

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, research problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Language is the primary medium of communication that enables humans to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Through language, individuals are able to interact, exchange information, and build social relationships. Among the many languages spoken around the world, English has gained global status and recognition, particularly in the context of globalization. English is widely used in various domains, such as education, science and technology, international business, and entertainment. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory foreign language in schools and is viewed as a critical skill that can enhance academic and professional opportunities. Therefore, mastering English is not merely a supplementary skill but a fundamental necessity for students to compete effectively at national and international levels (Harmer, 2007).

In the process of English language learning, there are four core language skills that learners are expected to acquire: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking is considered the most complex and challenging skill to master. Speaking demands not only accurate pronunciation but also fluency, spontaneity, clarity, and confidence in real-time interaction. It

involves both cognitive and affective aspects, as students must produce language quickly while managing anxiety and social pressure. Furthermore, speaking proficiency is often regarded as the ultimate indicator of success in foreign language acquisition. Learners are perceived to be proficient in English if they can communicate their ideas orally in a clear and confident manner (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019).

However, the reality in many educational settings shows that students continue to face significant difficulties in developing their speaking skills. This issue was particularly evident during the researcher's preliminary observations and internship experience at MAN 3 Nganjuk. It was found that most students exhibit low confidence when attempting to speak in English. Further reinforcing this observation, interviews conducted with the English teacher at MAN 3 Nganjuk indicated that many students consistently achieve low scores in speaking assessments, highlighting a persistent challenge in this particular skill. This reluctance is often rooted in several issues, including limited vocabulary, fear of making grammatical or pronunciation errors, and a lack of speaking practice opportunities during classroom instruction. Moreover, traditional teaching methods that are overly teacher-centered and lack interactive elements tend to hinder the development of oral communication skills (Wafiyah & Shofi, 2023). As a result, students find it hard to express themselves in English despite having learned the language for several years.

Given these challenges, the integration of technology in English language education has emerged as a promising solution. The rapid advancement of

digital tools has enabled the development of innovative language learning applications that can complement classroom instruction and provide additional practice. One such application is ELSA Speak (English Language Speech Assistant), an artificial intelligence-powered mobile application designed specifically to improve pronunciation and fluency in spoken English. ELSA Speak analyzes users' speech patterns, identifies pronunciation errors, and offers real-time corrective feedback. The application provides personalized learning paths, allowing students to practice anytime and anywhere beyond the limitations of classroom schedules (Putri, 2021).

ELSA Speak is equipped not only with phonetic training modules but also with interactive exercises, progress tracking, and engaging materials aligned with learners' individual levels. Its user-friendly interface and accessibility through smartphones make it highly suitable for high school students, particularly those in rural areas such as MAN 3 Nganjuk. By offering adaptive and autonomous learning experiences, the application can help students overcome psychological barriers to speaking, such as shyness and fear of judgment, and build greater confidence in their speaking abilities. The integration of such technology enhances the quality of language instruction and fosters a more learner-centered environment (Rahmawati, 2022).

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of ELSA Speak in improving students' speaking performance. Research conducted by Sari (2022) indicated significant improvement in students' fluency and pronunciation accuracy after regular use of the application. Similarly, a study by Apriyanti

and Ayu (2020) revealed that students became more engaged and motivated during speaking lessons supported by digital tools like ELSA Speak. These findings highlight the transformative potential of educational technology in language classrooms, particularly in enhancing oral skills.

Considering the current conditions at MAN 3 Nganjuk and the promising impact of ELSA Speak, this research is deemed necessary to further investigate the application's influence on students' speaking proficiency. The researcher aims to provide empirical evidence that can contribute to the development of more effective English language teaching practices. This study also intends to serve as a reference for English teachers in selecting appropriate digital resources that cater to students' needs and learning styles.

Therefore, this research focuses on examining the effect of using the ELSA Speak application on the speaking skills of eleventh-grade students at MAN 3 Nganjuk. It is expected that the results of this study will address the challenges encountered in the field and offer practical insights for improving the quality of English speaking instruction through technology-assisted learning approaches.

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of study, the research problem in this study can be formulated as follow: "Is there any difference effect between students taught by ELSA Speak Application and those taught by Hello Talk Application on their speaking skill?"

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the research problem, objective of this study is “to compare speaking skill learning outcomes between students taught by ELSA Speak Application and those taught by Hello Talk Application”

D. Hypothesis of the Study

To find the answer of the problem, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference on speaking skill between student taught by using ELSA Speak and those taught by using Hello Talk at MAN 3 Nganjuk.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference on speaking skill between student taught by using ELSA Speak and those taught by using Hello Talk at MAN 3 Nganjuk.

E. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on the use of the ELSA Speak application by a specific class of students at MAN 3 Nganjuk during a single time period. However, this research is limited to exploring the use of the application in improving students' speaking skills only, without addressing other language skills such as writing or reading.

F. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential contributions to various stakeholders involved in language learning. The results are expected to offer

meaningful benefits for students, teachers, and future researchers, as outlined below:

- For students: Provides an overview of how the ELSA Speak application can help to improve speaking skills through practice and feedback.
- For teachers: Provides guidance on the use of technology in teaching speaking.
- For future researchers: To become a reference in research on the use of technology for language learning.

G. Definition of Key Terms

This study involves several key concepts that form the foundation of the research. Understanding these concepts is essential to clarify the focus and scope of the study, as described below:

- ELSA Speak Application: An AI-based mobile application designed to help users improve their pronunciation and fluency in speaking English.
- Hello Talk Application : A language exchange app that connects users with native speakers worldwide to practice languages through chat, voice, and video.
- Speaking Skill: The ability to speak English well, which includes aspects of pronunciation, fluency and accuracy.