

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate in English has become a basic requirement for both native and non-native speakers. Akther (2021) emphasizes that speaking English has become a crucial skill in the globalized era, as learners are often assessed on their ability to engage in oral communication, express ideas coherently, and participate in international academic and professional contexts. Possessing sufficient English-speaking proficiency enables learners to convey their ideas clearly and interact in real-life situations fluently, accurately, and confidently.

Moreover, students' speaking ability directly influences their future opportunities, including employment prospects, academic success, and cultural adaptation (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018). Therefore, speaking should be prioritized in English as a foreign language (EFL) education, especially in learning environments where students have minimal exposure to authentic communication practices. However, developing speaking competence remains challenging for many EFL learners because it requires the integration of multiple linguistic and communicative components such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and coherence (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

Previous studies have shown that several linguistic and communication-related barriers hinder students from speaking English effectively. For instance, Kashinathan and Abdul Aziz (2021) found that a lack of vocabulary is a major obstacle, while Abrar et al. (2018) found that students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) often face challenges related to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. In addition, the lack of adequate opportunities to use English both inside and outside the classroom further limits the development of students' speaking skills. In many EFL settings, everyday communication is dominated by the students' mother tongue, resulting in insufficient exposure to authentic English interaction. This lack of practice outside school also inhibits fluency and natural language use (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

In Indonesia, the development of speaking skills often receives less attention than other language aspects. Although English lessons for young learners are designed to be communicative, the emphasis in local schools frequently remains on literacy-oriented skills such as reading, writing, and grammar (Setyarini et al., 2020). This focus helps strengthen students' understanding of linguistic forms but offers limited opportunities for spoken interaction. As a result, many students possess adequate theoretical knowledge yet struggle with hesitation, low confidence, and restricted fluency when speaking (Suryati, 2015).

The influence of students' native languages further complicates this issue. In many Indonesian classrooms, including those in Kupang, students predominantly use their mother tongue in daily interactions, leading to reluctance in speaking English even when encouraged by teachers. Limited vocabulary, pronunciation

difficulties, and challenges in constructing spontaneous sentences exacerbate this hesitation (Fitriani, 2017). Consequently, many Indonesian EFL learners continue to face significant barriers in achieving speaking proficiency and confidence.

Given these persistent challenges, ranging from limited exposure and vocabulary deficits to low self-confidence, there is an urgent need for creative and engaging teaching approaches. One promising solution is the integration of technology. Among a range of digital learning platforms, YouTube has been recognized as an effective resource for facilitating the development of learners' speaking abilities. According to Almurashi (2016), YouTube provides authentic and dynamic language input, featuring diverse accents, speaking speeds, and interaction patterns rarely encountered in traditional classrooms. This exposure is particularly valuable for students in areas with limited access to native speakers, such as Kupang. Through varied video genres such as short clips, tutorials, films, and vlogs, students can practice listening, imitate pronunciation, and absorb natural sentence structures that promote fluency and accuracy (Riswandi, 2016).

Beyond linguistic benefits, YouTube also positively influences learners' motivation and affective engagement. Alhrahshah (2024) found that its accessibility and usefulness significantly enhance students' motivation to learn. By selecting content aligned with their interests such as music, sports, or travel students experience more meaningful and contextual learning. This connection between personal interest and learning content reduces anxiety, encourages participation in speaking activities, and makes the learning process more interactive. Teachers can integrate YouTube through strategies such as shadowing, video-based discussions,

and role-plays inspired by video scenarios. Hence, YouTube functions not merely as an entertainment medium but as an authentic, flexible, and student-centered platform that supports contextualized English learning in Indonesia.

Youtube was chosen for this study because it provides authentic and engaging learning materials that cannot be fully achieved through traditional classroom teaching materials. This platform introduces students to the use of English in real life, including natural pronunciation, intonation, and everyday expressions. The wide variety of video content allows teachers to tailor learning materials to students' interests and language abilities, thereby increasing the relevance and enjoyment of the learning experience. In addition, YouTube is easily accessible via mobile devices, allowing students to practice English anytime and anywhere, which is an important advantage in areas with limited exposure to English. For these reasons, by offering authentic materials, pedagogical flexibility, and enhanced learner motivation, YouTube functions as an effective platform for improving students' speaking proficiency.

Although numerous studies have explored YouTube's role in English learning, most have focused on specific language components. For instance, Jalaluddin (2016) examined its effect on pronunciation, Yuyun and Simamora (2021) on listening comprehension, Saputra (2022) on vocabulary development, and Dewi et al. (2022) on grammar improvement. However, limited research has comprehensively investigated YouTube's potential to enhance speaking proficiency across multiple dimensions, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and

coherence, simultaneously. This gap indicates the need for further empirical investigation.

To address this gap, the present study explores the use of YouTube in improving the speaking skills of EFL students in Kupang. The study focuses not only on students' perceptions or motivation but also on actual improvement in fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility through pre- and post-test evaluations. Additionally, it proposes a localized YouTube-based learning model tailored for areas with limited English exposure. Thus, this study contributes both theoretically to the understanding of digital media integration in EFL instruction, and practically, by offering applicable strategies for enhancing speaking pedagogy in Indonesian classrooms.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do YouTube videos impact the speaking skills of EFL students?
2. What specific aspects of speaking skills (e.g., Fluency, Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, and Coherence) are most improved through the use of YouTube videos?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out how the YouTube videos impact the speaking skills of EFL students

2. To identify which elements of speech—such as Fluency, Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, and Coherence improved most notably as a result of interacting with YouTube content.

1.4 Significance of the study

Some key terms used in this study are defined according to their specific use in this research:

1. YouTube

In this study, *YouTube* refers to an online video platform used as a pedagogical tool aimed at enhancing students' English speaking proficiency. It provides authentic examples of spoken English through various videos such as vlogs, tutorials, and conversations, which students can use to observe pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary use, and communication styles.

2. Speaking Skills

In this study, *speaking skills* refer to students' ability to communicate orally in English by expressing their ideas clearly and effectively. The aspects assessed include fluency (smoothness of speech), vocabulary (appropriate word choice), grammar (correct sentence structure), pronunciation (clarity and accuracy of sounds), and coherence (logical flow of ideas). These elements are used as indicators to measure students' improvement before and after the implementation of YouTube as a learning medium.

3. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

In the context of this research, EFL is defined as the Indonesian educational

environment in which English is studied as a foreign language and is rarely used in everyday interactions. The participants in this study are EFL students who primarily use Indonesian or local languages in their everyday lives and learn English mainly through formal instruction at school.