CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the study's background, research questions, purpose, scope, and significance.

1.1 Background of Study

Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, allowing users to interact in real-time or asynchronously while sharing user-generated content and fostering relationships (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Real-time interaction occurs when communication takes place directly with no time lag, such as in live chat or video call features. Meanwhile, asynchronous communication allows users to send and receive messages at different times, such as through email or comments on social media. In addition, social media also allows users to share user-generated content, such as text, images, videos and opinions. This creates a space for individuals to express themselves and contribute to the digital community.

Platforms such as Twitter for experience sharing, YouTube for media sharing, and Facebook for social networking illustrate the diverse functions of social media (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). social media can help students feel more connected to their academic community, which is particularly beneficial in virtual classrooms where students may feel isolated. By participating in discussions and interacting with instructors and fellow students online, learners

can establish a sense of belonging and a stronger connection to the academic process (Tess, 2013).

In Indonesia, social media use is highly prevalent, with platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok widely used for communication and content consumption (Yonatan, 2023). In January 2024, Indonesia had 139.0 million social media users, which is 49.9 percent of the entire population (Kemp, 2024). WhatsApp leads with 90.9% usage, followed by Instagram with 85.3%, Facebook with 81.6%, and TikTok with 73.5%. TikTok stands out with an average monthly usage of 38 hours and 26 minutes, followed by YouTube with 31 hours and 28 minutes, WhatsApp with 26 hours and 13 minutes, and Instagram with 16 hours and 10 minutes (Meltwater, 2024)

The incorporation of social media into language learning environments has garnered significant scholarly attention due to its potential to enhance language acquisition and communicative competence among students. A study conducted at University Sains Malaysia indicates that Facebook positively influenced students' confidence, motivation, and attitudes toward learning English. Furthermore, the study reported improvements in students' language proficiency, suggesting that social media platforms serve as valuable facilitators in the language learning process (Kabilan, et al., 2010).

The study by Namaziandost & Nasri (2019) highlights the effectiveness of social media in improving EFL students' speaking skills, with 82% of participants recognizing a significant improvement, and 18% of students reporting only a moderate improvement. From the study conducted by

Namaziandost & Nasri (2019), it can be inferred that social media serves as a highly effective tool for enhancing EFL students' speaking proficiency. Digital platforms, including video conferencing, voicemail and online discussions, provide meaningful opportunities for language practice.

The study conducted by Syahira, et al., (2024) underlined the effectiveness of social media in improving students' English language skills, with a significant proportion of the participants reporting improvements in pronunciation, vocabulary and confidence. The findings suggest that students who actively engaged with spoken content, such as video discussions and comment-based exchanges, showed greater progress in fluency and self-expression. In contrast, those who passively interacted with social media, without actively participating in conversations or practicing oral interactions, showed only moderate progress. In addition, this study highlights that student who consistently used social media for language practice showed significant improvements in their overall speaking ability, especially in fluency and spontaneous communication.

Previous studies have highlighted the significant role of social media in enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. For instance, Namaziandost & Nasri (2019) found that social media effectively improves speaking fluency. However, their study did not specifically examine how English Education students at UNJ utilize social media in both academic and non-academic contexts. Similarly, Syahira, et al., (2024) found that social media significantly contributes to fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking. However,

their study did not determine which specific platforms are most effective in enhancing students' oral communication skills.

Furthermore, Kabilan, et al., (2010). highlighted that Facebook can boost students' motivation and confidence in speaking English. However, their study did not address the challenges students face when using social media for language learning. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring EFL students' perceptions regarding what social media EFL students prefer to use to improve their English speaking, how they use social media, and the perceived benefits and challenges in using social media to improve speaking.

This gap underscores the need for further investigation into how social media supports speaking proficiency among university-level EFL students, and as English Department students must develop not only their language skills, but also their ability to effectively use contemporary tools and platforms in their future teaching careers. This research seeks to provide valuable insights in optimizing the integration of social media in language education, preparing future EFL teachers with contemporary teaching tools, and improving the digital tools in educational contexts.

1.2 Research Question

1. Which social media platforms do EFL students prefer for improving English-speaking skills?

2. How do they use social media to improve their speaking skills?

3. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of using social media in improving speaking skills among EFL students?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out which social media are preferred by EFL students to improve their English-speaking skills, how they use social media, and the perceived benefits and challenges in using social media in improving speaking skills among EFL students in the Bachelor English Language Education (BELE), Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ).

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on Bachelor English Language Education (BELE), Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), and how they perceive social media in improving English language skills.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for enhancing language education practices among EFL students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) by focusing on their perceptions of social media's role in improving English-speaking skills.

By exploring how students utilize various social media platforms for language learning and identifying effective strategies and preferred platforms, the research aims to provide valuable insights into optimizing digital tools in educational settings.

These insights can inform curriculum development, pedagogical approaches, and educational policies aimed at fostering more engaging and effective language learning experiences. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the advancement of educational practices by harnessing the potential of social media to enhance language acquisition and communication skills among university-level language learners.