

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research questions, key terms, and the purpose and significance of the research.

### **A. Background of Study**

Mastery of English is needed in the global era, especially in the field of education. English as a school subject can be a bridge for students to communicate internationally. In an era that is almost entirely technology-based, teachers and students can utilize technology for the language learning process. There are many applications and websites that students can use to learn English by improving their writing, listening, reading and speaking. In this context, speaking becomes very important for effective communication.

Speaking is a productive skill in the oral mode, which involves using English to interact, express and share ideas. Speaking is one of the language skills that students must master. According to Ballet et.al (2017) asserts that humans are creatures that cannot be separated from the contributions of others in everyday life. As social beings, humans need good communication skills to build interpersonal relationships. This makes speaking ability very important to master, especially English which is an international language. The goal of language learning is to improve one's ability to communicate in public accurately and appropriately. Students should become proficient speakers to achieve this goal like articulate their thoughts and opinions during the classroom learning process. They should also be able to ask or respond to questions appropriately, confidently and effectively, even

if they sometimes use incorrect vocabulary and grammar. These are the requirements for teaching speaking ability.

However, many students have not mastered speaking ability even though speaking ability are needed in communication, especially speaking in English because English is an international language. The reason why students do not master speaking ability is because they feel unconfident and awkward when asked to speak in class. They also feel shy and afraid of making mistakes when speaking in public. Limited vocabulary is also often an obstacle that makes them hesitate to actively participate in speaking activities (Putri, 2021).

Students' speaking ability are often a challenge for teachers, because each student has a different level, both in pronunciation, understanding, and communication skills. In this case, teachers can apply learning methods and learning media or applications so that students are more developed in speaking ability. Many learning media such as duolingo application and elsa speak application can develop student's speaking ability (Hafifah, 2021; Putri et.al 2024) and some of visual learning media like picture series. According Montang et.al (2023) claims that picture series can develop students' writing skills. However, in the research, the researcher chooses one of learning media that will be applied to overcome this challenge is fondi application. The fondi application is a new application can improve English language skills (Arifiyana, 2023). The fondi application is a virtual-based interactive application in which several avatars are presented that can be selected by users from various countries. This application can

make users more confident and less anxious when speaking because it uses the avatar feature.

The fondi application has features that have the potential to improve students' speaking ability. The researcher chose this application because students can speak freely without any pressure by using the avatar feature and unique places presented, they can get friends to chat virtually. By using this application, students will also add relationships both domestically and abroad. They will learn more about social issues such as; how to start a conversation, how to greet others politely, and mutual respect between cultures and differences in any case. In this era almost entirely technology-based, students are expected to be able to operate digital platforms and habituate to technological developments.

According to Arifiyana (2023) in her research claims the fondi application has positive perceptions from students in speaking practice. This is also supported by Arroyan & Ma'rufah (2024) who found that students have a high perception of fondi applications. Their study showed that students felt more confident, comfortable, and motivated to speak English. The advantages of the fondi application include features in the application such as using 3D, there are virtual environments (plaza, park, and lounge), there is a live voice chat and can be used in a wide range, there is an AI instructor. The way fondi works in learning English speaking are the user downloads the fondi application. Then, the user selects an avatar to log into the application by giving the avatar a name. After that, users can meet other users in several virtual places available in the fondi application. Finally, the user has a conversation with voice chat.

The reason why the fondi application can improve English speaking skill is that it can minimize anxiety and shyness, confidence is increasing, and users can speak casually. The language structure in fondi application is easy to understand and hear by foreign interlocutors. This application makes it easy for students to talk to people around the world (Prayogo et.al, 2024). On the other hand, many researchers found technology-based applications such as Duolingo, Elsa Speak, Hello English (Shortt et.al, 2023; Akhmad & Munawir, 2022; Aini et.al, 2022) but research on Fondi application as learning media is still relatively small. Previous research focused on this application as a tool to improve speaking ability without comparing it with conventional media as a way of learning. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine the effectiveness between fondi application and picture series in learning english speaking. The study was conducted to fill the gap and show which media is more effective for learning English speaking. The author decided to conduct a study with the title **“The Effectiveness of Fondi Application on Speaking Ability at MTsN 2 Kanigoro Kediri”**.

### **B. Research Question**

The following is the formulation based on the background of the study: “Is there a significant difference in speaking skill between eighth grade students taught by using the fondi application and those taught using the picture series?”

### **C. Objective of the Research**

Based on these problems, the purpose of this research is to investigate whether there is a significant difference in the speaking ability of grade VIII students taught by using the fondi application compared to the picture series.

## **D. Hypothesis**

- $H_1$  (Alternative Hypothesis)

There is a significant difference in speaking ability between eighth grade students taught by using the fondi application and those taught using the picture series.

- $H_0$  (Null Hypothesis)

There is no significant difference in speaking ability between eighth grade students taught by using the fondi application and those taught using the picture series.

## **E. Significance of Study**

This study examines the effectiveness of the fondi application compared to picture series media in speaking ability. The results are expected to help educators in determining the right strategy to increase students' confidence and fluency in speaking English.

- a. For Students

This research is expected to improve students' ability to speak and make students more confident.

- b. For Teachers

This research focuses on improving learning methods so that teachers are more creative and innovative in providing learning media in the digital era.

- c. The other researchers

This research can be a reference in English language learning media development research.

## **F. Definition of key terms**

This research includes several key terms to describe the research entitled “The Effectiveness of Fondi Application on Speaking Ability at MTsN 2 Kanigoro Kediri”.

### **1. Effectiveness**

The ability of an actor to produce a solution that is more favorable than the available solutions is known as effectiveness.

### **2. Speaking Ability**

Speaking is the ability to communicate by expressing feelings, ideas, and information to others by using spoken and verbal language. In one interaction, two or more people communicate with each other to share or convey opinions or ideas.

### **3. Learning Speaking**

This is the process of learning to speak. In this process students gain a new understanding of how to talk to others and help students understand speaking better for those who do not speak. When asking students to create language, the teacher should be a good facilitator.

### **4. Fondi Application**

Fondi is application for communication-based learning tool. It has many features of it like avatar 3D and virtual places like plaza, bar, lounge, or home. The user can join and interactive with each other from different countries using voice chat and their conversation can be recorded with the facilities of the application. The function of this application is to train speaking ability interactively.