

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of Research**

Speaking is one of the crucial language skills that students need to master in order to communicate effectively. The importance of speaking skills in language learning cannot be overstated. Nunan (1991) stated that learning to speak in second or foreign language will be facilitated when learners are actively engaged in attempting to communicate. In Indonesia, the education system places significant emphasis on developing students' speaking skills, particularly in the junior high school level. In addition, the students charged to speak fluently during the learning process. When doing discussion, they charged to tell, listen and express their opinion to their friends. Thus, they have to master in speaking skill.

The development of speaking skills in students is intricately connected to the activation of their prior knowledge, which serves as a foundational element for effective communication and languages learning. Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory further supports the importance of prior knowledge in language development. Vygotsky emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning, suggesting that when students share their prior knowledge in collaborative discussions, they co-construct new understanding and enhance their communicative skills. This interaction not only improves individual speaking abilities but also fosters a community of learners who support each other's language development. When students engage in meaningful dialogue, they practice organizing their thoughts, using appropriate language structures, and responding to their peers, all of which are crucial for effective speaking.

According to Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, (1999), Prior knowledge refers to the knowledge, experiences, and skills that learners bring with them before learning new information or engaging in a new task. It represents the existing knowledge base and cognitive structures that

individuals have developed through their previous learning experiences, both formal and informal.

Students who have less prior knowledge it means they have little experience, and they cannot share their ideas or their opinions effectively to the other students during the learning process. Uno (2013) stated that prior knowledge is classified into 3 types, there are prior knowledge that students learn before school, prior knowledge that students learn out of the school, and prior knowledge about the generic skill. In this research, the researcher only focuses on the prior knowledge that students learn before in the school and connected with students' speaking activities in the school.

In this case, the students' prior knowledge is important because it can help students learn more effectively. It can be seen that prior knowledge has the role in education that can act as a scaffold that allows students to incorporate new information more effectively. When students have a strong background in a subject, they can engage with complex ideas more easily. Fisher & Frey (2009) argued that the prior knowledge of students can help the effectiveness in learning process. So the students can speak as well as possibly. The more students speak, the more they express their ideas so the learning process become more effective.

Prior knowledge has an influence in learning and teaching process. From that statement the researcher endeavoured to conduct a research entitled:

**“THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL”**

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of study above, the researcher formulates a research question: Is there any significance correlation between students' prior knowledge and their speaking skill?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the study is to find out the significance correlation between students' prior knowledge and their speaking skills.

## **1.4 Limitation of the Research**

The researcher limits this research to the significance correlation between students' prior knowledge and their speaking skills. The focus on this research is the prior knowledge that students learn before school. The researcher also limited this research to focus on students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehension when speaking.

## **1.5 The Significance of the Research**

This research can provide insights into factors that influence students speaking skill to develop students speaking skill, and hopefully useful and valuable, especially for students and teachers of English of the Eight grade of Ahmad Dahlan Junior High School to be considerations in their teaching and learning process in the future.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

Prior Knowledge: Knowledge, skill and experiences that learners bring before they learning new information or engaging in a new task (Dochy et al, 1999)

Speaking : Speaking is an activity that process or produces a sentence, not a mere delivery of words but a complex skill involving interaction and engagement with others (Brown, 2004)