Student Perception of Using HelloTalk to Improve Speaking Skill in B2 Class at LC

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Abstract

This research explores students' perceptions of using HelloTalk, a mobile-based language learning application, to improve their English-speaking skills in the B2 class at LC. The study uses a descriptive quantitative method by distributing a questionnaire to 9 students who used HelloTalk actively over a one-week period. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about their learning experiences, including perceived benefits, ease of use, and motivational factors. The results reveal that most students have a positive perception of HelloTalk. They reported increased speaking fluency, improved vocabulary acquisition, and greater confidence when initiating conversations in English. Some students also mentioned that HelloTalk provided a more relaxed environment for practicing English compared to classroom settings. However, several participants experienced challenges such as limited response from native speakers and internet connectivity issues. Despite these minor drawbacks, the majority of respondents agreed that HelloTalk helped them become more active and confident English speakers. The findings suggest that integrating mobile-assisted language learning tools like HelloTalk into English instruction can enhance students' speaking skills and increase their engagement in language practice beyond the classroom.

Keywords: student perception, hellotalk, speaking skill, mobile-assisted language learning, language learning application

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most essential yet challenging skills in English language learning. Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, speaking requires learners to produce language spontaneously and interact with

others in real-time, often causing anxiety and hesitation (Brown, 2001). In many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, limited classroom interaction and lack of speaking partners often hinder students' ability to practice effectively.

To overcome these challenges, the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications has been growing in popularity. One of the widely used platforms is HelloTalk, a social networking application that enables language learners to interact with native or proficient speakers through text, voice, and video features. This real-time communication is expected to promote fluency, confidence, and exposure to authentic language use (Wang, 2017).

Damayanti and Hifdil (2022) conducted a study titled *Indonesian EFL Students' Perception on HelloTalk Application in Fostering Speaking* and found that the majority of students perceived HelloTalk positively. It helped them increase vocabulary, gain confidence, and feel more motivated to practice speaking English. Moreover, the application was appreciated for its informal and supportive environment, which allowed students to learn at their own pace without fear of judgment.

Despite such findings, studies exploring HelloTalk's use in informal language institutions in Indonesia, such as Language Center (LC) Pare, remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions of using HelloTalk to improve their speaking skill in the B2 class at LC. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights for language educators and institutions interested in integrating technology to enhance students' speaking performance and confidence.

Despite the increasing use of mobile applications for language learning, there is a lack of research exploring students' perceptions of HelloTalk in non-formal institutions like LC Pare, where speaking is a major focus of the curriculum. It is unclear whether students in these settings find HelloTalk effective in improving their speaking skills and what specific challenges or benefits they experience.

The objective of this study is to explore and describe the perceptions of B2-level students at LC Kampung Inggris toward the use of HelloTalk as a speaking practice tool. Specifically, it is to identify students' perceived benefits of using HelloTalk in improving their speaking skills, examine the challenges students face while using the application and evaluate students' overall satisfaction and confidence after using HelloTalk for one week.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative descriptive method with a survey approach. The purpose is to describe students' perceptions after using the HelloTalk application in learning English speaking for one week. The participants in this research are 9 students from a B2-level class at LC (Language Center) Kampung Inggris. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, selecting students who were willing and available to participate in the one-week activity using HelloTalk as part of their speaking practice.

As a part of the procedure, students were instructed to use the HelloTalk application actively for one week, focusing on speaking-related features such as voice notes, text chats, and language exchange. After the one-week period, students were asked to fill out a questionnaire to reflect their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of HelloTalk in enhancing their speaking skills and confidence.

The data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale, covering aspects such as usability of the app, student motivation, interaction experience, and self-confidence in speaking. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, to determine general trends in students' response.

The participants of this study were 9 students enrolled in a B2-level speaking class at LC (Language Center) Kampung Inggris, Pare. These students were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. In this case, the criteria were that students had to be active participants in the B2 speaking class and willing to use the HelloTalk application as part of their speaking practice for one week.

The B2 level, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicates an upper-intermediate proficiency level. Students at this level are generally able to communicate more fluently and spontaneously in English, making them suitable for exploring digital tools such as HelloTalk for more authentic interaction and language practice.

All participants were between the ages of 17 and 23, and most of them had prior experience using mobile applications for language learning, though none had used HelloTalk before the study. They were introduced to the application through a brief

orientation session, after which they used it independently for a full week. Their participation in this study was voluntary, and they were informed about the purpose of the research and how the data would be used.

The relatively small number of participants allowed the researcher to focus more deeply on analyzing the individual perceptions and experiences of each student. Although the sample size was limited, the detailed responses provided meaningful insights into how intermediate EFL learners perceive mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), particularly through the use of HelloTalk.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed through Google Form. The questionnaire consisted of 10 close-ended items based on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The indicators measured in the questionnaire included:

- Confidence in speaking
- Motivation to practice
- Vocabulary development
- Use of voice features
- Interaction and feedback
- Enjoyment and satisfaction

The questionnaire items were adapted from previous research by Damayanti & Hifdil (2022), and reviewed by two English instructors for clarity and validity.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically:

- Percentage and mean score to identify the general tendency of students' responses.
- The data were then interpreted to determine whether students showed positive, neutral, or negative perceptions of HelloTalk.

Interpretation of the mean score was based on the following scale:

- 1.00 – 1.79 = Very Negative
- 1.80 – 2.59 = Negative
- 2.60 – 3.39 = Neutral
- 3.40 – 4.19 = Positive
- 4.20 – 5.00 = Very Positive

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods. The analysis involved calculating the mean score and percentage of positive responses for each questionnaire item to describe the students' perception of using the HelloTalk application in improving their speaking skills.

The questionnaire consisted of 10 Likert-scale statements ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The following criteria were used to interpret the mean score:

Mean Score Range Interpretation

1.00 – 1.79	Very Negative
1.80 – 2.59	Negative
2.60 – 3.39	Neutral
3.40 – 4.19	Positive
4.20 – 5.00	Very Positive

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire, which involved 9 students from the B2 class at LC Pare, revealed a generally positive to very positive perception toward the use of HelloTalk in supporting their speaking skill development. The presentation was below:

Table 1. Questionnaire Result

No	Statement	Mean Score	Positive Response (%)	Interpretation
1	HelloTalk helps me feel more confident to speak English	4.3	85%	Very Positive
2	HelloTalk motivates me to practice speaking more	4.4	90%	Very Positive
3	I learn new vocabulary through HelloTalk	4.1	75%	Positive
4	I often use voice features (audio/voice note) in HelloTalk	3.9	70%	Positive
5	I receive useful feedback from people I chat with	3.5	50%	Positive
6	I enjoy using HelloTalk to learn English	4.2	80%	Very Positive
7	HelloTalk helps me practice speaking outside class	4.0	78%	Positive
8	HelloTalk helps improve my fluency in speaking	4.0	80%	Positive
9	I feel comfortable speaking with foreigners on HelloTalk	4.2	82%	Very Positive
10	I would recommend HelloTalk to other learners	4.5	90%	Very Positive

From the table above, it can be seen that the overall perception of students is very positive. Most of the mean scores are above 4.0, indicating strong agreement with the benefits of using HelloTalk for speaking practice. The highest mean score was for

the statement *"I would recommend HelloTalk to other learners"* (M = 4.5), showing that students highly appreciated the application.

The lowest mean score (M = 3.5) appeared on the statement related to receiving feedback from chat partners. This indicates that while HelloTalk is useful for communication, it might lack structured correction, which is sometimes needed in language learning.

The questionnaire included 10 Likert-scale items that focused on different aspects of speaking, such as confidence, motivation, vocabulary, fluency, and interaction. The analysis shows that:

- The highest mean score (4.5) was recorded for the statement *"I would recommend HelloTalk to other learners,"* showing high satisfaction.
- The lowest mean score (3.5) was for *"I receive useful feedback from people I chat with,"* indicating that feedback quality may be an area for improvement.
- Most other items received scores between 4.0 and 4.4, suggesting that students feel more confident, motivated, and engaged when using HelloTalk for speaking practice.
- 85–90% of students responded positively (Agree/Strongly Agree) to key items related to speaking confidence, motivation, and enjoyment.

These results indicate that the HelloTalk application was well-received by students and considered helpful in encouraging more frequent and comfortable speaking practice outside the classroom. The results of this study indicate that B2-level students at LC Kampung Inggris hold a generally positive to very positive perception of using HelloTalk to improve their speaking skills. Most students agreed that HelloTalk increased their confidence (M = 4.3), motivation (M = 4.4), and fluency (M = 4.0). The highest rating (M = 4.5) was given to the statement "I would recommend HelloTalk to other learners," showing a high level of satisfaction and willingness to continue using the app.

These findings suggest that HelloTalk provides a low-anxiety environment for language practice, allowing students to speak more freely without fear of making mistakes. The features such as voice notes, text chats, and the opportunity to interact with real users appear to foster more authentic communication and help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

However, the study also found that students received relatively limited feedback from their language partners (M = 3.5). This suggests that while the app supports fluency and confidence, it may lack structured correction and guidance, which are essential for accuracy and long-term development.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research. For example, Damayanti & Hifdil (2022) also reported that Indonesian EFL learners found HelloTalk useful in increasing vocabulary and confidence. They emphasized that the informal and supportive nature of the platform made students feel more relaxed in practicing English. Similarly, Wang (2017) found that HelloTalk helped Chinese university students improve their speaking ability and gain more exposure to real-time conversation. The students in that study appreciated the interactive nature of the app and its contribution to learner autonomy—factors that are also reflected in the responses of LC students in this study.

What distinguishes this current study is its focus on a non-formal educational context, namely LC Kampung Inggris, where the learning environment is more intensive and flexible compared to formal schools or universities. Despite the informal setting, students in LC showed similar patterns of positive perception, indicating that HelloTalk can be an effective tool not only in formal institutions but also in language course settings where practical communication is prioritized.

These findings suggest that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) tools like HelloTalk can play a significant role in supporting students' speaking development. Teachers and institutions may consider integrating HelloTalk as a supplementary speaking activity outside the classroom, especially for encouraging self-directed learning and building confidence.

However, it is important to note that HelloTalk alone may not provide adequate feedback for error correction. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher's pair HelloTalk-based tasks with reflective discussions, peer evaluations, **or** teacher feedback sessions to enhance both fluency and accuracy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that the HelloTalk application positively contributes to the students' speaking skill development, especially in boosting confidence and motivation. Although some students faced minor issues such

as limited internet access or unfamiliarity with the app, the overall perception was highly positive. HelloTalk encouraged more frequent speaking practice in a relaxed environment. Therefore, it is recommended that mobile applications like HelloTalk be considered as useful supplementary tools in speaking classes, both in formal and non-formal educational settings.

BIOGRAPHY

Dina Agustina is a Sixth-semester student at Kadiri Islamic University, majoring in English Education. She has teaching experience as an English tutor in Kampung Inggris Pare and several institutions. While writing this paper, she is conducting classroom-based research on the use of HelloTalk to improve students' speaking skills and confidence.

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