CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes background, focus of the research, scope of the research research, research question, objectives of the research, significance of the research and definitions of the key terms.

1.1 Background

In recent years, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has emerged as a transformative approach in second language acquisition, offering flexibility, accessibility, and interactive opportunities for learners to engage outside traditional classroom settings. Studies have shown that MALL not only supports vocabulary and grammar learning but also facilitates speaking practice through mobile apps and synchronous or asynchronous dialogues (Sutrisna, 2025; Fadhilah, 2023; Alexiadou et al., 2025). Moreover, with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) integrated into mobile language learning tools, learners are increasingly receiving immediate feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and interactive speaking tasks (Kim et al., 2022; Butarbutar, 2024; Sormin, 2025). This fusion of MALL and AI holds considerable promise in enabling more personalized and responsive speaking instruction, thereby elevating the importance of exploring how such technology-mediated environments are reshaping language learning dynamics.

Despite the promising developments in MALL and AI-mediated language learning, mastery of speaking remains a persistent challenge for many learners of English as a foreign language, particularly in contexts with limited interactional opportunities and teacher-student talk time (Suryani & Jaya, 2025; Napitupulu & Dalimunte, 2025; Sormin, 2025). Speaking is inherently interactive and socially situated, depending heavily on classroom dynamics such as turn-taking, scaffolding by the teacher, peer interaction, and motivational climate all of which may be altered when AI-integrated MALL tools are introduced (Kim et al., 2022; Butar-butar, 2024; Sutrisna, 2025). In other words, while AI-MALL tools may extend speaking opportunities, their impact on the micro-dynamics of the classroom such

as how students engage, how teachers facilitate, and how peer talk evolves is still underexplored. Consequently, a qualitative investigation into the ways that classroom dynamics interact with speaking mastery in AI-integrated MALL contexts is warranted.

This study lies in its effort to bridge a critical gap between technological advancement and pedagogical practice, particularly in understanding how AI-integrated MALL reshapes classroom dynamics while supporting speaking mastery. Previous research has made significant progress in demonstrating that AI-enhanced mobile tools can improve learners' pronunciation, fluency, and confidence by offering personalized, real-time feedback and adaptive learning pathways (Zhou, Hashim & Sulaiman, 2025; Kim, Park & Warschauer, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2023). Other studies have also highlighted how mobile learning transforms interactional patterns in the language classroom by promoting learner autonomy, multimodal communication, and increased speaking opportunities beyond teacher-centered instruction (Kukulska-Hulme & Sharma, 2024; Burston, 2022; Viberg et al., 2023). However, these advancements have not been sufficiently examined through a qualitative lens that captures the nuanced interplay between AI-MALL implementation, teacher mediation, peer interaction, and the development of speaking mastery especially within the Indonesian EFL context, where contextual, cultural, and infrastructural factors may uniquely influence technology-mediated learning processes. Thus, this study is essential in extending prior findings by offering an in-depth, context-embedded analysis that illuminates how AI-integrated MALL actively transforms classroom practices and contributes to learners' speaking development.

In the Indonesian EFL context, where smartphone penetration and mobile connectivity are relatively high, but where access to sustained, high-quality speaking practice and teacher trainsing may vary widely, the adoption of AI-integrated MALL offers unique affordances and challenges (Fadhilah, 2023; Sormin, 2025; Napitupulu & Dalimunte, 2025). Investigating how the integration of AI into mobile-assisted speaking instruction influences classroom interaction, teacher roles, peer engagement, and ultimately speaking mastery can provide

valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers in Indonesia. So that, AI and MALL are not treated as separate elements. Instead, they are viewed as a connected and functional relationship. MALL functions as a mobile learning environment that provides a space for learning activities, while AI acts as an intelligent support system within MALL. The integration used in this study is Embedded and Instructional Integration, meaning that AI is directly included in speaking activities used during classroom learning rather than only for self-study, and interacts with students together with the teacher and their peers. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to explore how classroom dynamics shape and are shaped by the use of AI-integrated MALL tools and how those dynamics relate to students' speaking mastery in Indonesian EFL settings. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper contextualized understanding of the pedagogical implications of AI-MALL in Indonesia and to generate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing speaking instruction.

1.2 Focus of the Research

This study centers its investigation on the interplay between classroom dynamics and students' speaking mastery within the implementation of AI-integrated Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the Indonesian EFL context. The research focuses on examining how AI-supported mobile learning tools influence the classroom dynamics. Particular attention is directed toward identifying changes in group dynamics such as cooperation, peer support, interaction balance, and role distribution when AI features are embedded into speaking activities.

Quantitative focus measures the extent to which AI-integrated MALL contributes to students' improvement in speaking mastery, as reflected in measurable indicators such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and task performance scores. While, Qualitative focus explores students' and teachers' lived experiences and perceptions throughout the integration of AI-MALL. This includes focusing on how classroom dynamics evolve how students negotiate turn-taking,

manage collaborative work, respond to AI feedback, and construct meaningful interactional opportunities.

Overall, the research concentrates on understanding how AI-mediated mobile learning reshapes classroom dynamics and how these dynamics, in turn, influence the development of speaking mastery. By integrating quantitative performance data with qualitative insights into interactional processes, the study aims to produce a comprehensive picture of the pedagogical, social, and technological forces that shape speaking development in AI-enhanced EFL classrooms.

1.3 Scope of The Problem

The scope is restricted to EFL students at senior high school level especially in Explore Class Program of SMA NU 1 Gresik. The researcher focuses on examining the impact of using AI-Integrated MALL on students' speaking mastery and gaining the students' and teachers' perception about the classroom dynamics.

Data are limited to what can be captured through pre and post test and interviews which may be influenced by the participants' willingness to share experiences and by the researcher's interpretive lens. Additionally, the study is bounded by the specific AI-MALL tools available and used in the selected classrooms; therefore, results may not apply to other AI technologies or future advancements in mobile learning tools.

1.4 Research Question

1. What is the impact of using AI-integrated MALL on students' speaking mastery?
2. How do teachers and students perceive the influence of AI-integrated MALL on classroom dynamics within the classroom context?

1.5 Objective of The Research

1. To find the impact of using AI-integrated MALL on students' speaking mastery.
2. To find teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the influence of AI-integrated MALL on classroom dynamics within classrooms context.

1.6 Significance of The Research

This research is theoretically significant for its contribution to a deeper understanding of how AI-integrated MALL interacts with classroom dynamics to influence speaking mastery in the Indonesian EFL context because it provides empirical evidence to extend Walsh's (2013) Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) framework. The study may extend Walsh's model by identifying new interactional contingencies emerging from human–AI–human interaction, such as technology-facilitated scaffolding or shifts in teacher roles, which are not yet fully theorized within traditional CIC perspectives. While previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of AI and mobile technologies in improving learners' pronunciation, fluency, and engagement, few have examined the sociocultural and interactional processes that take place when these tools are embedded within real classroom environments. By adopting a qualitative approach, this study also highlights the nuanced roles of teacher mediation, peer interaction, and learner agency elements that are often overlooked in technology-centric discussions. The findings are expected to enrich existing theories of technology enhanced language learning, particularly by showing how AI-mediated feedback, mobile learning affordances, and classroom social structures collectively shape the development of speaking skills.

Practically, this study offers valuable insights for teachers, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers seeking to implement AI-based mobile learning tools in Indonesian EFL classrooms. The study's outcomes may guide teachers in integrating AI-MALL more effectively by understanding which classroom interaction patterns support or hinder students' speaking development. For curriculum designers and institutions, the findings provide evidence-based considerations for designing speaking activities, selecting AI-enhanced applications, and supporting teacher training that aligns with actual classroom needs. Moreover, the research addresses the unique contextual challenges in Indonesia such as varying levels of digital literacy, infrastructure inequality, and diverse classroom cultures making its results especially relevant for localized policy

development and scalable implementation of AI-integrated mobile learning across schools and higher education settings**.**

1.7 Definition of The Key Term

This section provides the operational definitions of several key terms used in this study to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the thesis.

1. **Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

   Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) refers to the use of mobile technologies such as smartphones, tablets, and portable digital devices to facilitate language learning in both formal and informal contexts. MALL emphasizes mobility, ubiquitous access to learning resources, learner autonomy, and multimodal communication opportunities that extend beyond classroom boundaries. Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) describe MALL as an extension of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) that integrates mobility and learner-centered interaction, while Burston (2015) highlights its growing effectiveness in supporting skills development through portable and personalized learning environments.

2. **AI-Integrated MALL**

   AI-integrated MALL refers to mobile learning environments that incorporate artificial intelligence features such as speech recognition, adaptive feedback, intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and automated pronunciation scoring to provide real-time support tailored to learners' needs. AI and MALL are not treated as separate elements in this study. Instead, they are viewed as a connected and functional relationship. MALL functions as a mobile learning environment that provides a space for learning activities, while AI acts as an intelligent support system within MALL. The integration used in this study is embedded and instructional integration, meaning that AI is directly included in speaking activities used during classroom learning rather than only for self-study, and interacts with students together with the teacher and their peers. Kim, Park, and Warschauer (2022) explain that AI-driven language tools enhance speaking performance by offering immediate, data-driven feedback,

whereas Wang and Chen (2023) argue that AI-enabled mobile apps promote personalized and self-paced language practice. Recent work by Zhou, Hashim, and Sulaiman (2025) also demonstrates that AI-based chatbots can significantly improve learners' speaking confidence and interactional competence.

3. Classroom Dynamics

Classroom dynamics refer to the social, communicative, and interactional processes that shape how learning unfolds within a classroom setting. These dynamics involve teacher student interactions, peer collaboration, participation structures, turn-taking patterns, classroom climate, and the distribution of roles and responsibilities during learning activities. Walsh (2011) emphasizes that classroom interaction is central to constructing learning opportunities through talk, while Mercer (2019) highlights the socio-emotional aspects of classroom relationships that influence engagement and learning behavior. Classroom dynamics in technology-rich environments, including AI-MALL, also determine how effectively such tools are integrated into instructional practices and how learners respond to them.

4. Speaking Mastery

Speaking mastery refers to a learner's ability to produce spoken language that is fluent, accurate, intelligible, and appropriate to the communicative context. It encompasses several linguistic and interactional components such as pronunciation, vocabulary choice, grammatical control, pragmatic awareness, turn-taking ability, and overall communicative effectiveness. According to Luoma (2004), speaking proficiency involves real-time processing and interaction management, while Fulcher (2015) conceptualizes speaking ability as a multidimensional construct that integrates linguistic, functional, and sociolinguistic competencies.

5. Indonesian EFL Context

The Indonesian EFL context refers to the cultural, educational, and institutional environment in which English is learned as a foreign language in

Indonesia. This includes curriculum policies, classroom practices, technological access, teacher readiness, and students' sociolinguistic backgrounds. Hamied (2017) notes that English in Indonesia is positioned as a foreign language with variations in quality and access across regions, while Lamb (2020) highlights the influence of learner motivation and environmental factors on English learning outcomes. More recently, Fadhilah (2023) reports increased adoption of mobile and AI-supported tools in Indonesian classrooms, reflecting growing interest in integrating technology into language education.