

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to explain the background of the study, problem identification, research limitation, statement of the problems, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the crucial aspects of language proficiency, encompassing comprehension, pronunciation, and the ability to effectively convey ideas, and information, express emotions, negotiate meanings, and engage in various social contexts. Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language (Rao, 2019). Brown (2001:267) stated, that speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. The people can carry on a conversation reasonably competently when they can speak a language. Good speaking skills will allow the students can express ideas, convey opinions, collaborate on projects, and establish effective interpersonal relationships. Therefore, speaking skills are not only a crucial component of language proficiency but also serve as the foundation for the communicative success of individuals in various life contexts.

Richards (2008) in Normawati et al., (2023), stated that the success of a learner is determined by their ability or proficiency in speaking. Proficiency in speaking allows students to communicate effectively with others in various situations. From everyday conversations to public presentations, good speaking skills enable students to express ideas, opinions, and emotions clearly and persuasively. By being able to communicate well, students can establish deeper connections with others, enhance collaboration in group projects, and improve their overall social well-being (Rao, 2019).

The successful speaking activities according to Ur (1996) as cited in (Siagian & Pinem:2020), include some points; learners talk a lot, participation is even, motivation is high, and language is at an acceptable level. Learners talk a lot means the teacher does not dominate the discussion. Participation can even, be shown from the student's active participation in the classroom. Motivation is high can be seen from the way the students talk. Lastly, students demonstrate their understanding by using basic sentences they have learned.

The successful speaking activities cannot be separated from the role of the teacher. This is because the teacher serves as the facilitator, guide, and model for students as they navigate through various speaking tasks and exercises. As emphasized by Brown (2007), the teacher's guidance and support are crucial in creating a conducive learning environment where students feel comfortable to practice and improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) underscore the importance of teacher-student interaction in speaking activities. They argue that through meaningful interactions with the teacher, students can

receive personalized feedback, encouragement, and linguistic input that are essential for their speaking development. Additionally, the teacher plays a vital role in designing speaking activities that are engaging, relevant, and communicatively authentic, which motivates students to participate actively and develop their speaking skills further.

In order to make the students participate actively in speaking class, the teachers need to implement the proper method to teach their students. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teaching speaking skills is based on various teaching methods that incorporate principles from learning theories. There are several types of teaching methods used to teach speaking in the teaching and learning processes which suggested by the Merdeka Curriculum. Nuramini et al. (2024), mention several types of teaching method that are suggested used in the Merdeka Curriculum such as Project-based learning, Problem-based learning, Peer teaching, Collaborative learning, Task-based learning, Cooperative learning, and Role playing. Similarly, Pertiwi, Nurfatimah, and Hasna (2022), state that the effective methods that can implemented in the Merdeka Curriculum are active learning and project-based learning. Meanwhile, Latifah & Priantari (2024), emphasized that role-playing is a viable method, while Az-zarkasyi (2024), mentioned the problem-based learning method can applicate to the Merdeka Curriculum. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2022), identified several methods suitable for the Merdeka Curriculum, including discussion method, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery learning.

The implementation of teaching speaking methods cannot be separated from the implementation of the curriculum because they are closely related and mutually supportive in the education process. According to Ni'mah, Wafa, & Sulistyaningsih, (2024), Law No. 20 of 2003 states that a curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as ways used as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities to achieve specific educational goals. Manalu et al., (2022) in Ni'mah, Wafa, & Sulistyaningsih, (2024), state that the curriculum is a lesson design, teaching materials, and learning experiences that have been programmed in advance. It can be said that the curriculum maps out learning objectives and content that must be conveyed to students while teaching speaking methods encompass strategies and techniques used to develop students' speaking skills in line with those objectives. The alignment between teaching methods and the curriculum is crucial to ensure that students not only acquire knowledge about the language but also can apply it in real communicative situations. In other words, teaching methods should be designed to actively engage students in speaking and interacting in the target language.

Indonesia always develops and modifies the curriculum to align with the country's societal dynamics. The newest curriculum implemented in Indonesia is the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, in the context of education in Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum is a government effort to empower schools to develop curricula that are tailored to local needs while still adhering to national standards. The

implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is expected to enhance the curriculum's relevance to the needs and potentials of students, including in English language learning.

The Merdeka Curriculum was developed as a more adaptive curriculum framework as part of a learning reform initiative, with a focus on important material and developing students' character and skills (Kemendikbud, 2022). Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that each student has enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Ndari, Suyatno, Sukirman, & Mahmudah, 2023). Nadiem Anwar Makarim, as the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek), expressed that the Merdeka Curriculum offers a greater level of conciseness, simplicity, and flexibility. Merdeka Curriculum aims to promote freedom of learning and teaching for both students and teachers. Therefore, it is imperative that the goal of educational freedom is to bring about independence, flexibility, and improvisation in teaching and learning (Angga & Iskandar, 2022) in Ferdaus & Novita (2023). Students must perceive the process of learning as enjoyable and purposeful, so they develop a sense of independence and a desire for lifelong learning.

Merdeka Curriculum provides flexible and student-centered learning experiences while emphasizing the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. It provides opportunities for students to learn in a calm, relaxed, fun, stress-free and pressure-free manner, to show their natural talents (Sonzarni, et al.: 2022). In contrast to the traditional curriculum

which tends to be more structured and teacher-centered, the Merdeka Curriculum involves the students in the learning process. This curriculum gives teachers the freedom to adapt learning to students' needs and interests and encourages more integrated learning between subjects.

Minister Nadiem Anwar Makarim mentioned several advantages in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. One of them is simpler and more in-depth because this curriculum will focus on essential materials and the gradual development of student competencies. The teacher will teach according to the stages of student achievement and development. In the Merdeka Curriculum, a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students is called Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). Teaching at the right level (TaRL) does not refer to the class level, but refers to the student's ability level (Kemendikbud, 2022b).

The Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia (2021), states that the objectives of general standards of teaching English in senior high schools in Indonesia are set as follows: 1. Develop communicative competence both oral and written to pursue the level of information literacy, 2. Increase awareness of the nature of English as a foreign language in order to compete with other countries in a global society, and 3. Develop students' understanding of the relationship between language and culture. Indonesia as a developing country has also set its educational curriculum to include English as a foreign language that is learned from elementary school to university.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, speaking ability is considered an important communication skill and must be actively developed. This curriculum prioritizes students' ability to successfully express themselves in English based on their development. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes the development of speaking abilities through interactive communication activities. Teachers should foster a supportive learning atmosphere that allows students to practice and improve their speaking abilities (Nabilla, et. al., 2024).

In the context of learning English, especially speaking skills, the Merdeka Curriculum provides an opportunity for teachers to develop teaching methods that are more contextual and relevant to the needs of students in certain areas. Rahimah & Widiastuty (2023), stated in English language learning, the Merdeka Curriculum offers opportunities for teachers to customize methods, teaching materials, and assessments to align with students' needs and interests. This method enables teachers to integrate English learning with students' life contexts, such as by using materials relevant to their environment or topics that capture their interest.

Talking about the Merdeka Curriculum cannot be separated from the Sekolah Penggerak which is also a breakthrough launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, together to improve the quality of education. By decision of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia Number 1177/M/2020 concerning Program Implementation Guidelines Sekolah Penggerak, stated that the aims of the Sekolah Penggerak are an increase in competence and character in accordance with student profile Pancasila, guarantees an equal distribution of education quality through improvement

programs the capacity of school principals who can lead education units in achieving quality learning, build an educational ecosystem that is a stronger focus on improving quality, as well as creating a climate collaborative for stakeholders in the field of Education both at scope of schools, local and central government (Syafi'I, 2021).

Based on the explanation, the researcher conducted a preliminary observation at SMA Negeri 4 Denpasar. SMA Negeri 4 Denpasar is one of the senior high schools in Denpasar. This school is one of the schools that implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the teaching and learning activity. This school is also known as the first Sekolah Penggerak in Denpasar (Targetnusa, 2022). As the first Sekolah Penggerak in Denpasar, the school became a reference for another school in Denpasar city in implementing educational programs. Regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar as Sekolah Penggerak, the researchers are interested in conducting research related to the teaching speaking method, challenges faced by the teacher in the implementation of teaching speaking method incorporating with Merdeka Curriculum in this school, and also the solutions to overcome the challenges.

As a pioneer in implementing educational innovation, SMA N 4 Denpasar has a big responsibility to demonstrate best practices in integrating the Merdeka Curriculum into English language teaching, especially in the speaking aspect. Two interesting phenomena that found by the researcher are connected to each other. The first one is the difficulty of the teacher to implement the speaking method

aligned to Curriculum Merdeka which leads to the second problem which is students who are not ready to speak in English.

With the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes a more independent and contextual learning approach, English teachers at SMA N 4 Denpasar experience some problems in implementing teaching methods that are by the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in speaking. This can result in a mismatch between the teaching methods used by teachers and curriculum expectations. English teachers find it hard to change their teaching paradigm from a more teacher-centered to one that is more open, collaborative, and supports student independence in learning.

That problem leads to the second problem, despite having studied English for several years, students often experience difficulties in mastering English speaking skills effectively. This is caused by a lack of opportunities to practice active speaking and learning that still relies on conventional approaches. From the phenomenon above, it can be seen the student's speaking ability needs to be guided by proper methods. To overcome this phenomenon, an in-depth analysis of the English teaching methods used by teachers at SMA N 4 Denpasar, which specifically integrates the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, is very important. This highlights the need to adapt and develop more effective speaking learning methods to ensure that the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented optimally at SMA N 4 Denpasar.

Some researchers have conducted studies on the use of teaching methods in learning English. Fatmakiyyah & Santoso (2023), examine the kinds of teaching

methods used by teachers to teach students speaking skills in English at Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Pasuruan. Then, a study by Haq (2023) analyzes the kind of teaching method that is used by the teacher and the problem faced by the teacher in teaching speaking at twelfth grade students of SMA N 1 Teras. Another study by Tahir & Hanapi (2017), conducted research that aimed to find out the method applied by lecturers in teaching speaking, the implementation, and the student's perception toward the implementation of the method at the University of Iqra Buru. Furthermore, Netta & Safura (2018), explore the lecture method in teaching speaking at the University of Muhammadiyah Aceh and the way the method is implemented in the classroom. A study by Burekovic, et al. (2023), examined the five methods used in English language teaching. By exploring the features of each method, this study aimed to help young English language teachers evaluate their teaching techniques, it's important to grasp their distinctions and provide a critical perspective. However, Pido & Erlina (2019), identify the methods implemented in teaching English and the procedures of English teaching methods implemented in English teaching activity at 7th grade of MTs Negeri 1 Kabupaten Gorontalo. There is also a study that describes research to describe the method of the English teachers face-to-face in SMA Negeri 1 Pajangan conducted by Feriovi & Abbas (2022). Shifa (2022), explores the teaching method used by English teachers in eighth and ninth grade in SMPN Simpang 5 to find out how the process of teaching and learning English for Young Learners via online during a pandemic. Aprillasis & Sugiarti (2023), conducted a study which aim to determine the teaching methods used by teachers and how is the implementation of the method for

inclusive children in Mahira Alam School Bengkulu School. Furthermore, the study by Anabokay & Suryasa (2023), explores the key methods used by EFL teachers, how they taught the methods, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of applying the method in Indonesia which focuses on elementary teachers. Fitra and Tiarina (2023), focused on English Teachers' challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 3 Solok Selatan. Ndari, Suyatno, Sukirman, & Mahmudah (2023), describe the Merdeka curriculum's implementation and its challenges at SD Muhammadiyah Warungboto schools in Yogyakarta.

In reviewing previous research relevant to the topic of teaching English and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, there is a broad understanding of various teaching methods, including Project-Based Learning, Problem Based Learning, Collaborative Learning, Role Playing, Peer Teaching, Discovery Learning, Discussion Method, Task-Based Learning. However, there are gaps in the literature that still require further research. Existing studies tend to provide a general overview of English teaching in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, without a specific focus on teaching speaking skills in *Sekolah Penggerak*. Additionally, research focuses on the use of specific teaching methods such as Project Based Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Task-Based Learning, Peer Teaching, Discovery Learning, Role Playing, and Discussion Method in teaching speaking skills within the Merdeka Curriculum is limited. Therefore, as a step forward in this field, further research that is more detailed and focused, especially exploring the direct application of these teaching methods in teaching speaking skills in SMA N 4 Denpasar which is known as the first *Sekolah Penggerak* in

Denpasar, would be highly valuable. By further investigating how English teachers integrate teaching methods that incorporate with Merdeka Curriculum in teaching speaking skills, this thesis will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various teaching methods in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled “An Analysis of Teaching Method Used by the English Teacher Incorporating Kurikulum Merdeka for Teaching Speaking at SMA N 4 Denpasar”. This research will make a significant contribution to strengthening the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and improving the quality of English learning at SMA N 4 Denpasar. Besides that, this study is beneficial for teachers in another school and another researcher by providing new insight into the use of teaching speaking methods in English lessons incorporating the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.2 Problem Identification

Proficiency in speaking is a critical skill for learners, enabling them to engage in meaningful real-time communication, express thoughts, ideas, and emotions, and negotiate meaning across various social contexts (Rao, 2019). Rao (2019), emphasized that speaking is an essential skill for students to become effective communicators, both in academic and real-life situations.

Brown (2000) emphasizes the role of speaking in improving language fluency, communicative competence, and confidence in language use. The role of

teachers in using effective teaching speaking methods in learning is crucial as it significantly contributes to students' academic growth, cognitive development, and overall learning outcomes. Furthermore, the role of teachers in using speaking teaching methods in learning activities also helps train students to speak English, which is beneficial for students' future in facing the rapid development of communication internationally. The implementation of teaching methods cannot be separated from the implementation of curriculum.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes more independent and innovative learning, making teaching methods crucial, especially in developing students' speaking skills. As the education paradigm shifts towards student-centered learning, teachers need to select appropriate teaching methods to encourage active student participation in the learning process. However, there are problems arise in implementing teaching methods incorporating the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in teaching speaking skills. The main problem is the lack of understanding of teaching methods aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum (Brown, 2007). The lack of knowledge and skills among teachers in selecting and implementing appropriate teaching speaking methods aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum can hinder students' ability to develop speaking skills effectively. It means the gap that can be seen in this case is about their speaking ability which needs to be guided by proper methods.

1.3 Research Limitation

In this present study, the researcher focused on investigating the implementation of teaching method for speaking incorporating with Merdeka Curriculum in SMA N 4 Denpasar. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method to describe the implementation of a teaching method for speaking incorporated with the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar. The kinds of teaching methods used by English teachers at this school and the challenges faced by the teacher will be explained descriptively.

1.4 Research Question

Referring to the background explained above, the research problems can be formulated as follows.

1. What kinds of teaching methods are used by the English teacher to teach speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar?
2. How do the teachers implement the teaching methods for teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar?
3. What challenges do the English teacher face in implementing the teaching methods for teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar?
4. What solutions do the teachers use to overcome the challenges faced in implementing the teaching methods for teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar?

1.5 Purposes of the Study

Based on the problem above, the purpose of the study could be seen as follows:

1. To identify the kinds of teaching methods used by the English Teacher in teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar.
2. To describe how the teachers implement teaching methods for teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar.
3. To investigate challenges faced by the English teachers in implementing the methods of teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar.
4. To elaborate on the teacher's solutions in overcoming the challenges faced by the English teachers in implementing the methods of teaching speaking skills in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA N 4 Denpasar.

1.6 Research Significance

The findings of this research are expected to benefit many people theoretically and practically.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

The findings of the present study are expected can provide scientific knowledge for many people and other researchers in the future about the use of

teaching methods for speaking in English classrooms incorporating with Merdeka Curriculum by the teachers more deeply, focusing on the types of teaching method, how the teacher implement it, challenges that face by the teacher in implementing it, and the solutions to overcome the challenge. The findings are also further expected to be used as a reference for another teacher in another school to teach students in the classroom.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The practical significance expected from this research are as follows:

a. For Teacher

This study can be used by the English teacher in designing and developing English teaching methods that can improve student's ability to speak English. Additionally, during the teaching and learning process, the teacher can inspire and motivate students to build on their prior knowledge.

b. For School

The researcher hopes that this research can be useful for schools in terms of information about how teachers implement teaching methods for speaking in the English classroom as well as to know challenges faced by the teachers in English lessons and the solutions to overcome the challenges.

c. For the next researcher

The result of the research is expected to provide benefits for future researchers to support the data finding which has the same topic about teaching methods for speaking incorporating with Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Conceptual Definitions

The definition of key terms used in this study is needed to avoid misunderstanding. The key terms are defined both conceptually and operationally as follows:

1. Teaching Method

According to Harmer (2007), a teaching method is a systematic and organized approach employed by educators to facilitate language learning among students. It involves the selection and implementation of structured plans and strategies to present language material effectively, ensuring coherence and alignment with the overall teaching goals. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, a teaching method for speaking emphasizes a student-centered approach, where students are given the freedom to explore and develop their speaking abilities through relevant and contextual activities.

2. Speaking Skill

Mubarak, Charisma, & Nurcholish (2023), state speaking is a production skill that falls into two main categories: accuracy and fluency. Accuracy consists of the use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation through several activities, fluency takes into account the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously.

3. Kurikulum Merdeka

According to the Ministry of Education in 2022, Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to learn more depth into concepts and

strengthen competencies. Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be customized to the learning needs and interests of the students.

1.7.2 Operational Definitions

1. Teaching Method

The teaching method can be defined as the kind of method which is used by the English teacher in teaching speaking to students in SMA N 4 Denpasar. It can be defined as procedures of how the teacher teaches the material in the classroom which include various activities in the process of language teaching activity at SMA N 4 Denpasar.

2. Speaking

Speaking is a process of delivering the message in saying ideas, opinions, knowledge and feelings to other people to inform, persuade, and also to entertain that can be learned through the teaching and learning process at SMA N 4 Denpasar.

3. Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka is a set of guidelines for the process of teaching and learning activities in SMA N 4 Denpasar. This curriculum is a curriculum in which the learning method refers to the talent-interest approach. Independent Curriculum is a curriculum whose learning method follows a talent-interest approach to learning.