CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background of the Research**

Speaking skill is an important ability in communicating in English.
Speaking skills can be very important because they are needed in conversational
activities. Speaking ability in English is a productive skill related to a person's
mastery of a topic through listening. Speaking skill refers to the ability to
communicate effectively through spoken language. It involves expressing
thoughts, ideas, and information clearly and coherently. Developing good
speaking skills encompasses aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar,
and fluency, enabling effective verbal communication in various social and
professional contexts. There are four factors that can influence pronunciation
problems are: (1) mother tongue, (2) amount of exposure, (3) age factor, and (4)
motivation and attention for good pronunciation (Jariyah, 2020). There are several
sounds in English that do not exist in Indonesian. Indonesian and English have
different consonants. All consonants in Indonesian must be pronounced clearly,
whereas in English this is not the case. For example, sounds in Indonesian have
the sounds [s], [k], [t], [l], [p], [m], and [b] which is also in English but phonetic
(order sound/role that determines how the sound is produced) in English sound
[s]. [k], [t] as word endings but in Indonesian it's like that No. In English we
usually find words ending with /l/ and /p/ sequentially like the words please and
porridge, but never found in Indonesia, so it is pronounced /help/ and /pulep/

Jariyah (2020). There are several problems in speaking including pause, filler (paused in speaking with certain sounds, for example with hmmmm or emmmm), mental problem, lack of ideas, mispronunciation, grammatical error, lack of vocab.

Junior high school curriculum emphasizes Integrated English language teaching through three language skills. Such as speaking, reading, and writing. This curriculum also emphasizes that teaching English as a foreign language must be based on a communication approach. This approach is based on teaching language as a means of communication. Based on interviews with students at SMPN 8 Jember are less interested learn English because students think English is difficult, especially in speaking. Students say speaking skills are difficult because they do not understand proper grammar. Moreover, students say that English is complicated because the material is difficult for students to understand. So they find it difficult to create ideas for them to speak up.

According to Candraloka & Rosdiana, (2019) students need to improve their speaking skills. Apart from that, the highest problems faced by students are vocabulary and grammar. The cause of the problems students face in speaking English is not only limited knowledge of the components of speaking skills including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and fluency but also they have personal reasons, such as shyness, anxiety, confusion, deficiencies, confident, and afraid of making mistakes. According to Rahmi et al., (2024) it was found that there were several main problems with it speak especially in introducing yourself. The first is a lack of vocabulary. When students are speaking to introduce themselves, they are often silent because their vocabulary is large due to the

teacher's lack of emphasis on memorizing vocabulary. The second factor is difficulty in producing words correctly. It was found that most of the students were wrong in pronouncing the words. Most students do not want to talk because they do not know how to produce the right words. This condition is caused by students rarely learning to spell words in English.

Then the Elsa Application is available to measure students' abilities in terms of pronunciation in aspects of English speaking skills. Elsa is an artificial intelligence (AI) application that focuses on the field of education, especially in terms of pronunciation. This application helps students hear, pronounce, proclaim, chant and affirm English words in spoken language. Base on the previous study, Elsa (English Language Speech Assistant) Speak Application gave positive effects on students' speaking ability. It showed by the improvement of students' speaking scores. According to Aswaty & Indari, (2022) the Elsa (English Language Speech Assistant) Speaking application is a suitable medium for teachers to use in teaching speaking.

The Elsa Application is highly recommended for students to improve their abilities speaking skills because it provides several facilities and features, including voice recognition technology, curriculum tailored to students needs, tested, free online dictionary, pronunciation and intonation examiners, and free assessment exams throughout the program. Elsa application is related to the current condition of students where every student must have a smartphone, making it easier for them to study anywhere and anytime. Apart from that, Elsa application is considered capable enough to be used as a virtual trainer. In

addition, Elsa provides several levels of learning, from beginner to advanced level, and determine whether the user's speech is good or not.

According to Hanna et al., (2022) using Elsa Speak can make students more fluent with correct pronunciation in speaking. Learning through Elsa Speak has many advantages, such as various topics according to user needs, where users can choose which topics they want to practice. The learning system is by listening to audio examples of a word or sentence which will later be recited according to what is heard and seen on the screen. Elsa Speak will assess whether what the user said is correct or not. Through its features, Elsa Speak provides a fun and memorable learning experience so that the boring view of learning English can be minimized. Furthermore, after using Elsa Speak students became more active in speaking. They can express opinions, and questions and provide comments on the material discussed at that time. It was concluded that Elsa Speak had a significant influence on the speaking skills of tenth-grade students at SMK Sahid Jakarta.

According to Sholekhah & Fakhrurriana, (2023) Elsa Speak provides a safe and non-judgmental learning environment for users can practice their English skills and learn from their mistakes. Automatic speech recognition technology gives users instant feedback on pronunciation and allows them to make corrections. Elsa Speak's personal feedback and guidance helps improve pronunciation. This research shows that Elsa Speak can help improve non-native English language skills their pronunciation.

Based on the background above, to overcome problems in students' speaking skills, a thesis entitled **(The effect of English Language Speech**

Assistant (ELSA) Application on improving students' speaking skills) was created.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the explanation above, the researcher formulated the research questions for this study as follows "Is there any effect of using Elsa on students' speaking skills?"

1.3 Objective of the Research

This research was conducted on eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Jember. The research subjects were eighth-grade students. The focus of this research is based on the problems found, the aim of this research is to determine the effect of using the Elsa Application on the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 8 Jember for the 2023 to 2024 school year in teaching English classes.

1.4 Operational Definition of the Terms

1. Elsa AI: In this research, it refers to application wheres students will use, which functions as a tool to improve their speaking skills.
2. Speaking Skills: In this research, researchers hope for students' ability to be able to correct pronunciation, English fluency, vocabulary, proper grammar, and comprehension.

1.5 Significances of the Research

1.5.1 Theoretically:

The findings of this research will support and complement previous theories regarding teaching English using the ELSA application for students' speaking skills.

For further researchers, this research will support and motivate other researchers to conduct research which will become a source in involving the application of the ELSA application as a training process to improve speaking skills.

1.5.2 Practically:

Researchers hope that the findings of this research can be useful for teachers this research is expected to use the ELSA application as a resource for teaching students' speaking skills.

1.6 Scope of The Research

This research will be carried out in the Jember district area, more precisely on school students at junior high school 8 Jember. This research focuses on whether there are differences in students' speaking skills before and after using the Elsa application. In this research, researchers will directly assess the impact of using the Elsa application on students and will assess whether this impact affects the speaking skills of junior high school 8 Jember.