

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

English language learning does not only focus on academic skills, but also plays a role in shaping students' character. This has become an important concern in today's education, where character building is considered as important as academic achievement. Character traits that are expected to develop through English language learning include responsibility, cooperation, and independence in learning. Additionally, students are also expected to have critical and creative thinking skills in problem-solving, as well as good communication skills, both verbal and written. This aligns with the current independent curriculum, which emphasizes character development through the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), divided into six dimensions: 1) faith, reverence for God the Almighty, and noble character, 2) independence, 3) cooperation, 4) global diversity, 5) critical thinking, and 6) creativity. To ensure that every student can continue to be a competent learner, of good character, and behave in accordance with the values of Pancasila, the six dimensions of the Pancasila learner profile must be considered simultaneously.

Based on initial observations at SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli, it was found that many students still have difficulties in building positive character, especially in social skills. They are less accustomed to working together, sharing responsibilities, respecting others' opinions, and communicating well. Instead of learning in groups, they are more comfortable working alone, so opportunities to foster empathy, caring and discipline are limited. In addition, in English language learning, effective communication is still a big challenge. Many students lack the confidence to speak and interact in English, especially when working in groups. This makes them tend to be passive, so the learning process does not run optimally and their speaking skills are difficult to develop. Looking at these problems, an approach is needed that not only helps students in understanding academic materials, but also fosters positive character in them. The cooperative approach is one approach that can be used. This

approach encourages students to work together, communicate and support each other during the learning process. As a result, students not only gain English language proficiency but also acquire social skills and positive attitudes that benefit their lives.

One of the approaches that can be used to shape student character in English learning at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli is a cooperative learning approach particularly learning together model. This model can improve social skills, sense of responsibility, empathy, and tolerance attitudes in academic interactions. According to Ibrahim et al. (2023), Cooperative Learning is an approach that allows students to work together in groups to complete a set task, promoting active learning and character development. Cooperative Learning approaches are divided into two main categories: the first is Structured Team Learning which is divided into three namely: Student Teams- Achievement Division (STAD), Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). the second category is Informal Group Learning Methods which is divided into 4 namely: 1. Jigsaw II, 2. Learning Together, 3. Think-Pair-Share, 4. Group Investigation. UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli uses the cooperative learning approach of learning Together (LT) to shape students' character in English learning. By working collaboratively, students improve their communication skills, teamwork and overall attitude towards learning. In addition, this approach makes the learning process more interesting and increases students' motivation to learn English. Lathifa et al. (2024) emphasize that the Cooperative Learning method encourages students to collaborate and interact with each other, thus allowing them to support and learn from their peers. By using this approach, educators can create a learning environment that not only improves academic achievement, but also fosters important values such as responsibility, cooperation and mutual respect, which are essential for students' personal and professional growth.

English learning should not only focus on academic aspects, but also help students develop social skills and positive character. Many students still lack in cooperation, responsibility, tolerance and good communication skills, especially

in group learning situations. Several previous studies have shown that Cooperative Learning can improve students' academic and character outcomes. Slavin (2011) found that Cooperative Learning contributes to improved academic understanding as well as the development of social skills, while Harianto et al. (2020) stated that cooperative learning improves social interaction and sense of responsibility. Putri (2020) in an Indonesian study showed that this approach can improve discipline and tolerance in English language learning. The previous studies above tend to focus on the benefits of cooperative learning and have not much explored the real challenges faced in the implementation of Cooperative Learning, especially in the formation of student character.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on analyzing the role of cooperative learning approaches in shaping students' character, especially in English language learning. While many previous studies have emphasized the effectiveness of this approach in improving academic achievement, this study delves deeper into how this method helps students develop important character traits such as cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and effective communication. Using a qualitative approach, this study seeks to understand students' experiences first-hand, including their interactions within the group, the challenges they face, as well as the behavioral changes that occur during the learning process. This focus on character aspects provides a new perspective, as there are still few studies that discuss how cooperative learning methods can be applied as a strategy to improve students' social skills in an English learning environment, especially in schools that still face challenges in character development. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for educators in designing learning approaches that not only focus on academic achievement, but also on building better character among students.

This research is expected to provide new insights into the cooperative learning approach to student character building in English language learning. Through this approach, students are expected to be more accustomed to working together, being responsible, appreciating differences, and communicating better. In addition, this research also aims to identify various challenges that may arise in the implementation

of this method, both from the students' and teachers' side, so as to provide a more real picture of how cooperative learning is implemented in schools. Using a qualitative approach, this research will explore the direct experiences of students and teachers in implementing cooperative learning and its impact on their interactions in the classroom. The results of this study are expected to provide input for teachers and schools in developing more effective learning strategies, not only to improve academic achievement, but also to help students build stronger characters. In addition, this research is also expected to be a reference for other studies that want to explore learning approaches that not only focus on academic achievement, but also on students' character development in various learning situations.

Based on the problems described above, English learning should not only focus on improving students' academic skills, but also play a role in shaping their character. However, the reality is that many students lack social skills, such as cooperation, responsibility, tolerance and effective communication, especially in group learning. The cooperative learning approach has been recognized as a method that can improve students' social interaction and academic outcomes. However, previous studies have mostly highlighted its academic benefits, while its role in students' character building, especially in English language learning, has not been explored in depth.

Regarding on the explanation above, the researcher conducted a study entitled: **“An Analysis of the Role of Cooperative Learning Approach on Students’ Character Building in English Learning”**.

1.2. Focus of the Research

This research focuses on analyzing the role of Cooperative Learning approach in shaping students' character especially in English learning by highlighting the aspects of cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and effective communication.

1.3. Formulation of the Problem

1. What aspects of cooperative learning approaches shape students' character in English language learning?
2. How does students face challenges in developing character while learning English?

1.4. Objective of the Research

This study aims to:

1. To analyze the role of Cooperative Learning approach in shaping students' character, especially in terms of cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and effective communication in English learning.
2. To identify the challenges faced by students and teachers in implementing the Cooperative Learning approach to build students' character in English learning.

1.5. Significance of the Research

Theoretical Significance

1. Contributing to the academic discourse on the integration of character education and English language learning through the cooperative learning approach, providing insights into its effectiveness in fostering positive student traits.
2. Enhancing the theoretical framework of cooperative learning in education by exploring its dual role in improving language skills and character development.

Practical Significance

1. This research uses qualitative methods to provide in-depth insight into how interaction in cooperative learning shapes students' character in English learning. Results from the analysis of observations, interviews, and student reflections show that this method helps students cultivate values such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation naturally in a real learning environment.

2. This study provides feedback for educators on how best to use cooperative learning to build students' character. Through thematic analysis of teachers' and students' experiences, the study found best practices for creating a collaborative learning environment that not only improves students' English skills but