

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Speaking ability is a crucial aspect of English language proficiency and plays a crucial role in communication. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, speaking ability is crucial. Fluency, pronunciation, syntax, and comprehensibility are some of the components that make up this ability (Bygate, 2016). Speaking competency requires more than just language fluency; it also requires critical thinking skills, performance daring, and repeated practice. Because it requires students to proceed and produce language on their own, speaking competency is frequently recognized as the most challenging ability in language learning.

In a communicative English language learning, speaking has a strategic role as the main bridge between linguistic competency and real-world implementation. Through speaking activity, students not just training language structure, but also developing the skills of critical thinking, collaboration, and the ability of conveying ideas verbally (Rabab'ah & Al-Mahrooqi, 2023). An effective speaking learning is expected to equip students with a contextual language ability and cultivating a sense of self-confidence in using English for daily life. Main expectation in speaking learning that students are able to convey opinion, tell stories, have discussion, and reacting social situation in a correct manner of English (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Speaking competency plays a key role in meeting 21st-century education goals,

which prioritize communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking as essential skills for lifelong learning and global participation (Redhana, 2019). Moreover, speaking is not just one of the four language skills, but also a main foundation for students to build global competition in the future.

However, evidence from the field suggests that many elementary school students still struggle to develop active and confident English speaking skills. The gap between the expected outcomes and the actual conditions reflects various barriers that affect students learning process. One of the main problems is students' tendency to act passively when being asked to speak English. They did not show the initiative to respond, and even oftentimes choose to stay silent due to the feeling of not being linguistically and psychologically prepared (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Other than that, the vocabulary limitations also become a major issue that make students having a hard time to express their ideas. It affects in their low level of proficiency to convey organized and clear ideas, especially when speaking in front of people (Hasnain & Halder, 2023). The fear of making mistakes while speaking can also worsened the situation. Many students feel anxious they will be mocked or corrected which caused them to choose avoiding the application of English verbally (An & Li, 2024)

Other issues came from the teaching approach where it's still focused on teacher (teacher-centered) and have not given a proper space for students to be more actively participating. In such settings, students often remain passive recipients of information, with limited opportunities to actively practice and refine their speaking abilities (Richards, 2022). Moreover, oftentimes learning has not been designed based on meaningful tasks which made students did not understand the relevance

between English and their real-world (Ellis, 2021). The limited activity that involves authentic communication caused students to feel that English is a theoretical and non-applicative study. This affect to students' low motivation to speak even if being given the chance. The learning environment that does not support active speaking practice also worsened this condition. Thus, these issues shows that innovation in learning approach that able to provide an authentic, and contextual speaking experience that also able to encourage students to actively using English during learning process is needed.

Based on the results of the preliminary classroom observation conducted at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa, it was found that students English speaking skills were still relatively low. Most sixth-grade students appeared to lack confidence when asked to speak in English and tended to provide very brief responses, consisting of only one or two words. This condition indicates that their speaking skills have not yet developed optimally compared to other language skills, such as reading and writing. The low level of speaking proficiency is influenced by several factors, including limited vocabulary mastery, fear of making mistakes while speaking, and a lack of confidence when expressing their ideas in front of their classmates. These challenges cause students to adopt passive behavior during English learning, where they prefer to listen and write rather than engage in oral communication. The situation is further influenced by the fact that English is taught by the homeroom teacher, who is responsible for teaching all subjects in the class. With divided attention and no background in English, the teacher tends to rely on conventional, teacher-centered methods. Although the school has digital facilities, they have not been used effectively for speaking instruction due to limited pedagogical and technical knowledge. As a result, opportunities for students to practice speaking in

engaging and authentic ways remain minimal.



The structural conditions of the school also make the situation more challenging. There are three 6th grade classes (6A, 6B, and 6C), however due to the 6C's classroom is under renovation, its students have been split between other two classes. This has created overcrowded classrooms, making it harder for teachers to manage interactive learning activities. In large classes, teacher tend to prioritize control and discipline rather than facilitating communicative tasks. Overpopulation also reduces the chance for individual students to participate in speaking practice. Students who already hesitant become less likely to take risks in such environments. These conditions demonstrate the urgent need for an instructional approach that can address both the linguistic and contextual challenges. A technology-mediated and task-based framework is seen as a promising solution because it creates a more interactive, student-centered learning environment. Through meaningful tasks supported by digital tools, students can be encouraged to practice speaking more actively and confidently, leading to potential improvement in their overall competence.

Considering various issues, the students have faced in learning speaking skills, an approach that is capable to provide a contextual, meaningful, and able to encourage students to actively using English learning experience is needed. One of the widely developed innovative language teaching approach these days is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). TBLT is a learning method that focus on the implementation of communicative task that portrays real activity in daily life (Ellis, 2021). In this approach, students did not only learn language structure, but also trained to use language as a tool to finish specific task, such as storytelling, discussion, or giving instruction. These tasks are designed to encourage the use of

English functionally and authentically, so the learning process can be more meaningful for students. TBLT also provide more chances for students to speak in situations related to the real world which is important in the context of speaking competency. The role of the teacher is as a facilitator who guides the process of task execution, not just presenting the material. Therefore, TBLT approach deemed appropriate to answers English learning challenges in primary school level.

Several previous research have proven the effectiveness of TBLT in improving students speaking skills. This approach is capable in improving students' active participation, strengthen their self-confident during speaking, and help them to use the language spontaneously in real context (Bygate, 2016; Jackson, 2022). In research conducted by Hasnain and Halder (2023), teacher who implemented TBLT reported a significant impact in students speaking skills and their enthusiasm during learning. Other than that, An and Li (2024) shows that students who use task-based approach in their learning experience their anxiety decreasing when speaking and show better verbal performance. Another advantage of TBLT is its flexibility in adapting the task with students' competency level, so that each student can study in accordance to their capacity. TBLT also encourages emotional and social involvement by doing group work and discussion, which become an effective facility to enhance communicative competency (Crookes & Ziegler, 2021). Thus, this approach not only provide results from cognitive aspects, but also from affective and social aspect in language learning.

As the development of technology in education environment, teacher demanded to integrate digital media into learning activity to be in accordance with the current digital generation characteristics. One of the media that has been proven

effective in the development of language competence is digital storytelling, it is a practice to combine verbal narration with multimedia element such as, picture, music, and voices to create digital story (Robin, 2008). In English language learning context, digital storytelling allows students to express their ideas creatively, and train their speaking skills at the same time in a collaborative and communicative context. This approach is in line with constructivist learning principle, where students play an active role to build meaning through project and communication-based learning experience (Niemi, Multisilta, 2016).

Research conducted by Okumus (2020) shows that students view digital storytelling as an interesting, motivating method that enhanced collaboration and speaking skills in English language learning. The study's findings supported the idea that students' active engagement can be increased and that they can express themselves verbally in a safe environment while using digital narrative-based technology. Additionally, according to Putri (2023), students said that technology improved their confidence, made peer discussions more fun, and made learning English easier. According to recent studies, digital storytelling strengthens students' sense of ownership over their education and improves their motivation, engagement, and deep conceptual knowledge (Lersar et al., 2022). Furthermore, because it facilitates the use of real activities in relevant contexts, digital storytelling is a suitable medium to incorporate into task-based learning models such as TBLT.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and digital storytelling in enhancing students' language learning, most of these investigations have treated the two approaches separately rather than as an integrated model. Research at the secondary and higher

education levels has shown that TBLT can significantly improve speaking performance, while digital storytelling has been widely recognized for its potential to increase student engagement and creativity (Fitriana, 2023; Risdayani et al., 2021). However, only a limited number of studies have addressed their combined implementation, particularly in the context of young learners at the primary school level. Furthermore, much of the existing literature has concentrated on writing proficiency or students' perceptions of digital media rather than measuring speaking improvement through structured tasks (Okumuş, 2020; Dollar & Tolu, 2015). Experimental studies that investigate how technology-mediated storytelling tasks directly influence students' speaking competence remain scarce, especially within Indonesian elementary schools.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its integration of TBLT with digital storytelling in a pre-experimental design specifically targeting 6th grade students. Unlike previous research that primarily focused on students creating digital products, this study positions digital storytelling as an authentic multimodal input to stimulate task-based speaking activities, including retelling, reconstruction, and story expansion. By adopting this approach, the study not only addresses the need for innovative speaking instruction in primary classrooms but also contributes new empirical evidence on how technology-mediated tasks can effectively foster young learners' fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension in English.

Speaking competency in this study denotes a learner's ability to produce comprehensible, purposeful spoken English in real communicative situations. Five components operationalize the construct for assessment: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Pronunciation concerns intelligibility of sounds and words. Grammar concerns structural control at sentence level. Vocabulary concerns

range and appropriacy of word choice. Fluency concerns smoothness and continuity of delivery. Comprehension concerns understanding of prompts and the ability to respond relevantly. Measurement of these five components through the analytic rubric in Chapter 3 gives the construct a concrete, testable form.

Terminology in this study follows one fixed convention. Task-Based Digital Storytelling (TBDST) denotes the instructional treatment, in which a digital story functions as multimodal input for a communicative speaking task. Technology-Mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT) denotes the broader pedagogical framework that houses the treatment. Digital storytelling (DST) denotes the medium alone.

Digital storytelling in this study refers to a short multimodal narrative that learners actively process and reproduce, not a video that learners passively watch. Conventional instructional video positions the student as a viewer who receives content, whereas TBDST positions the digital story as task input that the student must comprehend, reorganize, and re-narrate to reach a communicative outcome. Ownership of the spoken output separates the two practices. Learners in a conventional video lesson consume a finished product, while learners in TBDST generate language of their own through retelling, reconstruction, and story expansion. Purpose also separates them. Conventional video transmits information, whereas the digital story in TBDST exists to trigger a speaking task governed by the task cycle.

1.2 Problem Identification

Issues in English language learning in elementary school especially in speaking competence aspect still become significant challenge. According to previous studies, elementary school students oftentimes facing difficulty in using English to communicate actively. They tend to be passive, lack of confidence, and

have limited vocabulary and grammar structure when being asked to talk in English. Speaking competency considered as the most complex skills as it requires spontaneous thinking skills, linguistic proficiency, and the courage to do direct interaction (Brown, 2001). Other than that, task-based learning, which creates active and interactive spaces, is widely recognized as more effective in developing communicative language competence (Shintani, 2020).

However, the usage of technology in English language learning has already has been widely advised to improve learning quality in 21st century. One of the innovative approaches that appears is Technology-Mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT), that merge task-based approach with technology digital utilization. According to Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega (2014), TMTBLT can create a more interactive, collaborative, and linguistically meaningful learning environment.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa, it was found that the speaking skills of sixth-grade students are relatively low. Many students showed hesitation when asked to speak in English, often responding with only one or two words. Their main difficulties were related to fluency and confidence, particularly when expressing ideas verbally in front of their peers. Students also struggled with sentence organization, had limited vocabulary, and

showed fear of making mistakes, which discouraged them from speaking more actively. These challenges were reinforced by the instructional context, since English is taught by the homeroom teacher who handles all subjects and does not have a strong background in English. As a result, the learning approach remains conventional and teacher-centered, with minimal opportunities for students to practice speaking in meaningful contexts. Although the school has access to digital facilities, these have not been fully utilized for language learning because of limited pedagogical and technical skills in using technology effectively. The situation is further complicated by structural issues, as the 6th grade students are divided into three classes, but due to renovations in Class 6C, its students were distributed into Class 6A and Class 6B, leading to overcrowded classrooms. In such large groups, teachers tend to prioritize maintaining order rather than creating interactive speaking opportunities, which further reduces the chance for individual participation. These conditions highlight the need for an innovative approach and learning media that can provide more engaging, contextual, and technology-supported opportunities for students to enhance their speaking skills actively and confidently.

Digital storytelling is considered as one of the technology-mediated alternatives that will help students convey their stories verbally through digital project. Thus, it is important to test the use of digital storytelling effectivity in TMTBLT approach to enhance 6th grade students speaking competency.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that needs to be considered. First, this study is only conducted on one class of 6th grade students in SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa, so that the result cannot be generalized to the whole population of elementary school students. Second, the approach used will be pre-experimental by using one-group pretest-posttest design, that doesn't involve control group, so that influence of external variables cannot be completely removed. Third, the intervention will be done in limited period of time according to the lesson schedule and school academic calendar.

Scope of material also bounds this study. Content was limited to two thematic units, namely describing daily routines and recounting past personal experiences, delivered across four instructional sessions between the pretest and the posttest during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Instruction was conducted by the researcher in collaboration with the homeroom teacher. Generalization beyond these two topics and this timeframe should therefore be made with caution.

Moreover, technology-mediated that will be used in this research will be limited in the use of digital storytelling as a media to improve students' speaking skills. The ability of students in platform operation and technology device support (gadget, internet connection) also become factor that could influence the research result.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background of this research, this research is guided by one research question. Consequently, the researchers aim to investigate the following:

1. Is there a significant difference in sixth-grade students' speaking competency at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa before and after the

implementation of Task-Based Digital Storytelling?



1.5 Objectives of the Study

In line with the research problems expressed previously, this research aimed to achieve particular objectives related to the research background. This objective is formally stated as follows:

1. To determine whether there is a significant difference in the speaking competency of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Banjar Jawa before and after the implementation of the Task-Based Digital Storytelling (TBDS) approach.

1.6 Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to present valuable insights for English teachers, elementary school students, curriculum developers and policy makers. The significance of this research remained in its possible improvement to both theoretical comprehension and practical implementation. The expected gains in this research hence:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study anticipated to contribute in developing the literature in English language learning aspect, especially in the context of elementary school. This research will enrich the study related to the effectivity of Technology-Mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT) and the integration of digital storytelling as an innovative media to enhance students' speaking competency. Technology in language learning has proven to be able to improve students' participation and their communicative quality in language task (Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

This research can also serve as the basis for further research that develops similar learning models through other experimental quantitative approaches.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For English Teachers in Elementary School

As a reference in designing a creative and communicative technology-based learning, especially in enhancing students' speaking skill.

b. For Elementary School Students

Since this study is capable to improve their motivation and confidence in using English language verbally through a fun and easy-to-use digital media.

c. For Curriculum Developers and Policy Makers

In providing training and technology facilities that supports the implementation of TMTBLT in primary school.

