CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This part of the text discusses the background, aims of the research, research questions, research scope, research significance, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

Oral communication frequently emerges as a significant obstacle to the acquisition of English among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This challenge stems from the inherent complexity of speaking skills, which involve not only the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences but also the capacity to convey meaning effectively. As noted by Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2014), a substantial number of EFL learners express dissatisfaction with their speaking abilities. Their research indicates that speaking instruction for EFL students often prioritizes linguistic elements such as grammar and vocabulary, while communicative competencies—such as fluency, intonation, and social interaction—are frequently neglected. Additionally, Antunes (2022) emphasizes that speaking in a second language requires learners to integrate multiple competencies, such as phonological, lexical, and syntactic knowledge, while simultaneously attending to pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects of communication. This complexity often results in significant difficulties for EFL learners, who must navigate these demands in environments that may not provide ample opportunities for authentic language practice. Consequently, EFL learners struggle to apply their speaking skills in real-life communicative contexts, adversely affecting their confidence in using English orally.

There are some main difficulties that hamper the students' speaking performance. Based on the research conducted by Indari (2020), most of the students responded that speaking is the most difficult skill to learn among the other English language skills due to its orally demanding nature. The problems are mostly revealed by an internal psychological aspect, which is lacking self-

confidence and feeling anxious while speaking. This is supported by Rullu (2020), who found that students get anxious and feel embarrassed when they are lacking in speaking. Furthermore, it has also been discovered that the common use of their native language is very much affecting their English speaking. This reliance often leads to interference in vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure when attempting to speak English, resulting in decreased fluency and confidence. As a result, these factors collectively contribute to the persistent challenges EFL students face in achieving proficiency in spoken English.

In academic settings, performing speaking has been one of the most demanding parts of the language to master for EFL learners. Particularly for Indonesian students, who are classified as EFL learners, practicing English skills on a daily basis in classrooms is a huge obstacle. This is partly caused by the nature of Indonesians, who are strongly influenced by their mother tongue (Riadil, 2020). As supported by Kara, Ayaz, & Dundar (2017), it is indicated that the difficulties in learning to speak EFL might be caused by personal reasons. The issues might come from something like motivation, anxiety, or barriers to speaking another language. Psychological aspects such as low confidence, anxiety, and lacking self-esteem are the most common problems encountered in EFL-speaking classrooms (Arifin, 2017). Other difficulties indicated in another study by Khatoony & Rahmani (2020) were grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and intonation. Moreover, this study found that psycholinguistic variables such as anxiety, self-confidence, and shyness were other main obstacles that hamper the Indonesian students from managing themselves to perform speaking appropriately. The fact that the students have to be socially present while showing themselves in front of a lot of people might be the main reason why it is so challenging to speak a foreign language in front of a lot of people.

In the post-pandemic era, the role of technology in education has become increasingly pivotal and inevitable. Lo (2023) exposed that the sudden shift to online, hybrid, and finally face-to-face learning environments has compelled educators to adopt a variety of digital tools to support the teaching and learning process. This is in line with the research conducted by Konkin et al., where they found that there are some significant prospects for utilizing innovations invented.

during the pandemic to be reused after the pandemic, such as online video conferences, interactive online learning technologies, as well as remote technologies for organizing the educational process (2021). This is supported by the fact that people in the educational field embrace a change to establish an online education system with a proactive, open, and flexible approach, as technologies cannot be separated from humanity, as if they were part of our culture and identity.

One domain that has been significantly impacted is language education, particularly in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Digital technologies, such as video conferencing applications and other interactive software, have created new opportunities for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to engage in more intensive speaking practice. In this context, technology serves not merely as an auxiliary tool but as a bridge that addresses traditional limitations, such as the lack of opportunities for authentic communication and comprehensive feedback. This is particularly pertinent in EFL contexts, where students often face substantial challenges in developing speaking skills due to limited direct interaction with native speakers and the scarcity of real-time feedback. Mulyadi et al.'s (2021) research explored the benefits of digital technology in language teaching and discovered that students who used digital applications for speaking practice and received direct feedback exhibited greater improvements in speaking skills compared to those who did not utilize such technologies. In addition, Budiarta & Santosa (2020) claimed that it is essential to set up an innovative teaching model in this digital era. The appropriate way to teach the students differently from the conventional way is by integrating the teaching techniques with the updated digital media or platform. For the present learners, traditional teaching with no concrete innovation has proved only to create an atmosphere that was monotonous and boring, as in the one that happened in the English Language Education Study Program of one of the universities in Denpasar. (Budiarta & Santosa, 2020).

It is essential to now establish the methodology and learning modality we have learned during the pandemic and utilize them to their best potential in order to achieve the best online learning (Careaga-Butter, Badilla-Quintana, & Fuentes-Henriquez 2020). It is also found that during the post-pandemic period, EFL

students are massively more engaged in offline classrooms, which results in positive participation, including behavior, involvement, and cognitive aspects. However, emotional involvement is still lacking, even during face-to-face meetings. The study conducted by Khaerani, Lintangsari, & Gayatri (2020) indicated that using technology in offline classes is able to engage the students more in learning English, and the integration of technology to push the students' motivation is furthermore expected to be implemented in the future. The flexibility of online platforms might as well help the learning process, as it allows the teachers and the students to hold a class regardless of the situation on-site. Online platforms might also aid the teachers, as they can be used as material, courses, exercises, or assignments (Triana & Nugroho, 2021). There are many substantial examples where a public university in Bandung, West Java, adopted online learning by utilizing various platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Zoom, Flipgrid, and others (Amirullah et al., 2020).

Among the various digital tools available, Flipgrid has emerged as a popular platform for enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. In accordance with MacIsaac (2020), Flipgrid is a costless platform and mobile application designed particularly for educational purposes, allowing students to respond to the teacher's questions in the form of a video. Flipgrid was established by Charles Miller from the University of Minnesota in 2015. Differing from other platforms, Flipgrid is a platform to conduct a video-based discussion. Students post a video as a response to the instructor or peer videos with their own videos (Lowenthal & Moore, 2020). The platform is designed to foster interactive and collaborative learning experiences, enabling students to practice their speaking skills in a low-pressure environment while receiving feedback from both peers and instructors. This feature is particularly valuable in EFL settings, where speaking anxiety and a lack of confidence often hinder students' oral communication development.

Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of Flipgrid in improving EFL students' speaking performance. For instance, research conducted by Casañ-Núñez (2021) demonstrated that Flipgrid provided a conducive environment for students to practice speaking without the fear of immediate judgment, which in turn improved their speaking fluency and confidence. Similarly, Taylor and

Hinchman (2020) found that Flipgrid not only enhanced students' speaking skills but also fostered a sense of community and collaboration among learners, which is crucial for language acquisition. Flipgrid is a platform where the instructors of the subject are able to manage their own classes on the website. As the topic designer, they can use various resources and attachments, such as those from Google or Google Drive. Flipgrid allows the participants, in this case the students, to record a short video for various durations, and they can also give feedback to each other's videos as well. The video moderation and access are completely in the hands of the instructors to handle. According to Theoris (2017), Flipgrid is a helpful, implementation-based medium to build a student-centered learning community. Flipgrid is also open to all ranges of communities with no restrictions (Dettinger, 2018).

However, Flipgrid has ended its service as an independent platform on October, 2024. Instead, Microsoft adapted the features of Flipgrid into their integrated platform named Microsoft Teams for Education. This research attempts to fill the gap of the previous research by choosing participants whose speaking performances have never been tested before. Another role that this research attempts to fulfill is to gather a larger population. When other research limits the number of participants to below 100, this research tends to go beyond that. Lastly, this research also tries to prove whether Flipgrid's features remain relevant to employ in teaching speaking.

1.2. Research Aims

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether the use of Flipgrid helps students' speaking performance and explore the students' perspective towards its use during learning English speaking.

1.3. Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:
1. Does the utilization of video-based discussion platform' features help the EFL High School students' speaking performance?

2. How do the students perceive Flipgrid's features in assisting their speaking performance?

1.4. Research Scope

This research revolves around EFL students at high school levels in the Bandung area. The students involved have not tested speaking before. The participants are chosen randomly on purpose.

1.5. Research Significance

There is some significance this study offers, which is as follows:

a) **For theoretical framework**

This study is expected to provide insights for future research on the impact of using video-based discussion platform, particularly Flipgrid, in EFL-speaking classrooms.

b) **For participants/society**

This study aims to provide teachers and students with alternative language teaching methods. Speaking often presents challenges for students, particularly EFL learners, who struggle with the demands of producing oral output while thinking critically. Therefore, using Flipgrid is anticipated to assist both students and teachers in addressing this issue. This alternative platform offers a less tense atmosphere while still providing valuable feedback, which may enhance speaking performance.

c) **For researcher**

Whereas for the researcher himself, the findings of this study are expected to open a broader access and possibilities for further research. The results might become valuable resources for additional investigation.

1.6. Clarification of key terms

Key terms:

EFL students

The term "English as a Foreign Language" (EFL) refers to the teaching and learning of English by non-native speakers in countries where it is not the primary or official language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). EFL learners are individuals from such countries who study English for academic or personal reasons (Kenny, 2024). In this research, EFL students specifically refer to high school students in Bandung.

Speaking performance

Speaking performance refers to the ability of an individual to communicate orally in a given language, typically assessed in terms of fluency, accuracy, coherence, and appropriateness in various contexts. (Brown, H. D., 2007). Speaking performance differs from speaking skill since it is only measured by a one-time presentation, whereas speaking skill is valued by the speaker's long-term ability to perform speaking consistently.

Assisting

Assisting is defined as "to give help or support to." (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Assistance can be in the form of physical assistance, intellectual assistance, emotional assistance, or technical assistance. In this particular case, Flipgrid is equipped to offer technical assistance in the process of English learning.

Impact

Impact refers to the effect or influence that something has on a particular person, group, situation, or outcome. It often denotes a significant or noticeable consequence resulting from an action, event, or phenomenon. (Oxford Languages n.d.).

Utilization

Utilization refers to the act or process of making practical or effective use of something. It involves employing or applying resources, skills, or opportunities to achieve a specific purpose or goal. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Improvement

Improvement refers to the process or action of making something better or more satisfactory. It involves enhancing quality, performance, or condition to achieve a desired outcome or to address deficiencies. (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Improvement can be indicated with a significant difference from the previous phase to the current phase.

Flipgrid

Flipgrid is a free online discussion platform designed by Microsoft to help teachers observe students in the class and establish an enjoyable and supportive social learning environment (Flipgrid, 2020). Flipgrid mainly covers speaking areas since it is a video-based platform.

1.7. Organization of the paper

In this paper, there will be three main chapters to establish the study. In the first chapter, the discussion will mainly talk about the background, research aims and research questions, research scope, research significance, clarification of key terms, and structure of the paper. In the second chapter of the paper, we will discuss a literature review of previous studies regarding the implementation of Flipgrid in various classes, including an English language classroom. The focus will be on the aims, methods, and results of the previous studies. This part of the paper intends to identify the missing and lacking points of the established studies. In the third chapter, this paper will plan the methodology that is utilized in future research. It will consist of a presentation of the research design, participants, research instruments, data analysis, and finally, the expected results. In the fourth chapter, this paper presents the findings of the study. This section contains the results of the pretest and posttest, the results of questionnaires, and the discussion of the results. Lastly, in the final chapter, this paper provides the conclusion of the study. It offers the summary, limitations, implications, recommendations, and suggestions.

1.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explained the introduction part of the study, including the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the research, research scope, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper. The following chapter will wrap around the theoretical background, and related research will be presented as the foundation of this research.