CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This section contains the background of this research, the question of this research , the purpose of this research , the gap of this research, the conceptual framework of this research, the significance of this research, and the previous study of this research. This section also aims to introduce the first section until this final chapter.

A. Background

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), learners often have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Whereas, learners must have a lot of exposure in order to have perfect English learning skills. The one most essential productive skill in language learning is speaking. Nunan (2003) describes that speaking is a productive skill including systematic verbal remarks to deliver meaning. Brown (2004) gained that speaking as a process of interactive development of meaning, which requires two elements such as production and comprehension of information. Besides that, Thornbury (2005) states that speaking as a real-time activity necessitates learners plan, produce and monitor speech as they speak. So, speaking is not only about knowledge of grammatical but also regarding spontaneously and communicatively (Nunan; 2003, Brown; 2004, Thornbury; 2005). Speaking skills are essential skills which are more prioritized because they function for communication (Hana Yulinda Fithriyani & Arief Zul Fauzi 2024). Thornbury (2005) adds interactions of spoken happens when on the spot, increasing speaking ability requires practice extensively and confidently.

Because oral communication skills are spontaneous and need practice extensively, relying solely on the teacher's instruction inside the classroom is insufficient. Therefore, learner autonomy is necessarily important for learners, so that learners can manage their own practice outside the classroom. This concept, as defined by Holec (1981), its refers

to the capacity of learners to take their own learning charge involving setting learning goals, choosing learning strategies, monitoring their learning, and evaluating learning outcomes. This concept is further supported by Benson, (2011), who emphasizes that learner autonomy is the skill which learners have to take on more control of their own learning. Learners can take responsibilities and control their own learning process. This concept emphasizes that learners no longer completely depend on their teacher, but actively set how, when,where, and with how they learn (Dewi & Wilany, 2023).

However, in fact many learners have complicated experiences in increasing their speaking skills. They frequently lack confidence, when speaking they feel anxious, and they don't have many opportunities for speaking practice. Consequently, activities of speaking became teacher-centered and learners rely heavily on their teachers rather than actively engaging in communicating. And it makes their learner autonomy not optimal in the class. These issues are supported by preliminary interview findings held with several students and one teacher. The findings shows that most of them seldom practice speaking outside the classroom, lack of vocabulary, in the class learners' have limited time and mostly theory when English is the subject, and do not have initiative to use MALL outside the classroom. This condition indicated that both speaking practice and learner autonomy have not yet optimally improved.

To solve this problem or challenges, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has arisen as a promising approach. Kukulska-Hulme (2009), states MALL can support language learning by mobile devices with proper flexibility, accessibility and personalization anytime and anywhere. Similarly, Bhestari & Luthfiyyah (2021), defined that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) support learners with flexible, mobile, and accessible in find a learning resources, as a result learners can able to participate in learning English with more flexible with their devices like smartphones, laptops, etc. Learners also can get feedback from MALL

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directly through applications like Duolingo, Youtube, and WhatsApp. From these applications learners can access authentic materials, speaking practices in everytime. These features are believed to promote not only their speaking skills but also their learner autonomy.

However, despite the widespread use of mobile devices among Indonesian EFL senior high school students, their potential for learning is not fully optimized. Many learners tend to use mobile phones mainly for entertainment or just when the teacher is giving instructions, rather than for self-directed learning. It means the learner autonomy of learners in low levels. Therefore, a gap exists between the beneficial or potential of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to foster autonomous learning and the factual practices of learning of learners.

Furthermore, previous studies have found a positive effect of MALL. Bhestari & Luthfiyyah, (2021) found that learners had positive perceptions of MALL and mobile applications to foster learning independently. Similarly, Kholis (2021), reported that learners using ELSA Speak developed their speaking skills and demonstrated higher autonomy and motivation. However, most studies focus on learners' university or examine learner outcomes rather than perceptions of learners, especially at the senior high school level.

Therefore, there is limited understanding of how Indonesian EFL senior high schools perceive the use of MALL in fostering their speaking skills and learner autonomy. This study aims to fill this gap by examining learners' perceptions, which are essential in understanding whether MALL is truly used as a tool for autonomous learning or merely as a supplementary medium guided by teachers.

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B. Research Question

There are several research questions which, extend by researchers according from the background of this study, namely :

1. How do EFL senior high school learners perceive the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in supporting their speaking skills and learner autonomy?
2. How do EFL senior high school learners utilize Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to foster their speaking skills and learner autonomy?

C. Research Purpose

The purposes of this research are :

1. To identify learners' perceptions of the use of MALL in supporting their speaking skills and learner autonomy.
2. To examine how EFL senior high school learners utilize Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to improve their speaking skills and to foster their learner autonomy.

D. Research Significance

The research has two implications namely, practically and theoretically. Practically, this study suggests that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning could be effectively utilized by teachers and learners to support speaking skills through learning with flexibility in time or place. It also encourages the intensity of learner autonomy by enabling the learners to more practice independently inside and beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, theoretically this study contributes to the understanding on how Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can support the development of speaking skills and learner autonomy in EFL students' context. It also could provide empirical evidence on the relationship between technology use and self-directed learning.

E. Research Scope

The scope of this research is limited to EFL senior high school learners who utilize Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in

learning English especially in learning speaking. This research focuses on perceptions of learners' of MALL and how learners utilize it to support their speaking skills and learner autonomy. It specifically examines the types of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tools used by learners and the ways they use these tools to do speaking practice. Furthermore, the study explores aspects from learner autonomy, containing setting their learning goals, selecting strategies for learning, and also evaluating their learning outcomes. This study does not have the purpose to measure learners' English proficiency or compare many teaching methods, but rather focuses on learners' experiences and perceptions of using MALL when doing speaking practice.

F. Conceptual Framework

Speaking skills are positioned as key learning outcomes in this study. Speaking refers to learners' ability to express ideas orally. Brown (2004) supported that speaking is defined as a process of interactive or creating meaning, which requires two elements such as, production and comprehension regarding an information. In assessing speaking skills, this study used key components proposed by Brown (2004), the components of speaking consist of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension as indicators of learners' performance in speaking. All these components are used to assess and evaluate how well learners' can communicate their ideas effectively and accurately. Through the use of MALL learners' have opportunities to speak outside the classroom. They can engage in various activities like voice recording, practice of pronunciation, and interacting with digital content of digital, which help them improve their confidence and performance of speaking. Therefore, the use of MALL is expected to support the development of learners' speaking skill by providing the flexibility and continuous independent practice.

Moreover, learner autonomy is positioned the same with speaking skills. Learner autonomy as a learning outcome is this study, especially in

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the context of technology- enhanced in language learning (Benson, 2013),states that learner autonomy has the capacity to take responsibility over learning management, cognitive process and learning content, suggesting that autonomy consists of both strategic competence and metacognitive awareness. This opinion highlights that learner autonomy is skills which need some improvement from learners.

In addition, based on Holec (1981), learner autonomy is not only learning independently, but also capacity that includes learners' control over key aspects of their process of learning, namely, set the goals, choose strategies, monitor progress, and evaluate their outcomes. This aligns with the theory of self-regulated learning, when learners usually actively plan, monitor, and reflect on their process of learning. This perspective shows autonomy as a dynamic and developable skill rather than an inherited trait. It is developed through learners' experiences and appropriate conditions of learning. Moreover, autonomy can be understood through the lens of theory learning constructivist theory, which posits that knowledge is actively conducted by learners through interaction and experience. In speaking aspect improvement this is particularly essential. As learners must actively participate in practice, experiment, and self-correction. Learners who are autonomous are more likely to seek an opportunity for practice speaking, take risks in communicating with others, and reflect on their performance

Similarly, from this view Dewi & Wilany (2023), claim that learners autonomous can actively regulate how, when, and through which resources they learn, without the role of teacher as an instructor. In the context of Mobile-Assisted language learning (MALL) these theoretical perspectives became relevant, as mobile technologies provide flexibility. These affordances enable learners to take greater responsibility for their learning process, thereby fostering the development of learner autonomy.

Furthermore, this study used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to Davis et al., (1989) Technology Acceptance Model

(TAM), learners' perceptions of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence their acceptance and utilization of MALL. Moreover, alongside positive perceptions, this study also explores challenges learners experience when using MALL, namely technical issues, limited internet access, distractions, lack of guidance, and difficulties managing learning time. These challenges may affect how students engage with mobile learning tools and how effectively they develop autonomous learning behaviours.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in this study serves as the core learning approach in this study. According to Kukulska-Hulme, (2009), MALL enables flexible, personalized, and ubiquitous learning through mobile devices. In this study, MALL is represented by learners' experiences in using mobile learning applications, online platforms, and communication tools to support English language learning. This idea is strongly supported by current studies which emphasize that MALL supports interactive learning environments that bridge in contexts formal and informal learning. Recent study from showed that MALL can facilitate language learning through practice in repetition, real time feedback, and communicative interaction which are important in enhancing speaking skills. For example, research from Zhen and Hasim (2022), indicate that mobile applications significantly improve speaking skills from learners and overall performance of speaking. In addition, MALL enhances learners' confidence and motivation, making learners more willing to do speaking practice and engage in speaking activities. This argues MALL not only supports cognitive aspects but also can address affective factors, which are essential in second language acquisition.

Therefore, this conceptual framework assumes that students' perceptions of MALL both positive and perceived challenges shape the effectiveness of mobile learning. When students perceive MALL as applicable and manageable, and when challenges can be addressed, they

are more likely to engage in autonomous learning practices especially when doing speaking practice, which in turn fosters higher levels of learner autonomy and their speaking skills among EFL students. In addition, the conceptual framework diagrams can be seen in appendix.

G. Previous Study

In this study, there are some reviews of relevant literature findings from the previous researchers, namely :

The first previous study by Jaelani & Adung (2022), investigates the use of mobile language learning to promote learner autonomy in the EFL speaking context. This study used a case study approach, including interviews and open-ended questions via google from 15 learners from Bogor universities. And they found that learners had positive perceptions toward the use of MALL and actively utilized mobile applications like YouTube and language learning apps to practice speaking independently. In addition, this study found that MALL not only improved learners' speaking capabilities but also increased their autonomy.

The second previous study comes from Li et al. (2022), was conducted research entitled Learner Autonomy and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL: Perceptions of Undergraduate Students to examine learner perceptions of MALL and its role in fostering learner autonomy. This study used a questionnaire combined with qualitative analysis. The findings of this study indicate that learners' perceptions of MALL are tools that could support self-directed learning, learning responsibility, and independent practice. These findings suggest that mobile devices can support flexibility and many opportunities for learners who are autonomous beyond the classroom. This study focused on undergraduate students; the current research identifies learners in senior high school and not investigates speaking skills.

The third study comes from Septi Purnama Sari et al. (2024), which investigated the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in increasing learners' speaking skills using a pre-experimental

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design with pre-test and post-test. The study found there is significant improvement by investigating learners' perceptions and their utilization of MALL in fostering both speaking skills and learner autonomy at the senior high school level average score, this score suggesting MALL is than in learners' speaking capabilities after the integration of MALL with the increasing these gaps effective tools for supporting speaking skills among EFL learners'. This study focuses on measuring speaking performance and not exploring whether MALL can foster learner autonomy. Therefore this study aims to answer the gaps.

The fourth study was conducted by Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi (2024), which explores the impact of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on EFL learners' speaking skills. The study found that MALL significantly can improvelearners' speakingperformance by providing more opportunities for practice and can decrease difficulties like anxiety and lack of vocabulary. However, the study focused on outcomes from speaking and did not explore learners' perceptions or how MALL supports autonomy of learners, indicating a gap this current study aims to address.

The fifth research comes from Mousawa (2025), entitled The Role of Using Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to Develop University Students Autonomy in Learning Grammar. This study conducts a mixed-method approach with data collection from questionnaire, interviews, and self-completion diaries. This study found that MALL supports learners' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, also promoting autonomous learning. But this study focused on learning grammar and did not address speaking skill or learners' perceptions of MALL, this indicating a gap for this research.

The sixth study by Khan (2024), examines the effect of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) on the autonomy of the university of Taburesourcek Institute Languages' Learners. This study conducts an experimental design method with questionnaire likert scale. The findings found that MALL significantly increased learner autonomy of learners'

through apps namely Rosetta Stone rather than conventional methods. In addition, access to resource knowledge through MALL build learners became independent (self-reliant) in learning English in the EFL context.

And the last previous study by Bhestari & Luthfiyyah (2021), investigated learners' perceptions of using online and mobile media for English learning. This study used a qualitative case study approach, involving interviews with 4 learners from private universities. And they found that the digital press supported learners' independent and self-directed learning, indicating the development of learner autonomy. This study was conducted in higher education, and this research does not explicitly examine the role of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in fostering learner autonomy and speaking skills.

Based on the previous studies above, it can be concluded that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has potential which is significant in increasing both learner autonomy and English skills, especially speaking skills. However, most studies above either focus on learner autonomy without specifically addressing speaking skill, or emphasize development of speaking without exploring how MALL can foster autonomy of learner. Furthermore, many of these studies are conducted at university levels, with limited attention to EFL senior high school learners. Therefore, this research aims to fill these gaps by exploring how MALL can support both learner autonomy and speaking skills in senior high school students' EFL context.

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