CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explained the background of the problem that would be researched, identified the apparent problems, the limitation of the problems that would be researched, formulated the problem, stated the objective of the research, and discussed the significance of the research.

A. Background of the Research

Speaking skills are important for students who learn English as a foreign language. It is because speaking is one of the skills needed to have a conversation (Leong & Ahmadi, n.d.) and Fauzan (2014) states that speaking skills are important to communicate effectively and easily with the interlocutor. This is considered as one of the skills that involve active expression and production (Indah, 2021). Nowadays, speaking skills are receiving more attention from various parties in the educational scope. Taher Bahrani (2012) states that for most language teachers and learners, speaking skills are an important part when learning a language, therefore speaking gets more attention than other skills. So, speaking skills are important because they are one of the skills needed to communicate, to communicate easily and effectively, and receive more attention than other skills. Because speaking skills are important, students are expected to have enough English speaking ability.

Students who have good speaking skills have to meet several criteria. In the research conducted by Rahmawati & Ertin (2014), six indicators of students with

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good speaking skills are identified: a good score in grammar, a rich and unique vocabulary, comprehension that is appropriate to the context, fluency in speaking without much hesitation when responding, mispronunciations of less than 25%, and the ability to follow the instructions given during the speaking test. Criteria for good speaking skills are also outlined by Hari Wahyono (2017), who categorizes them into three groups: fluency, accuracy, and oral communicative strategies. Accuracy encompasses grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, while communicative strategies involve the precision of guessing and paraphrasing strategies. Students with good speaking skills have to meet criteria such as a good grammar score, extensive vocabulary, strong comprehension, fluent speech, minimal mispronunciations, the ability to complete assigned tasks, and accuracy in guessing and paraphrasing. The more a person's speaking skills improve, the more they fulfill the aforementioned criteria.

Based on observations in the seventh grade of SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan (female students' campus), there are still many deficiencies in students' English speaking skills. The students lack a rich vocabulary, including various types of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and more. They also struggle to understand the meaning of the words they use, resulting in frequent mismatches with the context. Additionally, they exhibit a significant amount of hesitation when speaking English and make numerous pronunciation errors. Furthermore, their ability to paraphrase sentences correctly is also limited. According to interviews conducted with 7th-grade English teachers at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah, , 80% of the students still have scores below the minimum passing criteria for English subjects. However, there is a lack

of innovation in teaching methods to improve students' speaking skills. The strong bond between students and their deskmates is evident, as they actively work together and interact more effectively than with their other classmates. The lack of innovative teaching methods in English subjects is identified as one of the contributing factors to the students' insufficient speaking skills. Therefore, a solution is needed to address this issue. The Learning Cell method emerges as a potential solution to improve students' speaking skills by addressing their specific problems and characteristics. This method falls under the umbrella of Collaborative Learning (CoLTs).

According to Barkley (2005), the collaborative learning method made all students involved in small groups active in learning activities, including both high-performing and struggling students. There are several types of collaborative learning methods, and Learning Cell is a type that trains students to discuss thoughts in pairs by asking and answering (Rakhmawati, 2015). It becomes a solution to solve student problems in the seventh grade at SMPIT AR-Rahmah based on their characteristics in class. Learning Cell is a paired learning strategy where students ask and answer questions in turn based on the same reading material. So, the lack of speaking skills of Class Seven B at SMPIT Ar-Rahmah is characterized by poor vocabularies, poor understanding, a lot of hesitation when speaking, a lot of mispronunciation, and an inability to properly paraphrase sentences. The collaborative learning type Learning Cell method is a solution to improve students' speaking skills because students pair up with their classmates, making their communication more effective.

There are several advantages to applying the CoLTs type learning cell in learning activities. Laal & Ghodsi (2012) state that there are six advantages of implementing CoLTs in academics. First, CoLTs type learning cells promote critical thinking skills. Students formulate their ideas, discuss them, and gain new insights. Second, students are involved in the learning process. When all students are involved, they play an active role in learning, which livens up the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Third, learning outcomes in class improve. Learning objectives are achieved properly and maximally. Fourth, students' problem-solving skills are developed because the technique is appropriate for students. Fifth, a large class can be handled by a teacher, making it more effective. Sixth, it helps to motivate students in certain subjects. Seventh, it serves as an alternative method for teachers to conduct assessments. Eighth, CoLTs utilize multiple assessments. This method is the right solution because students who are at the same level interact more actively than with classmates without feeling awkward and shy. Paired students who are not awkward and shy are able to speak and think, and speaking and thinking are the main components of students' speaking skills improvement. The advantage of implementing CoLTs type learning cell is that it promotes critical thinking skills, students play an active role in the learning process, improves learning outcomes in the classroom, enhances students' problem-solving skills, makes teachers more effective, motivates students, serves as an alternative assessment method, and utilizes multiple assessments.

Previous researchers have conducted similar research on the implementation of Learning Cell methods to improve students' speaking skills. In a previous study

conducted by Ningsi & Armansyah (2018) at Eleventh Grade SMAN 1 Palibelo, the Learning Cell method was found to be suitable for improving students' speaking skills. In the first cycle, 17 out of 30 students fulfill the criteria for good speaking, and this number increases to 27 students in the second cycle. Another study conducted by Anggraeni (2018) at MA Pesantren Guppi Samata also shows a significant difference between the average pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class students, with a difference of 11.5. The researchers conclude that the Learning Cell method is effective in improving students' speaking skills. Therefore, based on the two previous studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that the Learning Cell method can improve students' speaking skills.

Based on an interview with the headmaster of SMPIT Ar-Rahmah Pacitan, there have been no similar research conducted on implementing CoLTs type Learning Cell to improve students' speaking skills. There is still a lack of innovative solutions for students' problems. Students who like to discuss and interact actively with their classmates are potential candidates for utilizing the right teaching method, but this has not been a concern. The CoLTs type Learning Cell method has not yet been implemented as a solution to student problems. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research that analyzes students' speaking problems at SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan and provides innovative method solutions.

Based on the problems above, the researcher believes that the Collaborative Learning Technique (CoLT) type Learning Cell becomes a solution and can enhance students' speaking skills. Therefore, the researcher is conducting this research entitled "**The Enhancement of Students' Speaking Skill with CoLTs**

type Learning Cell for Class Seven B SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan in the Academic Year of 2022/2023.

B. Problem Statements

Based on the limitation of the study above, the problem statements of this research are:

1. Can Learning Cell Technique enhance the speaking skills of class seven B students at SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan in the academic year 2022/2023?

2. How are the students' perceptions towards the application of Learning Cell technique in class seven B SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan in the academic year 2022/2023?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statements above, the research objectives are:

1. To find out whether Learning Cell technique can enhance the speaking skill of class seven B students at SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan in the academic year 2022/2023.

2. To know the students' perceptions towards the application of Learning Cell technique in class seven B at SMPIT AR-Rahmah Pacitan in the academic year 2022/2023.

D. Significances of the Study

1. Theoritically

Hopefully, this research could be used as a reference in conducting similar research on the Learning Cell method, contributing to the development and quality of education in national or international settings.

    2. Practically

        a. The English Teacher

This research can help teachers in innovating speaking teaching methods. Additionally, teachers can use this research as a reference in implementing appropriate methods based on students' responses and perceptions of the methods that are being applied.

        b. The Students

This research can be used as a source of information and a reference in applying a solution-oriented learning method.

        c. The School

This research used as a source of information and a reference in applying a solution-oriented learning method..

        d. The Institution

This research serves an additional collection and reference for new innovations in the English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Pacitan.