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The Effectiveness of Using the HelloTalk Application in Improving English Speaking Fluency: An Experimental Approach at SMAN 1 Pamona Utara

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A B S T R A C T

Eglish is an international language widely used in education, work, and intercultural communication. Speaking fluency is a crucial component of speaking skills because it enables learners to convey ideas smoothly and spontaneously. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of using the HelloTalk application in improving students' English speaking fluency. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving two classes: an experimental group taught using HelloTalk and a control group taught using conventional methods. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test speaking assessments and analyzed using an independent sample t-test. The findings revealed that the mean post-test score of the experimental group (68.5) was higher than that of the control group (62.25), with t-count (5.85) exceeding t-table (2.002), indicating a significant difference. These results suggest that HelloTalk is effective as a learning medium for improving students' English speaking fluency through interactive and authentic communication.

Keywords: *HelloTalk, Speaking Fluency, Learning Media*

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INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is widely used in various aspects of life, ranging from education and the workplace to intercultural communication. In English language skills, the ability to speak fluently is a very important skill because it is the main means of conveying ideas verbally. Compared to other skills such as reading and writing, speaking requires students to think quickly, choose the right vocabulary, pronounce correctly, and respond spontaneously. According to (Hifdil & Hamdani, 2024b), speaking is not only about pronouncing words correctly, but also includes fluency, comprehension, and confidence in conveying messages. (R. Yorlanda & Abbas, 2022) state that speaking is a complex productive skill because it integrates pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension in communication.

According to (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020), fluency in speaking includes speaking speed, sustained fluency, and the ability to respond in a timely manner in interactions. (Bouzid & Yousfi, 2022) state that, despite this, in practice, many students still experience difficulties in achieving fluency in speaking due to limited practice time, fear of making mistakes, and lack of involvement in real communication contexts. This causes students' speaking skills to develop slowly and suboptimally.

Speaking fluency refers to the ability to produce speech smoothly, continuously, and with minimal hesitation. According to (Tavakoli and Wright 2020), fluency is closely related to temporal variables, including speech rate, pause frequency, and pause duration. Learners with higher fluency

tend to speak at a faster rate with fewer and shorter pauses, indicating greater automaticity in language processing.

(Segalowitz 2010) further explains that fluency consists of three dimensions: cognitive fluency, utterance fluency, and perceived fluency. Utterance fluency, which can be directly observed in learners' speech, includes speed of delivery, breakdown fluency (pausing), and repair fluency. In EFL contexts, limited exposure to authentic communication and fear of making mistakes often hinder the development of fluency. Therefore, the use of digital applications that facilitate real-time interaction with native speakers is expected to enhance learners' fluency development.

(Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2020) state that various approaches have been developed to improve students' speaking skills, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), role-playing, speaking games, and the use of technology-based communication applications. One innovative solution that is now increasingly being used is the use of digital applications that connect learners with native speakers, so they can practice speaking directly in a more relaxed, authentic, and contextual environment. Applications such as HelloTalk enable two-way interaction between students and native speakers through a voiceroom feature that greatly supports the development of English fluency. From the various techniques available, the researchers chose HelloTalk because its features and objectives are considered to be in line with the current needs of students, who require direct and relevant practice in communicating in English.

Previous studies have discussed the use of the HelloTalk app in English speaking learning. (Basir & Others, 2024) researched the application of HelloTalk in vocational high schools (SMK) using a qualitative descriptive approach and found that this app is able to create an interactive learning atmosphere and increase student participation in speaking. Research by (Rosilah & Ulfa, 2024) used a case study design on high school students and showed that HelloTalk provides an authentic learning experience, helps improve speaking skills, and encourages students to communicate more actively in English. Meanwhile, (N. Yorlanda & Abbas, 2022), through classroom action research, found that the use of HelloTalk significantly improved students' speaking skills, including fluency and comprehensibility. From these three studies, it can be concluded that HelloTalk contributes positively to improving students' English speaking skills. However, the difference in this study lies in its approach, which uses a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design to measure the effectiveness of HelloTalk in a more measurable way in terms of improving students' fluency and comprehensibility.

This study involved 60 students in grade XI at SMAN 1 Pamona Utara, divided into two groups: 30 students in the experimental class, who were taught using the HelloTalk application, and 30 students in the control class, who were taught using conventional methods. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on their relatively similar English language abilities. The research instrument consisted of speaking tests (pre-test and post-test) to measure students' fluency and comprehension. The assessment referred to (Brown, 2004) rubric to maintain validity and reliability. The research was conducted in three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The experimental group learned using HelloTalk through the Voice Room feature, while the control group learned conventionally. The test results were analyzed using an independent sample t-test to determine the significant differences and effectiveness of using HelloTalk on students' speaking fluency and comprehensibility.

Teaching Speaking

Speaking skills are an important aspect of English language learning because they are directly related to students' ability to communicate. Many students still experience difficulties in speaking fluently due to lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited opportunities to practice (N. Yorlanda & Abbas, 2022). According to (Hifdil & Hamdani, 2024a), speaking is a complex skill that

involves pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehension, thus requiring interactive teaching methods such as a technology-based communicative approach.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to speak smoothly and continuously without many pauses or repetitions (Putri et al., 2021). Minor grammatical errors are still acceptable as long as the message can be understood (Nadra et al., 2023). Factors that influence fluency include language exposure, confidence, and frequency of practice. Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and the use of applications such as HelloTalk have been proven effective in improving student fluency (Kulsum et al., 2023).

Definition of HelloTalk

HelloTalk is a language learning application designed to facilitate language exchange between learners and native speakers. This application allows users to learn naturally through text messages, voice messages, and video calls (Kulsum et al., 2023). According to (Damayanti, 2024), HelloTalk functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a learning medium that helps students improve their speaking skills through direct correction from their conversation partners. With its interactive features, this application provides a more engaging and effective learning experience compared to traditional methods.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the HelloTalk Application

HelloTalk is a Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) application that allows students to interact directly with native speakers to improve their authentic speaking fluency (Damayanti et al., 2024). The main advantage of this application is its ability to improve students' fluency and confidence through spontaneous practice that is not limited by time (Meliana & others, 2025).

However, HelloTalk also has several drawbacks, such as limited paid premium features, difficulty understanding native speakers due to differences in speaking speed and idioms, and the risk of non-academic interactions (Damayanti, 2024). Therefore, teachers need to provide guidance and supervision to ensure that the use of the application remains focused on learning objectives.

Procedures for Implementing HelloTalk in the Classroom

The procedures for implementing HelloTalk in speaking lessons consist of three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, teachers prepare lesson plans and conversation topics according to students' abilities and provide technical guidance on using the app. In the implementation stage, students practice speaking with native speakers or other learners through voice and text messages, while teachers monitor their progress in fluency.

The final stage is evaluation, where teachers assess students' fluency improvement based on aspects of speed, fluency, and ability to convey ideas. In addition, students are also asked to write reflections on their learning experiences to provide a qualitative picture of the effectiveness of using HelloTalk (Anjani et al., 2024).

METHOD

The design of this research will be a quasi-experimental research design. It will involve two classes, namely an experimental class and a control class, both classes were be given a pretest and posttest.

Research Design:

Experimental O1 X O2

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Control O3 X O4

Respondent

According to (Creswell, 2012), a population is a group of individuals who share the same characteristics, while Arikunto (2010) states that a population is the entire subject of a study. In this study, the population consisted of all 64 students in grade XI at SMAN 1 Pamona Utara, with 24 students in class XI A, 20 students in class XI B, and 20 students in class XI C. According to (Creswell, 2012), a population is a group of individuals who share the same characteristics, while (Arikunto, 2010) states that a population is the entire subject of a study. The class distribution can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 The Distribution of the Students

No	Class	Number
1	XI A	24
2	XI B	20
3	XI C	20
	Total	**64**

According to (Sugiyono, 2017), a sample is a portion of a population that has certain characteristics and is used to represent the entire population so that the research results remain valid and can be generalized. The sample of this study consisted of 40 eleventh-grade students of SMAN 1 Pamona Utara in the academic year 2025/2026. The students were aged between 16 and 17 years old. Two intact classes were selected using purposive sampling. Class XI C, consisting of 20 students, was assigned as the experimental group and was taught using the HelloTalk application. Meanwhile, Class XI B, consisting of 20 students, served as the control group and was taught using conventional teaching methods. The groups were formed based on similar English proficiency levels and were taught by the same English teacher.

Instrument

Research instruments refer to the tools used by researchers to collect data from research samples. The research instrument to be used in this study is a speaking test, which consists of a pre-test and a post-test. This test will be used to measure students' speaking fluency. The tests will be administered to the experimental and control groups twice, before the treatment (pre-test) and after the treatment (post-test). The pre-test will be used to measure students' achievement before the treatment, while the post-test will be used to determine whether the HelloTalk application can improve students' fluency in speaking or not.

Table 2 Scoring Rubric

Aspect	Score 1 (very Less)	Score 2 (Less)	Score 3 (Average)	Score 4 (Good)	Score 5 (Excellent)
Fluency	Speaks very haltingly , with many pauses, and is almost incomprehensible	Speak slowly, frequently interrupted, and with many long pauses, making it difficult to follow	Speak somewhat haltingly with fairly frequent pauses, but is still understandable	Speak fairly fluently, with some repetition or .hesitation, but meaning remains clear	Speaks fluently with natural pauses, very little hesitation and no distruption to communication..
Comprehensibility	Speech is almost incomprehensible, communication is almost impossible	Speech is difficult to understand, errors occur frequently, hindering comprehension	Speech is understandable with effort, errors occur frequently and are sometimes confusing.	Speech is generally understandable, there are few errors, but do not interfere with comprehension.	Speech is very easy to understand, pronunciation is clear and does not cause confusion

Adapted from (Brown, 2004)

Table 3 Clasification Score

Classification	Scale	Rating

Excellent	86-100	5
Good	71-85	4
Average	56-70	3
Less	41-55	2
Very Less	26-40	1

Adapted from (Daryanto, 2007)

Procedures

The treatment was given to the experimental class after administering a preliminary test to the students. The content of the treatment was in accordance with the school's existing syllabus, in collaboration with the use of the HelloTalk application as a medium. The meetings were held six times according to the schedule, with each meeting lasting 45 minutes. Below, the researchers present an outline of the teaching for the treatment:

Table 4 Teaching Outlines

Meeting	**Topic**	**Activities**	
		Teacher	**Students**
1st	Pretest	Administering the pretest	Doing the pretest
2nd-5th	Talking about: 1. Digital Literacies and my Identities 2. Love Your Environment 3. Waste Management and Recyling 4. Healthy Life for a Healthy Future 5. Healthy Food and Lifestyle Choices	1. Provide conversation examples related to the topic. 2. Ask students to open HelloTalk and go to the Voice Room feature to practice and try talking with their HelloTalk partners about the topic. 3. Provide brief feedback while students are speaking.	1. Listen to conversation examples provided by teachers according to the topic 2. Practice speaking in Voice Room with HelloTalk partners according to the topic. 3. Listen to feedback from teachers
6th	Posttest	Administering the posttest	Doing the posttest

Data Analysis

In this study, data were analyzed statistically using SPSS version 24. The data came from the pre-test and post-test scores of students' speaking fluency in the experimental and control classes. There were two variables studied in this research, namely the experimental class that used HelloTalk media and the control class that used conventional methods. The analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics. Before testing the hypothesis, the researcher conducted normality and homogeneity tests. If the data met the parametric test requirements, the Independent Sample T-Test was used to test the hypothesis.

The data collected during the trial was analyzed using several basic statistical techniques. To assess the extent of student progress, the researcher applied the t-test formula based on Arikunto (2012:301). This analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results in the control group and the experimental group.

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right)\left[\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right]}}$$

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Data collection was conducted from September 8 to October 2, 2025, at SMAN 1 Pamona Utara. The researcher provided training to students during six meetings using the HelloTalk application, specifically through the Voice Room feature, as a medium for learning to speak English. In this study, the researcher assessed students' speaking skills based on two main aspects, namely fluency and comprehensibility. The aspect of comprehensibility was added as an additional assessment to provide a more comprehensive picture of students' speaking skills.

The Result

The results of this study are presented using descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics through an independent sample t-test to show the significance value.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the first step in analyzing data using SPSS. It provides an overview of the data distribution, including the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. This initial analysis helps the researcher understand the overall variability in students' speaking performance. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of the students' pre-test scores, while Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of the post-test scores.Table 5 Pre -test Results of Experimental and Control Groups

Descriptive Statistic

Class	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation
Pre-Test Experimental	20	50	75	59.375	5.55
Pre-Test Control	20	50	75	59.75	5.58

The descriptive statistics table shows the pre-test scores for both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, consisting of 20 students, had scores ranging from 50 to 75, with a mean of 59.375 and a standard deviation of 5.55. On the other hand, the control group consisted of 20 students, with scores ranging from 50 to 75. This group recorded an average of 59.75 and a standard deviation of 5.58. These results indicate that both groups had similar performance levels on the initial test. The average scores between the experimental and control groups show no significant difference before the treatment was applied. In addition, the standard deviations of both groups are also close, indicating that the spread or variability of scores within both groups is also comparable.

In conclusion, the pre-test data showed that the experimental group and the control group were relatively balanced and equivalent in their fluency of speech.

Table 6 Post -test Results of Experimental and Control Groups

Descriptive Statistic

Class	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Deviation
Post-Test Experimental	20	50	85	68.5	5.77
Post-Test Control	20	50	80	62.25	4.83

Based on the table above, the post-test results show the performance of the experimental class and the control class after the intervention. The experimental class consisted of 20 students, with scores ranging from 50 to 85 and an average score of 68.5. Meanwhile, the control group consisted of 20 students, with scores ranging from 50 to 80 and a lower average score of 62.25. These results show that the experimental class, which was taught using the HelloTalk application, performed better in terms of fluency and comprehensibility compared to the control group, which was taught using conventional methods. The difference in average scores (68.5 vs. 62.25) shows that the treatment had a positive effect on the fluency and comprehensibility of the experimental group. In terms of score consistency, the standard deviation of the experimental group was 5.77, while the control group had a lower standard deviation of 4.83. This means that even though the control group's scores were slightly more consistent, the experimental group still showed higher average performance.

In conclusion, the post-test results show that the use of the HelloTalk application helps improve students' fluency and comprehension more effectively than the conventional method used in the control group.

Table 7 Independent Sample t-test Result

Class	N	Mean	t-count	t-table	Sig (2-tailed)	Result
Experimental	20	68.5	5.85	2.002	0.000	Significant
Control	20	62.25				

The table shows the results of an independent sample t-test conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group after treatment. Based on the calculations, the t-value was 5.85 and the t-table value was 2.002 at a significance level of 0.05 with a degree of freedom (df) = 38. Because the t-count (5.85) is greater than the t-table (2.002) and the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000 < 0.05, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted.

These results indicate that there is a significant difference between the post-test results of students in the experimental group and the control group. In other words, the use of the HelloTalk application has been proven to be effective in improving students' speaking fluency compared to conventional learning methods. The experimental class taught with the help of the HelloTalk application obtained an average score of 68.5, while the control class taught conventionally only achieved an average score of 62.25. This proves that students taught using HelloTalk experienced better improvement in terms of fluency and comprehensibility in speaking English.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the HelloTalk application in improving students' English-speaking fluency and comprehensibility at SMAN 1 Pamona Utara. The results of the data analysis revealed that the experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean score (68.5) than the control group (62.25). In addition, the independent sample t-test showed a significant difference between the two groups with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of the HelloTalk application is effective in improving students' English-speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency and comprehensibility.

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