

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the general outline of the research. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, the scope of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, technology has made learning more accessible to students, allowing them to follow their schedules. For this reason, critical thinking skills are required when analyzing information and utilizing technology. Many learning methods have been used to improve students' knowledge and skills in learning English, but they have not included bite-sized content. As a result, an effective and engaging method is required to support students' learning activities. The method is known as microlearning. This method provides learning content in short, targeted chunks, bite-sized and small digital learning units (Yuniarsih et al., 2022; Salleh et al., 2022; Meng & Wang, 2016; Mateus-Nieves & Moreno, 2021). It is believed can increase students' learning ability by up to 18% compared to the traditional method, maintain students' knowledge in their memories for longer periods, being engaged in learning activities, and self-regulated learning (Mohammed et al., 2018; Hosseini et al., 2020). These are the characteristics that students require in the twenty-first century, where they can use this method as a strategy in online learning that facilitates learners toward self-directed lifelong learning.

According to that view, microlearning has been proposed as a strategy for achieving the objective of the student, which is to increase students' comprehensive English ability, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as their ability to learn independently (Meng & Wang, 2016). Through microlearning, students' performance, motivation, and interest in learning are improved (Cai & Chen, 2019; Yu, 2016; Han, 2019; Correa et al., 2018), because students can control when and what they learn since it is accessible anywhere and at any time (Sun et al., 2015; Salleh et al., 2022). In addition, microlearning categorizes knowledge into manageable portions (Nugroho & Fitri, 2016), which intends to alleviate the mental fatigue caused by longer lessons. The existence of a short duration of microlearning content, students tend faster to finish the lesson because the learning method can keep their attention, and memory, as well as avoid the phenomenon of mental (Shail, 2019). Further, Salleh et al., 2022; Shatte & Teague, 2020; Giurgiu, 2017 described one of the functions of microlearning is conveying the learning materials in bite-sized, with technology-assisted learning that makes materials and learning activities more manageable and comprehensible.

There are several previous kinds of research have examined the area of microlearning. The research conducted by Sulistyaningrum et al., (2023) this research described the existence of microlearning-based learning materials scripts for English-speaking 8th graders with mild intellectual disabilities, infused with critical thinking skills through content analysis. The findings showed that critical thinking was not fully integrated into the material and haven't microlearning-

based. They also stated that microlearning provided flexible learning that promoted active engagement, as well as retention of information making it easier for students with disabilities to grasp and retain knowledge. Hence, is needed an English speaking material that is microlearning-based Sung et al., (2022) examined a study of learners' interactive preference for multimedia microlearning. The aim of this study was how learners prefer to interact with microlearning videos. The writers found the control function and expression function in multimedia microlearning videos considered useful because providing control to learners, as a result, learners will feel more responsible for their learning process. Sulistyaningrum et al., (2022) analyzed the Common European Framework (CEFR) and microlearning-based English-spoken production learning materials used by the teachers of junior high schools in Agam. The findings revealed that English material was only infused with CEFR PreA1 - A levels and had not been fully integrated with microlearning in each available textbook unit. However, there were learning scripts that followed Allela's microlearning descriptors and were infused with CEFR.

Moreover, Tolstikh et al., (2021) examined microlearning in the context of teaching English to engineering students, they discussed the use of technology-based microlearning platforms (Kahoot, video presentations, and online discussion forums) that provide a positive impact on student learning to increase their ability to understand and be enthusiastic toward the lesson. Moreover, Mateus-Nieves & Moreno, (2021) investigated the use of microlearning in teaching mathematics. The utilization of Moodle platform as one of the learning

media of microlearning can assist teachers in a flexible process of teaching. Besides that, this platform is also easily accessible to students. Pascual et al., (2021) examined the application of microlearning activities to improve engineering students' self-awareness. The focus of this study is to explain an initiative in a mechanical engineering program. It aims to develop the skills for the life and career of engineering students. This research indicates that by integrating micro-learning into the engineering curriculum, students can become more self-aware of their personal development and future work, which will have an impact on their skills for life and career.

On the other hand, there are several previous research has examined the area of material development. Kurniasih & Lisan, (2023) examined the development of English speaking materials for ten grade students. The researchers found that the students faced difficulties in speaking due to pronunciation issues and limited existing materials. The study used a research and development approach to create materials that align with the syllabus and address students' needs. The developed materials include vocabulary building, daily conversations, expressions, picture descriptions, and dialogues. The materials were designed to be interesting and practical, with colorful pictures and a good layout. The research followed a research and development approach, including need analysis, material development, expert validation, and evaluation. Ferdianto & Kholili, (2022) research investigated the development of supplementary speaking materials for eighth-grade students of junior high school. This research was to address the students' speaking difficulties and enhance their speaking skills by providing

effective and engaging materials. The researchers used Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) as a framework for designing the materials. The materials were developed to supplement the existing textbook used by the students, as the textbook had limited speaking materials. The materials included expressions, vocabulary building, daily dialogues, and pronunciation practice.

Devi et al., (2021) investigated the development and the effectiveness of English teaching materials in improving students' speaking skills. The process of designing and implementing materials was discussed in this study, which included theoretical analysis, field studies, prototype preparation, expert tests, limited trials, evaluations, and revisions of learning models. The teaching materials were developed with principles such as coverage and content accuracy, component completeness, language presentation, and appropriate illustrations. Experts validated the materials before they were used in a trial.

After scrutinizing previous research, the researcher found in the area of microlearning, there is no research on English-speaking teaching materials for eighth graders. In the area of materials development, the teaching materials developed have focused on speaking skills, however, they had not infused critical thinking skills and had not been microlearning-based. The researcher concluded that no research investigates microlearning-based English speaking teaching materials that infuse critical thinking. Hence, this was a gap in this research.

Furthermore, as an international language, English has brought a massive change in education in Indonesia, where its position in Indonesia has been a compulsory subject at any level, especially in junior high school. Students

must master English skills such as reading, writing, and listening, particularly in speaking, because speaking skills are usually prioritized in English teaching (Lumettu & Runtuwene, 2018). However, although speaking skills are a priority in English teaching, students' speaking skills remain low (Mulyani et al., 2019; Jaelani & Zabidi, 2020). The student has difficulty conveying their idea due to a lack of confidence, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Bahadorfar & Omidvar, (2014); Sosas, (2021) indicates the use of technology in teaching speaking skills is the best tool for helping students improve their speaking skills because it can increase fluency, accuracy, and confidence among students. Furthermore, technology facilitates enjoyable learning, making the learning process more engaging. Therefore, it can be concluded that facilitating students in learning to speak through the use of technology can increase their interest and motivation.

According to the curriculum in Indonesia (Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar), the concept of learning material and learning activity emphasizes students have critical thinking skills (Bahar & Sundi, 2020). It means that besides being able to use technology, the students must have the cognitive process of interpreting, solving a problem, analyzing, communicating, and evaluating the information gathered through the internet and observation (Saleem & Masadeh, 2021). In short, critical thinking skills in the twenty-first century will assist students in evaluating information obtained from the internet and demonstrating their presentation and communication skills.

Additionally, Idris et al., (2021) stated that there is a relation between critical thinking skills and speaking. Through speaking, students can think critically because, before delivering their ideas, they have to understand, analyze, evaluate, and conclude the information that will be conveyed to the listeners. Therefore, the teacher has to be creative to create interesting speaking learning materials that are designed for their needs, particularly learning materials that are accessible anywhere and at any time. By having appropriate materials students can achieve their learning goals and be able to express their ideas clearly and systematically.

In terms of speaking materials and critical thinking skills, microlearning is crucial to enhancing students' cognitive abilities, and promoting deeper understanding involves delivering small, bite-sized learning units, allowing for focused and targeted instruction. By infusing critical thinking skills into microlearning-based speaking materials, students are encouraged to engage in higher-order thinking processes such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating. This infusion encourages students' ability to think critically, make informed decisions, and solve problems effectively (Sulistyaningrum et al., 2023). Therefore, microlearning is a solution for students to improve their cognitive abilities because the materials targeted instruction. In addition, Ghafar et al., (2023) pointed out that developing microlearning-based learning materials into English teaching material can enhance retention, provide flexibility and accessibility, promote engaging and interactive learning, target specific language skills, and

optimize time efficiency for language students. This emphasizes the impact of developing microlearning-based materials for students.

Furthermore, based on the previous research, studies of microlearning-based English speaking materials with critical thinking skills are still required because it brings a positive impact on the student's learning activity and cognition. Therefore, this research is aimed to develop microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. To what extent are the existing microlearning-based and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking materials for eighth graders?
2. How are the processes of developing microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders?
3. How is the development of microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders?
4. How is the validity of microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze how far the existing microlearning-based and critical thinking skills-infused English speaking materials for eighth graders.

2. To explain the processes of developing microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders.
3. To develop microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders.
4. To measure the validity of microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was to develop microlearning-based English speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders. DDR (Design and Development Research) method will employ in this study. This study will take the data from the existing English speaking materials gained from the course book, and lesson plan. The results of the research are microlearning-based English speaking materials for eighth graders with the infusion of critical thinking skills.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the writer hoped this study can be new and insightful to teachers in developing microlearning-based speaking materials with the infusion of critical thinking skills for eighth graders. This study also provides a theory of microlearning-based speaking materials infusing critical thinking.

Practically, this study was beneficial to English teachers, students, institutions, and future researchers. For English teachers, this study can be used as learning materials that will develop speaking materials infusing critical thinking

employed microlearning. For the students, they can get new experiences and knowledge toward microlearning in improving their speaking and critical thinking. For other researchers, this study can be used as a guide for continuing similar studies. And for institutions, this study may also be used to enhance the standard of instruction.

1.6 State of the Art

Microlearning and material development has been extensively investigated in the teaching and learning process. Sulistyaningrum et al., (2023) this research discussed the analysis of critical thinking and microlearning-based English speaking learning materials for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Sung et al., (2022) examined a study of learners' interactive preference for multimedia microlearning. Sulistyaningrum et al., (2022) investigated the Common European Framework (CEFR) and microlearning-based English-spoken production learning materials used by the teachers of junior high schools in Agam. Tolstikh et al., (2021) examined microlearning in the context of teaching English to engineering students. Mateus-Nieves & Moreno, (2021) investigated the use of microlearning in teaching mathematics. Pascual et al., (2021) examined the application of microlearning activities to improve engineering students' self-awareness.

In addition, Kurniasih & Lisan, (2023) investigated the development and validation of supplementary speaking materials for eighth-grade students at SMP Plus Al-Mashduqiah. Ferdianto & Kholili, (2022) examined the development of supplementary speaking materials for eighth-grade students at

SMP Plus Al-Mashduqiah Kraksaan. The last, Devi et al., (2021) investigated the development and the effectiveness of English teaching materials in improving students' speaking skills. However, it is rare to discover microlearning-based speaking materials that infuse critical thinking skills. Therefore, this study examined the design and development research of infusing critical thinking skills into microlearning-based speaking materials for junior high school. This was a new preliminary of microlearning-based English speaking materials conveyed by the teacher with infusing critical thinking skills by following the descriptors of the microlearning method.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following key terms have operational definitions:

1. **Microlearning** is a short-term learning activity that focuses on specific learning outcomes (Salleh et al., 2022).
2. **Critical Thinking Skills** are defined as the disciplined process of thinking in interpreting, solving a problem, analyzing, communicating, and evaluating the information (Saleem & Masadeh, 2021).
3. **Speaking** is the activity of verbally sharing and receiving information between speaker and listener (Idris et al., 2021).
4. **Speaking Materials** are anything that is used to support learning. Speaking materials can be instructions, expressions, and discussions (Utami et al., 2021).

5. **Eighth Graders** is the second-year students of junior high school who are in the range of 14-15 years old.



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