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi in the 2024/2025 academic year to compose dialogs and present dialogs by role-playing about public places which is evaluated on pronunciation , grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and task

1.6.2 Role-play

Role-play is a role-playing activity in which students can act as certain figures, such as idols, public figures, and others, according to the scripts they make. At SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi, role-play is one of the ways teachers use to improve students' speaking English skills. This activity starts by giving students a common situation in a public place, where students can choose the role freely according to what they want. Students are given 30 (thirty) minutes to compose their role-play text, then practice acting out the role they have created.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

A theoretical review is an explanation related to the theories, findings, and sources from experts that underlie a study. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the employment of role-playing tactics can improve eighth-grade students' speaking abilities. Some ideas related to the notion of speaking skills and role-playing are reviewed to strengthen the understanding of the problem formulation in Chapter 1. In addition, some research related to this study is also presented in this chapter. To support the research findings, the researcher highlighted some key ideas from the related literature. The following theoretical review forms the basis of this study: (1) speaking skills; (2) dialogue; (3) role-playing technique; and (4) speaking assessment.

2.1.1 Speaking Skills

Speaking skills can help students develop their critical thinking skills, as they need to choose words carefully and formulate strong arguments when communicating with others. By mastering speaking talents, students will feel more confident in interacting with others especially using English. This can help increase their confidence to speak in various situations encountered in their daily lives. With good speaking skills, especially in English, students don't have the skill to convey thoughts and ideas clearly but are also trained to choose words carefully and formulate strong arguments when communicating with others. This process involves deep critical thinking, where students need to consider various points of

view, organize their ideas, and put forward convincing opinions. Through constant speaking practice, students will become skilled in speaking a foreign language, especially English.

Speaking skill is the skill to communicate with others both verbally and non-verbally. Speaking involves an interaction process to create meaning by involving the creation, reception, and processing of information (Brown, 2004). The concept of interactive language functions is something that students must grasp when speaking. Speaking is one of the most crucial talents that students must possess to speak English successfully and fluently. Mastering speaking skills is a challenge for students because it involves many aspects such as thoughts, words, how to speak, and the skill to listen and respond to the person you are talking to (Pollard, 2008). Any student of remote dialects can affirm how troublesome speaking can be. Speaking is defined as "the active application of language to convey meaning so that audiences can write that reflects what the student is learning curriculum and the construct being assessed.".

Speaking involves an interaction process to create meaning by involving the creation, reception, and processing of information (Brown, 2001). Speaking is the skill to communicate fluently and is not just about mastering the language directly (Harmer, 2001). Speaking skills in an educational context are very crucial in learning English. The relationship itself is communication. Speaking is the most crucial skill in foreign language teaching today, but It's also the most challenging talent to acquire in the classroom. Students are always encouraged to use the target language in class, but after class ends, they no longer could use it in real-life

communication. Some students seek opportunities to speak a foreign language outside of class, but most do not try (Dakowska, 2018).

Speaking is said to be the most crucial and challenging of the four talents when it comes to learning any foreign language as it involves several interrelated procedures (Rao, 2019). Successful speaking includes elements of speaking skills, such as mastering everyday conversational vocabulary, having fluency, and mastering grammar to compose clear conveyors. Speaking is the most productive conversational skill. It entails making methodical spoken words to communicate meaning. Speaking instruction is occasionally seen as a straightforward technique. People with no formal training are employed by commercial language schools all over the world to teach conversation (Kayi, 2006)

Speaking skills are necessary for speech teachers to use their creativity when teaching students (La'biran, 2023). Through research conducted by La'biran, it can be seen that teachers can teach speaking by incorporating innovative activities, engaging activities, and adaptable materials to improve students' speaking skills. On the other hand, the teacher used appropriate methods and group discussions when teaching, showed flexibility in teaching, motivated students, and therefore students' confidence to hold a conversation. To evaluate students' communication skills, they must prioritize topics, discuss specific topics with appropriate support materials, and use appropriate writing patterns and language usage across different levels, sounds (including English), grammar & pronunciation appropriately.

2.1.2 Role-Play

Role-play is extremely crucial when teaching speaking since it allows students to experience talking and acting out various social roles. It can help

students become more creative. Role-play might help students improve their speaking skills. In various scenarios, this strategy can help students interact. The use of role plays is liked by many students because a fun learning atmosphere can increase learning effectiveness. With a pleasant atmosphere, students can focus more, understand the material well, and share experiences regarding natural roles and situations, thereby improving students' speaking skills, particularly in English.

Role-play is an activity that requires students to play the role of another person in a conversation. Role-playing can offer assistance to the students to make strides in their capacity to talk clearly and specific competencies, especially in English (Harmer, 2001). Role play is a common educational practice in education that teaches communicative language. It allows students to be free to convey themselves creatively via language (Brown, 2004). Role-play is a popular teaching strategy in communicative language instruction (Brown, 2001). It enables kids to convey themselves through their innovative linguistic contributions. Role-playing will assist the students develop fluency. Based on Pollard, the steps of the role-play namely (Pollard, 2008):

1. The teacher divides students into groups.
2. Teachers check and organize the role-play and its parts.
3. The students who chose the same portion, get together and discuss their portion.
4. The students return to their groups and create a role play based on the situation and characters.
5. Students do role plays in front of the class.

Besides that, Bahriyeva mentioned a step-by-step guide to using the role-play (Bahriyeva, 2021):

1. Analyze the situation. The initial step is to gather individuals, address the issue, and encourage dialogue to uncover the root cause.
2. Enlarge the information.
3. Organize activities.
4. Act out the scenario.
5. Examine the lessons that students have acquired.

Role-play is one strategy that helps students in the classroom develop a variety of real-world spoken language skills. It would be very beneficial for the kids since they can improve their English in scenarios that they could come across in society (Cook, 2016). Role-play has been a popular teaching approach in the school system since the 21st century. He noted that the new curriculum incorporates role-playing to increase kids' enthusiasm for studying English. Role-play simulates the actual world by assigning students specific roles based on their personalities and opinions on various topics (Obijiofor, 2020). Brown stated Role-play as (a) assigning a role to one or more members of a group and (b) setting an aim for players to achieve (Brown, 2001). He recommended that role-play can be done individually, in couples, or in groups, with each participant assigned a role to achieve a purpose. Role play simulates the real world by assigning certain roles to students based on their personalities and their opinions on various topics. They have to speak and behave from the point of view of their new character (Harmer, 2001).

Students can gain knowledge about real-life situations, language proficiency, and communication skills by participating in role-play, which is a

simulation or recreation of ecstasy (Sari & Hamzah, 2023). Role-play can also help students develop social skills such as empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving. By acting out different roles, students can understand the point of view of others and learn to empathize with others. In addition, when participating in role-play, students are invited to work with their classmates to create a scenario and play their respective roles. This helps to promote cooperation among students and build positive relationships in the classroom. In role-play, students will also be invited to solve problems and face challenges that may arise in the given scenario. The students are required to think creatively and find solutions to the situations they are portraying. Thus, role-play not only helps improve speaking skills but also hones students' problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Thus, role-play is a useful technique for students in learning to speak English, as it allows students to practice communication and assume different social roles. This method fosters creativity, improves speaking skills, and facilitates interaction and learning in a variety of situations. Students perceive role-playing as a fun activity that creates a conducive learning environment and increases effectiveness. Through role-play, students can focus more and understand the subject matter more effectively by sharing experiences related to the roles and situations they face. Duxbury and Tsai suggested that role-play encourages students to do good things without teachers' involvement (Duxbury & Tsai, 2010). Role-play is particularly beneficial for improving English language skills, as it allows students to develop their language skills and understand the real-life scenarios they face. In addition, role-play also improves social skills such as empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving. By collaborating with classmates to create scenarios and take

on roles, role-playing encourages cooperation among students and fosters positive relationships within the classroom. Thus, role-play improves speaking proficiency and strengthens students' social skills.

2.1.3 Assessing Speaking

Assessment is a crucial process in measuring student progress during learning. Teachers use assessments to understand students' understanding of learning material and determine the effectiveness of teaching techniques. Factors in speaking assessments influence how well a person communicates. Assessment is a familiar and often misinterpreted term in teaching nowadays (Brown, 2004). Every time a student answers a question posed by the instructor by making a comment or attempting an unused word or structure, the instructor is quite unconsciously observing the student's performance. To effectively communicate the message in the dialog, non-verbals such as body language and facial expressions also participate in the student's oral assessment. Teachers should also pay attention to these aspects to assess students' overall speaking skills.

According to Nunan, assessment is a process that collects student data (Nunan, 2004). Therefore, assessment is part of the evaluation. One method of assessment is testing. This method consists of a more formalized collection of student performance data. In other words, assessment comes from testing and is evaluated from testing. In teaching and learning activities, assessment plays a crucial role. However, evaluating speaking skills is difficult because many variables affect our perception of a person's language skills and because we want appropriate and reliable test results. The teacher will assess students based on the activities they learned (Harmer, 2001). Performance test assessment can be done by providing

comments (explicit) or without providing comments (implicit) after the student's performance. Teachers can also assess students from various sources with certain criteria. Jakob found that the role-play technique is a fun activity that could make students actively participate in the speaking class (Jakob, 2018). Role-playing and teaching techniques have many advantages for students, particularly in areas like speaking.

Students need to prepare for grammar, fluency, and comprehension before being assessed. There are sixteen elements used to assess students' speaking abilities, with the hope that students can speak well and be assessed optimally in speaking activities (Brown, 2004). By providing situations and guidelines for students to take part in the conversation, the researcher aims to assess students' grammatical clarity, level of comprehension, and fluency in delivering the dialog effectively. Assessment can also help students to identify areas for improvement in their speaking skills so that they can continue to develop and improve their language skills gradually. Through assessments, students can also find out the parts they need to improve in their speaking skills, especially using English. Thus, they can continue to develop and improve their language skills gradually so that they can speak English well in the future.

In this study, the researcher focuses on assessing students' skills in practicing dialogue. The researcher needs to teach and test the students to find out the extent of their speaking skills. Therefore, the researcher will present the students with several scenarios and guidelines in which they can participate in their conversation. The assessment categories given to the students are grammar to ensure the information is conveyed and understood clearly, comprehension so that

students have an understanding of the dialog they practice, and fluency helps students to identify the dialog text when practicing dialog. In addition, comprehension is the student's understanding of the dialog practiced.

In short, with a focus on assessing dialogue skills, the researcher aims to measure the extent of the eighth-grade students' speaking skills. The assessment criteria given to the students, such as grammar, comprehension, and fluency, will help them to convey information clearly, understand the practiced dialogue, and flow the conversation fluently.

2.2 Empirical Review

In general, an empirical review is a review of the literature with an emphasis on analyzing and synthesizing empirical research findings related to a particular field or subject. Other studies have found that use role-playing techniques in the teaching and learning process can help students become more advanced speakers. The researcher conducted the current study using those initial investigations as a framework. The related research cited is listed below systematically.

The first research was started by Pinatih (2021). Her research was titled “Improving Students' Speaking Skills through Role-playing Techniques in the 21st Century”. The result of the study stated that the use of role-play in the learning process can improve students' speaking ability and increase their confidence. This study provided a strong theoretical basis and a comprehensive description of the research used, but it does not explain the school context in which the research was conducted. In addition, this research uses library research methods, so it does not use empirical data directly from the classroom.

The second research was conducted by Ahmada & Munawaroh (2022). Their research was titled “The Use of Role-Play to Improve Speaking Skill”. The results of this study showed that the use of role-play techniques can support students in improving their speaking skills, especially in English. Previous research by Pinatih and Ahmada & Munawaroh showed that the use of role-playing techniques in the learning process can improve students' speaking skills and increase their confidence. The first research by Pinatih (2021) focused on improving students' speaking ability through role-playing techniques, which was identified as an effective method to address common problems such as low enthusiasm and fear of speaking among students. Speaking is considered the most challenging skill to master in English, and the application of role-play can stimulate students' engagement and improve their ability to communicate effectively. Findings show that role-play not only improves speaking ability, but also increases students' confidence and interest in learning, making it a valuable alternative for educators in the 21st century, the second research by Ahmada & Munawaroh (2022) has several advantages, including showing a significant improvement in students' speaking ability, with scores increasing up to 80% after the application of the role play method. The focus on a specific problem, namely students with scores below the KKM standard, as well as the systematic use of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, made this study more structured. The role play method creates an interactive and fun learning environment for students, increases student engagement, and is supported by the use of video media for examples of correct pronunciation. In addition, in-depth data analysis and the relevance of the research to current educational needs make this study a meaningful contribution to the

development of English teaching methods. However, these two studies lacked information about the school context where the research was conducted. In other words, this study clearly states that the research will be conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi with the subject of class VIII D students in the 2024/2025 academic year, thus providing a more specific and directed context.

Both studies highlight the potential of role-playing to foster better speaking skills and confidence, and they contribute to the theoretical framework of this research by providing evidence that role-playing can be a valuable pedagogical tool for enhancing speaking skills, specifically in a classroom context like that of SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi.

In addition, the research not only focuses on improving speaking ability but also identifies the challenges students face when speaking in English and explores the effectiveness of role-playing in specific contexts. This study also provides clear steps in the application of the role-play technique, including pre-test, post-test, and the use of questionnaires to measure effectiveness, which were not explained in detail in previous studies. The strength of this study is the more structured and contextualized approach, as well as providing clearer steps in the application of the role-play technique, while the weakness lies in the limited time to apply the method comprehensively.

The contributions of the two studies reviewed, Pinatih (2021) and Ahmada & Munawaroh (2022), are crucial to the current research. Both studies laid a strong foundation by demonstrating the positive impact of role-playing techniques on students' speaking skills and self-confidence. Their findings highlight how

important experiential learning is in language acquisition, which is a central theme in this study.

In addition to valuable insights, the research also revealed a gap in the contextual application of the role-playing method in a particular school setting. This study aims to slightly reduce that gap by focusing on SMP Negeri 7 Mengwi, targeting the unique challenges faced by eighth-grade students in that environment. By incorporating the theoretical framework established by previous studies and addressing its limitations, this study not only advances the understanding of role-playing techniques but also enriches the existing literature with specific and actionable strategies tailored to real classroom scenarios.

