

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of seven sub chapters. It begins with background of the study then followed by research questions, objectives of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research and state of the art.

1.1. Background of the Study

Speaking is undoubtedly one of the most language skills which needs to be mastered since the early ages. Junior high school students, for example, still finds difficulty in expressing their ideas (Putra, 2019). Putra stated their problem was due to lack of vocabularies (Putra, 2019). Raba also mentioned the low learning outcomes of speaking English can be caused by various factors, such as self-confidence, background knowledge of students, and learning strategies (Raba, 2017). In short, JHS still face problems in English speaking skill.

Everyone, especially the younger generation, has been confronted with the twenty-first century world. Albahlal (2019), stated the twenty-first century skills in learning refer to critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, problem solving, digital literacy, etc. Students in junior high school, as one of the young learners, faces difficulties in expressing ideas critically through speaking. Elisa stated their problems were students' psychology aspects such as, shyness, anxiety, and lack of confidence and linguistic features and external factors such as environment, audiences (Elisa, 2021). Various strategies have been used to promote pupils' speaking abilities, such as teaching materials, teaching methods, and etc. Iman mentioned starting from the traditional way into the new modern way, such as from books, whiteboards, to the ICT tools (Iman, 2017). Alfa mentioned podcast is one of the authentic materials to improve students speaking skill (Alfa, 2020). So, podcast is one of the ways to help students in

overcoming the difficulties in speaking. However, these materials must be effectively developed and flexible enough to adjust to shifting circumstances. Leong stated that microlearning has been an useful approach among academics in a number of fields (Leong et al., 2021). Its features can be adjusted to fit any conditions. It is clear that podcasts and speaking materials with critical thinking skills would help students who are having difficulties in English language speaking. Additionally, using the microlearning strategy will help pupils feel more confident while interacting with the outside world.

In this context, studies by inserting the critical thinking skill in English language learning materials have been extensively conducted during the past until the present years. Many educational institutions have attempted to build frameworks for defining critical thinking abilities and suggesting ways to integrate them into the educational system in general, and English language learning in particular. Itmeizeh (2020), stated designing and applying critical thinking skills requires the teacher to be flexible, creative and open-minded. Therefore, to achieve this goal, teachers need to develop alternative interesting methods of teaching, creative classroom management techniques and authentic assessment in addition to traditional tests.

Vdovina and Gaibisso mentioned critical thinking necessitates active and engaged learning. It does not accept passive learning, which treats new facts and thoughts as if they are ready-made words of wisdom. In our experience, students learn better when they actively communicate with one another about a specific academic topic, especially when they are encouraged to use critical thinking when comparing their points of view and ideas, evaluating arguments, probing into the intellectual standards of clarity and accuracy, breadth and width, relevance and fair-mindedness, and so on (Vdovina & Gaibisso, 2013). Students can practice both communicative and critical thinking abilities by participating in interactive activities. They have a better possibility of improving their

self-consciousness and awareness of their own strengths and limitations, opening the way for self-improvement as learners, future professionals, and individuals.

Based on the explanation presented above, critical thinking skills should be emphasized in language learning materials. According to Putri and Sulistyaningrum, HOTS were found in lesson plan, learning objectives and learning activities (Putri & Sulistyaningrum, 2021). Sebastianus et. al., also suggest that speaking material designs should address the specific demands of students of speaking components such as pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy (Sebastianus Menggo, I Made Suastra, Made Budiarsa, 2019). Furthermore, English speaking materials should assist students in becoming better prepared to talk more naturally when presenting their views. In relation to the integration of critical thinking skills in speaking materials, different situations and student characteristics may alter the degree to which critical thinking can be introduced and developed, but we believe that planning, experimenting, and reflecting are the initial steps (Vdovina & Gaibisso, 2013). After all, students' feedback will provide answers in designing the lesson plan for the teachers, such as prerequisites, instructional objectives, supporting activities, and assessment. Not to mention, teachers are also expected to engage their students in an interactive activity focused on developing students' critical thinking ability in speaking, such as discussing current issues which rely on students' previous experience; by asking questions for clarification in order to make the issue clearer, more accurate and precise; by comparing opinions; by identifying the underlying factors, etc. (Vdovina & Gaibisso, 2013).

There were several studies relating to this research, Sebastianus et.al., researched needs analysis for academic-English speaking material development. One of his findings was that students' desires strongly on material design which is much more about 21st-century skills such as creative, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making,

collaborating, and using relevant technologies (ICT literacy) (Sebastianus Menggo, I Made Suastra, Made Budiarsa, 2019). In line with that study, Andini et al., also found ICT competences which are mostly integrated in the component of Teaching Method or Classroom Activities and Learning Media for English speaking skill (Andini et al., 2019). In line with a similar study conducted by Albahal, which reframed beliefs about English language learning and continued to view schools as responsible agents for preparing students to be successful in the twenty-first century by developing a curriculum based on the twenty-first century (Albahlal, 2019). He also added that English language classrooms must be filled with meaningful and intellectually stimulating activities, practices, and processes that enable students to not only effectively articulate thoughts and ideas using oral, written, and nonverbal communication but also to understand complex perspectives, use multiple media and technologies, make judgments and decisions, and collaborate creatively with others. (Buckingham, 2010) Mustofa, Ubaidillah, & Harianti, 2020; Oktaviah, 2020).

In relation to technology usage, according to Chaikovska et. al., one efficient and time-saving learning tool for improving speaking and listening abilities is the educational podcast (Chaikovska et al., 2019). Additionally, they mentioned that students might listen to the information they require while going to work or school, driving a car, strolling through a park, or performing normal tasks (Chaikovska et al., 2019) . Consequently, they have the chance to learn new words and phrases and improve their listening skills. This implies that podcast may be used for both self-study and in EFL classrooms. Their study also proved using podcasts improves comprehension, pronunciation, and dialect, stimulates social interaction, and inspires self-study. Align with this statement, Elekaei, et. al., mentioned podcasts were useful because they gave students access to time-saving

and user-friendly technologies. Instead of searching for the answers, learners could receive them (Elekaei et al., 2020).

Speaking of podcasts, they can also help students to speak critically. It contains various topics spoken by native English speakers and also offered kinds of models such as report, debate, interview, and conversation. It is one of the authentic materials for teachers to use in English classroom. Teachers can use this tool as one of the materials for debate activities in the classroom. According to Alfa, one of the advantages of using podcasts in the classroom is making students speaks actively and also critically (Alfa, 2020). It is observable when students interact with their friends about a subject from a podcast. Furthermore, Wardhani & Ibrohim said the implementation of the instructional design with help from podcasts increases students' critical thinking abilities (Wardhani & Ibrohim, 2021). Bustari et al., used podcast in in pre-speaking stage, it shows that students made improvement (Bustari et al., 2017). However, the use of short-podcast for speaking skill is limited.

Basically, podcast is part of learning object materials used in 21st century. This is in line with Menggo (2019) and Albahal (2019), they state on designing materials which is more about the 21st century skills, short podcasts will teach students to be critical in tackling the current era. These little podcasts will then be designed into the microtasks, also known as the microlearning. Microlearning is a learning methodology that emphasizes the value of digital literacy, time efficiency, and freely access. According to Allela, microlearning is an approach to teaching that focuses on getting learners to learn, act, and practice in short bursts (Allela, 2021). Dolasinski & Reynolds, defines microlearning as a method that utilizes multisensory and multimodality while concentrating on one idea for a brief period of time (Dolasinski & Reynolds, 2020). The two definitions are at the same page with short podcast, both have same characteristics,

such as technology based and limited time. Thus, it can be said that short-podcast is a part of learning object materials from microlearning. Proposed by Allela on samples of microlearning object, short-podcast was one of them (Allela, 2021).

A study conducted by Leong et al., on reviewing the trend of microlearning, they found out that microlearning was demanding in recent years, it was new and emerging global topic, it was integrated with e-learning or mobile learning, and microlearning was mostly used in language learning (Leong et al., 2021). Moreover, this was aligned with Zhang and West, they stated microlearning was effective model for professional development. In addition, it should be digitally based, skill based and personalized (Zhang & West, 2020). Accordingly, designing microlearning integrated in language learning is crucial.

Despite the significance of critical thinking skills infused in speaking materials and the use of podcasts in English language learning mentioned earlier, not all teachers have implemented it and not many students have produced it. This arises due to the lack of several factors, such as: not enough support from the school; lack of technology literacy from the teachers; and teachers' acknowledgement in creating activities to encourage students' critical thinking. According to Saleh, traditional attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning in teacher-centered approaches shape teaching in ways that do not encourage critical thinking (Saleh, 2019). He added that these teachers' classes are typically rigidly controlled, with minimal possibilities for individual learning or inquiry-based learning. In addition, Moeljono and Lintangari state that educational institutions' attempts to exploit English abilities have been deemed ineffective (Moeljono & Lintangari, 2021). Based on the previous studies mentioned above, this study is intended to bridge the gap in designing critical thinking skills infused in English speaking

materials and short-podcast based as one of the learning object materials from microlearning.

According to earlier studies, teaching speaking skills without incorporating critical thinking or media use is still insufficient to prepare students for the twenty-first century. In this situation, English education needs to be expanded. It is intended that by incorporating critical thought into speaking and using short podcasts, students will become more confident, fluent, and critical in presenting their ideas. As a result, it is vital to design as well as provide educational materials for speaking skill infusion through short podcasts. It is ideal to start using it in junior high school. Students at this level can utilize technology more responsibly.

As stated by Moeljono and Lintang Sari on the development of language skills that are seen as less effective, this is a continuing study to incorporate a twenty first century aspect and a combination with digital literacy tools (Moeljono & Lintang Sari, 2021). The preceding research gap can be filled up with material development utilizing podcasts and critical thinking incorporated in speaking abilities. To be more precise, junior high school students are the target audience for the development of this content.

There has been much research on using podcast at higher education to improve students speaking skill, but not at middle school. According to Alfa (2020), due of their limited vocabulary, podcasts for beginning learners take more time to absorb the speaker's message (Alfa, 2020). Meanwhile, Yoestara & Putri said to help students speak English fluently, teachers must employ a variety of strategies, with podcasts being one suitable medium that can be used in speaking lessons (Yoestara & Putri, 2019). Accordingly, this study will be developing the teaching materials for speaking skills that

infusing critical thinking skills by employing short-podcasts as the learning object material.

The researcher is interested in creating learning resources for junior high school students based on the context described above. The learning materials are intended to boost students' motivation and stimulate their interest in improving speaking abilities while also giving them more self-confidence while speaking critically with anyone. They can access and learn the materials at anytime and anywhere because they are web-based. Not to mention, it will support instructors as they facilitate learning and teaching in the classroom. Critical thinking is incorporated into and merged with the most recent curricula, learning object materials, which are podcasts, in the creation of these materials. Overall, this study may also support not just speaking competence but also other English learning resources. This study is constructed by stating background of the research, related literature review, the process of designing and developing the research, discussing the findings and finally the conclusion.

1.2. Research Questions

The focus of this study was to design short-podcasts based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking materials for Junior High School. Accordingly, there were three questions made by the researcher during the study. They were:

1. To what extent do the existing speaking materials use short podcast and infuse critical thinking skills for junior high school students?
2. How are the process of designing short podcast-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking material for junior high school students?

3. How are the design of short podcast-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking material for junior high school students?
4. How is the employability of short podcast-based and critical thinking skill infused in English speaking learning material?

1.3. Objectives of the Research

Based on the research question above, the objectives of this study were:

1. To determine whether short podcasts-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking materials have been used for junior high school students.
2. To describe the procedure in designing the short podcasts-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking materials for junior high school students.
3. To design short podcasts-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking materials for junior high school students.
4. To present the employability of short podcast-based and critical thinking skill-infused in English speaking materials for junior high school students.

1.4. Scope of the Research

This scope of this study is designing short-podcasts-based and critical thinking skills-infused in English speaking materials for Junior High School students, focusing on grade seven. The existing materials will be integrated with short-podcasts to encourage students' speaking skill and infusing the critical thinking skill in English speaking materials. It is designed for junior high school students grade seven to nine. Each grade will take two units from the English book which lesson is focusing on speaking lesson.

The source of data are existing syllabi from schools for Junior High School students, the latest curriculum: Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, English Text Books for Junior High Schools, related literature review on podcasts, critical thinking skills, microlearning, English speaking classroom and CEFR level for Junior High School. The method of the study is DDR applying the ADDIE method. Finally, the result of this study is a prototype of short-podcast learning object materials for English speaking infusing the critical thinking skill in Junior High School.

1.5. Significance of the Research

In accordance with the objectives of the study mentioned earlier, it is hoped that this research would help teachers in junior high schools bring greater instruction in teaching and learning English and students become more enthusiastic in learning the language.

1. Theoretically

The theoretical significance is essential for teachers of junior high school and other researchers. It is intended that the findings of this research on designing short podcasts for English speaking that infuse critical thinking skills will change teachers' perceptions of how to get students to complete one objective lesson in just 5 to 10 minutes. Additionally, it is believed that this research may benefit other researchers who plan to conduct research on this subject.

2. Practically

The practical significance of this research is expected that teachers will implement the short podcasts in English speaking lesson infusing critical thinking skill as a learning object material in the classroom. It is also hoped students will be more

enthusiast and more critical in the classroom. Not to mention, so that next researchers can take the study farther.

1.6. State of the Art

There have been many researches on using podcasts for English language learning. The researches were mostly done in higher education starting from senior high school to universities students. The use of podcast was to improve students listening and speaking abilities. Previous study brought by Bustari et al., shows an improvement on learning speaking using podcast for X1 graders (Bustari et al., 2017). Another research conducted by Hamzaoglu and Koçoğlu proved that using podcast able to reduce speaking anxiety (Hamzaoglu & Koçoğlu, 2016) . In connection with microlearning, Zhang and West conduct a study on designing microlearning instruction, they found it an effective model for professional development. They emphasized that if the design is effective, microlearning can be a powerful model (Zhang & West, 2020).

In order to highlight the novelty of this study, however, this research differs from earlier ones in a number of ways, with microlearning being one of them. It is an approach to teaching that focuses on getting learners to learn, act, and practice in short bursts with short-podcasts as one of the learning object materials (Allela, 2021). Meanwhile, the integration of critical thinking into speaking aims to better prepare students for life in the twenty-first century. As critical speaking is a tough subject, having fluency in it is important. Due to this, using short podcasts will motivate and inspire students more. The use of Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar is to keep up with the latest curriculum, so that it can be used directly. In conclusion, the utilization of KMB, microlearning, short podcasts, and the integration of critical thinking in speaking competence are the novel aspects of this research. By addressing the gap, this study could

help both teachers and students learn English in the classroom, particularly speaking skills. Additionally, with the proper design on learning materials using microlearning approach it can be more effective and efficient in delivering the lesson.

