

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provide an overview of the research, covering aspects such as the background of the study, identification of the issues, delimitation of the study, research questions, aims of the research, and significance of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

English is the biggest language in the world, and many people use it as a medium to communicate with each other since it is easier for people from around the world to communicate by using these languages (Aswaty & Indari, 2022). The influence of English in a globalized society has been a topic of discussion in many fields, including linguistics, education, and culture. The utilization of English can also be divided into two parts: English as a foreign language and English as a second language. In the educational field, English is taught in elementary school for EFL learners and from childhood for second language users (Riadil & Yosintha, 2021)

Considering the importance of speaking skills in English language acquisition, the global prevalence of this language highlights the need for effective communication. This skills involves communicating effectively and fluently in spoken English, which is essential for successful communication in various aspects of life, such as business, education, and social interaction (Rustiyani, 2020). As productive skills, speaking requires students to produce language in realtime, using proper pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Despite the challenges involved, mastering speaking skills is a highly desirable goal for many English learners (Yanthi, 2020).

Some previous research explores the effect of mobile learning apps on the speaking skills of Indonesian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), highlighting increased engagement and confidence. The research examines the effectiveness of various digital platforms in improving speaking, showing positive results in fluency and pronunciation. In addition, another research explores how the integration of technology in speaking practice affects student performance and motivation in a university setting. In response to the growing importance of proper spoken English skills, technological developments have introduced alternative solutions such as ELSA Speak, which fulfill the crucial need for effective

communication skills. ELSA Speak is a language learning app that can improve students' speaking skills, and it is an essential learning application for speakers of English as a foreign language who want to gain fluency and clarity in communication. ELSA Speak can solve complex speaking problems, and by utilizing the latest technology, the app uses AI-based tools that offer real-time feedback and personalized exercises to perfect pronunciation (Yosintha & Rekha, 2022). Its adaptive learning system matches exercises to individual needs, creating an immersive environment where learners can actively engage and improve their spoken English skills.

As the demand for better spoken English increases, ELSA Speak appears as an alternative solution in learning and teaching English, utilizing technological advancements to meet the urgent need for effective communication skills. By assessing the app's effects on language learning, this research contributes to improving language teaching techniques and resources. It is beneficial to students who wish to improve their English-speaking skills. Moreover, in the age of globalization and the digitalization era, the ability to communicate appropriately and fluently is needed. Improving students' speaking faces many challenges that impact their language development. One common problem is the lack of opportunities for speaking. Students may not find enough opportunities to engage in a meaningful conversation, which limits their ability to practice and perfect their oral English (Brown, 2001). In addition, the fear of making mistakes and being judged by peers can prevent students from actively participating in conversation. This fear of negative judgment is a psychological barrier that many language learners face, which prevents their ability to take risks in expressing themselves in speaking (MacIntyre, 2007)

In education, conventional teaching methods are often criticized for being monotonous and uninteresting. Traditional teaching approaches, characterized by lectures, textbooks, and memorization, are sometimes considered monotonous and fail to attract the attention and interest of modern learners. This is especially true among the younger generation, who are used to interactive and dynamic forms of media in their daily lives. Therefore, integrating app-based media has become very important in language education, particularly in English language teaching. Recognizing the limitations of traditional teaching methods in fostering

engagement and enthusiasm, educators are increasingly turning to technological solutions to enhance the language learning experience (Tiwari, 2023).

Here are several research clusters that are similar in this area of the research. Among them is research on language learning technology (Anggraini, 2022; Mufidah & Roifah, 2020; Perdana & Budiningsih, 2020), the use of ELSA Speak in teaching pronunciation (Darsih et al., 2021; Sholekhah & Fakhurriana, 2023), improving student pronunciation skills using ELSA Speak (Anggraini, 2022), language acquisition, and speaking proficiency (Kristianingsih, 2023; Prasongko, 2023; Syarifudin, 2019).

This study differs from the previous one in its clear identification of the type of speaking being examined, something that the earlier research did not specify. In addition, this study used a different sample and population, focusing on grade ten of senior high school students, while the previous study involved grade eight junior high school students. By specifying the type of speaking, this study allows for a more targeted investigation, contributing to a clearer understanding of the factors that influence speaking proficiency across different age groups.

The research on the ELSA Speak application underscores its effectiveness in improving speaking skills and enhancing motivation among students to learn English. Studies consistently show significant advancements in students' speaking abilities, with participants demonstrating increased proficiency and confidence after using the app. The interactive features of ELSA Speak, which allow for voice recording and immediate feedback, enable learners to engage actively in their language development. Furthermore, the researcher intends to explore how the ELSA Speak app, designed for smartphones, can improve students' English speaking proficiency, especially responsive speaking, at an intermediate level. The ELSA Speak application is free-to-download app on smartphones and was created with a feature that can assist students to improve their speaking skills ability. The main focus of this reasearch was the utilization of the ELSA Speak learning app to improve students' speaking skills. In other cases, other research usually focuses on static or written forms of speaking, which may not truly represent the dynamics of real-life conversations. By examining responsive speaking, this study highlighted how learners can develop skills such as turn-taking, active listening, and spontaneous responses, all of which are essential for effective communication. In

addition, the research includes a diverse population to capture a broader range of experiences and challenges related to the development of speaking skills.

The researcher is interested in implementing learning tool, ELSA Speak, to enhance students' speaking skills. As part of this research, the researcher plans to conduct research titled "The Effectiveness of ELSA Speak in Improving Students' Speaking Skills." The study will focus on assessing how effective ELSA Speak is in supporting students' oral communication development, with a particular emphasis on pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking confidence. Through this research, the goal is to understand the impact of integrating a tool like ELSA Speak into language learning environments, contributing to more effective teaching strategies and student's outcomes.

1.2 Identification of the issues

ELSA Speak is a learning media that can improve students' speaking skills and help teachers to teach speaking skills. There are several issues raised based on the researcher's observation:

1. Some teachers struggle to use technology in teaching speaking skills, often relying on traditional methods, which causes students to miss out on engaging activities.
2. Monotonous teaching media limits student engagement, which fails to stimulate interest in the material and causes students to struggle to stay focused during lessons.
3. Students face various challenges when trying to developing their speaking skills, such as feeling anxious during conversations, struggling to find the proper words, and lacking opportunities to practice in real-life situations.
4. The relationship between the word and its pronunciation creates challenges for students as they struggle to improve their speaking skills, often mispronouncing terms and feeling frustrated during conversations.
5. Teachers' lack of ability to deliver speaking materials effectively prevents students' progress and lowers their confidence in speaking.
6. The students' low motivation in learning English language negatively affects their engagement and limits their progress in acquiring language skills.

7. Some teachers' lack of ability to utilize technology prevent effective instruction and prevents students from fully engaging with learning materials.
8. Anxiety among students in practicing speaking English often prevents them from participating and limits their progress in language proficiency.
9. Social conditions that affect students' motivation in practicing speaking skills often create obstacles in their participation and make them hesitate to participate in conversations.
10. Language acquisition significantly affects students' speaking skills, as it influences their ability to communicate fluently and express their thoughts effectively.

Lack of technology utilization is a common issue in teaching speaking skills. The existing challenges in teaching speaking skills revolve around the limited use of technology. This issue signifies a common struggle among educators to merge technological tools into language teaching effectively. This includes missed opportunities to capitalize on advancements such as interactive apps or artificial intelligence (AI)-driven platforms, which prevent exploring innovative teaching methods that could significantly improve speaking proficiency. To overcome these challenges, a concerted effort is needed to embrace and harness the potential of technology to revolutionize how speaking skills are taught and practiced in educational settings.

Some teachers still use monotonous teaching media in teaching and learning activities, especially in teaching speaking. This challenge includes the common reliance on repetitive or unvarnished teaching methods across different subjects or disciplines. Such monotony in educational resources often leads to disinterest and less interest among students, preventing their enthusiasm for learning.

Expanding on the challenges students face in improving their speaking skills reveals a varied scope. These challenges involve various issues, including hesitation or lack of confidence in expressing oneself orally and lack of consistent practice outside of formal learning environments. In addition, cultural or language differences, fear of making mistakes, and the need to increase confidence in using language also contribute to these challenges.

1.3 Delimitation and focus of study

Delimitation of the research is important to distinguish one study from another. This research focused on using the ELSA Speak application to improve the speaking skills of grade ten students in senior high school using pre-experimental research with one group pre-test and post-test. The research method used in this research was pre-experimental with one group pretest and post-test. Moreover, this study focused on responsive speaking at intermediate level. The material used in this study was “introducing oneself to another” to treat the students.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the background of the research above, the research tries to answer the following research questions:

1. How are students speaking skills before and after using ELSA Speak application?
2. Is there any significant effectiveness of ELSA Speak to improve speaking skills?

1.5 Aims of the research

Based on the background of the research, the aims of the research are:

1. To explore the students' speaking skills before and after using ELSA Speak application;
2. To explore the effectiveness of ELSA Speak to improve speaking skills;

1.6 Significance of the research

To support future research, this study aims to provide readers and educators with new insights and understanding of the effectiveness of teaching methods using technology. The significance of this study lies on practical and theoretical significance.

1.6.1 Theoretically

This research hopefully can provide more literature information about the effectiveness of ELSA Speak in improving students' speaking skills; so that it can help as a reference for the next researcher on a similar theme.

1.6.2 Practically

a) For teachers

This research is expected to be used as a new inspiration for teachers in teaching English speaking skills by using ELSA Speak as a learning media

b) For students

This research contains information that is used as a solution for students to improve their English-speaking skills using ELSA Speak applications

c) For other researchers

This research provided information for other researchers to conduct further studies in the similar theme



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