

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Speaking ability is a fundamental aspect of language learning, especially in English, as it involves using the target language for verbal communication. Zou et al. (2023) stated that speaking is not just about pronouncing words but also includes fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and the ability to interact effectively. Rustamov & Mirza (2023) added that this skill is essential for daily and professional communication since speaking enables individuals to convey ideas and information clearly and appropriately in various contexts.

The inability to master speaking skills in English can lead to several negative consequences for students. Nazarov (2023) emphasized that a lack of these skills hinders effective communication and can impact personal and professional development. Dong et al. (2022) further noted that students who struggle with speaking may face difficulties in presentations, discussions, and other academic interactions, ultimately affecting their academic and career success. Therefore, mastering speaking skills is crucial for achieving success in English learning and professional life.

Poor speaking skills among students can be linked to several key factors. One of them is the lack of sufficient

vocabulary, as highlighted by Mabini (2023), as well as incorrect pronunciation, as discussed by Shadiev, Liu, and Cheng (2023). Additionally, limited opportunities to practice speaking in class are a significant factor, as teachers often do not provide enough space for students to participate in discussions (Jumani et al., 2024). This situation is worsened by students' low confidence in speaking (Cooper et al., 2023).

Another factor contributing to students' low speaking ability is the use of inappropriate teaching methods or approaches. Studies by Castroviejo et al. (2003), Yifeng Ma et al. (2003), and Zou et al. (2003) indicate that ineffective teaching methods can hinder the development of students' speaking skills. Moreover, teaching materials that are not tailored to students' comprehension levels or learning styles, as highlighted by Funayama and Nakajima (2023), make it difficult for students to understand the material, negatively affecting their speaking ability.

Although speaking is a fundamental aspect of language learning, especially in English, research shows that many students still struggle to master this skill. Zou et al. (2023) pointed out that speaking encompasses various aspects such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and effective interaction. However, despite its importance, many students have not yet achieved adequate competence in speaking,

which can affect their academic and professional success (Rustamov & Mirza, 2023).

While several factors influencing poor speaking skills have been identified, including a lack of vocabulary mastery (Mabini, 2023) and unsuitable teaching methods (Castroviejo et al., 2003), there remains a significant gap regarding the use of teaching materials integrated with appropriate learning models. Nazarov (2023) emphasized that the inability to master speaking can hinder students' personal and professional development, but there is limited research exploring how suitable teaching materials can address these weaknesses.

This research aims to enhance understanding of the importance of integrating teaching materials with appropriate learning methods to improve students' speaking skills. Dong et al. (2022) highlighted that students with poor speaking skills may face challenges in various academic interactions, yet research on how suitable teaching materials can help them remains limited. Therefore, focusing on the development of teaching materials tailored to students' needs can be a crucial step in improving their speaking abilities.

This study will make a significant contribution to the literature by exploring effective strategies for designing teaching materials integrated with learning methods suited

to students' needs. By combining appropriate approaches with relevant teaching materials, it is expected to enhance students' speaking competence and, ultimately, support their success in English learning and professional life. This integration will not only address existing gaps but also open new opportunities for developing curricula that are more responsive to students' needs.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, this research focuses on three main issues:

1. The limited mastery of vocabulary and lack of opportunities to practice speaking skills in the classroom.
2. Ineffective teaching methods and irrelevant teaching materials hinder the development of students' speaking skills.
3. Schools tend to rely on commercial teaching materials without evaluating their suitability for students' needs and abilities.

C. Limitation of the Problem

His study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the research focuses solely on the needs of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu in mastering speaking skills for social interaction. This limitation means that the findings may not be generalizable

to students from other grades or schools with different backgrounds and needs.

Second, the development of the prototype student worksheets (LKPD) based on social interaction will be limited to designs specific to the context of MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu. The study will not include the implementation or long-term testing of the effectiveness of these worksheets in a broader population, making the results more of an initial prototype requiring further testing.

Third, this study does not explore other factors that may influence students' speaking skills, such as learning motivation, learning environment conditions, or the role of teachers. The research is more narrowly focused on analyzing students' needs and developing relevant LKPD to enhance speaking skills within the context of social interaction.

D. Research Questions

This study focuses on understanding the needs of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu regarding their mastery of speaking skills in the context of social interaction. Recognizing the importance of speaking as a fundamental skill in language learning, this research also aims to design a prototype of effective student worksheets (LKPD) to enhance their ability to communicate socially. Therefore, this study seeks to answer two main questions:

1. What are the needs of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu in mastering speaking skills for social interaction?
2. How can a prototype of social interaction-based student worksheets (LKPD) be effectively developed to improve the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu?

E. The Purposes of the Research

This study aims to achieve two main objectives. First, it seeks to identify and understand the needs of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu in mastering speaking skills, especially in the context of social interaction. This goal is important to determine how much support students need to improve their verbal communication skills in social settings.

Second, the study aims to design a prototype of social interaction-based student worksheets (LKPD) that are expected to be effective in improving students' speaking skills. By creating worksheets that match students' needs, it is hoped that their ability to communicate socially can be significantly enhanced.

F. The Significants of the Research

This study holds significant importance both theoretically and practically in the field of education, particularly in developing speaking skills in the context of social

interaction among students. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to language learning theories by providing insights into the needs of seventh-grade students at MTs Darussalam Kota Bengkulu in mastering speaking skills. By identifying students' specific needs, this study can offer new perspectives on the factors influencing their speaking abilities, serving as a reference for further research and development. Additionally, the development of a prototype for social interaction-based student worksheets (LKPD) from this research will also provide a theoretical contribution to the design of needs-based learning materials.

Practically, this research offers direct benefits for educators, students, and educational institutions. Teachers can use the findings to design more effective teaching strategies to improve students' speaking skills in social interactions. Students will gain access to teaching materials that are more relevant to their needs, helping them enhance their ability to communicate effectively. Educational institutions can use the research outcomes to design policies and curricula that better respond to students' needs in speaking skills, while also adopting the LKPD prototype as a model for developing teaching materials in other schools.

G. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

To clarify the understanding of the concepts used in this study, the following are the operational definitions of several key terms relevant to the research topic.

1. *Speaking* is an individual's verbal ability to use language for effective communication, including fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and social interaction.
2. *Social Expression* is an individual's ability to express ideas, emotions, and information verbally in a social context through interaction between individuals.
3. *Learning Material (LKPD)* refers to educational resources or tools used to support the teaching and learning process, such as modules, texts, or other media. In this study, it specifically refers to activity-based teaching materials designed to help students learn specific skills through practice and structured activities.
4. *Cartoon Movies* are animated films used as a learning medium to help students understand and practice speaking skills in a social context.