

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Speaking is categorized as a productive oral skill different from listening and reading which are receptive skills (Harmer, 2007). It is called a productive skill as a person speaking to produce something. Setyaningsih et al., (2015) mentioned that speaking is the most complex skill which requires a lot of practices. Speaking can also be defined as a skill that is necessarily applied in people' daily life (Zyoud, 2016). Moreover, Austin and Searle (2018) stated that speaking contains many words and actions which aims to create an interaction and conversation with society.

Sari (2011) claimed that the frequency of language use significantly influences the success of students' speaking skills. Engaging in daily conversations and regular practice greatly contributes to students' ability in speaking. Conversely, limited opportunities to practice English may hinder students from improving their speaking skills effectively. As speaking is a crucial component of English language acquisition, it is essential to foster this skill throughout the learning process. In agreement with this statement, MacDonald et al., (2009) emphasize that teaching speaking skills should begin at the early stages of learning and continue progressively to advanced levels. This sustained practice enables students to develop their communicative skills.

Currently, junior high schools in Indonesia, particularly in Bali, are starting to implement the newest curriculum, the Independent Curriculum which promotes

the development of 21st century learning. Afgany et al., (2023) examines the differences between the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) and the Independent Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is a rebranding of the Prototype Curriculum officially introduced by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim in 2022. As part of the transitional policy framework, educational institutions are currently granted the autonomy to determine the most appropriate curriculum for their respective contexts. The institutions may decide to implement either the 2013 Curriculum or the Independent Curriculum based on their institutional capacity, pedagogical orientation, and readiness for curricular innovation.

The Independent Curriculum emerged as a refinement and continuation of the Emergency Curriculum, which was initially develop in response to the educational challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic (Pinatih et al., 2021). Conceptually, Independent Curriculum is grounded in the principle of independent learning, which emphasizes students' autonomy by allowing learners to determined learning process based on their individual interest and needs. The primary objective of this curriculum is to create more flexible and effective learning experiences. Despite the introduction of this curriculum, the 2013 Curriculum (K13) remains in use, as schools have the discretion to transition using the Independent Curriculum based on their institutional readiness.

In 21st-century learning, Fadel and Trilling (2009) claim four essential competencies of 21st century skills, commonly referred to as 4C skills; critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. These skills are considered fundamental for preparing them to face complex challenges during this era. Critical thinking enables learners to apply logical reasoning when expressing ideas and

evaluating diverse perspectives in problem-solving. Creativity involves generating innovative solutions to existing problems by thinking beyond conventional approaches. Communication pertains to students' ability to convey and interpret messages effectively, particularly through the use of the target language. Meanwhile, collaboration emphasizes cooperative efforts in identifying and resolving problems collectively. Given the integrative nature of these skills, it is essential for teachers to emphasize communication through the development of speaking skills. As revealed by Sari (2011), speaking not only facilitates the new vocabulary acquisition, but also assists students articulate their ideas effectively and develop coherent opinions.

In teaching speaking, teachers are not only expected to prepare students to produce spoken words as a means of expressing their ideas and feelings (Klefbeck, 2023). Students must also be taught to select appropriate vocabulary according to the situation and context, as well as to comprehend the meaning of each word they use. Supporting this notion, Setyaningsih et al. (2015) notes that speaking is not merely the act of saying something; it must convey meaningful connections to ensure that the listener understands the intended context. Similarly, Brown (2007) as cited in Dewi et al., (2017) explain that constructing meaning in speaking involves three interrelated processes: producing, receiving, and processing information. Although speaking involves several complex components, these elements must still be mastered. According to Creswell (2014), these elements include vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.

Based on the initial observation at SMP N 2 Singaraja, the researcher noted that the English teaching process in class VII4 was still predominantly lecture-

based. The teacher frequently delivered direct explanations of the material, followed by student exercises. Although occasional ice-breaking activities such as role plays were implemented, these were primarily scripted and drawn directly from the textbook. As a result, students' speaking skills did not develop as effectively as expected. Furthermore, Suwastini et al. (2022) observed that ice-breaking and role-play activities used in class were often disconnected from the textbook content. For instance, games such as *Guess the Word* or *Connect the Words* were enjoyable for students, but they did not always align with the topics or vocabulary being studied. In response to these issues, the researcher conducted a further observation to explore the speaking challenges encountered by seventh-grade students, particularly those in class VII9 at SMP N 2 Singaraja. This inquiry was prompted by a discussion with the English teacher, who noted that students in class VII9 faced greater difficulties in speaking compared to other classes. Consequently, students lacked sufficient speaking practice in real-life contexts, limiting their overall English language development.

In the preliminary observation conducted on July 17th, 2024, in class VII9 at SMP N 2 Singaraja, the researcher found some challenges related to the students' speaking skills. Many students preferred to use Indonesian when they had a chance to speak English, while others were passive in class. Based on the observation, there were a few reasons, namely : (1) students felt shy and afraid of making mistakes because they didn't want to be laughed at by their classmates, so they chose to stay quiet and didn't try to speak; (2) students found it hard to express their ideas or opinions in English because they had limited vocabulary, which made them confused when they had to speak spontaneously; (3) although role-play activities

were given, they needed to be improved to give every student a fair chance to participate in the speaking practice (Puspitasari et al., 2024).

During an interview with students from Class VII9 at SMP N 2 Singaraja on July 18th, 2024, the researcher asked them questions about their opinions on English and the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students were asked to choose their favorite skill and explain why, mention the difficulties they faced with the skill they liked the least, and suggest learning methods they found helpful. Out of 36 students in Class VII9, 23 students preferred listening, although they often did not fully understand what they heard. Thirteen students preferred writing over speaking because they felt uncomfortable and lacked confidence when speaking in front of the class. Most students also said that limited vocabulary was a big problem in their English learning. Additionally, 30 students said they enjoyed learning English more when the teacher included fun ice-breaking activities and games in the lessons.

On November 25th, 2024, the researcher conducted a pre-test using a Descriptive Picture-Cued Test to check the students' speaking skills. The test showed several big challenges that students have in pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and vocabulary. For pronunciation, many students had trouble saying daily activity related words correctly. Several words like cycling, walking, and swimming were often mispronounced as *woking* or *swiming*, which made their speech unclear. This happened mostly because they were influenced by their first language. In terms of fluency, students spoke hesitantly and paused a lot while answering the teacher's questions and giving instructions to their friends. They struggled to speak smoothly and confidently, which showed that they needed more

practice.

In terms of grammar, students frequently made errors with basic sentence structures, particularly in the use of the verb *to be* (is, are, am). A common mistake involved the incorrect use of pronouns and vocabulary, such as saying “he is running to school” instead of “she is walking to school.” These patterns indicated that many students continued to struggle with understanding and applying fundamental English grammar rules. Regarding vocabulary, while most students were familiar with basic nouns such as *book* or *table*, they experienced difficulties using common verbs like *walk* and *run*, as well as distinguishing between base and continuous verb forms. As a result, many students were unable to provide clear and detailed descriptions when asked to explain a picture. The results of the pre-test further supported these findings, with the class obtaining a total score of 402, resulting in an average score of 58.53. The passing grade (KKM) was 75, only 5 students (14.71%) achieved the minimum competency standard, while the remaining 29 students (85.29%) were lower than the passing grade. so these results showed that the students’ pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary all needed improvement. These outcomes indicated that the students required improvement in pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, with grammar emerging as the most critical area due to the frequency and impact of grammatical errors on overall speaking performance.

This study aimed to address an issue in class VII.9, where students did not have enough chances to practice speaking with their own words. Based on the preliminary observations, it seemed that speaking activities mostly focused on reading a role play script from the textbook. Even during a role-play, the students

were often asked to follow scripts from the book, so they did not get to create their sentences. Furthermore, the students apparently also did feel not confident and most of them felt bored when learning speaking. It caused by the teachers is used of monotonous teaching methods and aids. For instance, the teacher just gave instructions to speak through reading a dialogue or conversation. On the other hand, the teacher occasionally required the students to do speaking based on their memorizing a text such as presentation.

To solve the problem, the researcher intended to use the Role Reversal Total Physical Response and Questioning Activities (RR TPR-QA) method. This method aids students speaking by connecting language with physical actions. TPR is a teaching method where students learn by doing actions while speaking. As Richards & Rodgers (2003) mention, many grammar rules and vocabulary can be learned by using commands that the teacher gives. Savić (2014) talks about several ways to use TPR: (1) Giving commands, where the teacher shows the action first and then students follow, (2) Role reversal, where students start giving commands to each other or the teacher, and (3) Action sequences, where students do a series of actions after learning the basic commands.

This study was implemented due to the positive benefit of TPR method in enhancing speaking skills. It could be seen through previous research conducted by Yuliawaty (2023) at MTsN 13 Jakarta Selatan entitled *“Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Total Physical Response (TPR) untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbicara pada Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris.”*. The findings indicated that when students spoke while engaging in physical actions, they showed improvements in pronunciation and their ability to construct sentences. In this

study, students either performed the actions first and then spoke, or they articulated sentences while performing the actions. These activities were carried out in pairs or groups, where students took turns giving commands to one another. The focus of the study was to provide students with more opportunities to practice speaking, encourage them to use their own words, and reduce reliance on merely reading from the textbook.

The intervention in this study was based on the TPR method, explained in “Technique & Principles in Language Teaching” by Larsen- Freeman and Anderson (2011). TPR is a teaching method that mirrors how people naturally learn their first language. It focuses on helping students understand commands by combining verbal instructions with physical actions. Theoretically, the TPR method uses physical actions to help students understand and remember the target language. Although the original TPR literature does not talk about questioning activity after physical activities, this idea was in line with Krashen's Comprehensible Input theory as cited in Patrick (2019), which emphasizes the importance of easy-to-understand input for effective language learning. Additionally, this approach relates to Vygotsky's scaffolding principle, which shows that students need step-by-step support during learning. The teacher can help students connect movements with sentence structure by questioning activity after physical actions, deepening their understanding, and gradually encouraging verbal responses.

This questioning activity enriches the basic principles of TPR and helps students develop their speaking skills more effectively in English lessons. Numerous relevant studies claimed that questioning activity become an effective way to develop students' speaking skills (Kadnawi et al., 2021; Saskia et al., 2022;

Satriani et al., 2022). The previous Classroom Action Research conducted by Kadnawi (2021) found that the implementation of questioning paper technique enables to improve students' speaking skills at Kampung Inggris Pare. In agreement with this statement, Saskia et al., (2022) revealed that the use of questioning activity at UPT SMA Negeri 4 Parepare significantly improved students' speaking skills. The classroom questioning strategy effectively improved students' speaking ability, fostered greater classroom participation, and built students' confidence (Saskia et al., 2022). Satriani et al., (2022) who conducted similar study also proved that variations of questioning strategies enhance students' speaking skills at MTs As'adiyah Putri 1 Sengkang.

The TPR (Total Physical Response) method was a language learning method that combines commands, speaking, and actions. The goal of the incorporating OA into TPR method was to push students practice using English orally in the classrooms. TPR is specifically designed to make the learning process more engaging and accessible, particularly for young learners. In support of this, Rambe (2019) emphasizes that TPR creates a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment that enhances student motivation and facilitates the internalization of linguistic structures through physical activity.

Based on the problems encountered during the preliminary observations in class VII9 of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, the main goal of this study was to improve the students' speaking skills by using the Role Reversal Total Physical Response with Questioning Activities (RR TPR-QA) method. This study focused on helping students speak better in a English by combining the use of TPR with QA. It was expected that the findings would offer practical benefits by identifying effective

strategies to improve speaking proficiency among junior high school students. Moreover, the study sought to contribute to the development of more innovative and engaging approaches to teaching speaking in English language classrooms. By applying the RR TPR-QA method, the research focused on specific aspects of speaking skills in a foreign language context and reviewed relevant literature on the effectiveness of TPR-based strategies at the junior high school level.

1.2 Problems Identification

Based on the preliminary observations conducted, there were several problems identified, as follows:

1. **Difficulty in Speaking English.** Vast majority of students feel hard to speak English confidently and actively in the conversations. It leads them less participating during the discussion's activities. Further, the pre-test score revealed that the students' speaking skills outcome are not improved. The mean of pre-test was lower than the passing grade (KKM).
2. **Problems with Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation.** Many students still have problems with using vocabulary, tenses, and grammar correctly. Several mistakes were detected in their pronunciation and written form. They seem not very interested in enhancing their vocabulary.
3. **Ice-Breaking and Role-Play Activities Limited to Textbook Scripts.** Sometimes, English teacher does ice-breaking activities such as role-play, but most of these activities are based on textbook scripts. As the results, students' speaking skills do not improve as expected.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the problems identification, the research question of the current study was formulated as follows:

1. How can the implementation of the Role Reversal Total Physical Response and Questioning Activities (RR TPR-QA) method improve the English-speaking abilities of students at SMPN 2 Singaraja?

1.4 Scopes of the Study

Based on the research question, the scope of the study could be emphasized on several limitations, as follows:

1. The research objective was to solve the students' speaking issues in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.
2. The study was implemented at VII9 class of SMP N 2 Singaraja in the academic year 2024/2025.
3. The intervention involved the use of TPR combined with Question Activity.
4. The learning materials were limited to positive and negative Present Continuous Tense.
5. The results report here were due to 2 cycles conducted in the study.

1.5 Research Objective

Based on research question, the research objective could be explained as follows:

1. To investigate on how TPR-OA could improve students' speaking abilities in English at SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja in academic year

2024/2025.

1.6 Research Significances

The study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to a number of parties:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The research findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the existing theory of TPR, specifically related to teaching English to young learners. In addition, it is hoped to contribute to its theoretical development through the integration of OA into TPR.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

a. For High School English Teachers

The research is expected to be able to be use as an additional guidance, reference, and source for teachers, especially in implementing TPR-OA to improve their students' speaking ability.

b. For the students participating in the study

The finding is expected to facilitate students with innovative English activities and guide students in developing their speaking skills through the combination of TPR-OA technique. It also expected to help them in speaking English proficiently and confidently.

c. For Other Researchers

It is expected that other researchers could adopt the steps of implementing TPR-OA and apply the method to improve other English skills.