

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English in Indonesia known as a Foreign Language or EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Due to its position as a foreign language, English rarely used at school and in everyday life (Setiyadi, 2020). Viewed from the history of curriculum changes in Indonesia, English has been taught in Indonesia since 1967 with the hope that Indonesian students can master English well. Along with the times, curriculum changes from year to year continue to occur, and English is one of the subjects that has been involved until today. However, the status of a foreign language greatly influences the development of its use. It is no longer surprising if learning English for about fifty-six years does not show maximum results and does not meet the expectations of English learners due to English generally only conveys through learning in the classroom and in a minimum amount of time.

In general, English learning is divided into four skills: Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking, and assisted by learning vocabulary and grammar. Of the four skills, speaking is the most important skill. Speaking is a technique of producing, receiving and processing words based on various context (Panjaitan, 2022). Therefore, speaking is the main ability in sharing information that must be possessed in English Skill. Bahadorfar & Omidvar (2014) stated that speaking ability is the most important skill in EFL learning. Speaking is often used as a benchmark for the effectiveness of learning English in EFL schools. This is also supported by research results from Rao (2019) which showed that the ability to speak English related to the modern world demands good communication skills. Speaking skill is the expected result of learning English so English is not only used in the learning process but also used in everyday life. That is why governments across the country are focusing on improving speaking skills through learning English to compete globally. One of them is in Indonesia, where since 2013 speaking English has been required for high school students (Poerwati, 2013) with the hope that students can use English in a social context.

Unfortunately, all the efforts made by education staff regarding improving the ability to speak English have experienced turmoil due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused the government to issue regulations regarding an emergency curriculum, where this curriculum again changed the English Language learning especially in speaking skills. Since the announcement of the COVID emergency in 2019, Indonesia has had changes to the learning system. One of them is the Minister of Education and Culture Circular No. 4 of 2020 concerning Distance Learning, which started from March 2020 to July 2021. After that, face-to-face learning was allowed under various conditions although only a small part of Indonesia was in the green zone. Various decision changes occurred from July 2021 to January 2022 where all education unit levels 1, 2, and 3 PPKM (Restrictions on Public Activities) are required to conduct limited face-to-face learning.

Overall, it can be said that education in Indonesia has experienced turmoil for two years. Starting in March 2020, Education in Indonesia for the first time recognized the online learning system. It can be said that online learning has a positive impact, besides giving innovations in learning, the learning system is also more flexible and can be done anywhere and anytime. However, this still has a negative impact that is difficult to avoid. A study by Rofiq and Arifin (2021) found that one of the negative impacts of online learning is that it reduces the effectiveness of student learning and difficult to interact with the surrounding environment. Another research from Safitri et al (2021) also supports previous studies that students have difficulty in adapting and cannot understand the online learning system. The turmoil experienced in learning during the pandemic had an impact on students even until the pandemic situation began to end.

This situation was then used as a lens to see the English learning situation in Indonesia, especially in speaking skills difficulties. The changes that have occurred over the past two years have certainly affected the course of Speaking Skills in Indonesia. Several researchers have conducted research on speaking skill in Indonesia. The first researcher is Hayatinnufus (2018) who conducted research before the pandemic. This research was conducted at SMA Ar-Rohman Malang, Indonesia. This research used qualitative methods. This study found that speaking difficulties were not only experienced by students but also by teachers. These

difficulties are categorized into three parts, namely students' problems, teachers' problems and situation and condition problems. In students' problems, the linguistic difficulties faced by students are centered on grammar difficulties and non-linguistic difficulties faced by students, namely lack of participation in learning, accustomed to using their mother tongue, and also not knowing what to say. While the problems faced by teachers are the lack of instructor and difficulty remembering student names. In addition, the researchers also found that the condition of students participating in outdoor activities before learning began caused students to become tired and difficult to focus on learning speaking.

Another research on difficulties in speaking skills was carried out by Hidayah et al. in 2021. At that time, education in Indonesia was still being carried out online due to the pandemic. This research was conducted at SMA N 3 Kota Jambi. This research used qualitative methods. According to the results of this study, difficulties faced by the students are influenced by linguistics and non-linguistics factors. In the linguistic aspect, students experience difficulty remembering vocabulary, difficulty in pronouncing words, difficulty in constructing sentences, lack of fluency when speaking and the lack of comprehension between speakers. On the non-linguistics aspect, students face technological and interaction difficulties because this research was conducted during a pandemic. Students experience connection problems during learning and also the unavailability of facilities such as laptops, cellphones or computers. Interaction difficulties faced by students also occur due to the lack of interaction between students with friends and teachers, so that became increasingly difficult for students to practice speaking learning.

Another research on speaking difficulties was conducted by Panjaitan et al. (2022), during the new normal period. This research was conducted at SMK GKPI Pematangsiantar. This research used a qualitative method. In this study, the researcher found that students had speaking difficulties in terms of linguistic they are lack of vocabulary, mispronunciation of words and arrangement of words into sentences. Non-linguistic were also happened, it associated with learning in the new normal era. Students feel increasingly less confident and unmotivated because

during the new normal period. Technological difficulties also have become a problem for students in developing speaking skills

Various studies that have been described above, have similarities with this research, namely using qualitative methods. From the research conducted, it was concluded that in the pre-pandemic period, during the pandemic, and the new normal era, the difficulties faced by students had several different factors. There is a gap that there has been no research on speaking skills in the post-pandemic period 2023, where the learning system in Indonesia is fully implemented offline. Therefore, research updates is necessary to see how the educational turmoil that has occurred due to the pandemic affects the difficulty of speaking skills in students. Previous research that have been described was also conducted in high secondary schools, where this was different from this research which focused on junior secondary school students. From the gaps found, the researcher decided to conduct research on the difficulty of speaking skills in post-pandemic situations in junior secondary school students.

This research begins with preliminary observations, where in this observation, researcher investigated secondary schools that have students with difficulties speaking English. In this observation, researcher found that SMP N 4 students still had speaking difficulty. The preliminary observation was conducted in December 2022. According to the preliminary observation, students' speaking skill were stated to be far from the target that had to met in speaking competence. Students do not even have a good understanding of basic vocabulary and short sentences. One of the teachers explained that this could have been caused by several learning changes that have occurred in recent years, where students have had to adapt several times to the changing learning system due to the pandemic.

From the results of these observations, it would be very interesting if further research was carried out on the problems experienced by students in speaking skills. In addition, this study will also discuss how the post-pandemic situation affects students' speaking learning. Therefore, this research was conducted to understand more deeply the speaking problems experienced by students at SMP N 4 Singaraja.

1.2 Problem Identification of the Study

As explained in the introduction, several studies on speaking difficulties have been conducted before the pandemic, during a pandemic and in the new normal era (Hayatinnufus, 2018; Pratiwi & Prihatini, 2021; Nisyakh, 2022). There has been no research discussing the difficulties of speaking during the post-pandemic period where learning is fully implemented offline with the various upheavals that have gone through during the pandemic. Hence, it is important to research difficulties in speaking skill during the post-pandemic period to find how the changes in learning system along the pandemic have affect the students speaking skill.

Researchers have made observations at SMP N 4 Singaraja regarding the state of Speaking English learning in a post-pandemic situation. The results of observations found that speaking skills by students is still far from the basic competencies requested in speaking skill. Students also have not mastered basic English such as daily vocabulary or short sentences. And due to the pandemic, teachers have to repeat the basic material such as pronunciation, word recognition, and basic sentences. From the results of these observations, the authors decided to conduct further research on speaking difficulties experienced by students during the post-pandemic period.

1.3 Problem Limitations of the Study

Regarding problem identification, this study is devoted to analyzing the difficulties faced by students in speaking English. In addition, it is also limited in terms of participants, which uses third grade students in SMP Negeri 4 Singaraja. From the results of preliminary observations, second grade students have problems in speaking because it was the second year students practice speaking English. Where in the first grade, students take part in online learning, so speaking practice has not shown maximum results when face-to-face in second grade. Therefore, this research was continued after students started grade 3, where students may have more knowledge about speaking after two years of learning speaking English in

secondary school. This study was limited to class IX Hatta students of SMP N 4 Singaraja.

1.4 Statement of Research Questions

There are two research questions in this research, which were formulated as follows;

1. What are the speaking difficulties experienced by the students of SMP N 4 Singaraja?
2. What is the effect of the post-pandemic situation on the speaking difficulties experienced by students of SMP N 4 Singaraja?

1.5 Purpose of Study

There were two purposes of this research based on the research questions statements, which are represented as follows:

1. To analyze the speaking difficulties experienced by the students of SMP N 4 Singaraja
2. To analyze the effect of the post-pandemic situation on the speaking difficulties experienced by students of SMP N 4 Singaraja

1.6 Significance of Study

The significance of the study consists of theoretical significance and practical significance.

1. Theoretical significance
 - a. Researchers

The results of this study can be used as a theory about speaking difficulties to strengthen the main topic material or topics that can be developed more broadly.

2. Practical significance

a. English Teachers

The results of this study are expected to help teachers understand students' difficulties in speaking skills and the factors that cause these difficulties

b. Students

The results of this study are expected to acknowledge students of the reasons for speaking difficulties that they have. So that students will find a solution to deal with it.

c. Schools

The results of this research are expected to acknowledge the schools about speaking difficulties faced by students so that school will have a program to help students face the problem.

