

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

In the globalization era, the ability to communicate in English has been regarded as one of the most crucial skills to acquire, as it serves as a basic requirements for global competitiveness. This skill was not only considered valuable in academic settings but also played a vital role in professional environments, where successful communication often determined one's achievements (Björklund, 2025:65).

In the context of Indonesia's education system, the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka reflected the government's initiative to align national education with the demands of the 21st century (Vhalery et al., 2022). Emphasis on speaking skills has been considered a key priority, recognizing the essential role of oral communication in addressing global challenges (Syamli, 2024: 86–106).

However, the process of learning English speaking skills often encountered several obstacles. One major issue was the limited opportunities students had to practice English in real-life situations. In addition, psychological barriers such as shyness and fear of making mistakes also served as common hindrances for learners. These challenges became even more complex due to the diverse backgrounds of students, particularly in terms of their English proficiency levels and learning motivation. As a result, creative and innovative teaching approaches were required to effectively address these problems (Oktaviani & Rusdi, 2019).

These elements played a significant role in creating a learning environment that supported the development of students' speaking skills. Through interactive methods such as group discussions, presentations, and conversation simulations, teachers aimed to encourage students to actively use English. Moreover, the integration of technology was also one of the strategies employed to enhance speaking proficiency. Platforms like Google Classroom and Google Meet enabled students to practice independently and receive direct feedback from their teachers (Warchauer & Haeley, 2018: 57–71).

The contextualization of learning materials was also considered an important aspect of the Curriculum Merdeka. English materials for teaching speaking skills were adapted to suit the local context and meet students' needs. For instance, learners were encouraged to engage in discussions about culture, environmental issues, or global topics that were relevant to their everyday lives. This approach not only made the learning process more engaging but also helped students connect the content to their real-life experiences (Brown, 2019).

The evaluation of speaking skills was conducted through various methods, including performance assessments, classroom observations, and direct feedback from teachers. Constructive feedback was provided to help students recognize both their strengths and areas that required improvement in using English. Furthermore, collaboration with external parties was also one of the efforts made to enrich the learning process. Engaging directly with native English speakers offered students valuable opportunities to build confidence and communication skills Rohmawati (2023).

The implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka at SMAN 17 Batam was expected to produce students who not only mastered English theoretically but were also able to apply it in everyday communication. Strong speaking skills in English opened up broader opportunities for students, whether in pursuing higher education or entering the workforce. Through this approach, SMAN 17 Batam aimed to contribute to shaping a young generation that was prepared to compete at the global level.

1.2 Identify of Problem

Based on the preliminary research that had been conducted in the tenth grade at SMA Negeri 17 Batam, it was revealed that the students generally demonstrated low proficiency in speaking skills. Several challenges were identified throughout the study:

1. **Limited Vocabulary:** Students struggled to express their ideas and opinions due to a restricted vocabulary. This often caused them to pause in the middle of a conversation or use inappropriate words.
2. **Low Self-Confidence:** Many students felt insecure when speaking English. They were afraid of making mistakes, which led to a reluctance to participate actively in class discussions or presentations.
3. **Lack of Practice:** Students rarely had sufficient opportunities to practice speaking intensively, both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, their speaking abilities did not develop well.
4. **Pronunciation Difficulties:** A large number of students had trouble pronouncing words correctly, particularly in a foreign language like

English. This made their communication less effective and harder to understand.

5. **Weak Grammatical Skills:** Errors in grammar usage were common, included incorrect sentence structures and misuse of tenses. These mistakes made students' speech appear unstructured and unclear.
6. **Unsupportive Environment:** A lack of support from peers or family members was also a contributing factor. Many students did not have speaking partners or a supportive environment that encouraged them to use English regularly.
7. **Ineffective Teaching Methods:** The instructional approaches used in the classroom were not always engaging and often failed to provide enough opportunities for students to practice speaking actively.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This analysis is focused on learning speaking skill at SMAN 17 BATAM, especially in grade tenth which uses Curriculum Merdeka. The scope of this study is limited to speaking skill only, without included other aspect although the interrelationship between these aspects is reconized. The implementation of Curriculum Merdeka is implemented to improve students speaking skills. However, other aspects assesment, are not in the discussion.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background that has been described, there are several problems that need to be The Teaching Techniques Speaking Skills Based on Curriculum Merdeka at SMAN 17 BATAM. Therefore, this formulates questions:

1. What speaking skills techniques do English teachers use implementing Curriculum Merdeka?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the problem formulation that has been identified, this research aims to:

1. To find out and describe which the speaking skills techniques use by English teachers in implementing the Curriculum Merdeka at SMAN 17 BATAM.

1.6 Significance of the Research

Based on the background that has been described, this research has several significant benefits both theoretically and practically. These benefits can be explained as follows:

1.6.1 Practical Benefits for Teachers

This research can serve as a reference for English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. By understanding the impact of this curriculum on teaching methods, teachers can adjust learning strategies that are more effective, creative, and student-centered. In addition, this research can also help teachers

identify challenges that may be faced in the learning process, so that can find appropriate solutions.

1.6.2 Benefits for Students

The results of this study are expected to improve the quality of English language learning, which in turn will have a positive impact on student competence. With this analysis, students can to learning experiences that are more meaningful, relevant, and as per their needs in the global era. In addition, this research can also encourage the development of 21st Century skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy, which are needed in facing global challenges.

1.6.3 Benefits for Reseacher

This research can serve as a reference for other researchers who are interested in further exploring the impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on other subjects or at different levels of education. In addition, the findings of studying can serve as a basis for further that is more in-depth and comprehensive.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Speaking Skills

Speaking skills is the ability to express ideas, thoughts, or information orally clearly, fluently, and effectively. This skill involves aspects such as fluently, accuracy, pronuntiation, as well as the appropciate use of body language an intonation.

1.7.2 Curriculum Merdeka

Curriculum Merdeka is an educational Curriculum implemented by the Indonesian government that emphasizes flexibility, learning independence, and developing student competencies according to their interests and talents. It is designed to give schools and teachers freedom in managing learning.

1.7.3 Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are ways or strategies used by teachers in delivering subject matter to students, including the use of technology, group discussions, or project-based learning.

