

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

English is widely recognized as an international language, and many foreign speakers use it. English plays a crucial role that facilitates interactions between individuals in different countries worldwide. According to Jenkins and Kirkpatrick (as cited in Gunantar, 2016), the Majority of people choose English as a second language since it is widely understood by speakers, even if English is not their first language. This demonstrates that English may be used for both native and non-native languages. In Indonesia, English is still considered as a foreign language. This is because a child's mother tongue, which they learn from their parents, is the first language they learn when they are born (Sinaga, Sinambela, and Manik 2024). Besides, English is used in a non-English speaking environment where Indonesians only speak Bahasa Indonesia and local languages as their mother tongue (Soma 2018).

Given the global importance of English and its widespread use, English serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a skill that helps individuals adapt to various work environments. However, a study conducted by EF (English First) through the English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2024. Indonesia was ranked 80th, with a score of 468, which is categorized as low proficiency. This result shows that English is still considered a foreign language in Indonesia, and the overall understanding of English remains limited. Therefore, the government needs to place greater emphasis on English education from an early age, especially during junior high school, as this is a critical period for language development. If English learning

is delivered effectively and engagingly at this stage, students are more likely to develop interest, motivation, and positive attitudes toward learning.

Motivation plays a vital role in language acquisition. According to Gardner (1985), students who are motivated are more likely to persist in learning and achieve better outcomes. When students are genuinely interested in learning English, they are more likely to understand the material, build confidence, and improve their communication skills. However, despite the importance of English and the motivation it can bring, many junior high school students in Indonesia still struggle to communicate effectively in English, especially in speaking.

Speaking plays a vital role that enables individual to transmit an oral information effectively (Lorena and Sadiku 2015). As the primary method of everyday communication, according to Bygate (as cited in Al-roud, 2016), Speaking are the ability to use oral language to explore ideas, purposes thoughts, and feelings with others in order to make the message clear and understandable to the listeners. it is evident that mastering English language requires proficiency in speaking. This is due to the fact that each language skills are interconnected, speaking, reading, writing and listening, where each skill are supporting each other. Lewis (as cited in Barman, 2017), stated that each of the four language skills also involves sub-skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, which are essential for effective communication.

Based on the pre-observation conducted in the eighth grade of SMP 12 Tanjungpinang, it was found that the students focused more on being introduced to English learning through writing rather than speaking, due to the final exam primarily assessed writing skill. Therefore, the teachers will teach the basics English learning through writing. As a result, speaking practice was rarely prioritized due to timed limited allocation. Teachers were given only 80 minutes per-session, which is arguably insufficient for implementing effective speaking activities, since speaking

practice generally requires more time consuming methods. As a result, students have limited opportunities to familiarize or learn English through speaking activities.

Furthermore, the researcher found several challenges that hindered students' speaking performance. First, students came from diverse backgrounds with different learning preferences, where some students preferred learning activities by using auditory, while others preferred visual styles, which makes it difficult for teachers to accommodate all their needs effectively. Moreover, Parents' expectations plays a role to influenced students' motivation. Each parent will have different thoughts on how to improve their children English skill. Parents would enroll their children in additional English courses, while others would expect their children to understand basics English for daily use.

Second, the shift from 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the Merdeka Curriculum has made English as an elective subject. According to pasal 33 Permendikbudristek nomor 12 tahun 2024, English is designated as an elective subject that may be implemented depending on the school's readiness until 2026/2027 academic year. However, in its implementation, some schools are not prepared to provide English lesson at the elementary level, leaving students more deepen to their mother tongue or Bahasa Indonesia. This resulting, when students entered junior high school, they are not familiar with English and often experience difficulties, unmotivated, and the lack of confidence in speaking.

Finally, teacher used learning media that are not specifically designed for speaking. Since the school prioritizes writing skill, teachers often used conventional media such as textbooks and vocabulary flashcards to teach students basic English. In addition, teacher used digital platform such as social media and Google classroom, where video was uploaded for students to analyze for next discussion. Considering these challenges, it is necessary for teacher to create a fun, engaging, and effective learning environment for speaking activities. Since, the main purpose of speaking

activities in this school is not to achieve high proficiency, but to encourage students to speak confidently and develop motivation for future improvement. One possible approach is to use technology in language learning.

Technology has advanced at a rapid pace in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. However, many Teachers still used traditional media to support the learning process. Traditional media is a method that has been used since long ago as a medium for oral and written communication between educators and students in the teaching and learning process (Setiyono 2025). In speaking practice, teachers often use a technique such memorization of dialogs, question-and-answer practice, substitution drills, etc (Yede 2020). Therefore, traditional media play an important role in making a strong foundation and the basic in modern methods development that is more interactive and multimedia (Mamahit 2021).

Despite the importance of traditional media in teaching speaking, the media tends to be a one way method, where information is received by students without much possibility of in-depth visual or audio interaction. Students might find these learning methods less engaging and lack interaction between the teacher and students. According to Febriansyah, Zaim, and Thahar (2024), Students today are accustomed to interactive and multimedia content. Traditional media simply can't compete in terms of engagement.

To solve these issues, teacher need to use new teaching methods and engaging learning media are required. The uses of digital media serve as a learning tool to assist them in learning process. As an educators, teachers must carefully choose which technologies is appropriate to use in class. According to Salsabila and Agustian (2021), when technology is used effectively, teachers may deliver more engaging and non-boring content, increasing students' interest and participating in learning activities. The use of technology into education has opened new opportunities for building, engaging and inspiring learning environments. One such

option is the use of animation-based learning media through plotagon studio application.

Animation has great potential to explain complex ideas, lower learning anxiety, and engage students in the discussions activities. In addition to providing students with entertainment, the purpose of animation is to encourage students and help them understand the subject more easily (Afrilia, Neviyarni, Darnis, 2022). Furthermore, animation helps students acquire grammar and vocabulary naturally by portraying a familiar real life scenarios or dialogue. With these benefits for students cognitive, affective, and linguistic, animation plays an important role in supporting students to develop their language skills, particularly in speaking. One example of animation-based learning media that can be applied in speaking classes is Plotagon Studio.

Using plotagon studio is one way to accomplish the challenges in learning speaking. Plotagon studio is a creative software application that allows users to design characters and setting into 3D animated stories based on their own imagination (Maghfirah et al. 2024). Teachers can use this tool to produce animated stories with students' recorded voices, providing a fun and engaging way for them to practice their speaking. In summary, the features that Plotagon Studio offered not only help improve students' language skill but also motivate them to participate actively in classroom learning.

Considering the importance of English speaking skills and the potential of Plotagon Studio as a learning tool, this research aims to investigate “The effect of utilizing animation through plotagon studio on eighth grade students' speaking skills at SMP Negeri 12 Tanjungpinang.” The results of this research are expected to provide new insight whether utilizing animation through plotagon studio is an effective approach to improve students' speaking skills, particularly in talking about the past through WH-Questions.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the background of the research mentioned above, the aim of this research is to determine whether or not utilizing animation through plotagon studio has an affect on eighth grade students' speaking at SMP Negeri 12 Tanjungpinang, particularly in talking about the past through WH-Questions. This research specifically looks at the effect of animation through plotagon studio on students' speaking abilities in English subject, therefore the results may not represent the outcomes of utilizing this learning tool for other subjects.

1.3 Research Question

The researcher developed the following question in the context of the previously provided explanation: "Does utilizing animation through plotagon studio significantly affect the speaking skills of eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 12 Tanjungpinang, particularly in talking about the past through WH-Questions?"

1.4 The Objective of the Research

Based on the research question, this research aims to determine whether utilizing animation through Plotagon Studio has a significant effect on eighth grade students' speaking skill at SMP Negeri 12 Tanjungpinang, particularly in talking about the past through WH-Questions.

1.5 The significances of the Research

1.5.1 Theotrically

The researcher hopes this research can contribute to the field of English Language Teaching by showing how digital media, especially animation-based learning media such as Plotagon Studio, can be used as a strategy to improve students' speaking skills. The result of this research may also serve as a reference or consideration for future researchers who want to explore the use of digital media in teaching speaking or other English skills. Furthermore, this research is expected to encourage the growth of language teaching by making students more interested and motivated in learning English.

1.5.2 Practically

1. Students

This research can encourage students to become more enthusiastic about learning English, improve their speaking skills, boost their self confidence, and enhance their ability to ask and give opinions appropriately.

2. English Teachers

The findings of this research will help teachers create a variety of useful learning media for teaching speaking. The use of animation through plotagon studio can be an alternative solution to improve the learning outcomes and experiences for students with different learning styles.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. 3D Animation

3D Animation is a collection of moving pictures that are arranged in each scene based on predetermined movements.

2. Plotagon Studio

Plotagon Studio is a multipurpose animation program that enables users to create 3D animated stories by designing characters, settings, scripts, as well as recording voices in different languages to bring their own stories to life.

3. Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is the students' ability to express past experiences orally through WH-Questions responses.