

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter talks about the background of the study, research question, research objective, research significance, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Social media has now become an important part of student's daily lives (Alamgir, 2023). They grew up amid rapid developments in digital technology and have made social media their main space for interaction. Various platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter/X are used not only for entertainment, but also for self-expression, seeking information, and even building personal identity. In their activities, many of them use English, either consciously or unconsciously, as a form of style and adaptation to global trends. English has become a kind of “digital slang” that is often used in captions, comments, and daily stories. This phenomenon shows a shift in communication patterns and the use of foreign languages outside the classroom. As an adaptive generation, student uses social media not only for entertainment but also as an informal source of language learning. This pattern of use is relevant for further study in the context of language acquisition.

In recent years, TikTok has rapidly emerged as one of the most influential social media platforms among university students. Its popularity is driven by its short-form video format, ease of use, and highly personalized algorithm that continuously delivers engaging content based on users' preferences. For many students, TikTok is not only a source of entertainment but also a primary medium for communication, self-expression, and identity formation. They actively participate in creating and consuming content,

which often includes elements of the English language, such as captions, spoken narration, comments, and trending phrases. This phenomenon indicates that English is increasingly used in informal digital interactions, reflecting a shift in how language is practiced in everyday life.

Moreover, the integration of English into TikTok content demonstrates how students are exposed to global communication practices beyond the boundaries of formal education. As digital natives, students are accustomed to interacting with multimodal content that combines audio, visual, and textual elements simultaneously. This environment allows them to encounter English in authentic and meaningful contexts, rather than through isolated classroom exercises. According to Chen and Ha (2023), social media platforms have significantly transformed the communication patterns of Generation Z by enabling them to engage with global audiences and diverse linguistic inputs. Consequently, TikTok serves as a dynamic space where students not only consume information but also participate in language use, making it an important phenomenon to be examined in relation to English language development.

Speaking skill is considered one of the most essential components in learning English as a foreign language. It serves as the primary means of communication through which learners express their ideas, opinions, and emotions in real-life situations. Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, speaking requires learners to actively produce language in real time, which involves a combination of linguistic competence, fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. According to Brown (2001), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Therefore, mastering speaking skill is crucial for students,

especially those majoring in English education, as it reflects their overall communicative competence.

However, developing speaking skill is often challenging for many students. One of the main difficulties lies in the lack of opportunities to practice speaking in authentic contexts. In many classroom settings, students tend to be passive learners who focus more on grammar and written exercises rather than oral communication. As a result, they may have adequate theoretical knowledge but struggle to express themselves fluently in spoken English. Nunan (2003) states that speaking requires continuous practice and interaction, which cannot be fully achieved through traditional teaching methods alone. Additionally, psychological factors such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes often hinder students from actively participating in speaking activities (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Furthermore, speaking skill consists of several important components that must be developed simultaneously. These include fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Each of these components plays a significant role in effective communication. For instance, fluency allows speakers to communicate smoothly without excessive hesitation, while pronunciation ensures that speech is understandable to others. According to Harmer (2002), successful speaking depends not only on linguistic knowledge but also on the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. Therefore, improving speaking skill requires consistent exposure, practice, and interaction in meaningful communication situations.

Given these challenges, it is important to explore alternative learning environments that can support the development of speaking skill. With the advancement of technology, digital platforms such as social media offer new possibilities for language practice beyond

the classroom. These platforms provide opportunities for students to engage in more interactive, flexible, and meaningful speaking activities. Therefore, investigating how such platforms influence students' speaking skill becomes an important area of research.

One of the most significant language skills that can be influenced by TikTok is speaking skill. Speaking is a productive skill that requires learners to actively produce language in real-time communication, involving aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. However, many students still face difficulties in developing their speaking skill due to limited opportunities to practice, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 2003). In traditional classroom settings, speaking activities are often limited, which results in passive participation among students. Therefore, alternative platforms such as TikTok provide new opportunities for students to engage in speaking practice beyond the classroom environment.

TikTok offers various features that support speaking skill development in an interactive and engaging way. Features such as video recording, voice-over, duet, and live streaming allow students to produce spoken English in authentic contexts. Students can participate in activities such as storytelling, role-playing, pronunciation imitation, and responding to other users' content. These activities promote active language use, which is essential for developing speaking ability. According to Dewanta and Bahasa (2020), TikTok facilitates audio-visual learning that enhances students' ability to express ideas and practice communication skills. Similarly, Zaitun et al. (2021) found that TikTok can effectively support students in improving their speaking performance through creative and interactive learning activities.

Furthermore, TikTok promotes repeated exposure and imitation, which are key processes in second language acquisition. Students are frequently exposed to English-

speaking content through TikTok's algorithm, which continuously recommends similar videos based on users' interests. This repeated exposure allows students to internalize pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns more naturally (Krashen, 1985). In addition, the informal and low-pressure environment of TikTok reduces speaking anxiety, which is one of the major barriers in language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). As a result, students may feel more comfortable practicing speaking without fear of being judged.

Despite its potential benefits, the use of TikTok in developing speaking skill also presents both positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, TikTok offers an accessible and engaging platform for practicing English speaking. Students are exposed to various accents, expressions, and communication styles, which can enrich their speaking ability. In addition, the interactive nature of TikTok encourages students to participate actively in language use, which can improve fluency and confidence. Research by Rahmawati et al. (2023) shows that the use of TikTok in language learning can significantly improve students' speaking skills as well as their motivation and creativity.

Moreover, TikTok can enhance students' motivation to practice speaking. The entertaining and creative format of short videos makes learning more enjoyable and less stressful. Students are more likely to engage in speaking activities when they are presented in an interesting and relatable way. According to Raut Prafulla Patil (2016), social media platforms can increase students' engagement and participation in learning by making the process more interactive. This increased motivation can lead to more frequent speaking practice, which is essential for language development.

However, TikTok also has several potential drawbacks, particularly in terms of language accuracy. Much of the content on TikTok uses informal language, slang, and non-standard grammar, which may influence students' speaking habits. If students are not

aware of the differences between informal and formal language, they may adopt inappropriate expressions in academic contexts. According to Crystal (2000), language variation in informal contexts can affect learners' understanding of standard language forms. Therefore, while TikTok provides authentic language exposure, it does not always guarantee accuracy.

In addition, excessive use of TikTok may lead to distraction and reduced focus on structured learning. Students may spend more time-consuming entertainment content rather than engaging in meaningful language practice. Furthermore, not all users actively create content; some remain passive viewers, which limits their opportunity to practice speaking. As stated by K. Guru (2022), excessive use of social media can negatively affect students' learning habits and academic performance. Therefore, it is important to explore students' perceptions of TikTok to understand whether they use it effectively for developing their speaking skill.

Although numerous studies have explored the use of social media in English language learning, most of them tend to focus on general language proficiency or specific aspects such as vocabulary and overall learning effectiveness. Several previous studies have shown that platforms like TikTok can improve students' vocabulary, motivation, and general communication skills (Setyonyoto & Ratri, 2022; Irawan et al., 2025). In addition, some research has highlighted the role of TikTok in enhancing students' speaking ability through experimental or classroom-based approaches (Rahmawati et al., 2023; Zaitun et al., 2021). These studies mainly emphasize the effectiveness of TikTok as a learning tool rather than exploring students' personal perspectives.

However, there is still limited research that specifically investigates students' perceptions of TikTok in relation to their speaking skill, particularly in the context of

English education students in Indonesia. Most existing studies focus on measuring improvement or outcomes, while fewer studies examine how students themselves perceive the role of TikTok in their speaking development. In fact, perception plays an important role in determining how learners engage with learning tools and whether they consider them beneficial or not Robbins & Judge (2017). Therefore, understanding students' perceptions is essential to provide a more comprehensive view of how TikTok contributes to speaking skill development.

Investigating students' perceptions of TikTok on speaking skill is important due to the increasing integration of digital platforms into students' daily lives. As TikTok continues to grow as a dominant social media platform, it becomes necessary to understand whether its use can support meaningful language learning, especially in developing speaking skill. Speaking is a crucial competence for English education students, as it directly relates to their future roles as educators who are expected to communicate effectively in English.

Furthermore, exploring students' perceptions can provide valuable insights into how TikTok is actually used by learners in real-life contexts. While some students may find TikTok helpful in improving their confidence and fluency, others may perceive it as distracting or less effective for formal language development. By identifying these perceptions, this study can contribute to a better understanding of the strengths and limitations of TikTok as an informal learning tool. This is important for educators to design more relevant and adaptive teaching strategies that align with students' digital habits and learning preferences.

Based on the phenomena, theoretical considerations, and research gaps discussed above, this study focuses on examining students' perceptions of TikTok on their speaking

skill. Specifically, this research aims to explore how students perceive the role of TikTok in supporting or influencing their ability to speak English, including aspects such as fluency, confidence, and pronunciation. By focusing on English education students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri, this study seeks to provide a contextualized understanding of how TikTok is utilized as an informal learning medium in developing speaking skill.

In conclusion, this research is expected to provide a deeper insight into the relationship between TikTok usage and speaking skill development from the students' perspective. It not only contributes to the field of English language education but also offers practical implications for integrating digital media into language learning in a more effective and meaningful way.

B. Research Questions

1. What are students' perceptions of using TikTok for improving speaking skills among English Education students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri?
2. What speaking skill aspects do students perceive to be improved through TikTok?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To describe students' perceptions of using TikTok for improving speaking skills among English Education students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri.
2. To identify speaking skill aspects that students perceive to be improved through TikTok.

D. Research Significance

This study is expected to provide contributions both theoretically and practically as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of English language education, particularly in understanding the role of social media as an informal learning medium. It also enriches the literature related to students' perceptions and speaking skill development in the context of digital learning environments, especially through TikTok.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Students

This study is expected to raise students' awareness of how TikTok can influence their speaking skill, both positively and negatively. It may also encourage them to use TikTok more effectively as a medium for practicing English speaking.

b. For Lecturers/Educators

This research is expected to provide insights for educators in designing more engaging and relevant teaching strategies by integrating digital platforms such as TikTok into speaking activities.

c. For Future Researchers

This study can serve as a reference for future research related to social media and language learning, particularly in exploring other language skills or different contexts of digital learning.

E. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on investigating students' perceptions of using TikTok for developing speaking skills. The research specifically examines how TikTok is used as an informal digital learning medium that may support students' speaking ability, including

aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, confidence, motivation, and engagement.

The participants of this study are English Education students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri who actively use TikTok and have experience accessing English-related content on the platform. This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach using questionnaire data. Therefore, the study aims to describe general patterns of students' perceptions rather than to measure the direct effectiveness of TikTok on students' actual speaking performance.

This study has several limitations. First, the research is limited to English Education students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to students from other institutions, departments, or educational levels. Second, this study only focuses on speaking skills and does not cover other English skills such as listening, reading, or writing. Third, the data were collected through a questionnaire, so the findings are based on students' self-reported perceptions and experiences, which may be subjective. This study does not include speaking tests, interviews, or classroom observations to directly measure students' actual speaking improvement. Finally, this study only examines TikTok as the main digital learning platform and does not compare it with other platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, or Facebook. Therefore, the findings are limited to the context of TikTok usage in relation to students' perceived speaking skill development.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Student Perception

Student perception is the process by which students receive, organize, and interpret information to form opinions or judgments about a particular object or

experience. According to (Kandi et al. 2023), perception is an individual's interpretation of stimuli received through the senses. In this study, student perception refers to students' opinions and evaluations of the use of TikTok in developing their English speaking skills..

2. TikTok

TikTok is a platform for sharing quick videos that may last anywhere from 15 seconds to 5 minutes. It is a chinese music video platform which was introduced by Zhang Yiming in September 2016. The user uses software tools to post their videos, which are subsequently shared with other TikTok app users. As cited by (Rahayu & Hamidah, 2022), TikTok was identified as the most downloaded app during the first quarter (Q1) 2018 with 45.8 million downloads, its popularity has overtaken of other widely well-known apps such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

3. Speaking Skills

Speaking skill is the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally in English through clear pronunciation, appropriate vocabulary, and fluent communication. It involves several components such as fluency, pronunciation, and confidence (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2002). In this study, speaking skill refers to students' ability to communicate effectively in English as influenced by their use of TikTok.