

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

English is one of the most important skills to master in this era of globalization. English is also used as an international language in various fields, including education, business, technology, and tourism. In the twenty-first century, English has become a common language that connects people around the world. This has made the world more accessible, even with differences in culture, traditions, and habits (Rao, 2021). English has become broader and even includes education, business, social interaction, good English speaking skills can support students' careers. In the modern world, using only one's native language is not enough for effective communication. It emphasizes the importance of knowing a universal language like English to connect and communicate with people globally (Göktürk et al., 2020). In the fact, there are still a lot of students outside who do not have enough ability to speak.

Despite years of English education, a surprising number of students in Indonesia still grapple with a crippling lack of confidence when it comes to speaking the language. The fact that the ranking of English in Indonesia is still at a low proficiency level (Position 79) below the Philippines and even Sri Lanka (EF EPI, 2022). There are many factors which affect a student's low level proficiency in mastering a language. According to Periani (2024), these issues may arise from various factors, such as anxiety, low self-confidence, and limited communication abilities. Many individuals face challenges when it comes to using a foreign language in addition to their native one. These difficulties often include feelings of shyness and fear that hinder their willingness to participate in English conversations. Additionally, problems may arise due to teachers who do not regularly use English in classroom settings, further limiting opportunities for practice and confidence-building (Crisanita & Mandasari, 2022). A student's weak speaking ability can have a long-term impact on a student's career and social life, because the ability to communicate effectively in English is essential.

Therefore, it is very important for teachers to identify and overcome these problems. By creating a supportive learning environment, providing more opportunities for speaking practice, and using more effective teaching methods.

One of the obstacles to speaking skills is the fear of speaking English, in other words that speaking is affected by motivation, anxiety, and confidence. When students feel anxious, they often hesitate to speak and may even fear making mistakes while expressing themselves (Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2020). Those component will affect student speaking ability, especially fluency. The second factor is the students' limited experience in speaking practice, which leads to difficulties in communication, including poor grammar and vocabulary skills. Additionally, some students may be reluctant to participate and choose to remain silent during class (Swondo & Haya, 2022). Hence, a solution is needed to increase self-confidence and relieve student anxiety levels. Therefore, the teacher must consider the use of appropriate media and methods. It aims to provide students with the experience to practice speaking with interlocutors. In this age of rapid modern advancements, almost everyone has made use of the internet (Swondo & Haya, 2022). Moreover, technological developments have developed to produce learning media that are very useful in the field of education.

In other word, a person's low proficiency in English can be influenced some factors including psychological factors, low of confidence, low vocabulary, no friend to speak English, pressure in English, weak mastery of English grammar, student's personality, influence of mother language, teacher's performance, learning environment, learning motivation, teaching methods, and cross cultural Indonesian and English. As a result of these issues, teacher must be able to choose the proper method and media to use in the classroom. Nowadays almost every media, application, science and knowledge are delivered in the English language (Yusa, 2021). Appropriate learning media, tools and methods are expected to help student deal with various existing problem.

Technology is increasingly rapidly and influences almost all areas of life such as business, education, health, transportation, even industry, forcing

us to adapt immediately. Technology has advanced quickly in recent years and has greatly affected education (Hidayat et al., 2022). Technological developments have changed and influenced the education sector in many positive ways. Today, learning through portable digital devices, like mobile learning (m-learning), has become a part of everyday activities related to gaining knowledge (Criollo-c et al., 2021). A wide variety of educational applications are available for smartphones and computers, making learning more interesting and interactive, including language learning.

Smartphones are one of the results of technology, there are many methods and techniques can be used to improve student English speaking skill. There are a lot of result of technology outcomes, there are so many mobile-based applications to support learning, especially English foreign acquisition. The unique feature of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning is its use of personal devices like tablets and smartphones. This allows users to access learning opportunities anytime and anywhere (Elaish, Shuib, Ghani & Yadegaridehkordi, 2017). For example, speaking activities to practice speaking skills can be conducted using media applications on a smartphones. Hence, there are several theories about using some media applications to improve speaking skills, i.e. Computer Mediated Communication. Many educational sectors recommend using Computer-Mediated Communication to support the learning process (Hidayat et al., 2022). CMC is defined as a "real-time, synchronous conversation that occurs over the internet" (Côté & Gaffney, 2018). Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is a term that refers to communication that occurs via computer or smartphone, such as email, text messages, online chat, social media, and various other online communication platforms.

Some students feel less anxious when communicating using voice or video chat because they may not feel as stressed as when they talk face to face with the person they are talking to. Using SCMC can help reduce students' anxiety when speaking, compared to face-to-face (FTF) interactions (Hidayat et al., 2022). The reduces of student anxiety should make student feel comfortable when speaking English, it allowed student to improve their fluency. Practices in live conversations with others can provide benefits, including students

opportunity to practice speaking skill in a real conversation, improve pronunciation, and boost enhancing confidence and courage in speaking English.

Here are the clusters of the research that similar to this research, including The Use Of Media To Improve English Pronunciation (Ulya et al., 2021; Landa, 2022; Nurhasanah, 2020; Rifqiyah, 2021; Haryadi & Aprianoto, 2020), Students Perceptions Of Computer-Mediated Communication In Speaking Skills (Saputra et al., 2023; Hakim, 2020; Andujar & Ramiro, 2021), Effectiveness Of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Of Pronunciation (Nejad et al., 2021; Bagheri & Zenouzagh, 2021; Hsu & Beasley, 2019; Pratama, 2019)), Face To Face Vs Computer-Mediated Communication toward Speaking Anxiety (Hidayat et al., 2022; Joseph & Jean, 2021; York et al., 2020), The use of media to enhance speaking confident (Maulina et al., 2019; Tri Pujiani et al., 2021; Maulina et al., 2019), The Use Of Some Media For Improving Students Speaking Skill (Wati & Yenni, 2019; Deswarni, 2017; Swondo & Haya, 2022; Putru, 2023; Kholizah, 2023), The Use of Speak Pal app on Speaking Skills ((Emecen & Saricoban, 2023).

There are shortcomings in previous research with similar areas of study, these articles only discusses the outline of SCMC theory in general, not focuses on discussing the effectiveness of various SCMC media deeply to improve speaking skills (Pratama, 2019). Therefore, these articles can be criticized for not specifically discussing the use of English language learning apps in improving students' speaking skills.

Secondly, one of the limitations of some studies above is that they do not include the type of material used in ongoing research activities. By determine the material you will be able to consider whether or not the learning objectives are being achieved (Taufik et al., 2022). As a result, the understanding of the research process and methods may be limited. For this reason, it is important to include more specific information about the types of materials that were used in the research so that this study can be a more complete reference.



Lastly, most of the previous studies have not focused on the learning process, but more on the media or application (Suryanto & Fitrawan, 2023). This can be criticised that every media or app developer will give good feedback in order to sell their product. Therefore, in this study the author seeks to integrate Speak Pal as part of the learning process to improve students' speaking skill. Learning is the process of gaining knowledge or skills in a subject through study, experience, or instruction (Brown, 2007). The purpose is to investigate the effectiveness of the speak pal application in the student learning process.

Based on the problems and clusters above, researcher want to introduce Speak Pal app as a media for practice speaking skills. The main focus of this research is to find out the effectiveness of the Speak Pal Application in improving speaking ability of tenth grade senior high school students, especially in giving and receiving compliment material. In addition, after using Speak Pal application in the classroom, not only speaking skills but researchers also hope to stimulate students to be more confident in speaking. As well as improving their English, students are also being encouraged to use English confidently in the outside.

## **1.2 Identification of Issues**

The ability to speak is a vital skill that contribute to make effective communication and hold a position as a international language. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of students outside who do not have enough ability to speak. Many students face difficulties using a foreign language alongside their native language. They also experience shyness and fear when participating in English conversations, and sometimes struggle due to teachers not frequently using English in the classroom (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022). Speak Pal application is a learning media that can improve student speaking skill.

Based on the researcher observation, students who have low speaking skills are often caused by the following problems:

1) Lack of student motivation

During the process of teaching English speaking skills in class, the researcher faced quite a significant challenge, namely low student motivation to learn. Even though they were given a variety of interesting topics, most students tended to be hesitant to express their thoughts, often remaining silent or only giving short answers. The researcher tried to motivate them by using interactive methods such as role-playing and group discussions, but the responses given were still limited. This made the classroom atmosphere feel less dynamic, and the achievement of learning targets was hampered. This low motivation problem indicates the need for a more creative approach and the selection of appropriate media in increasing students' interest and confidence in speaking English.

2) Lack of vocabulary,

The researcher found that many students have low vocabulary skills, which hinders their fluency in speaking. When asked to express their opinions or talk about a certain topic, students often have difficulty finding the right words to express their thoughts. Some students even look frustrated because they are unable to put together sentences properly. As a result, the conversation become sluggish, and many of them prefer to remain silent rather than trying to speak.

3) Fear of making mistakes

During the process of teaching English speaking skills in the classroom, the researcher realized that many students were reluctant to speak because they were afraid of making mistakes. When asked to speak or give opinions, students tended to hesitate, often kept silent for a moment, and avoided the opportunity to speak in front of their friends. Although the researcher tried to create a supportive and non-judgmental environment, the anxiety of making mistakes,

especially in grammar and pronunciation, seemed to hold them back from trying to speak more actively. This caused the learning atmosphere to be less interactive, and students lost the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. The researcher realized that a more effective strategy needed to be implemented to build students' confidence so that they would not be afraid of making mistakes and would be more courageous in participating in speaking activities.

4) No self-confidence

The researcher found that many students face low self-confidence issues. When asked to speak in front of the class or even in small groups, most students appear awkward and hesitant. They often avoid eye contact, speak in a low voice, and only give short answers, as if afraid of being judged by their peers. This lack of self-esteem is also evident when they refuse to engage in interactive activities such as group discussions or role-plays.

5) Feeling anxious

During the process of teaching English speaking skills in the classroom, the researcher realized that many students felt anxious whenever they were asked to speak. This anxiety was evident when they appeared fidgety, often playing with their hands, lowering their heads, or avoiding eye contact while speaking. Some students even showed physical signs such as sweating or speaking with a shaky voice. As a result, conversations became disjointed and often marked by long pauses, as they struggled to overcome their anxiety.

6) Lack of learning strategies and media

The researcher found that teachers lack effective learning strategies and minimal use of appropriate media in teaching speaking. It was seen that teachers often only used monotonous teaching methods, such as lectures and text-based exercises, without a variety of strategies that could encourage active student participation. Students listen more than interact verbally, so their opportunities to practice speaking are very limited, teachers rarely use appropriate supporting media, such as video conversations, native speaker audio, or other interactive learning technologies that can enrich students' learning experiences. As a result, students lack real context in speaking English.

Some teachers still rely on monotonous media, such as traditional methods or textbooks, especially in teaching speaking. This can lead to less engaging and interactive learning experiences for students. The selection of English learning media and methods must be considered so that it can have an effective impact on student's speaking skill. In the speaking field, teacher can use other media rather than only using coursebook. They can use media which is integrated with SCMC. Various studies have shown the advantages of Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (SCMC). In addition to boosting students' motivation, using SCMC can also help reduce their anxiety when speaking (Hidayat et al., 2022). The use of learning media based on SCMC is claimed to provide opportunities and experiences for students, to directly practice dialogue about learning content during class. Among the aspect mentioned, the researchers have considered that the Speak Pal application has an effect on student speaking skill, by integrating the application into the learning process.

### **1.3 Delimitation and Focus of Study**

The researcher limits this study on the uses of Speak Pal application on students' speaking skill as a tool or media for teaching and learning speaking, which is not intended for all language skills. The researcher only use Speak Pal Application to teach a material about "giving and receiving compliment" on tenth grade of SMK Islamic Centre Cirebon, where the researcher adapted pre-experimental research method to collect the data and obtain the research findings. In addition, this study focuses on interactive speaking at the intermediate level.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the background researcher formulates the following research question:

1. How are students' speaking skill before and after using Speak pal application?



2. Is there any significant effect of using Speak Pal application on students' speaking skills?

### **1.5 Aims of the Research**

The section provides the research objectives based on research problem above is:

1. To explain the students' speaking skill before and after using Speak pal application
2. To explain the effectiveness of Speak Pal app to improve speaking skills

### **1.6 Significant of the Research**

The purpose of this research is expected to provide meaning and new experiences, not only theoretically but also practically:

#### **1.6.1 Theoretically**

The result of this research is to find out effect of using Speak Pal application in students' speaking skill. In other words, this study aims to examine the effect of using Speak Pal application on students' speaking skill in the speaking learning process and provide evidence of implementation based on theory to solve the problems that occur.

#### **1.6.2 Practically**

The result of the study are also expected to be useful for these stakeholders as follows:

##### **a) For Student**

The results of this study can be used as a reference to enhance student ability in speaking English by using the Speak Pal application.

##### **b) For Teacher**

English teachers can integrate Speak Pal application into strategies in the English learning process, especially speaking skills.

##### **c) For Other Researchers**

To provide additional information for other researchers who want to conduct further research in related fields.