

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English is Indonesia's second language, and many countries have declared English their official language. English proficiency is one of the aspects that makes Indonesia a developed country. Therefore, if the majority of Indonesian people learn English, it will be easier to communicate with other countries that use English. In Indonesia, English begins to be taught from elementary school to university to prepare for the future English language will be needed to continue studying abroad or to find work. This shows that English has an important role in the future and can help Indonesia become a developed country if most of its human resources can speak English. Therefore, the millennial generation or today's children need to understand and learn English enthusiastically.

To reach their current level of English proficiency, students must be proficient in these four language skills. Zaim (2016) stated in the concept of language learning that language learners must master four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Four Skills activities in language learning have many valuable purposes: they provide learners with extensive support, opportunities to be creative, an environment to use language to exchange authentic information, proof of their own abilities (evidence of learning), and the most important thing is trust self (Lorena Manaj, 2015).

Brown and Yule (2000) believe that speaking is one of the basic skills that measure a person's success in learning a language. Apart from that, several functions of speaking are that speakers can express opinions or express their feelings, ask questions, share knowledge or information directly, and so on. The ability to master spoken language is a criterion for measuring the degree of student language mastery. Speaking skills are used to express ideas and communicate with other people. Therefore speaking skills are very important because

speaking and interpersonal skills are two things that cannot be separated (Ufiyah Azzahra et al., 2019).

Speaking skills are tools or development for students in learning processes such as group study or discussions, during discussions students are trained in communication (Apriani et al., 2018). By speaking, students can convey opinions, thoughts or ideas that they want to convey orally, the goal that the teacher wants to achieve is to improve students' speaking skills, students are able to express themselves through speaking activities.

Speaking skills are the ability of students to be able to convey messages in the learning process. Speaking skills do not come suddenly but require training from formal and non-formal education. And in formal education is through a school-wide process involving teachers and peers (Putu Ayu et al.,2021).

The researcher encountered several problems when observing on 15th May 2024 in eleventh grade at SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya, especially students' speaking skills. According to the English teacher at the school Ms. Dyan Wahyuningtyas, the causes of students' problems in speaking skills were students' lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence to come to the front of the class, and worry about making mistakes when speaking. When conducting preliminary research, the researcher also obtained student data speaking skill score given by the teacher. There were many students whose scores were still below the minimum completeness criteria (KKM). The KKM value that had been set at SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya was 75. The number of students who were still below the KKM was 17 students and the number of students above the KKM is 4 students from the total 21 students. From the statement above, the researcher concluded that students experienced difficulties in speaking skills. One of the eleventh grade students was also asked by SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya researchers about this. According to students, what the teacher conveyed was accurate. They were lack vocabularies, made them less confident to progress in class and

afraid of making mistakes in speaking. Students also said that the lack of lesson descriptions made it difficult to understand.

Those students' problems were caused by the teachers' way of teaching and the media used were still conventional, only based on English textbooks. They only practiced speaking by reading the textbook aloud in their own seats without coming to the front of the class. That was what causes students to be afraid and not confident in their speaking skills.

Therefore, the researcher found a more interesting way to help children improve their speaking skills. Speaking problems faced by students ranged from lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, and lack of interest in learning. The researcher chose technology as a medium to improve speaking skills. By using technology, more students were interested in improving their speaking skills inside and outside the classroom.

In this era, technological developments are significant in facilitating daily life activities. Chitamba (2014) believes that technological developments are very helpful for the economy, education, health and other fields. In the field of education, technology brings benefits to students and teachers. The educational process can be made easier because students have access to a lot of information related to subject matter. Beyond that, technology offers an interesting learning process. The development of information and technology can improve students' interactive learning through the interesting features provided therein (Raja and Nagasubramani, 2018).

The digital era has introduced many educational technology tools, including applications. In this research, the researcher used application to improve students' speaking skills. There are many English learning applications that can be used to improve speaking skills in English learning such as FluentU, Duolingo, Memrise, Hello talk, ELSA, etc. Due to very rapid technological advances, many English learning applications have emerged

that can be used to improve speaking skills, one of which will be used in this research is the ELSA application. The reason the researcher chose this application compared to the other applications mentioned was because the researcher felt that this application was the easiest to access and was very suitable for improving students' speaking skills.

ELSA (English Language Speak Assistant) is a fun and engaging app designed to help improve English pronunciation and support Education 4.0. ELSA's AI technology was developed using speech data from people who speak English with different accents. This allows ELSA to recognize the speech patterns of non-native speakers, which differentiates it from most other speech recognition technologies (Sri Dhivya et al., 2023). From the statement it can be concluded that ELSA apps are very suitable to be used as a medium to improve students' speaking skills in an interesting way using technology.

The first feature of this application is that students can choose the level of conversation they will have. There are many conversation that students can learn directly, such as everyday conversations and even work conversations. With ELSA, students can practice speaking in conversations, students can also practice pronunciation. Apart from that, this application also provides video tutorials that make it easier for students to practice because there are examples of how to do it. There is also a recording feature that students can try after listening to native speakers to improve their speaking skills and will be assessed whether students' pronunciation is correct or not. Even though this application is limited because it is paid, the free features are very helpful in improving students' speaking skills.

Based on previous researchers' findings, the use of ELSA is very effective in improving English pronunciation. This is proven by the total average score of the experimental class in the pre-test of 63.34 points and the total post-test score of 84.1 points, the control class post-test score of 81.02 points (Rismawati et al., 2021). The difference

between previous research and this research is the skills that will be improved. If the researchers from the previous study above only focused on improving English pronunciation using ELSA, apart from improving English pronunciation, the researcher from this study will also use ELSA to improve students' English speaking skills. The researcher believes that English pronunciation and speaking skills are related to each other.

From the review above, the researcher conducted the research on improving students' speaking skills using application learning media with the title "Using ELSA To Improve Students' Speaking Skills at The Eleventh grade Of SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya".

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background above, the researcher formulate the research questions as follows :

Can ELSA improve the students' speaking skills in the Eleventh grade of SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the background, the purpose of this study is to find out whether ELSA Apps improve the students' speaking skills in eleventh grade at SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to give contribution to the language teaching learning process as follow :

### **1.4.1 For English Teacher**

The researcher hopes that this research can give some benefits to some people, especially English teachers in SMK Kawung 2 Surabaya. It can be an inspiration for all teachers on how to teach better in English language learning and can improve speaking skills. ELSA can be a solution in improving speaking skills. This can improve students' speaking skill scores.

#### **1.4.2 For Students**

The researcher hoped that this research media can help improve students' speaking skills. Since studying English with ELSA, students feel happy and enjoy the teaching process, thus improving their speaking skills.

### **1.5 Operational Definition**

#### **1.5.1 Improve**

Improve is the process of becoming better quality or more productive to become better (Webster, 2004)

#### **1.5.2 Speaking Skill**

Speaking is the action of expressing one thoughts and feelings in spoken language. Skill is the ability to do something well. And speaking skill is the process of building and sharing meaning trough the use of verbal symbols, in variety of context (Swust, 2008).

#### **1.5.3 Technology**

Technology is a way of doing something to meet human needs with the help of tools and reason, so that it can expand, strengthen, or make body parts and senses more powerful (Hennessy et al., 2005).

#### **1.5.4 ELSA (English Language Speech Assistant)**

The ELSA apps is a mobile application designed to improve English pronunciation and fluency for non-native speakers. It uses advanced speech recognition technology to analyze the user's pronunciation and provide feedback regarding accent, intonation and other speech characteristics. ELSA Speaking Application is a flexible programmer with many features (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).