CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background to the Study

Speaking is a way to communicate verbally to convey ideas or opinions to others. There are two categories of speech functions, namely transactional functions which focus on conveying information and interactional functions which focus on maintaining social relations between people (Luoma, 2004). This shows that the ability to speak is an important communication skill not only for conveying information or ideas but also for maintaining social relations with others. In learning English, students are ideally expected to be able to do speaking by expressing meaning in simple short-spoken conversations to interact with the surrounding environment or peers such as asking, giving, refusing opinions, and offering something. After graduated, it is hoped that the students are able to do daily conversation well.

Since speaking is an essential skill in mastering English, it is one of the language competencies that must be mastered by junior high school students. Flojo & Pablo (2013) argued that learning to speak is more than knowing the rules of grammar. The students must know what to say about something, how to say it, to whom, where, and when to say it. Speaking lesson in junior high school aims to convey ideas, feelings, and information in the form of sounds and words (Ilham & Wijiati, 2020). It is targeted so that students can reach the functional level, namely speaking and communicating orally conveying information and solving everyday problems, as stated in the ISI standard. Therefore, before speaking the students must have the vocabulary and information to be said and the students must understand the sentences of what he wants to say.

The ability to speak foreign language skills and linguistic diversity are part of the signs of Allah SWT's power as explained in the Al-Quran, Surah Ar-Rahman verse 55, which means:

"And created man, who taught him how to speak" (Q.S Ar-Rahman). The above verse is explained in the interpretation

of al-Qur'an that "Allah taught every people the language they used to communicate'' (Shihab, 2002). From the verse above we can see that Allah SWT has given mankind the ability to speak or communicate. One way for a teacher to transfer knowledge is through verbal communication, in which teachers are required to convey their learning correctly, in which we can learn. familiar with speaking.

Even though speaking is compulsory, it is no secret to be an obstacle for both students and teachers. Many students avoid when asked to speak even though they are able to use it. According to Muammar et al. (2018), this happened because of several problems experienced by students. These problems are in the form of linguistic aspects and non-linguistic aspects. Linguistic factors include the accuracy of pronunciation, intonation, language style, and structure of the sentences and paragraphs used. While the non-linguistic aspects are in the form of anxiety, small voice, and lack of preparation. According to Hakim et. al (2019), there are several factors that contribute to students challenges in learning to speak, including a lack of

vocabulary, a lack of self-confidence, and a lack of diverse teaching methodologies.

Speaking English is still not an easy thing for students, especially in Indonesia. One of the major issues for teachers is the lack of unique teaching resources for students with introverted features in speaking activities in English topics (Hakim, 2018). This is happened because Indonesian people are more used to or more dominant in using Indonesian as their first language. Halidjah (2012) argued that some of the causes of students' difficulties in speaking English are: (1) difficulty expressing ideas orally (speaking); (2) lack of vocabulary (vocabulary); (3) Low grammar skills, making it difficult to speak with the correct rules; (4) Low ability to pronounce words (pronunciation), making it difficult to pronounce words correctly; (5) Children's lack of courage and motivation to speak for fear of being wrong.

Nurfitria (2017) also added that teaching speaking has not been successful yet. Many students claim to have low level of speaking ability. The students rarely can speak English in their

daily life. Indeed, almost all of them are not proficient in speaking English because they barely use English to communicate in English both inside and outside the classroom. They speak English only in the teaching and learning process in class. Situations like this make the students avoiding and and not be motivated to speak English. Consequently, this results in low student' speaking mastery. As a result, technique or strategy is one of the most significant things that must be used throughout the teaching and learning process in order to achieve the goal of teaching and for students to enjoy the learning process without thinking that studying English is an unpleasant subject (Efrizal, 2018).

Based on interviews with seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 15 Kota Bengkulu Academic Year 2021/2022. It is revealed that the students had problems in learning English, especially speaking skills. First, they do not understand the material provided. Second, the ability of each student is not the same. Some students speak faster than others and only a few students pre-review the topic lesson from their home. Third,

students also complained about the less interactive learning process. Even though the teacher has explained many times, only the lecture method and notes on the blackboard dominate each meeting. Both teachers and students did not feel any interaction in the classroom. This has an impact on reducing student motivation so that the teaching and learning process is only an obligation and loses its essence as a place to seek knowledge that is interactive and fun (Razi et al., 2021).

The teacher also mentioned that teaching speaking at classrooms is mostly challenging. The most dominant challenge the teachers face is to make student actively engaging in speaking activity. Most students are shy to speak and prefer to stand and quiet. Although teaching speaking is already integrated with other skills, speaking activity tends to be avoided by the students. The teachers argued that students refuse and avoid speaking in front of the class. The teachers are also familiar with role play activity and encourage to use role play in teaching speaking. According to Burns & Richards (2018) role playing method is a way of mastering learning material through the

development of students' imagination. The development of imagination and appreciation is carried out by students by playing as living things or as inanimate objects.

After looking closely during pre-observation, it's clear that there are some important issues with how students learn and speak English. The way teaching learning process, mainly centered around the students, has led to weak student activities. Even though there is a plan to use role play, the students still struggle to engage and express themselves. The problems go deeper, involving language difficulties, grammar challenges, and even students feeling anxious. The students also don't get many chances to practice English in daily life. The results from looking at this beforehand show that it is an urgency to implement innovative teaching strategy. Role play can be used as a new way of teaching, focusing on role play and making the learning environment more interactive. The goal is to improve speaking skills and make learning English better for the students.

Based on the problems described above, an effective strategy to enhance students' English-speaking skills involves

employing the role-playing method. This instructional model seeks to assist students in discovering self-meaning (identity) within the social context and resolving challenges collaboratively groups (Uno, 2012). It entails simulating the behavior of the character being portrayed, aiming to train students in navigating real-world situations, engaging in intensive spoken language practice, and offering opportunities for the development of communication skills. The purpose of incorporating role play into English teaching is to stimulate students' critical thinking and creativity, enabling them to cultivate and refine new language and behavioral skills in a relatively low-pressure environment. Additionally, it fosters the motivation and engagement essential for effective learning.

Utilizing role-playing serves as a technique to impart insight and empathy skills in education. As outlined by Flojo and Pablo (2013), role play encompasses various activities wherein learners envision themselves in scenarios where they assume the identity of another person and employ language suitable for the given context. In this context, students can simulate genuine

situations even when physically absent from them. The application of role play is particularly fitting for English learning, as this technique engages students actively in the learning process. If this is applied, changes to the learning strategy from passive English to active English can occur, so that in the end students better understand and achieve the goal of the discussion.

Learning in practice is a common term used in inquiry learning. It is primarily based on constructive learning theory, which points out that the act of inquiry may help students build higher-order thinking abilities and helps sharpen students' reasoning (Chen & Tippett, 2022). As students learn abstract concepts and principles, the teachers allow them naturally to explore and discover through reading, reasoning, experiment, observation, and discussion using concrete examples and inquiries so that students can understand the information that has been learnt.

It means that the inquiry teaching approach gives students' prominent roles enough consideration so that students' learning

motivation is improved. The inquiry-based learning enables students to leverage their educational strategies and independence, fostering an enhancement of their comprehensive English application skills. This approach emphasizes the social aspects of pertinent disciplinary knowledge, allowing students to navigate varied events and situations and experience responsive emotions. Additionally, teamwork within the learning process cultivates problem-solving skills. The instructional style not only strengthens the relationship between teachers and students but also enhances the overall effectiveness of the lessons. (Zhai, 2019).

Inquiry-based learning is a model of learning to explore by ourselves. In this case the practical steps for implementing the inquiry-based learning. In general, there are several steps of the inquiry learning model, starting from orientation, formulating problems, formulating hypotheses, collecting data, testing hypotheses, and drawing conclusions (Hartono, 2013). Therefore, inquiry-based role play is the process during play when students inquire using their imagination to explore,

experiment, discover, collaborate, improvise, and create. It is claimed that has a positive influence on social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development.

There have been many researchers conducted about using role play in teaching speaking. Hidayati (2015) argued that one of the most effective activities can be used in teaching speaking is role play activity. It is noted that the incorporation of role play has led to increased courage and confidence among students when speaking. This is evident in their active participation in class conversations, discussions, performances in front of the class, improved pronunciation, enhanced fluency, and a greater sense of confidence in speaking. Daulay et al. (2023) also conducted study to investigate the effect of role play towards students' speaking ability. According to the results, the utilization of role play has a positive influence on students' speaking skills, affirming the effectiveness of incorporating role play into speaking instruction. This is attributed to its capacity to engage certain students by assigning roles, thereby increasing

their participation in discussions and augmenting both speaking and learning activities.

Similar research that discusses the problems faced by junior high school students in speaking skills has also been carried out by research conducted by Akmal (2018) showed that the students often feel embarrassed and feel nervous when asked to speak in front of the class, the teacher's lack of attention to students in speaking skills, the language used by students who are irregular causes the information conveyed to be less effective and listeners have difficulty understanding the contents of the conversation precisely, and learning taught by the teacher still uses the lecture method.

Hadzik (2019) stated that the use of role plays on students' speaking ability was beneficial in improving their speaking fluency. The reason role play is often used is that it gives many social circumstances with varied social roles. In this strategy, becoming the personality of others involves opposing all that exists in others, such as values, responses, feelings, and attitudes. Furthermore, because this practice requires fewer or better bodily

motions, students feel more at ease and are less worried when learning to talk. Thus, role play is important in helping learners enhance their speaking skills.

Based on the background above, it has been found that student learning activities are ineffective since learning still relies on the teacher. Some studies proved that role play is useful to improve students' Those above researches show that there are several problems experienced by elementary school students in learning speaking skills. Seeing the many problems, it seems an urgency to conduct a study to solve the problems that occur in the speaking skills of seventh grade junior high school students. This research aims to find out the effect of Inquiry-Based Role Play toward students' speaking skill. Therefore, this research is necessary. The researcher is interested in researching with the title The Effect of Inquiry-Based Role Play on Seventh Grade Students' at SMP Negeri 15 Kota Bengkulu."

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, it is identified that student learning activities are weak because learning is still

teacher-centered even though in the RPP there is a learning method using role play, for this reason the researcher chose this research to use an inquiry-based role play method. That way students can express what they get when learning and what they understand during learning takes place. In addition, students can also practice some of the material according to the lesson plans taught to build students' courage and creativity in speaking English. The field in this study is an English subject that specializes in speaking skills. The focus that can be used as a research reference is to improve English speaking skills through the role-play. Then the following problems can be identified:

1. The lack of speaking skills of class VII students in English subject is caused by linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

2. Students have difficulty expressing ideas orally, low grammar skills, making it difficult to speak with the correct rules.

3. Psychologically, students have anxiety so that students lack the courage and motivation of children to speak because they are afraid of being wrong.

4. The low mastery of speaking by many students have a low level of speaking ability. rarely have the opportunity to speak English in everyday life.

5. Students have problems learning English because the learning process is less interactive.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the problem identification above, the writer can limit the research focus as an effort to improve students' English-speaking skills by using the role play method in class VII SMP Negeri 15 Bengkulu City.

So that researchers can focus and not deviate from the problems to be discussed, the following limitations are given:

1. Student learning outcomes are taken from *the pretest* and *posttest.*

2. Junior high school English subject.

D. Research Questions

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the research questions can be identified as "Is there an effect of Inquiry-

Based Role Play toward students' speaking skill at the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 15 Kota Bengkulu?"

E. Objective of the Research

Based on research questions, the objective of the research is to evaluate the effects of Inquiry-Based Role Play toward students' speaking skill at the seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 15 Kota Bengkulu.

F. Significance of the Research

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits, both practically and theoretically.

1. Theoretically

The results of the research are hoped to improve the English-speaking ability of class VII students of SMP Negeri 15 Kota Bengkulu through the inquiry-based role play which are expected to (1) contribute to the development of the world of education, especially in learning. in English, (2) can be used as a comparison with previous research, (3) can be used as a reference for future research designs.

2. Practically

a. for students

After participating in this series of research, students are expected to be able to compile scripts for role playing activities in class and **be** able to carry out role playing activities which are expected to encourage students' English-speaking skills to develop better and better. ultimately have a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

b. for teachers

The result of this research is hoped to improve a professional and creative attitude in carrying out the learning they manage and as the task of school educators, therefore it can be used as input material and can increase understanding for education practitioners, especially English teachers using the role-play, can improve English speaking skills. In addition, it can be used as information material for English teachers about the importance of choosing a learning model so that students are more

appreciative, so that the quality of learning and learning outcomes are improved.

c. For students

This research is expected to increase knowledge and insight about the use of the role-play in learning, especially English subjects so that it can achieve the expected results and can increase knowledge about learning speaking skills at the junior high school level. This research can also be a reference for further research.

G. Definition of Key Term

This study has two variables for key terms. They are described below.

1. Inquiry-based Role Play

Inquiry-based role play is a process during play when students ask questions using their imaginations to explore, experiment, discover, collaborate, improvise, and create. It is claimed to have a positive influence on social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Role playing can be used as a method for teaching insight and empathy

competencies. According to Flojo & Pablo (2013) role playing refers to all kinds of activities in which students imagine themselves in situations where they play the roles of other people and use language that is appropriate to the new context. Role-play is very appropriate to be applied in learning English, because by using the role play technique in learning students play an active role in the learning process.

2. Speaking Ability

Speaking is one of the language skills. In everyday life we speak more often in communicating to convey information, communication will be more effective if it is done by speaking. According to Brown (2018) the spoken word is a wonderful tool. They flow together to convey a message full of information. In speaking someone conveys messages and information to listeners by using good language and speech so that listeners can understand the intent of the message conveyed by the speaker.