

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Speaking ability is one of the most important skills in the context of language learning, especially at the junior high school level. This skill not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a means of expressing ideas, opinions, and feelings. As Baron's (2020) stated that speaking can be understood as a process that involves the production of meaning through various interrelated stages. This process includes several important elements, such as sound production, receiving information, and processing the data received. Thus, speaking is not a one-way activity, but rather an interactive process that involves active participation from all parties involved. Furthermore, Brown in Crisianita *et al* (2022) underlined that speaking is a form of oral production that can be observed empirically and directly. This means that speaking ability can be assessed and measured through real observation of one's speaking behavior. This process produces effective and significant results, which in turn has a major impact on the validity of a speaking test. In other words, speaking ability is not only essential for everyday communication, but also has profound implications in the context of evaluating and measuring students' language ability. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to implement comprehensive assessment methods that accurately reflect students' speaking skills, as these assessments can inform instructional practices and help identify areas for improvement. By prioritizing the development of speaking skills, educators can better prepare students for real-world interactions and enhance their overall language proficiency, ultimately contributing to their success in both academic and professional settings.

English learning at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan is essential to equip students with the communication skills needed in the digital era. As a compulsory subject, English has been taught from grade seventh to grade ninth, with the expectation that students can master effective speaking skills.

The learning objectives emphasize the importance of interaction in English, where students are expected to exchange ideas, experiences and opinions with teachers and peers in a variety of contexts. In the context of speaking, students are able to understand and convey the main ideas and details of a discussion or presentation on a familiar topic. This study focuses on grade eight, specifically on Chapter 4 with the topic “No Littering.” This topic is relevant to environmental issues and provides an opportunity for students to explain their answers using simple sentence structures. The Learning objectives for this topic include the ability to talk about past incidents or events, formulate questions for a short interview about these occurrences, talk about past incidents or events, make questions for a short interview about past incidents or events, identify the main idea and detailed information on a series of past incidents or events. In this school teaching module, it is written that to achieve these learning objectives, teachers will use the Project Based Learning (PBL) model and manual Game to deliver teaching materials to students in class.

Meanwhile, based on my observation at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan many students find it difficult to understand and use English, especially in the context of speaking. Practically, classroom interaction is often limited, with students listening more than actively participating in discussions. This is due to students' lack of understanding in the process of delivering teaching materials in English, not being vocal, rarely practicing with friends and teachers in class and discomfort in using newly learned vocabulary. In addition, when discussing the topic of “No Littering,” many students were still able to relate the material to their personal experiences, making the discussion less interesting. Although the project-based learning (PBL) and manual Game method is applied, its implementation was often ineffective. The evaluation results showed that students had not reached the minimum competence criterion (MCC) 70 has been determine by the school as the objective study must be achieved. The average scores obtained by students indicated that their understanding of the material taught was still not optimally developed. This indicates the need to review the teaching methods and learning strategies applied to improve student learning outcomes in the future.

Regarding to the gap between hope and the reality above the research want to develop interactive educational Game to teach English to the students of the eighth grade. Interactive educational Game are learning media designed to increase student engagement through active interaction in the learning process. As explained by Suryana *et al*, (2023) interactive educational Game provide teaching and increase user knowledge through unique and interesting media, so that students are more motivated to learn.

Comprehending to the explanation above the research will apply research development to develop interactive educational Game in speaking ability by using ADDIE model. Dick and Carey (2020) underlined that the model's structured approach ensures that each stage: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, aligns with the goals of both educators and learners, maximizing the efficiency of the learning process. By doing this, it is believed that students will be able to reach the level of student competency success in line with the established learning objectives, as well. The study **"Developing Interactive Educational Game on the Students' Speaking Ability at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan"** was the one that the researcher decided to carry out.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the identified problem background, the formulation of the problem in this research is as follows:

1. How did the Interactive Educational Game development on the speaking ability at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan?
2. How effective the development of Interactive Educational Game on students' speaking ability at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan?
3. What were the obstacles of Interactive Educational Game development on the students' speaking ability?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the formulated problems, the research objective is:

1. To describe the process of developing an Interactive Educational Game to enhance the speaking ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan.
2. To determine the effectiveness of the developed Interactive Educational Game in improving the speaking ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan.
3. To identify the obstacles encountered during the development and implementation of the Interactive Educational Game on students' speaking ability.

1.4 Product Specification

The specifications of the products produced are digital products in the form of digital websites that can be accessed online and offline.

1. Product name: Interactive Speaking Education Platform (ISEP)
2. Product description: ISEP is an interactive learning platform designed to improve students' speaking skills at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan especially in No Littering material. The platform integrates various interactive learning methods, including speaking exercises, discussion forums and immediate feedback to create a fun and effective learning experience.
3. Target users
 - a. Students of SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan (eighth grades)
 - b. English teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan
 - c. Parents of students who want to support their child's learning
4. Content
 - a. Interactive Modules: Learning modules that cover various speaking topics, with multimedia content (audio and text).
 - b. Speaking Exercises: Speaking exercises designed to improve students' pronunciation, intonation and fluency.

- c. Discussion Forums: A space for students to discuss and share experiences, as well as provide feedback to each other.
- d. Assessment Tools: Voice-based quizzes and assessments to measure student progress in speaking skills.
- e. Feedback Mechanism: A feedback system that allows students to upload voice recordings and receive ratings from teachers or peers.

5. Content Specifications

- a. Language: Content available in English and Bahasa Indonesia to cater to diverse learners.
- b. Content Types: Video tutorials, audio recordings, interactive quizzes, and written materials.
- c. Cultural Relevance: Content that reflects local culture and context to make learning more relatable for students.

6. Implementation Plan

- a. Needs assessment and curriculum design based on the specific needs of students at SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli Selatan.
- b. Development of interactive educational Game modules and resources.
- c. Pilot testing with a small group of students and teachers to gather feedback.
- d. Full implementation and ongoing evaluation to refine and improve the platform.

7. Expected Outcomes

- a. Improved Speaking Skills: Enhanced fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking among students.
- b. Increased Engagement: Higher levels of student motivation and participation in speaking activities.
- c. Positive Learning Environment: A supportive and collaborative learning atmosphere that encourages peer interaction and feedback.

8. Evaluation Metrics

- a. Pre- and Post-Assessment: Measure students' speaking abilities before and after using the platform.
- b. User Feedback: Collect feedback from students and teachers regarding the usability and effectiveness of the platform.
- c. Engagement Analytics: Track user engagement metrics, such as time spent on the platform and participation in discussions.