CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, problem identification, scope of study, research question, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

English language skills are an essential skill that must be mastered for communicating with the global world. Nowadays, English language skills are highly demanded because English has evolved into the dominant international language in academic, business, technology, and cross-cultural communication (Anita et al., 2023). Indonesia is one of the nations consistently innovating to advance English language education, aligning with the recognition of the significance of language skills in the era of globalization (Adnyana, 2022). This is also the reason why English has become a mandatory subject presented in every curriculum published by the government.

Merdeka curriculum is a new curriculum implemented in Indonesia. Just like other subjects, English language learning within the Merdeka Curriculum has a primary focus that is aimed to be achieved from elementary to secondary education levels. Based on the Attachment of the Decree of the Head of the Agency for Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture Number 008/H/KR/2022, it is stated that English language learning emphasizes six language skills: listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting, in an integrated manner across

various types of texts. This is intended to assist students in successfully attaining communication skills in the English language as part of their life skills. This regulation provides opportunities for learners to broaden their insights related to themselves, social relationships, culture, and global job opportunities.

One of the most crucial aspects of language skills that play a significant role in fostering intelligent, critical, creative, and cultured future generations is speaking skill. Tashieva et al. (2021) stated that speaking skill are essential for students to support self-expression, for instance asking questions, providing specific information, and explaining ideas related to phenomena, events, or other objects. Yusran (2016) added that speaking skill can shape students with critical and systematic thinking in presenting their ideas. Equally important, through this skill, students can formulate smart arguments according to the context.

In the realm of building social relationship, Wu (2023) said speaking skill plays a vital role in establishing harmonious relationships among students and their surrounding environment. Students can understand and respond to the emotions, feelings, and needs of others, thereby strengthening social and interpersonal bonds. Additionally, Prasetya (2023) stated in the professional world, these skills enable individuals to collaborate effectively with colleagues. Therefore, based on various explanations regarding the importance of speaking skill for students, every element needs to enhance the quality of learning, particularly in the case of English language learning. Purnamasari et al. (2023) stated that speaking skill is one of the indicators of success in learning English.

Based on the facts gathered in the field, it must be acknowledged that learning a foreign language presents its challenges (Pratiwi &Rohmadi, 2023). Therefore, it is not surprising that English speaking skill among students have not been able to meet the expected targets. Many students encounter obstacles when speaking English. Significant barriers include difficulties in pronouncing vocabulary, spelling errors, and the complexity of understanding grammar (Nasrudin, 2019). Psychological factors such as fear, embarrassment, lack of confidence, and low motivation also contribute to students' low speaking skill (Nisa et al., 2023). Several of these mentioned factors are closely related to the role of the teacher in building the learning activities applied in the classroom. Thus, teaching methods and learning media must be tailored to the needs of the learners to make learning much more engaging.

The role of teacher as a facilitator in the learning process is crucial, especially in developing strategies that can boost students' confidence in speaking. That argument is supported by Gabejan (2021), who mentioned, that by creating a supportive environment, teachers encourage students to express their ideas freely and without pressure. This enables students to communicate more effectively and confidently. Adem & Berkessa (2022) argue that English language learning activities that are overly focused on theory and the "Teacher-centered" approach need to be changed, as this hinders students from improving their expected skills. Furthermore, they emphasize that teachers should provide opportunities for students to practice the language they are learning. The emphasis should be placed on teaching language usage rather than just focusing on theoretical aspects.

Finding English teachers who use traditional and less innovative approaches is not difficult, making learning speaking skill seem monotonous and boring. Pratiwi & Rohmadi (2023) state that students are not encouraged to learn how to speak the language; instead, they tend to be taught only language theory. This means that the teaching delivered by the teacher doesn't correspond to how students should speak based on the context and situation but instead emphasizes theoretical comprehension of the language. This approach is predominantly rational and cognitive, without creating emotional and effective connections. Therefore, the lack of speaking skill can be a serious hindrance to students' development into intelligent, critical, and understanding of the context.

The primary emphasis in teaching speaking skill should be on the practical application of language in authentic communication situations. It is crucial to adopt an approach that emphasizes the significance of comprehending the utilization of language in daily social and cultural settings (Noviyenty & Anwar, 2023). Teachers can guide students in using language in practical and relevant situations, allowing them to experience firsthand how language is used in real life. This makes the learning process more meaningful. To achieve functional language learning, there is a linguistic approach called pragmatic approach. Anita et al. (2023) describe pragmatic approach simply as an approach that directs students to learn language based on its contextual usage. This approach emphasizes successful communication while taking social factors into account.

Several researchers have conducted research regarding of implementation of pragmatic approach to enhance students' speaking skill. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Aritonang et al. (2022) indicate that pragmatic approach in language learning has proven to be highly effective in encouraging active student participation throughout the learning process. In this approach, students play an active role and engage in critical thinking and problem-solving throughout the sequence of learning activities, from start to finish. This approach enables students to be more involved in using language in everyday contexts and significantly enhances their speaking skill.

Another study conducted by Amenah Firas (2022) analyzed the role of pragmatic approach in English language teaching. From this research, we can learn that pragmatic approach yields positive outcomes in English language instruction. By employing this approach, students have many opportunities to listen to language in real-life context. Furthermore, this approach aids students in enriching their vocabulary within a rich network of associations. Additionally, pragmatic approach can reconstruct students' knowledge.

The next research is from Elmira Huseynova in 2022 focused on the application of pragmatic approach in English as a Second Language (ESL). The research demonstrated that effectively implementing pragmatic approach in foreign language learning significantly enhances students' speaking skill. Students are equipped with the ability to communicate appropriately in various situations. Furthermore, teachers can guide students in communication skills like native speakers, enabling students to express themselves freely on various topics and situations.

Preliminary observation was carried out at one of the high schools in North Bali, namely Madrasah Aliyah Syamsul Huda located in Tegallinggah Village, Sukasada District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. The Researcher observed the phenomenon of students having low speaking ability. From the initial data collection, it was found that XI B students had low speaking skill, so they needed extra attention to improve their skill. Based on the assessment of student learning outcomes, it was evident that out of 25 students consisting of 18 females and 7 males. 14 students had achieved the minimum passing grade (KKM), while the remaining 11 students scored below the KKM, which is 75.

The researcher had the opportunity to observe classroom teaching and learning activities directly. It was observed that students mostly used Indonesian rather than English when answering or responding to the teacher's questions. This was due to their limited English vocabulary. Moreover, they heavily relied on textbooks, resulting in spending more time trying to understand the content by translating each word in the book using the dictionaries they brought. As a result, their opportunity to speak English directly was very limited. The researcher also found that students often made pronunciation errors, leading to some students feeling embarrassed when speaking.

Several students tended to not engage in the learning process. When the teacher explained, some students appeared to be more focused on other things, such as looking around or whispering to their friends next to them. Through the researcher's analysis, it was observed that such phenomena occurred because the teacher still employed teacher-centered approach. This made students'

opportunities to practice using language according to its function very limited. As a result, the material taught seems to distance students from understanding language use in real life situations that are relevant to everyday contexts. So that learning prosess became less meaningful and less attractive.

To gather further information about the observed phenomena, the researcher conducted interview with an English teacher who teaches XI B. From the teacher's perspective, the inactivity of students in class and their low speaking skill were attributed to their relatively low motivation to study. Students' perception of English learning as challenging to understand was a significant reason why this situation occurs. In response to this, the teacher claimed to have tried various methods such as singing songs and playing games to enhance student engagement, particularly in speaking skill. However, the teacher acknowledged that these efforts had not yet yielded optimal results. Another obstacle mentioned by the teacher was the vast amount of curriculum content, making it seem like the school is rushing to meet targets. Consequently, it becomes very challenging to ensure that students comprehend all the material being taught.

On the other hand, to obtain richer data, the researcher also conducted interviews with several students from class XI B, particularly those who had scores below the minimum passing grade (KKM). Many of these students admitted to not liking English learning because they found it challenging. Students mentioned that they struggled to understand what the teacher was conveying. The significant challenges they faced were when they had to speak in English. Various difficulties such as pronunciation, what they considered

complicated grammar, making it hard for them to construct sentences with proper grammar, and the fear of making mistakes, caused students to lose enthusiasm for participating in English classes.

After conducting these initial observation, the researcher chose MA Syamsul Huda as the research site with two considerations. First, almost half of the students in XI B class had low English speaking abilities. Second, the researcher wanted to know whether the use pragmatic approach could enhance students' speaking skill.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background above, the identification of problems in this research were:

1. XI B students of MA Syamsul Huda have low speaking ability caused by several factors, such as vocabulary limitations, often using incorrect pronunciation, low motivation, and lack of self-confidence.

2. Approaches and teaching strategies that are not appropriate for the needs of students. The teacher taught more theory to students and uses a significant amount of the Indonesian language.

3. Teaching and learning processes that did not direct or build a learning atmosphere that is in real context with everyday life.

4. Learning activities still used teacher-centered approach, so the chance for the students to speak was very limited.

1.3 Scope of Study

In order to make this research to be more focused, a limitation of the research problem was made. The limitation of the problem in this study was limited in analyzing the use of pragmatic approach in improving the speaking skill of students of MA Syamsul Huda Tegallinggah.

1.4 Research Question

The research question of this study was "How students' speaking skill at MA Syamsul Huda Tegallinggah can be enhanced through pragmatic approach?"

1.5 Research Objective

The purpose of this research was to analyze the use of pragmatic approach to enhance students' speaking skill at MA Syamsul Huda Tegallinggah.

1.6 Research Significance

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

1. The result of this study was expected to be able to provide an overview regarding pragmatic approach model in improving the speaking skill of students at the junior high school level in learning English.
2. The result of this study was expected to be able to enrich references related to linguistics, especially in the field of pragmatic.

1.6.1 Practical Significance

1. For Teachers

The researcher expected English teachers will use this study as a source of information on how to apply pragmatic approach in the teaching and learning process to enhance students' speaking skill.

2. For Students

This research was expected to make students enjoy the teaching and learning process more so that the learning received by students is much easier to understand and more meaningful.

3. For Readers

The result of this study was expected to be able to provide new knowledge about how to apply pragmatic approach to improve speaking skill, especially in learning English in Senior High School.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Pragmatic Approach

To understand the definition pragmatic approach in learning, it would be beneficial for us to comprehend the meaning of the terms of approach and pragmatic. According to Killen (1998) approach is a term used for something general in nature. In learning, Killen explained approach is the way or strategy used to plan, organize, and implement learning to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Leech (1983) stated pragmatic is a study of the meaning of utterances in specific contexts. In this case, people use language in context to achieve their communicative goals. In line with that, Suyono (1990:2) defined pragmatic as the study of

language users' ability to construct and select sentences according to the context so that they (language users) can use them appropriately. In language learning, he viewed pragmatic as an approach that involves inviting students to engage in real-life communication contexts and speech situations by applying the principles of comprehensive language usage.

1.7.2 Speaking Skill

Speaking is a skill of articulating the sounds of a language to verbally express thoughts, concepts, or emotions (Brown and Yule, 1983). The skill of speaking involves being able to converse effortlessly and assumes not just an understanding of language features, but also the capability to instantly handle information and language (Harmer, 2007).