

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most important skills in learning English because it directly represents learners' ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings in real-life situations. Brown and Yule (1983) state that speaking is the main skill used in everyday interaction and serves as a key indicator of success in foreign language learning. Through speaking, students can express meaning, negotiate understanding, and participate actively in both social and academic contexts. Therefore, mastering speaking skills becomes a fundamental objective of English language instruction, especially at the senior high school level where students are expected to communicate more fluently and confidently.

However, although English has been taught as a compulsory subject for many years in Indonesian schools, students' speaking proficiency is still relatively low. Many students continue to find it difficult to express their ideas orally, have limited vocabulary, and demonstrate poor pronunciation and fluency. Moreover, psychological factors such as low confidence, fear of making mistakes, and anxiety when speaking in front of their peers often hinder students from participating actively in speaking activities (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). These challenges suggest

that speaking remains one of the most difficult skills for Indonesian learners to master.

One major factor that influences students' speaking difficulties is the teaching strategies implemented by teachers in the classroom. Teaching speaking is not only about explaining grammar rules or asking students to memorize vocabulary; it also involves interactive and communicative strategies that encourage learners to use the language meaningfully. Orlich et al. (2010) describe a teaching strategy as a systematic plan employed by teachers to achieve instructional objectives effectively. The use of appropriate strategies can foster a supportive learning environment in which students feel motivated and confident to speak.

Several studies have indicated that the use of communicative and student-centered strategies can significantly enhance students' speaking ability. Razi et al. (2021) found that strategies such as role play, drilling, picture describing, and storytelling assist students in developing fluency and confidence in speaking. Likewise, Widyaningsih and Robiasih (2018) reported that interactive activities, including group discussions and cooperative learning, motivate students to participate more actively and lessen their fear of making mistakes. These findings emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate strategies in speaking instruction.

Nevertheless, implementing effective speaking strategies is not always easy. Teachers frequently encounter various challenges, such as limited instructional

time, large class sizes, students' low vocabulary mastery, and passive learning habits. Maryanti et al. (2021) revealed that although teachers employ a range of speaking strategies, their effectiveness is often constrained by students' anxiety, peer pressure, and classroom management issues. This indicates that a gap still exists between theoretical recommendations and actual classroom practice.

This gap becomes more apparent in schools located in eastern Indonesia, particularly in areas with limited educational facilities and exposure to English, such as East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Students in this region generally have fewer opportunities to practice English outside the classroom, which in turn affects their confidence and fluency. Awololon and Purwaningsih (2025) emphasize that limited exposure and teacher-centered instruction often diminish students' communicative competence, making it difficult for them to develop speaking proficiency.

Teachers in such contexts are expected to be more creative and adaptive in selecting and implementing teaching strategies. Group discussion, for instance, has been shown to be effective in improving students' speaking skills by promoting collaboration and active participation. A study conducted by Heni (2024) at STIKOM Uyelindo Kupang revealed that group discussion significantly enhanced students' English abilities, including speaking, by shifting the learning process from teacher-centered to student-centered interaction. This finding indicates that interactive strategies are particularly relevant for students in NTT.

SMAN 1 Kupang, as one of the prominent senior high schools in East Nusa Tenggara, reflects these regional challenges. Based on preliminary observations, eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Kupang still experience difficulties in speaking English fluently and confidently. Although teachers have implemented several speaking activities, students' participation levels and oral performance vary significantly. Some students are active, while others remain passive and reluctant to speak.

Similar findings were also reported by Lestari (2024), who discovered that students' low confidence, limited vocabulary, and inadequate learning media were major obstacles in speaking instruction, even when teachers implemented various strategies. This indicates that the effectiveness of speaking strategies depends not only on the strategy itself but also on how it is applied and adapted to students' needs and classroom conditions.

Therefore, this research entitled "Investigating the Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Speaking to the Eleventh Grade Students of SMAN 1 Kupang" is conducted to explore the strategies employed by English teachers in teaching speaking, identify the challenges they face, and examine how these challenges are addressed in the classroom. This study is important because its findings are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, schools, and future researchers in developing more effective, contextual, and appropriate speaking instruction strategies, particularly for senior high schools in eastern Indonesia.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

1. What speaking teaching strategies are used by English teachers?
2. How are the speaking teaching strategies implemented by the teachers in the classroom
3. What challenges do teachers face in implementing these strategies, and how do they overcome them?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the research problems outlined above, the objectives of this study are

As follows:

1. To identify and describe the strategies used by English teachers in teaching speaking at the senior high school level.
2. To analyze how teachers implement these strategies in the classroom to enhance students' speaking skills.
3. To explore the challenges faced by teachers in implementing speaking strategies and the solutions they apply to overcome these challenges.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Significance:**

The results of this study are expected to enrich the literature on teaching strategies in speaking, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the high school level. Since most existing studies focus on high school or university students, this research contributes new insights specific to the strategies used in high schools, particularly in areas with limited resources such as Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. It may also support future research that explores contextualized and student-centered approaches in similar educational settings.

### **1.4.2 Practical Significance:**

- a.** For English teachers, this study may serve as a useful reference in selecting and applying appropriate strategies to improve students' speaking skills. It can help teachers to better understand which techniques are effective, how to adapt them to students' needs, and how to overcome common classroom challenges.
- b.** For school administrators and education policymakers, the findings can provide valuable input for designing teacher training programs, allocating resources, and developing curricula that support more effective English speaking instruction at the high school level.

- c. For future researchers, this study may offer a foundation and direction for further exploration of teacher strategies in different contexts, promoting innovations in English language pedagogy that are relevant, engaging, and culturally appropriate.