CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the most fundamental and essential human communication skills, alongside writing, listening, and reading. This skill begins to develop from an early age through exposure to spoken language and social interaction. Qasim (2021) stated that speaking is the most common language skill the learners want to master as quickly as possible. Children learn to communicate by listening to others, and humans naturally speak more than they write, even before learning to read and write. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) added that through speaking, people can express ideas, facts, feelings, and thoughts. Rabiah (2018) also emphasized that language is an important tool for conveying and understanding thoughts between individuals. Without speaking ability, meaningful interaction would not occur, making this skill crucial for language learners.

Speaking abilities are crucial for communication, thus becoming proficient in them is essential while studying English as a foreign language (EFL). Teachers play a vital role in creating a learning environment that supports the development of students' speaking abilities. One of the greatest challenges in English teaching is helping students actively and effectively use the language in real-life situations. Therefore, learning strategies should be designed to give students opportunities to

speak spontaneously, organize ideas well, and use language appropriately in context. According to Adawiyah (2018), learning that integrates engaging content can increase students' motivation and encourage their active participation in speaking activities. Such an approach allows students to experience more realistic and meaningful communication during the learning process.

Speaking represents a vital aspect of language proficiency, as it allows learners to convey their opinions, concepts, and feelings in a clear and impactful manner. Nevertheless, for many students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking continues to be one of the most difficult skills to master, influenced by factors related to language, mental state, and learning environment. Fitriyanti and Malihah (2024) stated that students often face limitations in vocabulary and grammar, as well as non-linguistic obstacles such as lack of confidence, anxiety, and limited opportunities to practice. This indicates the need for effective teaching strategies that address both the linguistic and affective domains. At MA Nurul Islam, the English teacher for grade XI stated that, on average, students' speaking skills are still below standard. This condition calls for the implementation of more interactive and effective learning methods to improve students' speaking abilities. Factors such as lack of practice, limited vocabulary, and minimal exposure to English conversational situations are the main causes. Therefore, a technology-based learning approach is needed to increase students' active engagement, one of which is through an interactive application like Praktika.ai. This application can help students practice speaking in real conversational contexts, making them more prepared and confident in using English.

In this digital age, various technologies have been utilized to enhance speaking skills, including technology-based language learning applications. These applications offer a more interactive and adaptive approach, allowing students to practice speaking more flexibly and personally. One application that has gained significant use is Praktika.ai, designed to improve speaking skills through conversation simulations with artificial intelligence. Studies indicate that integrating technology, including educational applications, can boost student motivation, deliver instant feedback, and offer greater opportunities for practice than traditional teaching approaches. (Leuwo et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have explored the use of Praktika.ai in relation to speaking skills. The first study by Sun (2012), highlighted the importance of the Skype application in teaching English. The research showed that interaction with technology-based platforms like Skype helped students improve their speaking skills by communicating directly with native speakers or peers from other countries. The second study by Xiaoyu He (2018), found that the Cake application allowed students to control their learning, overcome speaking difficulties, and motivated them to speak in English. The last study by Kim and Kwon (2017) explored how mobile applications affected the speaking abilities of EFL (English as a foreign Language) students. The research showed that consistent use of mobile applications significantly improved students' speaking skills in English, though with a moderate rate of improvement.

Therefore, the importance of using technology has become a vital part of the learning process as a teaching medium. Technology has been used to help and enhance language learning. Furthermore, as no previous researchers have used the

Praktika.ai application, the researcher will use the Praktika.ai application to determine its effectiveness on the speaking skills of grade XI students at MA Nurul Islam Lampung. Praktika is an application created by Adam Turaev on May 26, 2022, designed to help students learn by simulating artificial intelligence scenarios. Therefore, this application can be considered a new tool. It offers interactive conversations with an AI tutor, real-time feedback, adaptive difficulty levels, and over 1,000 lessons covering various topics.

Thus, the use of technology, such as the Praktika.ai learning application, is an attractive solution that can provide a more interactive and contextual learning experience. This application not only helps students practice independently but also allows them to engage in conversation scenarios that mimic real-life situations. Through this approach, it is hoped that students' speaking abilities will improve significantly, enabling them to meet the expected standards and gain confidence in using English in various situations.

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that utilizing technology particularly interactive language learning applications holds a significant role in improving students' speaking abilities. Various studies have shown that integrating digital tools into language learning increases student engagement, provides meaningful practice, and improves performance. However, limited research has specifically explored the use of the Praktika.ai application in improving speaking skills within the EFL context. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study entitled **"THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING PRAKTIKA.AI APPLICATION TOWARDS STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL AT MA NURUL ISLAM**

LAMPUNG" to examine how this technology-based learning tool can effectively enhance students' ability to speak English confidently and fluently.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study as previously explained, the research problem can be formulated as follow: Is Praktika.ai application effective in teaching students' speaking skill at MA Nurul Islam Lampung?

C. Objective of Research

Based on the research problem, the main purpose of this research is the objective of research is to determine the effectiveness of using Praktika.ai application on students' speaking skill at MA Nurul Islam Lampung.

D. Research Hypothesis

In relation with the background of the study, the research problem and the objective the study, the researcher can take the hypothesis:

Ho: There is no significant difference on speaking skill between students who are taught using the Praktika application and those who are taught using picture.

H1:   There is significant difference on speaking skill between students who are taught using the Praktika application and those who are taught using picture.

E. Significance of the Study

1. For English Teachers

    The significance of this research for teachers is to improve teaching methods, and enhance students' language learning experiences. This research contributes to the ongoing improvement of language education and the achievement of educational goals.

2. For Students

The significance of this research for students lies in its potential the curiosity in learning speaking by utilizing praktika.ai application. This research encourages a positive and proactive media to language learning, ultimately contributing to their holistic development.

3. Further Researcher

This research is expected to provide useful information and serve as a reference for conducting further studies related to speaking skills using the Praktika application and other AI application.

F. Scope and Limitation of Study

This research was conducted at MA Nurul Islam Lampung with the aim of exploring the effectiveness of using the Praktika.ai application in improving students' speaking skills. The main objective of this study is to determine whether the use of Praktika.ai has a significant impact on students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking English. The scope of the study focuses on the English-speaking learning process through the use of digital learning media. The subjects of this research are limited to the eleventh-grade students of MA Nurul Islam Lampung in the academic year 2024/2025.

G. Definition of key terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this study, the following definitions are given:

1. Speaking Skill

Speaking skills refer to the ability to communicate effectively using spoken language. This includes the ability to speak clearly and accurately, participate in spontaneous conversations, express thoughts and ideas, and

respond appropriately in various social and communicative situations. Speaking skills are crucial in language learning, as they enable learners to interact confidently using English.

2. Praktika.ai Application

Praktika.ai is a language learning application developed to enhance speaking skills through artificial intelligence (AI) powered conversation simulations. The application offers interactive dialogues where learners can engage in real time conversations with an AI tutor. It provides instant feedback and adapts the level of difficulty to match the learner's progress. By using Praktika.ai, students can practice speaking English in a controlled yet dynamic environment that simulates real-life conversations, helping them improve fluency and confidence in their speaking abilities.

3. Picture

Picture in the context of this study is used as a learning medium in the control class to teach speaking skills. Picture media is used to stimulate students to describe, narrate, or discuss the content of the image orally. The use of pictures aims to help students develop ideas and organize sentences when speaking, as well as serve as a visual aid that can trigger conversation in the teaching and learning process