

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Intercultural competence has become an essential part of learning English. Studies conducted in this field have covered a wide range of topics, from comprehending the idea to investigating efficient teaching strategies. According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence includes the capacity to communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds in an appropriate and successful manner. It entails not just learning language but also growing in empathy, adaptability, and cultural understanding (Holliday, 2010).

Recent studies on multicultural English teaching have advanced the field in a number of ways. Academics have concentrated on evaluating how well the pedagogical strategies now in use support learners' intercultural competency. Deardorff's (2009) research, for example, looked at the effects of including materials and activities from other cultures in the curriculum. Furthermore, studies have looked into how technology might help with cross-cultural understanding and communication (Godwin-Jones, 2017). Social media platforms, online collaboration projects, and virtual exchange programs have given students opportunities to interact with classmates from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the difficulties and complications associated with teaching intercultural English have been examined in recent study. The cultural biases ingrained in language teaching methods and materials are a major problem (Kramsch, 1993). These prejudices have the power to reinforce stereotypes and obstruct sincere cross-cultural communication. The power dynamics present in cross-cultural encounters are an urgent concern as well, especially in educational contexts (Holliday, 2018). In order to address these problems, it is necessary to critically evaluate current teaching strategies, curriculum, and evaluation instruments to make sure they support inclusive and equitable learning environments.

The common goal of intercultural competency and peace education is to promote empathy, understanding, and collaboration across a range of social and cultural differences. Galtung (1969) show that our knowledge of the function of

intercultural competence in fostering peace and resolving disputes on both an interpersonal and societal level has improved as a result of recent study in this multidisciplinary topic.

The Merdeka Curriculum provides a promising framework for incorporating intercultural competence (ICC) and peace education into the English language learning process. This curriculum focuses on learner-centered and contextualized education, giving teachers more flexibility to introduce themes of diversity, social justice, and global citizenship into lessons. These themes align strongly with Indonesia's national values, as outlined in Pancasila, the country's foundational philosophy, which emphasizes unity in diversity, respect for human dignity, and social justice. However, despite the Merdeka Curriculum's potential to promote these values, the English for Nusantara textbook currently used in 9th-grade classrooms does not fully address intercultural competence and peace education. My initial analysis indicates that while the textbook includes some elements related to these themes, the integration of intercultural competence, linguistic features, and peace education remains superficial. The textbook lacks sufficient content and structured activities to help students develop the necessary skills for effective intercultural communication and peaceful conflict resolution. This gap highlights the need for a more deliberate and comprehensive approach to teaching intercultural competence and peace education within the curriculum.

Nevertheless, a number of obstacles still exist in spite of intercultural competency's promise in peacebuilding initiatives. One such problem is the necessity of addressing institutional injustices and power disparities that impede real cross-cultural dialogue and sustain disputes (Brewer, 2003). Furthermore, there are major obstacles to the advancement of intercultural competency and peace education programs due to the rise of nationalism, xenophobia, and cultural division (Dowdall & Colucci, 2019).

Peace education is designed to foster understanding, respect, and cooperation among individuals and groups. Peace education, which has its roots in the ideas of social justice, human rights, and nonviolence, strives to provide students the tools they need to settle disputes amicably and constructively. According to Galtung (1969), its main objectives are to foster empathy, improve critical thinking about

social issues, and motivate active engagement in the process of establishing a society that is more just and equitable. Through the integration of these ideas into educational environments, peace education aims to establish a basis for sustained societal harmony.

A common component of effective peace education is the integration of particular curricular approaches and instructional strategies that address different aspects of conflict and resolution. In order to have students thinking deeply about peace, instructional strategies like cooperative group projects, conflict resolution role-playing, and participatory learning are frequently employed. To assist children in developing problem-solving abilities and a greater comprehension of various viewpoints, programs may include exercises like role-playing, peace circles, and restorative justice techniques (Davies, 2004). These techniques seek to establish a secure and encouraging learning atmosphere where students can investigate and hone nonviolent communication skills.

In the current Indonesian setting, intercultural competency and peace education go hand in hand, especially considering the country's multifaceted cultural terrain and past experiences with intergroup violence. Astuti and Hidayat (2017) point out, given Indonesia's diverse population in terms of languages, cultures, and religions, it is imperative to make deliberate efforts to foster intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence. This requirement is in line with the more general objectives of peace education, which aim to develop in student's attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility (Salomon, 2002).

Although Indonesia's cultural diversity is a strength, there are drawbacks as well, such as intergroup conflicts and sporadic acts of violence. According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence cultivates constructive discussion and respect for cultural differences, giving people the skills and mentality they need to manage such difficulties. According to Reimers and Chung (2010), incorporating intercultural content into peace education curricula can enable Indonesian students to critically engage with themes of social justice, identity, and conflict.

Byram (1997) highlights that intercultural competency is necessary for people to interact with others in a variety of cultural situations in a way that is consistent with Pancasila's concept of unity in diversity. Based on Galtung's (1969) ideas,

peace education seeks to develop the attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and conflict resolution that are essential to promoting Pancasila's ideal of a peaceful coexistence.

Intercultural competency and peace education can be included into formal learning experiences through the Merdeka Curriculum, which places a strong emphasis on learner-centered and contextualized education (Kemdikbud, 2021). Teachers can use the curriculum to help students gain a greater knowledge of Pancasila values and to build their intercultural abilities by adding themes of diversity, social justice, and global citizenship. Additionally, teachers can modify instructional strategies like intergroup communication and experiential learning to support the development of intercultural competency because the Merdeka Curriculum's flexible structure allows for this (Deardorff, 2006).

Studies indicate that the adoption of values education, encompassing Pancasila principles, may augment the efficacy of intercultural and peace education endeavours (Sulistiyanto, 2017). Students are better prepared to negotiate complicated cultural dynamics and support efforts at conflict resolution when intercultural learning experiences are based on the ideals of tolerance, mutual respect, and social justice (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Moreover, the assimilation of Pancasila principles cultivates a feeling of national identity and inclusivity, advancing social harmony in heterogeneous societies (Hefner, 2009).

However, there are still difficulties in incorporating Pancasila values into educational procedures and successfully implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. In order to provide fair access to intercultural and values-based education, Brewer (2003) emphasizes the significance of resolving power disparities and structural inequalities within educational systems. Furthermore, in order to provide teachers with the pedagogical expertise and cultural competences they need to execute the curriculum successfully, it is imperative that they continue their professional growth and training (Byram, 1997).

Research findings from a variety of language education experts support the idea that teaching speaking skills can be a useful platform for teaching interculturalism and peace education. Byram (1997) asserts that teaching speaking gives students the chance to meet with people from different cultural backgrounds and participate in real-world communication. Students can improve both their

language skills and their intercultural competency through communicative activities like debates, role-plays, and discussions because they can negotiate meaning and comprehend various cultural viewpoints.

Furthermore, speaking exercises help language learners develop empathy and intercultural awareness, according to research by Alcón Soler (2008). Through cooperative speaking exercises that entail the exchange of personal narratives, convictions, and cultural customs, learners can enhance their understanding of cultural variety and foster tolerance for differing opinions. Intriguing methods for incorporating interculturalism and peace education into speaking training have been investigated in recent field study. For instance, Li's (2019) study looked into how language learners might improve their speaking abilities and foster intercultural understanding through the use of online intercultural encounters. The results showed that online interactions with peers from various cultural backgrounds encouraged the growth of intercultural competence and enabled meaningful communication.

In addition, the application of task-based methods for teaching speaking within the context of peace education has been the focus of new research directions. For example, García-Pastor's (2020) study looked at how well cooperative problem-solving exercises help language learners develop their conflict resolution abilities and cultivate a peaceful culture. The results showed that cooperative speaking activities helped pupils grow in their capacity for empathy, diplomacy, and social responsibility. Research indicates that imparting speaking skills to students offers a beneficial foundation for incorporating interculturalism and peace education into language learning. Teachers can support language learners' attempts to promote peacebuilding and develop intercultural competence by implementing communicative activities that foster engagement, collaboration, and reflection on cultural differences.

1.2 Identification of The Problem

The existing English textbooks, such as English for Nusantara introduced under the Merdeka Curriculum, fall short in adequately supporting the enhancement of students' speaking skills. Although there is an effort to highlight Indonesia's

cultural diversity, the English for Nusantara textbook lacks comprehensive integration of peace and intercultural education. This deficiency poses a significant issue in developing communication skills that are in line with the curriculum's goals of inclusivity and practical relevance.

One of the recurrent issues in Indonesia is the lack of intercultural understanding, particularly among the younger generation. According to recent studies, the country's diverse cultural landscape, while rich, often leads to social fragmentation due to insufficient intercultural communication and education. For instance, research by Yulianti et al. (2022) highlights that schools and educational institutions frequently fail to incorporate intercultural education effectively into their curricula. This omission results in students holding stereotypes and harbouring biases towards those from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, thereby perpetuating social divisions rather than fostering unity. A simple yet common example of this issue occurs when students from different ethnic groups prefer to socialize exclusively within their own cultural circles, leading to a lack of meaningful interaction with peers from other backgrounds. This behaviour reinforces existing prejudices and hinders the development of a more inclusive and harmonious society.

This challenge is further exacerbated by the limited focus on speaking features in English language materials used in Indonesian schools. According to Sari (2023), many English textbooks in Indonesia emphasize grammar and reading over speaking skills, which are crucial for effective communication. As a result, students often struggle to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue in English, a language that could otherwise serve as a bridge between diverse cultural groups. The lack of emphasis on speaking practice not only hinders their ability to express themselves but also limits their opportunities to engage in intercultural exchanges, further deepening social divides.

Moreover, current English language textbook noticeably lack components related to intercultural and peace education. Language learning materials frequently ignore cultural diversity and neglect to include viewpoints on global concerns like social justice and human rights, according to research by Lee and Choi (2019). Without exposure to a variety of cultural contexts and conversations on

peacebuilding, students risk narrowing their perspectives and becoming incapable of navigating cross-cultural interactions. (Wright, 2020).

Furthermore, speaking exercises in English language materials sometimes lack a focus on improving linguistic expertise. According to Brown (2018), many speaking tasks promote speed over correctness, overlooking the significance of language structures and vocabulary learning. This method may limit students' capacity to communicate themselves clearly and effectively in spoken English (Johnson, 2021).

A study conducted by Gao and Neumann (2018) showed that speaking exercises found in textbooks and online resources are often unreliable and do not adequately prepare students for real communication situations. If there are not enough opportunities to practice speaking meaningfully, students may struggle to improve their fluency, pronunciation and communication skills (Peterson, 2017).

Another significant problem with the English language resources available today is the insufficient incorporation of linguistic information into speaking training. Speaking exercises frequently ignore the fundamental linguistic structures and principles that are necessary for clear oral expression in favour of concentrating only on communication skills at the surface level. Liaw and English (2017) claim that a lack of clear instruction on grammar, vocabulary, and discourse elements in many speaking tasks results in low linguistic accuracy and superficial language use. As a result, students could find it difficult to express complex meanings, communicate ideas coherently, and modify their language use in various situations and registers. Huang and Tsai (2013).

Indonesia has had many intercultural conflicts in the last few decades as a result of its diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic terrain. Hefner (2005) found that tensions fuelled by identity politics and historical grievances have frequently resulted from Indonesian society's multicultural fabric. These disputes have taken on diverse forms, such as social discrimination, religious extremism, and communal violence (Bertrand, 2004).

A significant issue related to peace education in Indonesian classrooms based on research, involves the challenges of promoting religious tolerance among students. A study by Wahid Institute (2021) found that in some schools, especially

in regions with strong religious homogeneity, students often harbour prejudices against those of different faiths. Teachers reported difficulties in facilitating discussions on religious tolerance, as students would sometimes express discriminatory views learned from their families or communities. Another study by LIPI (2020) observed that in classrooms where ethnic diversity exists, students sometimes face bullying or exclusion based on their ethnicity. For example, in certain schools in West Kalimantan, ethnic Dayak and Madurese students experienced tension stemming from historical conflicts between their communities. Teachers in these schools reported that they often lack the resources and training to effectively address these issues and promote peace.

In reaction to these difficulties, peace education has become an essential tactic in Indonesia for fostering social harmony and conflict resolution. According to studies by Yusuf (2017), peace education programs have played a significant role in helping young Indonesians develop tolerance, intercultural understanding, and respect for variety. Teachers have worked to instil a culture of peace and nonviolence in the next generation of students by including peace education into extracurricular activities and school curricula (Susanti, 2019).

Additionally, tackling the underlying causes of intercultural disputes in Indonesia requires a strong emphasis on peace education. Saputro and Suryadi's (2018) research emphasizes how crucial it is to use peace education initiatives to foster dialogue skills, empathy, and critical thinking. Through facilitating dialogues on social justice, human rights, and conflict resolution, educators enable students to confront preconceptions, biases, and discriminatory beliefs that exacerbate cross-cultural conflicts. Fernandes (2016).

The necessity for inclusive and participatory methods that include a variety of stakeholders in peacebuilding endeavours is also emphasized by peace education programs in Indonesia. Community-based peace education initiatives have been successful in energizing local communities to resolve intercultural disputes using negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation procedures, according Kurniawan's (2020) research. These programs support the development of long-lasting peace and social harmony at the local level by encouraging cooperation and teamwork among various ethnic and religious groups (Chaidar & Yusuf, 2015).

According to research by Hantzopoulos (2011), cultural awareness, empathy, and respect for variety are often absent from speaking exercises. Furthermore, the lack of content on peace education in language learning resources reinforces the limited view of language learning as only a communication tool, ignoring its capacity to advance social justice, conflict resolution, and reconciliation (Bajaj, 2011).

In conclusion, in Indonesia, the lack of intercultural understanding among 9th-grade students is exacerbated by ineffective intercultural education and insufficient focus on speaking skills in English language textbooks. These educational materials often emphasize grammar and reading over practical speaking exercises, which impedes students' ability to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue. Moreover, textbooks frequently neglect intercultural and peace education content, reinforcing stereotypes and limiting students' exposure to diverse perspectives. This deficiency not only hinders effective communication but also perpetuates social fragmentation and biases. Addressing these issues through improved textbook content, comprehensive peace education, and community-based initiatives is crucial for fostering tolerance, empathy, and unity, ultimately paving the way for a more inclusive and harmonious society

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This research is limited to development of intercultural-based speaking material for ninth grade junior high school students with linguistic practice and peace education in Merdeka Curriculum.

1.4 Statements of Research Questions

Based on the background of the study and the identification problems, research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are students' needs for English Speaking material?
2. How is the supplementary model of intercultural and peace education material for English speaking developed?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on above questions of research, objectives are formulated as follows:

1. To know students' needs for English Speaking material
2. To develop the supplementary model of intercultural and peace education material for English speaking

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study gives benefit theoretically and practically. These significances are discussed in the following section below:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research acts as a reference for integrating intercultural communicative competence and peace education into English language teaching, particularly in developing speaking materials.

2. Practical Significance

- a) For Students: Having good English supplementary material, global competence, and creativity will prepare students for a better career and life in the uncertain world of the 21st century. Students who are taught using the developed model are expected to be able to improve their English language competence, especially speaking skills
- b) For teachers: This research will anticipate to give an applicable framework for addressing students' global competence, English competence, and creativity in English instruction. Teachers are expected to use the model as guidance so teachers can implement it more easily in the classroom.
- c) For other researchers: This research is hoped to be useful to other researchers to designing and implementing speaking material which contain the elements of intercultural and peace education in Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity and prevent any misunderstandings regarding the focus of this research on swear words, the following sections offer detailed explanations of the key terms utilized throughout this study.

1. Intercultural-Based Speaking Material

Refers to English language teaching materials specifically created to incorporate intercultural communicative competence. These resources are designed to help students comprehend, interact with, and communicate across different cultural viewpoints while enhancing their speaking skills. This approach promotes the cultivation of global awareness and cultural empathy through focused activities and exercises.

2. Linguistics Features

The specific elements of language, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and discourse, that students are expected to practice and master through the speaking materials.

3. Peace Education

A pedagogical approach that encourages understanding, tolerance, conflict resolution, and peaceful interactions among students by incorporating peace concepts into the learning process.

4. Merdeka Curriculum

It refers to Indonesia's educational approach that emphasizes the freedom to learn, giving students the chance to engage in creative, self-directed, and tailored learning experiences. This framework prioritizes the development of essential skills, character building, and the appreciation of local culture, while also integrating intercultural communicative competence and peace education. The aim is to prepare students to become responsible global citizens, equipped with the necessary knowledge and values to navigate an interconnected world.