

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses about: a.background of the study, b. research question. c. objectives of the study, d. scope and limitation, e.significance of the study, and f, definition of key terms.

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

Speaking is one of the abilities that must be mastered by students because language is used to communicate with other people or peers in everyday life. In communicating with students, it is often necessary to convey ideas and pings to others so that speaking skills must be developed and improved as an effective means. Speaking skills are also considered the most important aspect of learning a foreign or second language. Among the four major language skills, speaking is considered the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language. According to Nunan (2015), speaking has been considered the most important but also the most difficult skill in language learning compared to reading, writing, and listening.

In addition, Furthermore, in the school setting particularly at the high school level speaking ability is one of the key indicators of students' communicative competence, as it reflects their ability to use English in real-life communication situations (Nunan, 2003). However, in reality, many students still struggle with speaking English. Various studies indicate that students' speaking skills have not yet reached optimal levels, making speaking one of the most challenging language skills for students (Nunan, 2015). Therefore, appropriate

teaching materials and strategies are needed to help students develop their speaking skills.

Research conducted by (Djahimo et al., 2018). Indicate that various factors hinder students' ability to speak English, such as limited vocabulary, anxiety, and a lack of self-confidence. In addition, low motivation also affects students' participation and willingness to learn English (Ihsan, 2018). Students often participate in English language learning merely to complete assigned tasks without having a strong motivation to improve their language skills. Furthermore, a lack of practice is one of the main problems in developing speaking skills, as students need sufficient opportunities to actively use English in communication (Zuhriyah, 2017). Therefore, students need more opportunities to practice speaking through meaningful and engaging learning activities so that their speaking skills can develop optimally.

To address these challenges, it is important to incorporate innovative strategies into the teaching of speaking. One way to do this is by harnessing the power of technology, utilizing technology in language learning can now be an effective and relevant solution to the needs of today's students. Digital-based learning application offer an interactive, flexible and accessible at any time. One application that is widely used for English language learning is Duolingo.

Duolingo is one of the applications used for language learning. This application can be used as a learning media in the classroom because it covers four components of language skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Niah & Pahmi, 2019). Duolingo allows students to practice their speaking skills through a speech recognition feature that provides immediate

feedback on pronunciation and sentence structure. With this approach, students can improve their fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking English without the pressure of a formal classroom environment.

In addition, this application can also be accessed for free and used at any time, thus providing wider learning opportunities and flexibility to be applied in the classroom. Niah, (2019) in her research also found that the Duolingo application can help improve English language skills, especially in speaking skills. This can be seen from the increase in student scores in the initial test and also the final test. In addition, research conducted by Dearestiani, (2023) in his research also found that the Duolingo application was proven to supporting speaking skills and encouraged them to continue practicing speaking using the Duolingo application.

Furthermore, research conducted by Daniswara et al. (2024) stated that students felt that this application was very effective in increasing their vocabulary. Activities that are focused on word practice, listening, and multiple choice exercises make them easy to remember vocabulary in English.

Several previous studies have shown that the Duolingo application is effective at improving students' proficiency in English. The research indicates that after using Duolingo, students see an improvement in their ability, as evidenced by better test scores at the end. This application also encourages students to continuously practice using available interactive features. In addition, Duolingo also helps with language development, mostly through exercises like grammar drills and exercises that improve students' understanding of English.

However, even though these studies have not specifically explored students' experiences in using the Duolingo application to develop speaking skills in more depth in high schools, especially in grade XI students, there are still many students who experience difficulties in speaking fluency such as lack of confidence, unclear pronunciation and limited vocabulary, even though they already have basic English skills. In addition, previous studies generally used a quantitative approach, while in this study the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method to explore the challenges and also the advantages of using the Duolingo application from the perspective of the students themselves.

Based on this background, this study aims to fill a research gap by providing a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the use of the Duolingo app in supporting the speaking skills of 11th-grade students at SMAN 4 Kediri. SMAN 4 Kediri was selected as the research site because it is one of the high schools with high academic standards in the city of Kediri. However, based on initial observations, some 11th-grade students still struggle with speaking English, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and self-confidence. Therefore, research is needed to determine how the use of the Duolingo app can help improve students' speaking skills at this school. This study is expected to provide insights into the use of the Duolingo app as a supplementary learning tool to support students' English speaking abilities.

**B. The Problems of The Study**

1. How do the students use Duolingo application in their learning speaking?
2. What are the challenges faced by the students in using Duolingo application in learning speaking?

**C. The Objectives of The Study**

1. To find out the use of the Duolingo application in their speaking learning.
2. To find out what challenges faced by students in using the Duolingo application in learning speaking.

**D. Significance of The Study**

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this study is expected to provide further insight and serve as a reference regarding the use of the Duolingo app to support students' speaking skills. The findings of this study are also expected to serve as a source of information and a reference for future research related to the use of technology in English language learning.

2. **Practically**

- a. For Students

This research to provide new insights to students on how to learn English that is fun and also interesting by using the Duolingo application. Students are expected to develop their speaking skills so that they will be more confident when speaking English.

- b. For Teachers

The results of this study are to be a reference for English teachers in high schools. It is hoped that teachers can consider using

the Duolingo application as a learning medium in class to develop students' speaking skills.

c. For Researcher

For the researcher, this study is beneficial to enrich knowledge and experience in conducting scientific research, especially in the field of English language learning. It also helps the researcher to deepen the understanding of the implementation of digital applications such as Duolingo in enhancing speaking skills and to serve as a reference for future studies.

## **E. Scope and Limitation of The Study**

This study focuses on exploring the use of Duolingo Application In Supporting Speaking Skills of the Eleventh Grade in SMAN 4 KOTA KEDIRI.

Specifically, this study was conducted at SMAN 4 KOTA KEDIRI with the subject of eleventh grade students who have used Duolingo application. The aspects of speaking skills examined in this study focus on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency. In addition, this study also aims to find out how students interact with Duolingo application and how the application's role in supporting students' speaking skills.

In addition, this research is also limited by the method used, namely descriptive qualitative. The findings in this study are also only at one level, namely in class XI students and also in this study only focused on one school so that it could not be generalized to all schools and to the entire student population. The use of the Duolingo application is also limited to features that support speaking skills only.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

Based on the title “*Exploring the Use of Duolingo Application In Supporting Students Speaking Skills of The Eleventh Grade In SMAN 4 KEDIRI*” the researchers gives definition as follows:

### **1. Duolingo Application**

Duolingo is a free language learning application developed by Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker, which provides engaging and game-like learning

methods, offering exercises in vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening, including a voice pronunciation feature to practice independently.

## **2. Speaking Skills**

Speaking skills are the ability to communicate orally in an effective, clear and confident manner. This ability includes various components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and also on the ability to convey ideas accurately and precisely and also clearly in various contexts.