

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the Background of the Study, the Formulation of Research Question, the Purpose of the Study, the Significance of the Study, the Scope and Limitation, and the Definition of Key Term.

A. Background of the Study

English plays an important role in current era of globalization. English is widely used as an international language in many fields such as education, business, technology, and global communication.¹ Therefore, having good English skill is not only an advantage but also a necessity for individual who want to compete in a global environment. Among the four-language skill: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, speaking is considered as an important skill because it reflects the ability to communicate directly, dealing with cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, affective, social, and memory strategies.²

Speaking is activity that deals with both producing and pronouncing words.³ A good speaker is someone who can express their ideas clearly and make the listener understand the message.⁴ Therefore, speaking involves the ability to communicate ideas effectively so that both of the speaker and listeners understand each other. However, many learners still face difficulties in mastering English speaking skills, especially in countries where English is a foreign language. Students often struggle to express their ideas orally due to limited

¹ Muhammad Israfil et al., "EFL Students' Needs in Promoting English Speaking Skills at Lower Secondary School," *International Journal of Research in Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 255, accessed January 25, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.26877/ijre.v4i2.457>.

² *Ibid.*

³ Alfinah Damayanti et al., "Indonesian EFL Students' Perception on Hello Talk Application in Fostering Speaking," *English Language Teaching for English Foreign Language (EFL) Learners (ELTIES)* 6, no. 1 (2024): 19, accessed January 25, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.24252/elties.v6i01.46017>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

fluency and vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and grammatical errors.⁵ In addition, affective factors such as anxiety and a lack of confidence, shyness, lack of motivation, and fear of mistakes also become major barriers in speaking practice.⁶ These problems make students less active and less confident in using English in daily communication.

In formal classroom settings, speaking activities are often limited. Classroom learning remains the primary space for English practice, but classroom time and interaction opportunities can be constrained by curriculum demands, class size, and assessment priorities.⁷ Students usually have a little time to practice speaking and the interaction mostly between teacher and students, not among students themselves. As a result, students do not get enough opportunities to practice real communication. In fact, learning speaking requires regular practice and exposure to authentic language use. The lack of interaction with native speakers or international communities also makes it difficult for learners to improve their speaking ability effectively.⁸

Rapid developments of technology have brought new approaches in language learning, one of which is *mobile-assisted language learning* (MALL). This approach allows learners to study anytime and anywhere using mobile devices such as smartphones.⁹ In current condition, many social media application that also support language learning by connecting users from different countries. These applications provide

⁵ Afifah Afifah, "Struggling to Meet Expectations: Speaking Difficulties and Strategies of EFL Students at Datokrama State Islamic University Palu," *Datokrama English Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2025): 100, accessed on February 11, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.24239/dee.v6i2.140>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Alif Alfian Rizky and Fattah Amal, "Revisiting Indonesia's English Curriculum: Policy Gaps and Classroom Realities," *Jurnal Tahuri* 22, no. 2 (2025), accessed January 25, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.30598/tahurivol22issue2page102-119>.

⁸ Muhammad Israfil et al., "EFL Students' Needs in Promoting English Speaking Skills at Lower Secondary School," *International Journal of Research in Education* 4, no. 2 (2024): 255-256, accessed January 25, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.26877/ijre.v4i2.457>.

⁹ Siti Melasari et al., "Use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) Through the HelloTalk Application in Improving Speaking Skills: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Social and Education (INJOSEDU)* 2, no. 9 (2025): 2666.

opportunities for learners to participating in real communication, practicing various language including English in a more interactive and flexible way.¹⁰

One of the popular social media applications used for language learning is HelloTalk. HelloTalk is used for expanding social network, cultural deepening, learning and exchanging other languages, it developed through an international team based in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China. HelloTalk has a mission to leverage technology to connect global communities through language and culture.¹¹ In line with its slogan “Talk to the World,” this application allows users from many countries to interact with native speakers and learn many languages.¹²

According to the official HelloTalk website, today this application has reached more than 70 million users over 200 countries, with more than 260 languages being used including English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Portuguese, German, Italian, Russian, Arabic, Indonesian, and many more. HelloTalk features including liveclass, pro partner, audio classes, chat & messaging, voice room, live streaming, moments, and collaborative tools such as translation and correction.¹³ All of these features help users practice their language skills in real communication with both native speakers and peer learners.

A unique feature in HelloTalk is the voice room. This feature provides group voice chat rooms to learn a language collectively.¹⁴ These rooms allow users to interact directly

¹⁰ Siti Melasari et al., “Use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) Through the HelloTalk Application in Improving Speaking Skills: A Systematic Literature Review,” *International Journal of Social and Education (INJOSEDU)* 2, no. 9 (2025): 2666.

¹¹ Diyah Trinovita, “Pemanfaatan Aplikasi Hellotalk Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Asing,” *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 5, no. 2 (2025): 424, accessed January 26, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v5i2.2354>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Asep Sunarko, Ameilia Frida Putri Hapsari, and M Zainul Fadil, “Using the Hello Talk Application to Improve the Arabic Language Ability of Early Children,” *Asian Journal of Innovative Research in Social Science* 4, no. 3 (2025): 155-158, accessed January 26, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.53866/ajirss.v4i3.1035>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 155-156

through audio conversation on specific topics chosen by the host. This feature helps users practice listening and speaking, gain confidence, and learn from real-time discussions while communicating directly with multiple users spontaneously.¹⁵ Each user can create their own room and those who want to speak can either request to join or be invited by the host.

The use of voice room feature has several potential benefits for learning speaking. First, it provides more opportunities for learners to practice speaking compared to traditional classroom settings.¹⁶ Second, it allows users to interact with people from different backgrounds, which helps them become familiar with different accents and cultures. Third, the informal learning environment may reduce anxiety and learners' motivation.¹⁷ Therefore, learning through this feature is not only about language knowledge but also about experience and social interaction.

The result of research conducted by Damayanti et al., entitled "*Indonesian EFL Students' Perception on HelloTalk Application in Fostering Speaking*," showed that the HelloTalk application was positively perceived by the sixth semester students of the English Education Department at Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic University as a medium that supports the development of English speaking skills. The participants also expressed satisfaction with the application because its features were considered helpful in facilitating speaking practice¹⁸. In general, previous studies on HelloTalk have mostly discussed the

¹⁵ Asep Sunarko, Ameilia Frida Putri Hapsari, and M Zainul Fadil, "Using the Hello Talk Application to Improve the Arabic Language Ability of Early Children," *Asian Journal of Innovative Research in Social Science* 4, no. 3 (2025): 155-158, accessed January 26, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.53866/ajirss.v4i3.1035>.

¹⁶ Siti Melasari et al., "Use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) Through the HelloTalk Application in Improving Speaking Skills: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Social and Education (INJOSEDU)* 2, no. 9 (2025): 2667.

¹⁷ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982): 164.

¹⁸ Alfinah Damayanti et al., "Indonesian EFL Students' Perception on Hello Talk Application in Fostering Speaking," *English Language Teaching for English Foreign Language (EFL) Learners (ELTIES)* 6, no. 01 (2024): 18-32, accessed on February 11, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.24252/elties.v6i01.46017>.

effectiveness of the application in improving students' speaking, listening, and grammar skills.

In addition, based on preliminary observation conducted by the researcher through participating in four HelloTalk voice room on January 19, 21, 22, and 24, it was found that the interactions within the feature reflected various learning experiences among users. The first observation was conducted in a voice room entitled "Psychology of Human" on January 19. The second observation was conducted on January 21 in voice room entitled "Why you Admire Rebels, Fear Criminals? Both Broke Law." The third observation was conducted on January 22 in voice room entitled "Are we learning or understanding?" The fourth observation was conducted on January 24 in voice room entitled "Role of Women: What do They Bring to the Table?" Through these observations, the researcher found that some users actively participated in discussions and practiced speaking with confidence, while others appeared less active during conversations. The interactions in the voice room also showed that users communicated in different ways depending on the topic, participants, and situation. These conditions indicate that the voice room feature provides diverse experiences for users in practicing English speaking informally.

However, despite the growing use of HelloTalk as a language learning and social media platform, there is still limited research specifically focusing on users' learning experiences within the voice room feature in relation to speaking practice. Previous studies have generally examined HelloTalk as a whole application and mainly focused on its effectiveness in improving language skills. In contrast, this study specifically focuses on the voice room feature as a medium of informal speaking practice. Furthermore, this study aims to investigate the aspects of improvements and difficulties in speaking practice experienced by users through this feature. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a more specific understanding of the dominant users' experiences in speaking practice through voice room interactions in HelloTalk.

B. Formulation of Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the formulations of research question are as follows:

1. What is the level of speaking practice experienced by the users of HelloTalk voice room feature?
2. What factors contribute to the difficulties in speaking practice experienced by the users of HelloTalk voice room?
3. What strategies do the users use to improve their speaking practice through HelloTalk voice room?

C. Objectives of the Study

According to the background and formulation of research question written above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify level of speaking practice experienced by the users of HelloTalk voice room feature;
2. To identify factor that contribute to the difficulties in speaking practice experienced by the users of HelloTalk voice room feature.
3. To investigate the strategies used by users to improve their speaking skills through HelloTalk voice room feature.

D. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical significance

This research is expected to contribute to the development study of English beyond Indonesian EFL learners, especially in the context of technology-based learning and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The results of this study are expected to enrich the understanding of Indonesian users' experiences in speaking practice through the voice room feature on HelloTalk application. In

addition, this research may serve as an academic reference for future researchers who are interested in studying speaking experiences, informal language learning, and the use of voice-based feature in foreign language learning.

2. Practical significance

a. For EFL Learners

This research serves as a reflection and guidance for EFL learners in using the HelloTalk voice room feature for speaking practice. The findings can help learners become more aware of the possible improvements and difficulties they may experience during interaction, as well as encourage them to participate actively in informal English learning environments.

b. For Teachers or Lecturers

The results of this research can be used as a reference in designing and implementing speaking learning activities that integrate digital media and informal learning practices. This study provides insights into how social networking applications may support speaking practice both inside and outside the classroom.

c. For Future Researcher

This study can serve as a reference and foundation for further research related to mobile-assisted language learning, online speaking interaction, or the use of social media applications in EFL contexts. The findings may also encourage future researchers to explore similar platforms with different language skills, or broader research methodologies.

E. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study focuses on improvement and difficulties experienced by Indonesian users when use HelloTalk voice room feature. The participants are limited to Indonesian users aged 18-27 years, choosing English as their learning language on

HelloTalk profiles. This study focuses only on investigating users' experiences when practicing English speaking through the voice room feature. Therefore, other features of the HelloTalk application are not included in this study.

F. Definition of Key Term

1. Learning Experience

Learning experience refers to what learners go through while learning, including the interactions and processes that happen during the activity. In this study, it covers the users' perceived experiences while joining HelloTalk voice rooms for English speaking practice. It is operationalized as the perceived improvements and the difficulties they face.

2. Speaking Practice

Speaking practice is structured and purposeful opportunities to speak designed to improve a person's ability to construct and share messages using spoken communication. It typically involves repeated speaking activities that promote verbal communication while targeting aspects such as fluency, pronunciation, and communicative effectiveness.

3. HelloTalk Voice Room Feature

HelloTalk Voice Room is a feature in the HelloTalk app that enables users to join group voice-chat rooms to learn a language collaboratively. Through live discussions, users can practice speaking and listening with other learners and native speakers, build self-confidence, and connect with native speakers.¹⁹ In this study,

¹⁹ Asep Sunarko, Ameilia Frida Putri Hapsari, and M Zainul Fadil, "Using the Hello Talk Application to Improve the Arabic Language Ability of Early Children," *Asian Journal of Innovative Research in Social Science* 4, no. 3 (2025): 156, accessed January 26, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.53866/ajirss.v4i3.1035>.

it is the main setting where users interact verbally to practice English with other participants.

4. Indonesian Users

Indonesian users refer to HelloTalk users from Indonesia and participate in learning activities using the application and conversation through voice room feature. In this study, they are operationally defined as users aged 18-27 and choosing English as learning language on their HelloTalk profile.