

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the background, research question, objectives of the research, research scope, research significance regarding empowering students' speaking skills through tiktok: an innovative approach.

1.1 Rationale

Social media applications are used for four main purposes: entertainment, socialization, formative, and academic (Yang, 2020). According to Zaitun (2021) learning media can be defined as an educational tool that develops along with learning technology and comes in various forms, including audiovisual and visual. One of the popular technologies used today is social media, which has various types of platforms that can be used for learning. TikTok, as one of the popular social media, can be used as a tool for language acquisition, particularly in improving English speaking skills (Pratiwi, 2021).

TikTok, a video-sharing social network operated by ByteDance Ltd. has developed into one of the well-known social media platforms in the past five years. According to Anderson (2020) the creation of small-sized videos (from 30 seconds to 5 minutes) and sharing features have made it easier for people to share their videos without using complex editing tools. In addition, as a social network, TikTok allows the created content to be shared through hashtags or personal pages, which allows lesser followers to view the content. TikTok was often considered a "dance showcase" with no educational value, but it is now a repository of useful micro-learning content (Kaye, 2021). Since its users come from various backgrounds and mostly speak English, TikTok makes a suitable environment.

TikTok, as a well-known application with millions of users, serves as a social media platform for sharing short videos (De Leyn, 2022). The main function of TikTok is for leisure, many users only watch it in their spare time, but the video content also has the potential to broaden the horizons and knowledge of its users. TikTok can assist students in developing confidence by presenting accurate pronunciation, diverse vocabulary, and easy-to-understand frameworks through video exposure (Pratiwi, 2021). Therefore, TikTok can also be used as a method to

assist children in developing their speaking skills (Pratiwi, 2021). Utilize the platform's popularity and unique features to increase engagement and motivation (Escamilla-Fajardo, 2021). The TikTok format, characterized by short videos and diverse content, encourages authentic communication and creativity, fostering students' natural expression and confidence (Marhamah et al., 2022). However, challenges such as ensuring content quality and privacy must be overcome. Despite these challenges, research and case studies show that TikTok can be a valuable tool for improving speech, offering opportunities for feedback and interaction with peers. Going forward, establishing best practices and guidelines will be critical to effectively integrating TikTok into educational contexts for speaking skill development.

To improve oral communication skills, TikTok provides a learning and communication platform. It gives students more opportunities to practice speaking in English through social interaction and content exchange (John & Yunus, 2021). With its live broadcast feature, TikTok allows users to communicate with foreign acquaintances, which can improve students' oral proficiency and confidence in using English expressions (Schurz et al., 2022). It is clear that the use of TikTok in the classroom has a significant impact on students' speaking ability. Furthermore, Xiuwen & Razali (2021) explained that the use of TikTok in language learning has the potential to improve students' speaking skills. TikTok offers many fun and enjoyable activities, one of which is creating short videos to help students learn to speak. Students can also learn English languages by watching short videos of people speaking. Many studies have investigated the benefits of using social media to help language learners learn to speak, but few studies have investigated how TikTok empowers EFL learners to learn to speak.

Speaking skills are considered the most important skills for students learning a language (Yulita & Hertiki, 2023). It is in line with Maulana et al., (2019) that say the most important aspect of learning a language is getting fluent in speaking. Speaking is a social act in which meanings are made and shared in various contexts (Sangaji, 2019). Speaking skills are also used as a means of direct and indirect communication. By mastering English, students will find it easier to communicate,

both orally and in writing, especially in the learning process and completing academic tasks (Saddhono, 2022). Speaking ability is one of the crucial aspects of language skills (Kaye, 2021). Good speaking ability is greatly influenced by the quantity of speaking practice the more practice, the better the speaking ability a child will have. Providing proper speaking training in class will help students develop good speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, correct intonation, and idea delivery. Speaking involves conveying ideas, thoughts, and intentions through words to a listener or interlocutor.

In relation to this, Wahyuni Oktavia & Kunci (2021) state that speaking is the skill of pronouncing articulation sounds or words that express, state, or convey intentions, ideas, thoughts, and feelings, which are structured and developed according to the listener's needs so that what is conveyed can be understood. With good speaking skills, children will find it easier to maximize their potential. Consistent with this statement, Tarigan (2020) notes that the more proficient a person is in language, the clearer their thought process will be. In other words, Speaking is a way for a person to convey their thoughts, goals, and meanings. Others can receive and assimilate the information communicated by that person. Therefore, effective communication and interaction occur. However, students often do not find an environment that is willing to provide feedback or even respond to them when they speak English in the classroom or school setting. This is due to the fact that the majority of Indonesians consider English to be difficult.

In addition, speaking is the primary way to communicate with others, so mastering a language is equivalent to the ability to speak. Furthermore, Spawa and Hassan (2018) argue that speaking skills should be learned more than other skills. Therefore, in today's technological era, English is essential for communication. According to Richards (2019), as foreign language learners, students should prioritize their speaking skills in English. Additionally, it is described as an interactive process in constructing meaning, which includes reception, production, and processing of information. The form and meaning of conversations depend on the context, participants, collective experiences, physical environment, and the

goals of the conversation. Students engaged in interaction will gain valuable feedback from each other during the interaction process.

Students often face challenges when learning to speak, such as difficulties in using a foreign language. A lack of motivation to learn a foreign language, especially speaking in English, is another contributing factor. Additionally, they often feel too shy and fearful to speak. Several causes underlie these issues. Furthermore, speaking skills consist of many complex aspects, including (1) fluency, which involves smooth flow of sounds, syllables, and phrases; (2) pronunciation, which pertains to how clearly students articulate their speech; (3) vocabulary, which encompasses the words used in the language; and (4) comprehension, which involves the ability to understand the speaker's intent and the overall meaning of the words used (Kaye, 2021).

One of the most challenging skills for students is speaking. Why? Because students tend to feel shy about speaking in a foreign language when they believe they haven't mastered it. Researchers have also found that many students struggle to speak due to a lack of vocabulary and insufficient practice. This difficulty can demotivate students from continuing to learn English (Daud, 2019). Many students are able to write well in English but struggle when it comes to speaking. To become more fluent and confident in speaking, six key elements are considered important: being confident, fluent, and accurate; finding the right words; maintaining the audience's interest; and sounding natural. Based on observations interviews with students and teachers at SMPN 1 Ciledug, Cirebon, students are hesitant to express their opinions.

This hesitation is due to teachers focusing only on fictional story material, leading to students' lack of understanding of the rapidly explained material and their inability to answer the teacher's questions. Additionally, many English learning processes during online learning have relied on lecturing and completing tests, causing students to feel bored and uninterested. This is supported by research on the analysis of online learning processes conducted by Putra et al. (2020), which found that during online learning, student attendance did not reach 100% despite being scheduled. Furthermore, much material was not covered, there was a lack of

student motivation, and economic factors related to internet quotas also played a role.

Students often feel bored and uninterested during learning process, making it less effective. Moreover, not all students have access to phones with adequate data and network support, and many parents cannot accompany their children during online learning. Rahmawati et al. (2020) also conducted an analysis of online learning, finding that ineffective online learning is due to students not fully understanding the teacher's explanations, leading to decreased student motivation over time.

If student interest, and motivated to continue to decline during online learning, it could affect their academic performance. To increase student participation in expressing their opinions, teachers play a crucial role. According to Roesminingsih & Susarno (2020), teachers contribute significantly to the learning process as educators, learners, trainers, and mentors. Additionally, innovative and enjoyable learning media are needed. Learning media act as channels or bridges for the educational messages conveyed by the teacher to the students, allowing these messages to be absorbed quickly and accurately according to their purpose (Suprijono, 2021). Azhar (2018) states that learning media are tools for delivering educational messages, while Aji (2020) explains that interactive learning media can effectively replace what the teacher cannot convey, making the learning process more efficient.

Video learning media has a greater power than audio media. Poole (2018) states that the term "audiovisual aids" is commonly used for teaching tools that incorporate both media and sound into the learning equation. TV and video are similar because both display moving images and sound. This sound can be natural or artificial, tailored to the situation. Since students can see and hear what is being said, they are more engaged in learning pronunciation. Moreover, TikTok videos utilize facial expressions and speaker movements, making them easier to understand. The visual elements are more attention-grabbing than audio alone.

The popular video application TikTok features unique effects that allow users to create cool and engaging short videos that attract a large audience. This app is

also used for learning, including English language learning. TikTok is an ideal medium for learning in an enjoyable way and can be used by everyone (De Leyn, 2022). TikTok has benefits in helping students learn, particularly in speaking, as many videos from native speakers directly demonstrate proper pronunciation. However, TikTok also has negative effects, such as shocking content and adult scenes, but students must be able to select useful videos and avoid misuse. Additionally, TikTok can serve as an innovative learning media.

Innovative and creative learning media are essential for boosting students' confidence in expressing their opinions. One such medium is social media, like TikTok. Using TikTok, teachers can easily create interactive learning experiences tailored to the students' environment, situation, and conditions. Social media is not only a communication and interaction tool but also a means of self-expression and self-branding (Andreas et al., 2019). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2020), social media is a group of internet-based platforms built on Web 2.0 technologies that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Christ Garret (Cawidu, 2022) defines social media as tools, services, and communication that facilitate connections between people with shared interests. The use of social media in education itself is not something new. Several researchers have used social media applications as learning media, for example Zaitun et al., (2021) who used TikTok as a tool to improve students' speaking skills, Hasan Dirjal & Ghabanchi (2020) using Skype devices in teaching the speaking skill (Male / Female) as a supportive environment of English language teaching. Hamdi (2023) using the social media as a tool to improve speaking skills. Agustin & Ayu (2021) using instagram for increasing vocabulary and listening skill and Cagas (2022) used TikTok as a tool to improve the speaking and grammar skills of higher education students.

According to Tekno Kompas 2018, TikTok has around 10 million active users in Indonesia, mostly millennials and school-aged children, making it an attractive and familiar learning medium for students. TikTok can effectively enhance students' speaking skills and confidence. Aji (2020) notes that TikTok meets students' learning needs, is engaging due to its novelty, and offers numerous features applicable to learning. It aligns with the maturity and characteristics of

millennial students, who are closely connected to digital devices. Utilizing TikTok for learning can make speaking skill training more engaging and enjoyable for SMPN 1 Ciledug, Cirebon students, who are in the concrete operational stage. The familiarity and frequent use of TikTok can attract students' interest and alleviate boredom in learning. Therefore, the research question posed in this study is whether the use of TikTok as a learning medium influences the speaking skills of SMPN 1 Ciledug, Cirebon students.

Based on the aforementioned background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled **“Empowering Students' Speaking Skills Through TikTok: An Innovative Approach.”**

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does the utilization of TikTok social media empower the speaking skills of students?
2. What is the student's response in using TikTok in English learning on empowering students' speaking skills?2

1.3 The Objective of Research

Based on the problem statement above, the purpose of this research is

1. To understand the utilization of TikTok social media in empowering the speaking skills of students.
2. To Identify the Student's response of using TikTok in English learning towards empowering students' speaking skills.

1.4 Scope of The Research

The results of this research are expected to bring both theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretical Benefits

Through this study, it is hoped to contribute to the development of knowledge in general regarding the use of TikTok social media in improving students' speaking skills and to provide input for future studies.

2. Practical Benefits

This research is expected to broaden the knowledge and experience of both the researcher and the readers.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this research can help readers to know the effectiveness of using TikTok in English to empower students' speaking skills, and how to utilize social media platforms in learning.

Practically, to help students to get used to using TikTok as a means as a breakthrough in learning media to facilitate speaking skills.

1.6 Clarification of key terms

1.6.1 Speaking Skills

Speaking skills are the ability to communicate effectively which allows us to convey information orally and in a way that can be understood by the listener (Marleni, 2021). In order for interactions between speakers and listeners to avoid misunderstandings, students must learn to speak well.

1.6.2. TikTok

TikTok is a social software that allows users to create a community of 15-second creative music short videos that are based on style and slow motion. Users can choose their own music interface and then create their favorite short videos Yang (2020).