

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents research background, problem identification, research limitation, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research significances.

#### 1.1 Research Background

Of the four language skills, speaking is categorized as one of the most important skills for having communication (Tarigan, 1990 & Ulfiah, 2017). In communication, there is a language used. Supporting the previous statement, Barber (1993), mentioned that a language is spoken and is needed by people to interact. It is in line with Suharta, Sada, & Sutapa (2018), who claimed speaking is the primary communication tool that students need to master. Students must be trained to talk in English regarding the importance and usefulness of speaking. However, Farah (2013), claimed that speaking is the most complex skills. It is because speaking needs much practice. According to Saputri (2017), the frequency of language used determines the success of speaking skills. If it is not applied in real life, students can find difficulty in mastering speaking skills. Therefore, students should be allowed to practice English at least in daily conversation.

Implementing 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and using the 2013 curriculum in teaching English to Junior High School is a good choice. In 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, four competencies are commonly known as 4C Skills. According to Rochmawati (2019), the four competencies in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning consist of; 1) Critical thinking, which enables students to use their logic in expressing ideas and providing a different perspective in solving a problem; 2) Creativity, which refers to the new ideas about the existing problem; 3) Communication, which enables students to do interaction with others by using the language being taught; 4) Collaboration, which refers to the cooperation that is built-in solving a problem. The teacher needs to focus on teaching communication through speaking skills by consisting the four competencies above. It is because speaking is the essential dialogue in building conversation with others. Furthermore, speaking enables students to have new vocabularies and good idea in expressing their minds (Aminuddin, 2017).

In teaching speaking, the teacher does not only teach students to produce spoken words in order to express their feeling and idea (Baidawi, 2016). However, students are taught to select the appropriate words relate to the context and situation. Moreover, students should know and understand the meaning of the word produced. Supporting the previous statements, Dewi, Kultsum, & Armadi (2017) clarified speaking is not simple as we say something. However, the relation of the meaning must be constructed in order to make people understand the context. As cited in Dewi et al. (2017), Brown complimented three processes of building the

meaning, namely producing, receiving, and processing information. In addition, there are several elements of teaching speaking that make speaking complicated, but it still needs to be mastered. Those elements are vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency (Harris (1969) and Harmer (1998). Related to the complexities of those elements, many students get some problems in learning speaking skills.

On one side, the problem appeared from students who tended to use Indonesian when they had the opportunity to speak English. On the other hand, students preferred to be silent and passive when given instruction (Farah, 2013). The same phenomenon also happened in the VIII F class at SMP N 2 Kubutambahan. Based on the preliminary observation, some problems are found in the English class. The problems existed from teacher and students. The following are the problems that existed on the teacher's side; (1) Teacher delivers the material based on the handbook and still uses teacher-centered learning. (2) Teacher uses a monotonous strategy in teaching English; for example, the teacher reads the text about showing the existence of things and people first, then follows up by the students with drilling method and continues finding the unfamiliar words, answering the questions in the text. In the end, students are asked to prepare a conversation. Here, teacher is dominantly taught about reading rather than speaking. (3) Teacher is less assertive in handling the stubborn students in the classroom. It creates discomfort for other students who are focused. Consequently, the related problems exist on the students' side; (1) Students are too noisy even when the teacher explains the material. (2) Students are too passive when

asked to do the instruction such as reading, answering the question, and performing dialogue in front of the class. (3) Students are claimed English as a complex subject, especially in speaking, because they are afraid of being bullied if they are mispronouncing the words and make mistakes. (4) Students are bored with how the teacher shares the material.

Following the preliminary observation and interview conducted in VIII F class, students face some problems in learning the elements of speaking skills. The problems consisted of; (1) Vocabulary, students' vocabulary mastery is still low, and only a few students who curious about the meaning of the words. (2) Pronunciation, the way students pronounce the words have still followed the form of writing, and it is because students are lazy to open the dictionary and see the correct pronunciation. (3) Grammar, students are still confused in using tenses, especially verbs, so they often make grammar errors. (4) Fluency, a problem found in pronunciation, affects students' fluency, and the lack of vocabulary knowledge makes them challenging to improve their own words.

Furthermore, the interview is conducted to collect some information about English class, especially about speaking. Based on the data collected, there are eight classes in the VIII grade, which two English teachers handle. Among those classes, the VIII F class is claimed to lack one. The English teacher who dealt with this class judged that the male students liked to play all the time in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, their attitude is not balanced with their competency. Most students in this class said that English is complicated, especially speaking. Notably, no media is used and

only focuses on the handbook (LKS), it making students lose interest in learning English.

Considering the problems above, the teacher needs to create enjoyable teaching and learning by choosing an appropriate media to give variation in the learning process (Nugroho, Nurkamto, & Sulistyowati, 2012). To solve those problems, using flashcard as teaching media can be proposed as creative learning in teaching speaking (Harmer, 2007). He adds the use of flashcard helps students to speak easily in the form of words or sentences. Flashcard is very useful for presenting and practicing an activity, for example, illustrating character (Suprianti, Mahayanti, Kusuma, & Wijayanti, 2018). Rather than vocabulary, flashcard also enables students to improve their motivation in learning four language skills, especially speaking (Tamayo, Gaviria, & Rivas, 2016). A flashcard is a simply media with no electricity used in its implementation (Suprianti et al., 2018). Supporting the previous statement, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary states that a flashcard is a card containing words and colorful pictures. The use of flashcards benefits students in expressing their feeling and ideas to make a short description spontaneously without writing and remembering the outline, (Khasanah, 2017).

In this study, the researcher has studied several relevant studies, one of them is Saputri (2017) entitled Improving Students' Speaking Skill through Flash Card in Descriptive Text at the Eight Grade of MTS N Ngemplak Boyolali in Academic Year of 2016/2017. Though other researchers have studied speaking using flashcards as teaching media, but it

needs to be done again. However, to maximize its implementation, teaching speaking through flashcards can be conducted in group activity (Harmer, 2007), so that students can reach critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration during the implementation.

Furthermore, the study is conducted at SMP N 2 Kubutambahan and the subjects are the VIII F students. There are considerations in selecting SMP N 2 Kubutambahan as the place of the study. First, this school was chosen since the use of media is rarely used by teachers, especially in teaching speaking. Second, no one conducted the same research as the researcher did in this school. Therefore, the researcher is interested in improving speaking competency of the eighth-grade students by using flashcards in a form of classroom action research (CAR) in this study. Classroom action research is a systematic process of solving educational problem and making improvements (Tomal, 2010). This study is applied the model of classroom action research by Kemmis & McTaggart in Burns (2010), which consisted of four phases namely, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This study is used three kinds of research instruments such as, observation checklist, interview guide, and tests. The data collected is analyzed qualitatively (Burn, 1999) and quantitatively (Sumanto, 1995). In qualitative data, there are five procedures that need to be followed such as, assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. Meanwhile, in quantitative data only measures the mean scores of students' pre-test and post-test. Thus, this study became very important to be conducted since no study attempted to

reveal the implementation of flashcard in improving speaking competency on the eighth-grade students of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the preliminary observation, some problems were identified by the eighth-grade students of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan. The students faced difficulties mastering speaking because they had intense anxiety, less confidence, low motivation, and flawed assumption about English subject, especially speaking. Those problems are explained as follows.

1. Students assumed English as a complex subject. They think there are so many things that have to be learned in English, especially elements of speaking because teacher is dominantly taught reading rather speaking. For speaking activity, teacher just asks students to make conversation and perform in front of the classroom.
2. Teacher has always used the same strategy in teaching speaking so that students lose their interest in learning. In addition, the teacher did not try to use any media to support the learning, making students tend to be passive and did not enjoy the learning process.
3. Students' speaking scores are still low because they have no effort to make them improved. It was proven by the results of the students' pre-test mean scores, i.e., vocabulary (2.35), pronunciation (2.38), grammar (2.32), and fluency (2.62). For the detail, the scores can be seen in the

findings and discussion. Moreover, students are afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, they have less practice in producing speech.

### **1.3 Research Limitation**

Regarding the problems explained previously, this study is not only limited to teachers who teach junior high school with conventional learning based on handbooks source. However, this study is also limited to the eighth-grade students of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan in the academic year 2021/2022. This study is conducted in order to find out whether the implementation of flashcards as teaching media can improve students' speaking competency. Furthermore, this study is conducted to know the responses of the teacher and the students toward the implementation of flashcards as teaching media in teaching speaking competency.

### **1.4 Statement of The Problem**

Based on the identified problems above, the problem statement can be formulated as follows:

1. How can flashcards improve students' speaking competency in the VIII F class of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan?
2. What are the teacher's and the students' responses toward the implementation of flashcards in improving students' speaking competency in the VIII F class of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan?



## **1.5 Research Objectives**

Concerning the problem statement above, this study has two objectives, i.e., general objective and specific objective. The general objective of this study is to improve students' speaking competency through flashcards. The specific objectives of this study are explained as follows:

1. To find out whether the implementation of flashcards can improve students' speaking competency in the VIII F class of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan.
2. To know the responses from both the teacher and the students toward the implementation of flashcards in improving students' speaking competency in the VIII F class of SMP N 2 Kubutambahan.

## **1.6 Research Significances**

This study is estimated to have two main significances in which theoretically and practically. Those are explained as follows:

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study is expected to be helpful for the improvement of students' speaking competency and become an alternative solution in teaching speaking. There are several theories used in this study and those can be used as references for theoretical significance such as, Thornburry (2005) about how to teach speaking, Harris (1969) about testing English as second language, Jones (1989) about speaking and listening, Tomal (2010) about action research for educators, Cameron (2001) about teaching languages to young

learners, Brown (2004) about language assessment principles and classroom, Harmer (2007) about the practice of English language teaching, Suprianti, Mahayanti, Kusuma, & Wijaya (2018) about developing flashcards and its manual book for teaching vocabulary in grade six, Kemmis & McTaggart about classroom action research, and many others. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to influence educational institutions in implementing an appropriate media as learning strategy based on the students' needs and learning achievement, especially in speaking subject.

#### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

##### **1. For the English teacher**

This study is expected to be helpful for the teacher in teaching speaking to the eighth-grade students. Furthermore, as a guidance and facilitator, the teacher is expected to create innovative teaching and learning that improves students' motivation to learn English, especially speaking. The teacher can use this media in order to avoid monotonous methods so the students can enjoy the teaching and learning process.

##### **2. For the eighth-grade students**

This study is expected to provide some advantages for students' speaking competency such as, ease in memorizing new vocabulary, pronouncing the words correctly, understanding the grammar and meaning of the word clearly,

and speaking fluently. Moreover, the students are expected to enjoy the speaking subject and become more active by contributing to the teaching and learning process.

3. For the other researchers

This study is expected to be an appropriate reference for the other researcher who wants to conduct similar interests as this study. In addition, the other researcher is expected to find out another suitable media, method, and more innovative learning strategy in teaching speaking competency to the eighth-grade students. Hopefully, this study provides more information for further research and enables the other researcher to design a better and more exciting method to improve students' speaking competency.

