

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In recent years, the demand for English proficiency has become increasingly prominent in Indonesian education, particularly in programs designed to prepare students for global academic and professional engagement. As a result, many schools in Indonesia have implemented International Class Programs (ICP) (Astuti & Hidayati, 2021) as a strategic effort to enhance students' English proficiency, particularly their speaking ability. These programs are commonly characterized by the use of English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) (Sinaga & Maisarah, 2024), the adoption of internationally oriented curricula, and increased exposure to English in classroom interaction. Ideally, such conditions are expected to create a more supportive environment for developing students' ability to use English in meaningful communication (Nuraini & Lestari, 2021). Despite this expectation, existing studies on ICP and speaking ability present inconclusive findings. In practice, the implementation of ICP does not always fully reflect its intended design, as variations in teacher proficiency, classroom interaction, and students' engagement may influence how English is actually used in learning contexts.

While some research reports improvements in students' confidence, fluency, and willingness to speak (Peng & Wang, 2024), most of these studies tend to overlook how students experience and use English as part of their everyday communicative practices, particularly beyond formal classroom settings (Aditya et al., 2024). They also pay limited attention to the interactional processes through which meaning is constructed in real communication (Salsabilla, 2023). Speaking ability is often treated as an individual cognitive skill, primarily assessed through tests or structured classroom activities. Consequently, these approaches may not fully capture how students actually use English in everyday communication beyond the classroom.

Limited attention has been given to students' experiences after completing the ICP, particularly in relation to how they use English in real-life situations (Lee,

2019). The ability to communicate in English is not only developed through formal instruction, but also through interaction, social practice, and personal engagement with language in authentic contexts (Devlin et al., 2024). Understanding students' experiences is crucial to reveal how they perceive the role of the program in relation to their communicative ability in a more holistic sense.

In relation to speaking ability, the concept of communicative competence provides an important theoretical foundation. According to Canale & Swain, (1980), communicative competence involves not only grammatical knowledge, but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts, to maintain discourse, and to employ strategies in communication. This perspective shifts the focus from language as a system of rules to language as a tool for meaningful interaction. In contrast, while this model provides a structured understanding of communicative ability, it tends to conceptualize communication as an individual capacity, which may not fully capture the dynamic and interactional nature of meaning-making in real-life contexts.

From a theoretical perspective, this issue can be better understood through the concept of dialogism proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1984). Bakhtin views language not as a fixed system of rules, but as a dynamic and socially situated practice that emerges through interaction. Meaning is not simply transmitted from speaker to listener; rather, it is co-constructed through dialogue, shaped by context, purpose, and the presence of others (Chen et al., 2022a). Speaking ability can be understood as the ability to participate in meaningful interaction, where speakers respond to others, adapt their language, and construct meaning in context (Sato & McDonough, 2020). This perspective is particularly relevant in ICP contexts, where students engage in multilingual interaction and continuously adjust their language use in response to others.

In addition, Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia highlights the coexistence of multiple languages and voices within communication. In the context of Indonesian ICP classrooms, the use of both English and Indonesian may reflect students' efforts to negotiate meaning rather than a deficiency (Tai, 2022). This implies that communicative competence encompasses not only language proficiency but also the capacity to react, adjust, and interact in a variety of settings (Tashkent, 2021).

Although the relevance of dialogic interaction to speaking development is widely acknowledged, despite its relevance, limited research has examined ICP from a dialogic and experiential perspective, particularly in Indonesian contexts where communicative practices are shaped by complex social and institutional factors. Most existing research remains product-oriented, emphasizing outcomes rather than the process through which speaking ability is formed. This gap is especially evident in Indonesian state high schools, where contextual factors such as classroom practices, student diversity, and institutional conditions may influence how communication skills develop over time.

This research seeks to explore students' experiences after participating in the International Class Program and how these experiences relate to their ability to use English in everyday communication. By adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach and drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, this study seeks to offer a novel perspective on speaking ability as a socially constructed and interactional practice. The findings are expected to contribute not only to the theoretical discussion of communicative competence, but also to the improvement of English language teaching practices in Indonesian educational contexts.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Despite the increasing implementation of International Class Programs (ICP) in Indonesian schools, the extent to which these programs support students' ability to use English in meaningful communication beyond the classroom remains unclear. Previous studies have primarily focused on measurable outcomes such as test scores, fluency, and confidence within classroom settings, while limited attention has been given to students' own experiences in using English in real-life contexts. As a result, there is still a lack of understanding of how students perceive their speaking ability, particularly from their own lived experiences beyond classroom contexts.

Speaking ability is often treated as an individual skill, rather than a socially situated practice shaped through interaction (Chen et al., 2022b). From a dialogic perspective as proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, communication involves responding, adapting, and constructing meaning in relation to others. This perspective has not

been widely explored in studies of ICP, especially in the Indonesian context. Therefore, this study seeks to explore students' lived experiences after participating in the ICP, specifically focusing on how they navigate communicative situations by responding, adapting, and negotiating meaning elements central to Bakhtin's dialogism. Based on this focus, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do students experience of using English in and beyond the International Class Program?
2. How do they use English in responding, adapting, and negotiating meaning in communication?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

This study aims to explore students' lived experiences of participating in International Class Program (ICP) and to understand how these experiences shape their use of English within and beyond formal classroom contexts. The study specifically investigates how students experience English as part of their daily communication practices, how they engage in interaction using English in both academic and non-academic situations, and how they construct communicative meaning through responsive and context-dependent language use. In relation to the first research question, this study seeks to examine students' lived experiences of using English inside and outside the classroom, including how English exposure, classroom interaction, peer communication, and everyday communicative practices influence their confidence, participation, and meaning-oriented language use. In relation to the second research question, this study aims to explore how students use English in communication through processes of responding, adapting language use, and negotiating meaning during interaction. Particular attention is given to how students maintain communication, adjust language according to context and interlocutors, and employ flexible communicative strategies, including bilingual language use, to sustain interaction and mutual understanding. By employing a phenomenological approach and Bakhtin's dialogism as the theoretical lens, this study seeks to understand English communication not merely as the production of grammatically correct language, but as a socially situated, interactional, and

meaning-oriented communicative practice shaped through students' lived experiences within the ICP environment.

1.4 Significance of The Study

This study is expected to provide contributions to the understanding and development of English language education, particularly in relation to students' speaking ability and communicative experiences within and beyond the International Class Program (ICP). The significance of this study is presented in three aspects: theoretical significance, practical significance, and significance for future research.

1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in English language teaching, particularly in understanding speaking ability as a socially constructed and interactional practice. By integrating the concept of communicative competence proposed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain with the dialogic perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective on how speaking ability can be understood beyond linguistic accuracy.

2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to provide insights for English teachers, particularly those involved in International Class Programs, in designing learning activities that support meaningful communication and interaction. It may also help students become more aware of how they use English in different contexts and encourage them to engage in more authentic communication. In addition, the findings can serve as a reference for schools and policymakers in evaluating and improving the implementation of ICP in Indonesian state high schools.

3. Significance for Future Research

This study may serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring speaking ability from a qualitative and dialogic perspective. It also opens opportunities for further studies that examine speaking development through different methodologies or in different educational contexts.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To ensure a clear and consistent understanding of the concepts used in this study, several key terms are defined operationally as follows:

1. International Class Program (ICP)

International Class Program (ICP) refers to a specialized educational program designed to provide students with greater exposure to English-mediated learning and internationally oriented educational practices (Galloway & Rose, 2021). In Indonesian educational contexts, ICP commonly integrate the national curriculum with international learning approaches, such as Cambridge-oriented materials, bilingual instruction, English-medium classroom interaction, and globally oriented learning activities (Mutiaraningrum et al., 2026). Rather than functioning solely as a program that uses English as the language of instruction, ICP also aims to create a communicative and academic environment that encourages students to develop English proficiency, intercultural awareness, critical thinking, and readiness for global communication (Galloway & Rose, 2021). Within Indonesian state high schools, ICP implementation often reflects a hybrid educational model in which English is used strategically alongside Indonesian in classroom interaction, academic discussion, and communicative activities while still adapting to national educational policies and local learning contexts (Astuti & Hidayati, 2021).

2. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to students' ability to use English appropriately, effectively, and meaningfully in communication across various social and interactional contexts. The concept, proposed by Canale & Swain, (1980), emphasizes that successful communication involves more than grammatical accuracy alone. Communicative competence includes the ability to understand and produce language according to situational context, communicative purpose, interlocutors, and social expectations (Choi & Kang, 2024). In this perspective, language users are expected not only to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to maintain interaction, respond appropriately, negotiate meaning, and adapt language use during communication. Canale and Swain further explain communicative competence through several interconnected dimensions, namely grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence relates to knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure, while sociolinguistic competence concerns the ability to use language appropriately according to social and cultural contexts (Taguchi, 2020). Discourse competence refers to the ability to organize utterances coherently within communication, whereas strategic competence involves the use of communication strategies to overcome difficulties and maintain interaction (Taguchi, 2022). In the context of this study, communicative competence is understood as students' ability to participate actively in meaningful communication, respond to others, adapt language use according to communicative situations, and negotiate meaning effectively within interaction both inside and beyond the International Class Program environment (Larsen-Freeman, 2023).

The definitions above are intended to clarify the specific meanings of key terms as used in this study. They serve as operational references to ensure consistent interpretation and to avoid ambiguity in understanding the concepts discussed throughout the research.