

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking skills in the English language are undeniably an essential component of comprehensive language education. Of the four fundamental skills, which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing, speaking is regarded as a productive skill that students ought to master. Moreover, because English is considered a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, speaking English becomes highly important for education. By fostering proficient communication in English, students can actively engage and connect with others. In addition, well-spoken skill students allowed them to convey their feelings, ideas, and information in face-to-face communication. Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:156) define speaking as an interactive process in which people adjust between roles as speakers and listeners, relying on both non-verbal as well verbal means to achieve communication purposes. In other words, successful speaking requires a significant amount of listening.

Mastering English is beneficial especially used in oral communication. Because of this, students tend to base their evaluation of their English course's usefulness and their progress in learning a foreign language on how much they think they have improved their spoken language skills (Richards, 2008). Thus, speaking is a skill that needs to be developed as well as practiced (Thornbury, 2005:27). While practicing, students can share their intriguing ideas with their friends or present them in front of the classroom. Nevertheless, when the students would like

to speak, they must consider some aspects, such as the ideas, what to say, and how to say it. In addition, the students also need to speak English fluently and clearly to avoid miscommunication while communicating. Considering some elements required to combine in speaking, a good speaking skill is hard to reach. Thus, it is important to practice and develop students' communication skills in order to improve their speaking skills in English.

In learning speaking skills, students need to know what type of speaking activity they are doing. There are so many functions of speaking and some of them are according to Richards (2008:21) who claimed that separate instructional approaches are needed for the three distinct functions of speaking, each of which has a different shape and purpose. Speaking can be viewed as a transaction, a performance, or an interaction. Speaking as interaction relates to the common understanding of conversation and refers to an interaction that is essentially social in nature. Speaking as transaction describes circumstances in which the priority is not on the individuals and their social interactions, but rather on communicating ideas and being understood precisely. Lastly, speaking as performance is used to describe public speech or talk that conveys information in front of an audience. Examples of this type of talk include speeches, public announcements, and presentations made in classrooms.

Students have a chance to speak up about the idea by producing sounds and pronouncing word by word as an utterance. Meanwhile, speaking is one of the difficult skills that are crucial for students. Speaking in a foreign language is more difficult than reading, writing, or listening since it requires real-time communication. Furthermore, unlike when they write, speaking prevents people

from editing and revising what they want to express. According to Nunan (2003:55), an increase in oral communication implicates accuracy as well as fluency. Accuracy is the amount of certainty the students' speech aligns with what others say while using the target spoken language, in contrast to fluency is the level to which students use the language confidently and quickly with using few hesitations. Thus, the students have to produce their speaking as clearly as possible to make the listener and teacher understand and avoid confusion.

Through preliminary observation and interviews conducted by the researcher, several issues were found among the students of SMPN 1 Ubud. Based on interviews with eighth-grade students, they frequently hesitated to speak due to a lack of confidence and limited vocabulary, making it difficult for them to communicate their ideas smoothly. In addition, they struggled with applying correct sentence structures and often made grammatical errors. Moreover, the students had difficulty understanding spoken English and formulating appropriate responses, which affected their ability to engage in meaningful conversations. Thus, these challenges significantly impacted their speaking skills, particularly in terms of grammar, fluency, and comprehension. Due to these obstacles, their speaking scores were poor, ranging from 60 to 73 based on the teacher's tabulation of the students' initial speaking practice in class. As a result, this led them to perceive speaking as extremely difficult. To overcome this issue, teachers play a vital role, not only in teaching but also in intelligently choosing an appropriate teaching method.

In their teaching techniques, English teachers at SMPN 1 Ubud still relied on repetitive methods, such as assigning tasks to the students with the same vocabulary

exercises, speaking drills, and answering the student's books repeatedly, without incorporating varied or interactive tasks that could better engage the students. Because of the brief explanations from the teacher, students had no understanding of the learning material and were unwilling to ask for further clarification. Meanwhile, students should have opportunities to analyze, discuss, and communicate their understanding of the material, both in writing and verbally, to develop critical thinking skills in the classroom (Widiastuti et al., 2023). However, teachers only chose students who voluntarily raised their hands during the question-and-answer sessions. On the other hand, students rarely raised their hands, and whenever the teacher urged them to speak, they remained silent. On top of that, the teacher rarely used teaching media such as pictures and videos to attract students' interest and engagement.

In response to the issues, the researcher suggests an engaging and beneficial technique that the researcher believes allows the students to express themselves creatively and effectively as well as helps them speak with more confidence by using storytelling technique. Crowford (2004) stated that storytelling is an ancient technique that develops hand in hand with language. The process of storytelling is essential for passing down cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. While not the sole method, they undoubtedly contribute significantly to the spread of cultural knowledge or information. Moreover, as a form of media, picture series is combined with storytelling technique. For the storytelling steps, the researcher used theory by Freeman (2007). In the theory, the storytelling steps include preparation, practice, and performance.

Besides, the researcher combined this technique using an interesting media that can implemented with storytelling technique namely a picture series. Students can utilize this media as an aid during the educational process in the educational setting. A picture series contains a sequence of illustrations that can be used to represent a place, person, or object in two dimensions. A picture can stimulate the students' brains to think fast and make it easier for them to improvise when they are speaking. Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:191) claimed that using visual aids like charts, diagrams, pictures, and photographs is one of the greatest widely used techniques for encouraging oral production. In terms of teaching speaking, they view an image or a series of pictures, as a stimulus for a more detailed narrative or description. Following all the benefits offered by picture series, the researcher is interested in using storytelling technique combined with picture series to address the issues facing the students, particularly when it comes to telling a story.

According to the background above, one essential component of language learning is the development of English-speaking skills, which makes it necessary for the use of effective strategies for teaching. By focusing on the correct teaching and learning strategies, students can significantly improve their speaking skills. Through storytelling technique combined with picture series, is expected to solve the students' problems and help them to easier in producing an interesting story based on the aspect of good speaking. Therefore, the implementation of this classroom action research is focused on the use of storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025.

1.2 Research Problem

As pointed out in the study's background, the eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Ubud are still struggling with studying and improving their speaking skills. The students' problems in this class significantly impacted their speaking skills, particularly in terms of grammar, comprehension, and fluency. Moreover, the teacher still relied on repetitive methods, without incorporating varied or interactive tasks that could better engage the students. Thus, the problem of speaking experienced by the students should be given more attention and dealt with correctly from the very beginning. If not, the communication process happened in the classroom might not be running successfully. Therefore, given the fundamental importance of speaking skills, the research problem of this study could be defined as follows: can the speaking skills of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025 be improved through storytelling technique combined with picture series?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In order to give the current study a direction, an objective has to be reached. It is suggested that the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud's speaking skill be improved because they still encountered obstacles during the speaking process. Hence, the objective is the focus of this research. Furthermore, this objective is intended to be accomplished while carrying out the study to resolve the issue being studied. The research would be successful if the objective of the study could be achieved and solved the research problem. Therefore, in response to the research problem highlighted before, the objective of this study is to determine whether or

not the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025 can be improved using storytelling technique combined with picture series.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are chosen in accordance with the objective of the study. This research cannot provide greater detail in the discussion of the research problems. In a single study coverage, speaking skills discussion may be regarded to be excessively broad enough as well as complex. In order to prevent misrepresentation of the topic, the study's variables must be strictly limited and discussion should not overlap. So, the researcher's focus is specifically on how to employ the storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025. According to the present research, SMPN 1 Ubud uses the Merdeka Curriculum to design learning objectives and materials for the eighth-grade students that are suitable for them.

The study focuses on Learning Objective 8.8 of the Merdeka Curriculum, which requires students to produce a wide variety of simple spoken and written text presented in multimodal form within the family and class. Based on the teacher module, the research centered on Chapter 2 Unit 1 about how to write and tell an imaginative story. Thus, the researcher primarily focuses on exploring students' speaking skills in telling a story about narrative genres, particularly fables, using the complete generic structure of narrative paragraphs, such as orientation, complication, as well as resolution. Also, there are a series of fable illustrations

used as media to aid students in stimulating their imagination in creating concepts. The students must present a story about fables that meets the standards for good speaking based on the scoring rubric. They include comprehension, grammar, and fluency.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research aims to determine how the technique may resolve student's difficulties. The study discusses the use of storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025. The anticipated outcomes aim to provide insight into the effective use of storytelling technique to enhance students' speaking skill, specifically in telling fable-related stories. Therefore, the researcher believes that all subjects benefit from the research findings. Furthermore, the results should be helpful to English teachers and students as well as serve as a basis regarding further research in this field. In addition, it is envisioned that the findings held both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, the study's findings are intended to be useful as a reference for further research of existing classroom action research. Particularly, in terms of using storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve students' speaking skills in the class. Also, the results of this study are aimed at reinforcing existing theories. Besides, it is hoped that new empirical evidence for prior research on the use of storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve students' speaking skill, especially in telling a story, would be utilized in future studies or become more empirical evidence. These findings should help

both students as well as teachers in their classroom instruction and educational processes. In addition, the theories also assisted teachers in choosing the best technique.

Practically, the study's findings are intended to benefit English teachers, students, and other researchers. First, the results provide English teachers with valuable insights about how to improve students' speaking skills through the use of storytelling when combined with picture series. Second, the findings could address students' reluctance to speak and express themselves. For students, this approach makes the learning process more engaging and encourages improvement in speaking skills. Lastly, the study serves as a source of motivation for future researchers to explore innovative ideas. Moreover, it potentially integrates multimedia to further enhance students' enthusiasm for learning speaking through storytelling technique.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

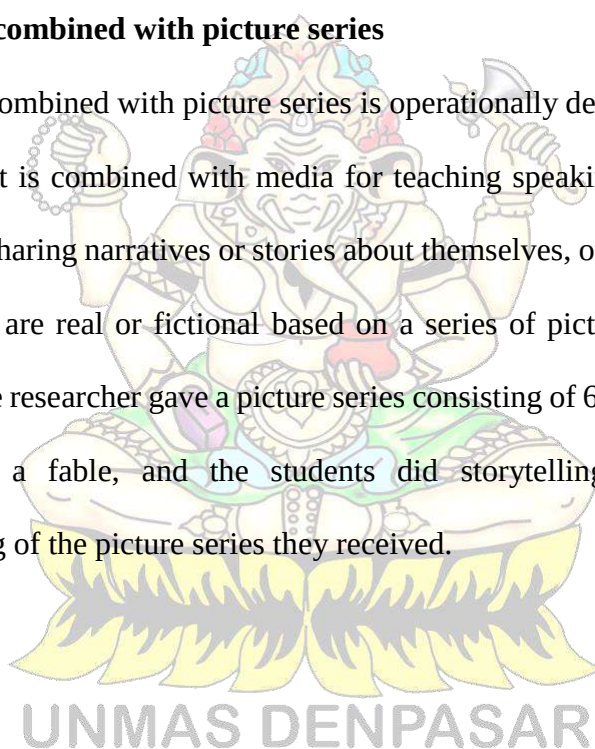
This research focused on the use of storytelling technique combined with picture series to improve the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025. This research has systematically utilized specific key terms that closely align with the study's variables. In addition, to promote understanding and prevent misunderstandings, it is essential to provide reliable operational definitions of key terms applied in conducting this research. Therefore, two key concepts were used in this study, including speaking skill and storytelling combined with picture series.

1. Speaking skill

The speaking skill studied in this research were the skill of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Ubud in the academic year 2024/2025 in telling a short story about a fable. The material focused on narrative paragraphs especially fable-related stories based on generic structure such as orientation, complication, and resolution. Finally, the students performed storytelling according to their comprehension, grammar, and fluency.

2. Storytelling combined with picture series

Storytelling combined with picture series is operationally defined as a teaching technique that is combined with media for teaching speaking which involves the students sharing narratives or stories about themselves, others, or the world, whether they are real or fictional based on a series of pictures given. In this technique, the researcher gave a picture series consisting of 6-12 pictures in one series about a fable, and the students did storytelling based on their understanding of the picture series they received.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review contains a comprehensive review of the main theories that are relevant to the present study. This theoretical review serves as a foundation for further research and inspires informed decision-making in the subject matter. The review of theories related to the concept of speaking and technique has offered valuable insights into the research problem at hand. By reviewing these theories, the researcher has gained a deeper understanding of how speaking and technique connect. This study seeks to determine whether the use of storytelling techniques combined with picture series can improve the eighth-grade students' speaking skills. In addition, certain theories and relevant research studies are reviewed for this study to aid readers in understanding the problem formulation presented in Chapter I. The following theoretical review serves as the foundation for this study: (1) speaking skills, (2) narrative paragraph, (3) storytelling technique with picture series, and (4) assessing speaking.

2.1.1 Speaking Skill

Speaking implies an interactive verbal process that produces meaningful signals for hearing, allowing for direct responses. It is a complex language skill requiring information processing, reception, and production (Brown, 2001). In addition, speaking skill refer to the skill to effectively communicate orally using verbal and nonverbal symbols. It is among the four language skills that are counted

as productive skill as its primary goal is to convey meaning through spoken language. Speaking skills play a vital role in effective communication, language teaching, and studying which is essential for students' language development. Therefore, to avoid misunderstandings about the concept of speaking, the definition should be reviewed in the context of some related theories that define speaking from various perspectives. The theoretical review of speaking skills is as follows.

Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:156) defined speaking as an interactive process in which people adjust between roles as speakers and listeners, relying on both verbal and nonverbal means to achieve communicative goals. In other words, successful speaking requires a significant amount of listening. Brown also adds that the speaking process emphasizes the importance of communication for both the person who is speaking and the person who is listening. This theory highlights that speaking is a dynamic process of information exchange in which both parties work together to create meaning. As language students and teachers, embracing this interconnectedness can lead to more effective and meaningful interactions and a deeper understanding of the communicative process as a whole.

Speaking is the productive aural or oral skill that consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (Nunan, 2003:48). Moreover, Nunan stated that to improve students' speaking skill it requires accuracy as well as fluency. Accuracy is the amount of certainty the students' speech aligns with what others say while using the target spoken language, in contrast to fluency is the level to which students use the language confidently and quickly with using few hesitations. In addition, the students have to produce their speaking as clearly as possible to make the listener and teacher understand and avoid confusion. Nunan

suggested that language learning should help students become more skilled communicators, which involves both comprehension and production. In other words, Nunan's perspective underscores the importance of prioritizing speaking skills for comprehensive language proficiency.

Turk (2003) defines speaking as a means of communication that connects people interactively in oral communication. Speaking with people allows you to express your thoughts, feelings, and new information which can serve various purposes, such as making social contact, expressing opinions, or giving instructions. Turk emphasizes the importance of providing the right emotional conditions for effective speaking and suggests that speaking in a formal or informal setting depends on the situation and the purpose of communication. When speaking in the context of language acquisition, activities such as speaking should be demonstrated in situations where students can show their understanding, and curiosity, ask questions, as well as react to others. That is why, speaking is an essential skill for communication and should be developed to improve students' communicative skills.

Speaking is not merely a means of communication, but a powerful tool for shaping our understanding of the world, exchanging ideas, and building connections with others (Richards, 2008:19). Whether it's a casual conversation or a formal discussion, speaking facilitates problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration. In order to learn to speak, students should know what they are going to say. Richard stated that three functions of speaking can be viewed as a transaction, a performance, or an interaction. Speaking as interaction relates to the common understanding of conversation and refers to an interaction that is

essentially social in nature. Speaking as transaction describes circumstances in which the priority is not on the individuals and their social interactions, but rather on communicating ideas and being understood precisely. Lastly, speaking as performance is used to describe public speech or talk to a group to share information.

Harmer (2007:269) states that speaking is the skill to communicate clearly and concisely. It requires both linguistic feature knowledge and the capacity to process information and language instantly. In other words, students must be able to pronounce phonemes accurately, apply the proper stress and intonation patterns, and speak coherent sentences in order to communicate successfully in English. Besides, Harmer explained that the purpose of the speaking event can be characterized as interactive or non-interactive. Interactive speaking is an unplanned situation where the conversation takes place spontaneously. In contrast, non-interactive is a planned situation where people do a wedding speech. Regardless of the goal of speaking, teachers should encourage students to improve their speaking skills by creating a relaxed atmosphere, exposing them to natural speech, and encouraging them to combine listening and speaking in real-time interactions.

According to Brown (2000:271), there are six categories that apply to speaking or oral performance: imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal, and also extensive. Imitative involves imitating a word, phrase, or sentence, to practice pronunciation or grammar. Intensive speaking is focused on practicing specific grammatical as well as phonological features of the language. Then, responsive speaking is brief and typically consists of responding to questions or comments posed by both teacher and student. In transactional speaking, students

extend a form of responsive language used to exchange specific information in conversations. Moreover, speaking is more focused on maintaining social relationships than transmitting facts and information in interpersonal speaking. The last is extensive speaking like giving oral reports or presentations, often at intermediate to advanced levels of language proficiency.

Speaking is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition. Speaking is not just about mastering the structures, words, and sounds of a language, but rather about understanding the meaning potential associated with them (Saville-Troike, 2012:2). In short, speaking is about more than just knowing grammar but it is also about understanding and communicating ideas in a clear way. In addition, understanding the meaning potential within language is essential for students to truly grasp its nuances. Thus, to improve the language acquisition process, students must highlight the importance of understanding the underlying meanings and intents behind the words, rather than simply saying them.

To summarize, based on the theories, speaking is not only about conveying information or ideas but also the skill to comprehend what the speaker says is crucial. Besides, they should involve comprehension, fluency, and grammar while speaking. Since speaking is a productive skill that needs something to produce in the form of spoken or oral communication. The researcher used the theory from Nunan (2003:48) which said speaking is the productive aural or oral skill that consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. It should be noted that fluency and accuracy are important while speaking. Moreover, to master this skill, practicing and developing students' speaking is a must.

2.1.2 Narrative Paragraph

There are several types of paragraphs in English. Each paragraph has its own definition, language features, social function, as well generic structure. Paragraphs can provide information, express an opinion, tell a brief story, or explain something. Damayanti et al. (2022) explained that the learning outcomes contained in the Merdeka Curriculum take into accounts the interrelationships at each level. A clear example of this connection is the type of paragraph used in the English for Nusantara series of books. Hence, the student's book for eighth grade is related to recount, narrative, descriptive, and procedure paragraphs. The primary focus of this study is the generic structure of narrative paragraphs as the learning material.

According to Kane (2000:366), narratives contain a meaningful series of events presented through words. The sequence of events is not random or rather, they follow a certain order. There is always a time arrangement in the sequence, and typically there are additional arrangements along with it. The simplest chronology is a simple development from the beginning to the final event. But occasionally, chronology is made more complicated by presenting the events in a different order. For instance, a story can begin with the final scene and then go back and return to everything that came before it. Stories can be incredibly complex and complicated, featuring several characters, deep storylines, and detailed interactions between characters, actions, and settings. Meanwhile, narratives are easier to understand and shorter in length.

Narration is storytelling. Narration is the act of a speaker describing a particular event that occurred (Langan, 2007:176). In other words, a narrative paragraph's primary goal is to communicate a point by telling the reader or audience

a tale. Narratives involve the disruption of regular events and the use of words to create tension until a critical moment. The audience learns about ways of behaving which are valued in the culture from the way the story's characters deal with and overcome the problem. By telling a story in detail, the students use narration to clearly explain a point. Thus, telling and reading a narrative paragraph can be a lot of fun. Here, the narrative is delivered simply and clearly. The audience were able to comprehend the speaker's message if the story is presented in a clear and detailed manner.

As stated by Crown (2008:2), there are two categories of narrative paragraphs: literary nonfiction and fiction. First, fiction story is classified into fantasy and folklore. Fantasy stories include high fantasy, science fiction, fairy tales, modern literary tales, dramas, poems, and tall tales. Meanwhile, folklore covers folktales, legends, fables, and myths. The second category of narrative called realistic or nonfiction stories contain autobiographies, historical stories, biographies, contemporary stories, and human-interest stories in magazines and newspapers. In this case, the researcher used a fable as a topic for the speaking practice in the classroom.

According to Core Knowledge Language Arts (2013:23), a fable is a brief narrative whose purpose is to convey a lesson known as the moral of the story. There are several characteristics of a fable. Firstly, the story is usually short and simple. Secondly, the majority of the characters are animals. Thirdly, despite their wisdom or foolishness, the characters are one-dimensional. Furthermore, the location is not specified and might be wherever. Finally, the story's lesson is typically conveyed in its end. In addition, the story shows the animal as having

human characteristics and offers a clear moral, making it an intriguing way to engage students' imaginations. It is true that fables typically have a cautionary moral, yet caution is a virtue that is taught in the first life's lessons.

In telling a story about narrative genres, particularly fables, the students need to consider the generic structure of narrative paragraph, such as orientation, complication, and resolution (Damayanti et al., 2022). Using the generic structure helped the students in creating their story clearly and correctly. Orientation is the introduction to the story, where the setting, characters, and time are established. A complication occurs when a problem or conflict, usually involving the main character, arises in the plot. The last is the resolution of the story where the problem or conflict is resolved, often leading to a change in the characters or their circumstances.

According to Sudarwati and Grace (2022) the social function of a narrative paragraph is to entertain the reader or listener by telling a story that deals with difficult or complex situations that are chronicled and lead to a catastrophe. Stated differently, it aims to provide both entertainment and amusement while examining real or imagined perspectives from a range of viewpoints. These explanations indicate that narrative serves two purposes. Firstly, it is the purpose of speakers and followed by listeners' purposes. The speakers have to tell a story while captivating the audience. Following their listening to the story, the listener's goals may find the story both entertaining and educational.

Moreover, there are also language features used in the context of a narrative paragraph. Anderson and Anderson (2003:165) stated that narrative paragraphs have five basic linguistic features. First of all, using past tense

(S+V2+O), for instance: the wolf bit the rabbit' foot. Secondly, there are specific characters, for example: the wolf, and the rabbit. Furthermore, Time words link events to indicate when they happen, such as: soon, after, before, or then. Next, describe the actions that take place in the story using verbs, for instance: ate, cried, fell. Lastly, to describe the character and environment, the adjective is used, for instance, sharp teeth, and white fur. Therefore, by knowing the language features, students can easily generate their story script before performing.

To sum up, when the students create a narrative story, the students have to use the correct generic structure. Thus, the researcher used the theory of Damayanti et al. (2022) which offered three generic structures of narrative paragraphs such as orientation, complication, and resolution. Orientation is the introduction to the story, where the setting, characters, and time are established. A complication occurs when a problem or conflict, usually involving the main character, arises in the plot. The last is the resolution of the story where the problem or conflict is resolved, often leading to a change in the characters or their circumstances.

2.1.3 Storytelling Technique Combined with Picture Series

Techniques are specific classroom activities or strategies applied by teachers to support students' learning and become involved during English teaching and learning experiences. Effective technique is essential for the successful improvement of students' speaking skills. Within the current study, the researcher used storytelling technique. Storytelling is an oral technique that helps students enhance their speaking skills. In this technique, students are encouraged to act out a script of a story they created using their language, which they afterward perform

in class. Moreover, there was a media such as a picture series combined with the technique. Therefore, the current study concentrated on explaining the definition of storytelling technique combined with picture series and the steps of storytelling.

According to Freeman (2007), storytelling is viewed as a fundamental human activity and a primary way through which people make sense of their experiences and the world around them. Storytelling involves the creation and sharing of narratives that help individuals and communities construct meaning, convey values, and establish identities. Freeman emphasizes that storytelling is not just a mere recounting of events, but a complex, interpretive act that shapes both the teller and the listener, allowing for the exploration of deeper truths and understandings. In the theory, the storytelling technique steps include preparation, practice, and performance. First, in the preparation, the student chooses a story. Folk and fairy tales are a natural source. Second, in practice, the student outlines the sequence of events in the story and practices telling the story to a willing listener or friend. Lastly, in the Performance, the student tells the story in front of an audience.

In another theory, (Munajah (2021:4) explained that storytelling is a way to convey a story to listeners, using a loud voice, body movements, and facial expressions that depict the content of the story. Additionally, storytelling is the art of telling stories that are effective in developing personal values in students without the need for direct instruction. Moreover, the storytelling technique is effective in teaching, particularly in helping students understand narrative structural elements (Dharmayanti et al., 2022). With this in mind, students can develop their creative powers according to their development. Moreover, this can activate not only intellectual aspects but also aspects of sensitivity, subtlety, emotion, art, the ability

to fantasize, and imagination of students which not only prioritizes the abilities of the left brain but also the right brain.

According to Crowford (2004), storytelling is an ancient technique that develops hand in hand with language. Stories exist in all cultures. What makes them universal? Clearly, stories are essential for passing down cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. While not the sole method, they undoubtedly contribute significantly to the spread of cultural knowledge or information. Storytelling often involves improvisation and audience participation. Storytelling is crucial in language learning because it is an oral activity that captures the audience's attention by using multi-sensory and emotional elements (Stanley & Dillingham, 2009:5). It involves improvisation, facial gestures, and body movement.

As stated by McDrury and Alterio (2002:31), storytelling refers to humans using language to communicate aspects of both themselves and other people as well as the imagined or real worlds they live in. To effectively engage students in storytelling, they propose the key storytelling characteristics. There are the settings, listeners, and the story itself. The first, settings include setting up a cozy seating area, using props or visuals, and ensuring that the audience is focused on the storytelling session. The second, listeners mean to understand the audience's age and interests to adapt the story accordingly and make it relatable also engaging for them. Lastly, prepare the story by choosing an appropriate story that is engaging and age-appropriate for the audience.

Students learn most effectively when they are presented with visual aids that make the atmosphere for learning more enjoyable and conducive to concentration, especially when using graphs, charts, and pictures (Nunan, 2003:100). Through the

use of picture series, teachers can effectively employ storytelling techniques, prompting students to generate and articulate ideas while directly visualizing their story. In other words, using visual media as a series of pictures allows the students to directly see exactly what they are about to express. As teachers continue to explore innovative teaching methods, it is appropriate to integrate storytelling technique combined with picture series to build a more productive classroom.

In addition, Harmer (2007:178) explained that using picture series can engage and stimulate students' creativity, and also increase their vocabulary. Students can easily tell a story after analyzing a series of pictures of the story's plot. Their brain was stimulated to quickly put together what they were going to say. In order to aid with learning, teachers have long utilized pictures and illustrations that they have collected from newspapers, books, magazines, or photos. Harmer also stated that pictures can be cue cards, photographs, large wall pictures, flashcards, and even illustrations. Additionally, some teachers utilize overhead projector visuals, projected slides, or occasionally drawing on board. The existence of pictures as media to tell a story made the students immediately think fast and stimulate their ideas.

In other theories, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:191) claimed that using visual aids like charts, diagrams, pictures, and photographs is one of the greatest widely used techniques for encouraging oral production. In terms of teaching speaking, they view an image or a series of pictures, as a stimulus for a more detailed narrative or description. Hence, pictures make it easy for students to organize their ideas. The students were not confused when they wanted to explain the sequence of events in the story because a brief plot was already put as a picture.

It should be noted that there must be consistency in the aim of producing storytelling topics. For instance, teachers could offer students more detailed directions to recount the story that the provided pictures convey if they are trying to elicit a certain grammar or language accuracy.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was focused on storytelling technique according to Crawford (2004) which stated that storytelling is an ancient technique that develops hand in hand with language. Moreover, the researcher used a theory adapted from Brown and Abeywickrama (2018) for the picture series. Moreover, the storytelling technique was combined with picture series as the media. For the storytelling steps, the researcher used theory by Freeman (2007) which states that the storytelling steps include preparation, practice, and performance. In the preparation activity, the students need to choose a story. Next, the practice activity is where the students outline the sequence of events in the story and practice telling the story to a willing listener or friend. The last, performance is where the students tell the story in front of an audience.

2.1.4 Assessing Speaking

In evaluating the students, an assessment is essentially needed. Assessment is used in education to understand and improve student learning. This type of assessment can be formal, like a test, or informal, such as observation and note-taking. Crucially, it can be administered at any time, even without prior scheduling or student preparation to determine their understanding of the subject. (Brown, 2004). The assessment of students' speaking skills, particularly in storytelling, is a crucial aspect of the teaching and learning process. It not only serves as a measure

of student achievement but also provides valuable insights for teachers in planning their future lessons. Emphasizing the important role of assessment can help enhance learning outcomes and student engagement in the classroom.

The word "assessment" describes a number of methods used to gather data regarding a student's proficiency or accomplishment in language (Carter & Nunan, 2001:137). Although assessment and testing are related, assessment refers to a wider range of measurements, such as monitoring and documenting student development through project work, simulations, and observation. Assessment is separate as well from evaluation, which focuses on the entire language curriculum rather than just the knowledge that a single student has learned. They also add that teachers perform assessments during the learning process in order to improve instruction, which is referred to as formative assessment. Meanwhile, summative assessment is the term used to describe the evaluation conducted at the end of a course, term, or school year, typically to present overall information about program outcomes to educational authorities.

Teachers use assessment results to improve student learning by identifying areas where students need more support, adjusting their teaching strategies, and providing targeted feedback. The assessment results can reveal strengths and weaknesses, which teachers can use to plan their instruction to better meet the needs of their students (Suskie, 2009). This can involve modifying lesson plans, adjusting the pace of instruction, or introducing additional resources or activities to support student learning. Additionally, teachers can use assessment results to inform their professional development, seeking out opportunities to deepen their understanding of pedagogical content knowledge and improve their use of assessment data.

Brown (2003:4) defines assessment as a continuous process that covers a considerably larger range of topics. The teacher evaluates a student's performance subconsciously every time the student answers a question, makes a comment, or attempts to use a new phrase or structure. For instance, tests are only one form of assessment. They are not the only types of assessments that a teacher can conduct. Tests can be important tools, but they are just one of several procedures and tasks that teachers can use to evaluate students. Assessment is to differentiate between informal assessment as well as formal assessment (Brown, 2003:5). Formal assessments are organized and scheduled, utilizing exercises or procedures that are intentionally created to evaluate students' abilities and understanding. On the other hand, informal Assessments are not planned and begin with casual comments and reactions, providing spontaneous feedback to the student.

Assessments are conducted on a regular basis by teachers which are their main goal is to provide information for more effective teaching and learning (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007:27). By using assessment to inform and improve teaching methods and learning outcomes, teachers can create better effective, and more engaging learning experiences. It is essential for teachers to continuously reflect on the results of assessments and adjust their approach accordingly, ultimately leading to more efficient and impactful learning. Fulcher and Davidson also argue that one essential piece of evidence supporting the validity of classroom language assessment is a well-designed instrument. The professional design of tests is guided by specific recommendations, covering the creation of items and tasks. It is emphasized that a test with poor design could result in unclear information, potentially compromising the overall validity of the assessment.

The assessment of oral language can be defined by a curriculum or by standards or tests that may or may not align with the curriculum. (McKay, 2006:181). In brief, the process of assessing students' speaking is intricately linked to the curriculum, learning objectives, and the teacher's ability to assess students' comprehension. English teachers play a crucial role in accurately evaluating students' mastery of the material. Both teachers and students need to understand the assessment criteria, creating a transparent and insightful approach to evaluating speaking. By aligning assessments with taught materials, teachers can effectively measure students' progress and provide valuable feedback. This practice not only validates students' efforts but also fosters continuous improvement.

In the field of language assessment, validity and reliability is crucial. Based on Fraenkel et al. (2011:147), the concept of validity refers to the suitability, significance, accuracy, and practicality of the conclusions drawn by a researcher. In addition, validity indicates whether an assessment truly measures the intended skills or knowledge. When an assessment is valid, information is generated that can help in setting standards, assessing student progress, and making decisions about classroom instruction. Meanwhile, reliability is the capacity of scores or responses to remain consistent between administrations of an instrument and between sets of items (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Ensuring consistency across various test forms during one administration is also a part of reliability. It's important to guarantee that when a test is taken again, the results are similar to the original test and that the level of difficulty of the test remains unchanged from year to year. When it comes to choosing or creating the tools that teachers plan to use, both ideas are crucial to think about.

The assessment should have a positive wash-back effect, helping students understand their strengths and weaknesses and improving their language skills. In assessing oral performance, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:183) stated that scores or checklists used for assessing participant performance should be thoughtfully created to align with the goals of the observed discussion. For assessing speaking, Brown (2001:406), as stated in Brown and Abeywickrama (2018:183), offered oral proficiency scoring categories. In the scoring rubric, there are five components: pronunciation, comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Each of the elements has its criteria and score to assess students' speaking skills.

In this research, the researcher focused on assessing students' speaking skills in telling a fable story. To score the students, the researcher must provide tests to them. Therefore, the researcher used a picture-cued story-telling task which consists of 4 series to determine whether or not there is an improvement in students' speaking skills. To assess students' speaking, in the present study, the researcher used the theory adapted from Brown (2001:406), as stated in Brown and Abeywickrama (2018), which offered five elements, but the researcher limited the use of three elements such as grammar, comprehension, and fluency. The adapted scoring rubrics incorporating the essential elements have proven to be relevant and effective in this action research in the classroom setting.

2.2 Empirical Review

An empirical review would involve analyzing the existing empirical research on a specific topic related to the researcher's study. The basis of empirical research

lies in the observation and measurement of phenomena, with knowledge derived from practical application, not theoretical concepts. The basis of empirical research lies in the observation and measurement of phenomena, with knowledge derived from practical experience rather than from theory or belief. An empirical review's main goal is to give a thorough and organized summary of all currently published research on a certain subject, assisting researchers in identifying any gaps in the literature or areas that require further study. The present action research has been conducted by some researchers. They can collaborate as follows:

First, a similar study was conducted by Ardi et al. (2023) entitled "The Use of Storytelling Assisted with Picture Series to Improve Speaking Skill." The purpose of this research was to investigate the potential for improvement in students' speaking skills using storytelling technique. In general, this researcher showed that the storytelling technique had significantly increased students' speaking skills, especially when telling a story based on the given picture series in teaching speaking for the ninth-grade students of SMP (SLUB) Saraswati 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023. When the researcher conducted the prior study, the subjects responded well to the storytelling implementation combined with picture series as the media to enhance their speaking skills and the teaching-learning process.

The strengths of this study are that this researcher provides many theories from a previous article to provide evidence for how storytelling can effectively enhance speaking skill. This researcher also used the theory from Brown which consists of five aspects of the scoring rubric. Regarding the weaknesses, the writer did not provide a main theory of storytelling technique from experts, including the

steps to implementing storytelling technique in the class. Also, it did not state clear material for the speaking practice. Meanwhile, in the present study, the researcher implemented the storytelling technique following well-defined steps adapted from expert theories. Additionally, the researcher prepared clear material using narrative paragraphs which later the students prepared based on the generic structure: orientation, complication, and resolution. For the scoring rubric, the researcher applied Brown's theory, but concentrated on evaluating students' fluency, grammar, and comprehension, ensuring it aligns with their proficiency level.

Second, a similar research was conducted by Hayati et al. (2024) entitled “The Implementation of Storytelling a Short Story to Improve Middle School Sundanese Student's Speaking Skill.” A study conducted with second-grade students at SMP IT Nurul Ittihad found that using short stories as a storytelling technique significantly improved their speaking skills. This conclusion was based on a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores, which demonstrated a clear enhancement in the students' speaking abilities after the intervention.

The strength of the second relevant study is the researcher used many relevant articles conducted by previous researchers to support this study. Moreover, the writer stated the pre-, whilst, and post-activity when implementing the storytelling technique. Concerning the weaknesses of this previous study, the writer's main theory was still ambiguous. Besides, this research did not use any media to assist the learning and teaching process. In the present study, the researcher used the storytelling technique with a clearly outlined steps to avoid misunderstandings among the students when performing a story. Furthermore, the researcher used a clear and colorful picture series as a media to stimulate their ideas in organizing the

story flow. In addition, the students prepared a narrative paragraph following the general pattern, including orientation, complication, and resolution to strengthen their readiness before doing an oral performance. Lastly, this present study was conducted using the Merdeka curriculum.

