



Efl Secondary Students' Experiences And Challenges In Hellotalk – Assisted Digital Storytelling In Learning Speaking

Olivia Anjani¹, Maman Suryaman², Muhammad Reza Pahlevi³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang

Abstract

Received: 19 Desember 2023

Revised: 02 Januari 2024

Accepted: 09 Januari 2024

This study aims to explore EFL secondary students' experiences and challenges in HelloTalk-assisted digital storytelling in learning speaking. The students will practice using HelloTalk application to complete the digital storytelling activity. It includes choosing topic, gain information, composing script, and delivering stories. This study was using qualitative research with narrative inquiry. In order to uncover the student perspectives and insights in gaining a direct understanding of their experiences and challenges encountered during their practices, this study employed a semi-structured interview. The finding showed that students had positive response on HelloTalk-assisted digital storytelling in speaking classroom. It proven by the participants used HelloTalk actively to practice speaking through DST to trains their speaking practice, and scaffold students' confidence in target language. Nevertheless, there was students that found some difficulties related to their pronunciation and vocabulary. They still have the lack of vocabulary and low pronunciation that make them missed pronunciation when talking with language partners on HelloTalk app. Therefore, it can be said that the result of this study is EFL secondary students had positive response in HelloTalk-assisted digital storytelling in speaking classroom.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, HelloTalk-Assisted Digital Storytelling, Speaking classroom

(* Corresponding Author: anjaniolivia06@gmail.com)

How to Cite: Anjani, O., Suryaman, M., & Pahlevi, M. R. (2024). Efl Secondary Students' Experiences And Challenges In Hellotalk – Assisted Digital Storytelling In Learning Speaking. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10495089>.

INTRODUCTION

In the educational field, speaking is considered a necessary skill among all skills. In line with Nazara (2011, p. 29) mentioned that speaking has been considered as the most important skill to master for various reasons. Firstly, the concepts and methods for teaching speaking have long been central to language education research and conferences. Secondly, there are huge conversations and other speaking books, audios, and videos are constantly being released. Moreover, many students thought speaking competence as a measure of language knowledge. Fluency is defined as the capacity to talk with others, rather than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They consider speaking to be the most important ability they can learn.

Despite being an essential skill, the ability to speak English among English foreign language (EFL) secondary students in Indonesia remains a major concern. Hasan in Larasati, F. (2018, p. 154) reported that students perceived that learning to speak was difficult because it was being taught in an outdated way, where teachers were using traditional methods that emphasized grammar and vocabulary

rather than communication skills. Moreover, Tiwery, & Souisa, (2019, p. 34) found other issues faced by the students were linked to their attitude, specifically their lack of motivation and interest in enhancing their speaking skills.

To address these challenges, digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as promising strategy that can enhance students' speaking proficiency. In line with Al-Amri (2020, p. 270) digital storytelling has the potential to significantly enhance different areas of EFL students' communication skills. As stated by Kallinikou & Nicolaidou (2019, p. 2) language learners can use DST to improve their speaking skills in foreign language using technology to communicate their story in their own words and voices. Emphasized by Reinders (2011, p. 1) how simple DST to utilize for speaking practice and how it may effectively motivates students to use the language both inside and outside of the classroom.

Recent studies have highlighted the potential benefits of DST. For example, Moradi & Chen (2019, p. 7) reported that using DST in language education has several benefits, such as allowing for more creativity in teaching methods, offering greater variety compared to traditional approaches, personalizing the learning experience, creating real-life situations in a simple and meaningful way, and increasing students engagement in the learning process. Moreover, Syafryadin & Salniwati (2019, p. 3150) found that using DST to enhance the speaking skills of 10th grade science students at SMAN 2 Rembang in the 2018/2019 academic year had a significant positive impact, students who used DST achieved a passing grade of at least 70%. In addition, Nair & Yunus (2021, p. 11) concluded that many studies show that creating DST helps students communicate, ask questions, and express their perspectives, which sharpens their speaking skills, also share their work to receive feedback from peers, leading to better collaboration and emotional intelligence.

This study utilizes the HelloTalk Application as a means to facilitate DST in the EFL speaking classroom. HelloTalk is chosen as a platform for several reasons. For example, Yorlanda & Abbas (2022, p. 1) utilizing the HelloTalk application appropriately can enhance learner's speaking proficiency. The app inspires students to expand their vocabulary and enabling them to communicate with foreigners. As result, students have reported that using HelloTalk to learn English is more enjoyable than before. Moreover, Nushi (2018, p. 19) mentioned that HelloTalk provides language learners worldwide with diverse range of appealing functionalities such as voice message, text chat, photo sharing, doodle sharing, smileys, GPS location sharing, and language-specific features like translation, transliteration, and voice recognition to assist learners in improving their writing and speaking skills in their target language.

Despite the potential benefits of DST in language education, there is a lack of research on experiences and challenges faced by EFL secondary students in using DST as a tool for learning speaking. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the experiences and challenges of EFL secondary students in learning to speak using DST with HelloTalk application.

METHOD

This research concerned on narrating EFL secondary students' experiences and challenges in digital storytelling in speaking classroom. This means that it will

be collecting data from participants through their stories or narratives of their practices on using digital storytelling. That is why this present study employed qualitative research with a narrative inquiry design.

In line with Barkhuizen (2013, p. 18) narrative inquiry combines storytelling and research, either by using stories as data or by employing storytelling to analyze data and presenting findings. In addition Polkinghorne (1995) emphasized that “analysis of narratives” as the use of stories as the research data, whereas “narrative analysis” is the use of storytelling as a tool for evaluating data and presenting findings. Moreover, Chase (2005) proposed that narrative inquiry as a flexible and dynamic approach to research that allows researchers to explore the complexity of participants’ experiences in a way that honors the participants’ voices.

Based on the statements above, by using narrative inquiry can help to explore participants’ experiences in students’ own words. Additionally, narrative inquiry provides a rich, in-depth understanding of participants’ experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of Research

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data collected through interview of participants’ experiences and challenges in HelloTalk-assisted DST in speaking classroom. The findings organized according to the themes that have emerged from the analysis process. There are general pattern findings of this study. It consists of sharing stories in voice chat feature trains students to practice with native speaker, composing script in messaging feature scaffold students’ confidence in practice English, and delivering stories challenges students’ pronunciation and vocabulary.

Sharing and creating Stories using Voice Chat Feature Trains Students to Practice with Native Speaker

There are several intriguing findings related to participants’ use of DST in learning speaking. One of the important component is students use HelloTalk application as a tool to assist DST activities. During the interview, the participants explained that they are actively use the HelloTalk application to practice speaking through DST. They added that HelloTalk application allowed them to communicate with native speakers of the target language and obtain direct feedback on the stories they wrote. They also can do the opposite, they can dig some information from the native speakers on HelloTalk than they retell it in the class.

The participants recorded their story narrations using the app’s voice chat feature. They expressed an interest in sharing their stories with native speakers using the voice chat feature on HelloTalk application. This interaction provided them with valuable opportunities to practice with native speakers, receive feedback, improved their pronunciation and fluency. Direct interaction with native speakers played a crucial role in enhancing their speaking skills and building confidence in using English as a means of communication.

Here’s an excerpt from participants during the interview that explain their DST activities using HelloTalk application:

Researcher: In what ways do you practice DST in speaking classes?

P1: I can use HelloTalk to practice storytelling with foreigner.

- P2: I can create a script for my own storytelling by asking friends on HelloTalk according to the topic chosen.
- P3: Using HelloTalk I can tell stories using the voice chat feature. There I can tell stories to native speakers according to the topic chosen. The information provided by the native speaker can also be used to create storytelling scripts to tell in class.
- P4: I choose a topic in the HelloTalk application and ask questions with native speakers then the results I use to create a storytelling script to tell in class.
- P: With the HelloTalk app I can exchange stories with native speakers. That way I can use it in making storytelling scripts and telling stories in front of the class.
- P6: Through the help of HelloTalk I can share my storytelling script with native speakers through the voice chat feature.

The participants proceeded to use the voice recording feature to capture their story narration, which could be shared with native speakers of the target language within the HelloTalk users. The feedback and the information that participants get from the native speakers can help students to create a story to tell in front of the class.

Composing Script in Messaging Feature Scaffold Students' Confidence in Practice English

Among the various advance features offered by the HelloTalk application, the messaging feature stood out as a useful feature for participants to start composing scripts and sharing stories, especially for those who were afraid or feel unconfident to use the voice chat feature. Through the messaging feature, participants found a favorable setting to construct their script and communicate ideas. They could get the interesting information from their language partners to enhance their storytelling scripts.

By engaging DST, the participants expressed the freedom and comfort felt when using the app. They expressed how HelloTalk provide a safe space for practicing speaking and share their digital stories without the fear of making mistakes in front of a huge audience. This sense of privacy allowed participants to explore and experiment with their language skills more confidently. Moreover, connecting with native speakers through the app provided an opportunity to develop cross-cultural friendships.

Students' transcript

Researcher: What are the benefits that digital storytelling presents in learning to speak?

- P1:** I found the messaging feature in HelloTalk extremely helpful for composing my storytelling scripts. I could discuss my ideas and gather the necessary information from native speakers through written messages. This feature allowed me to refine my script and ensure that my storytelling was more engaging and authentic.
- P2:** At first, I felt a bit hesitant to use the voice chat feature, so I turned to the messaging feature in HelloTalk. It provided me with a comfortable space to compose my script at my own pace. I could ask questions and receive

guidance from native speakers through written messages, which helped me develop a well-structured and compelling story.

The excerpts from participants 1 (P1) and 2 (P2) highlight the benefits of using the messaging feature on HelloTalk application to scaffold them in composing storytelling scripts. They found it helpful to discuss ideas with their language partners, gather information, and enhance their scripts. This feature provided a comfortable space for participants during the DST activity. It also build their confidence in creating well-structured and engaging stories. Overall, the messaging feature in HelloTalk played a significant role to scaffold students in DST and creating authentic narratives.

1. Delivering Stories Challenges Students' Pronunciation and Vocabulary

Participants expressed various challenges they encountered while learning speaking through DST assisted by HelloTalk application. These difficulties include speaking skills and the utilization of DST. The main challenging that insists students to have proper pronunciation and vocabulary refers to delivering stories.

Regarding speaking skills, participants mentioned limitations in vocabulary and pronunciation. These problems hidden their progress in developing speaking skills. They will feel unmotivated and lack of confidence.

In terms of DST, participant encountered challenges in adapting HelloTalk's digital support. They needed time to familiarize with the features, and unfortunately some features are required purchase. Although HelloTalk provided participants with communication access with native speakers from various countries, participants struggled to adjust a difference time zone with their language exchange partners on the application. Moreover, the diversity of accents made it difficult for participants to comprehend their conversation partners. The students' challenges is presented at interview transcription as follow:

Researcher: What are your difficulties in creating digital stories in terms of speaking?

P1: When using the HelloTalk app, I wanted to try using the voice chat feature but I was embarrassed and afraid that people who listened to it would not understand because of my wrong pronunciation. So I use the massaging feature.

P2: My English pronunciation is poor, often missed with the language partners on HelloTalk. My vocabulary is still limited.

P3: The difficulty I experienced when storytelling using HelloTalk was due to differences in time zones with native speakers.

P4: I still have difficulty using HelloTalk in learning storytelling in speaking class. I still need adaptation to the features of the feature.

P5: I needed to adapt to the features of HelloTalk, because it seems that there are some features that can only be accessed if subscribed. So I can only use free features to be used in storytelling.

P6: I often get confused by the accent of the native speaker that I am not familiar. However, with the feature to translate voice chat, I can understand what my language partner is talking about.

DISCUSSION

The discussion section aims to explore deeper into the findings presented and provide a comprehensive analysis of the implications and insights derived from the

study. This section will critically examine the themes that emerged from data analysis, discuss their significance in the context of using DST assisted by HelloTalk application from learning speaking. The discussion will explore the connection between the findings, draw comparisons to existing literature, and highlight the unique contributions of this study.

1. Sharing Stories in Voice Chat Features Trains Students to Practice With Native Speaker

The findings shown in the excerpt demonstrate the use of DST assisted by HelloTalk application to assist students in learning speaking. Participants used HelloTalk actively to practice speaking through DST, engage with native speakers, and receive direct feedback on their written stories. They used HelloTalk's voice chat feature to record their stories. It is same with Rivera (2017) mentioned that HelloTalk facilitates language learning and cultural immersion by allowing users to connect and chat with native speakers around the world through various features such as text, voice, audio messages, video chats, and doodles, as well as providing useful tools such as translation and feedback options.

By consistently practicing speaking using voice chat feature on HelloTalk, students can enhance their speaking skills. This interactive feature allows students to converse in real time with native or fluent speakers of the target language, giving them significant practice chances for practicing pronunciation, fluency, and conversational skills. Students can acquire confidence in expressing themselves orally, receive feedback on their pronunciation and grammar, as well as develop a more natural and fluent speaking ability by using the voice chat tool on a regular basis. It is strengthened by Yorlanda & Abbas (2022, P. 131) stated that HelloTalk application assists in the improvement of speaking abilities such as pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

These findings are aligns with the literature that highlight the integrating technology into language learning.

As described by Reinders (2010), DST allow students to convey their stories using technology, incorporating various media to enhance communication and information literacy skills. Moreover, Robin (2016, p. 19) strengthen that DST can be a powerful educational tool for students of all ages. It encourages their creativity and research skills as they create their own stories using various resources like the library and the internet. Through DST, students improve their communication skills by organizing ideas, asking questions, expressing opinions, and creating narratives. Sharing their work with peers helps them develop emotional intelligence, collaboration, and social learning.

This result is consistent with the previous research by Saenboonsong, S., & Poonsawadb, A. (2020, p. 36) where the results revealed that digital storytelling was an appropriate method for boosting their English skills. It is also a method of increasing motivation as students show happiness and excitement while improving and practicing English speaking skills.

2. Composing Script in Messaging Feature Scaffold Students Confidence in Target Language

According to the findings of the interviews, the messaging feature in the HelloTalk application was very helpful in boosting students' confidence in learning English through DST. Participants expressed the advantages of using the messaging

feature to write their storytelling scripts, which enabled them to debate ideas and gain information from native speakers via written communications. This feature provided participants with a safe and encouraging atmosphere in which to create well-structured and interesting stories. It is same with Smeda et al (2014, p. 6) by combining digital media with innovative educational practices, DST can complement a constructivist teaching and learning approach. It serves as a valuable tool in education, allowing for the integration of digital media while also promoting interesting teaching and learning experiences.

By utilizing the messaging feature, participants were able to overcome initial hesitations and fears associated with using the voice chat feature. The messaging feature provided a safe space for participants to work at their own pace, ask questions, and receive guidance from native speakers. This process helped participants refine their scripts and ensure their storytelling was more engaging and authentic. Strengthen by Syafryadin (2019, p. 3148) by incorporating DST, students are provided with a non-threatening avenue to practice spoken English as they have opportunity to edit their spoken text, challenging themselves to improve their proficiency in the language. In addition, they engage in learning software applications and utilize translations tools, allowing them to write their stories in bahasa and translate them into English.

HelloTalk, as a language learning software, contributes to the creation of this environment by allowing students to practice speaking and share their digital stories with native speakers in a private setting. This sense of privacy allows participants to comfortably explore and experiment with their language skills, which can trains students to have a creative thinking and good idea in creating their story narration. It is same with the previous study Yang, et al (2022, p. 1) DST's authentic and relevant learning possibilities for effectively promoting students' development as fluent English speakers and creative thinkers.

This is consistent with prior research by Nair, V., & Md Yunus, M. (2022, p. 1) the study discovered that using digital storytelling improved pupils' speaking skills. It can increase pupils' motivation and curiosity while also increasing their confidence in speaking English.

3. Sharing Stories Challenges Students' Pronunciations and Vocabulary

When utilizing DST with the HelloTalk application to in learning speaking, participants encountered a various challenges. These challenges included limitations of vocabulary, missed pronunciation, difficulties adapting to HelloTalk's capabilities, time zone differences with language exchange partners, and accent variance. It is same with Wahyuni, et al (2017, p. 162) in speaking there are some difficulties. These are: (1) several students were unable to explain their ideas using proper grammar. Some of them made grammar mistakes when introducing themselves, and the majority of the students had a low level of vocabulary mastery. They often repeating the same words when speaking, resulting in ineffective communication. (3) pupil were unable to communicate smoothly; (4) some students still had difficulty pronouncing specific words; and (5) some students described the subject of the speech with low confidence.

It also strengthen by Sosas (2021, p. 967) stated that in speaking, it is normal when students may feel anxious and fear when speaking a foreign language. However, with the technology, teachers can utilize it to facilitate students learning

to speak. Technology is beneficial because it allows students to speak without having to meet the teacher's faces or worry about their preferences, which can make them feel more fearful or hesitant.

It is essential to address student difficulties, teachers can help students by providing support and creating an encouraging environment. In order to maximize the use of digital media in DST activity teachers can give a guidance and monitoring students in adapting the features on HelloTalk. Access to HelloTalk's features should be equitable, considering the financial limitations of some learners. Strengthened by Renandya and Jacobs (2023) claims that demand of the future teacher is incorporating technology in language learning. This issue potentially enhances language learning. Furthermore, speaking requires more practice that mediated by technology.

CONCLUSION

There are various advantages of using DST with HelloTalk in learning speaking. It gives students a platform to create and share digital stories, which improves their speaking practice and language acquisition. HelloTalk provides a secure and comfortable environment for students to practice speaking without the fear of making mistakes in front of a huge audience. HelloTalk's link with native speakers which can give an opportunity to create cross-cultural friendships while also providing possibilities for valuable criticism and support.

However, participants encountered difficulties when utilizing DST and HelloTalk. These issues included limitations of vocabulary, low pronunciation, difficulty adapting to HelloTalk's features, time zone variations with language exchange partners, and difficulty comprehending varied accents.

Finally, the incorporation of DST with the assistance of HelloTalk shows promise for effective language learning and the construction of compelling learning environments in speaking classes. It gives students an innovative platform to improve their speaking skills while also connecting them with native speakers for actual language practice. The findings highlight the significance of assisting students in overcoming obstacles and giving equitable access to HelloTalk's features. Teachers can build a learning environment that encourages fun, confidence, and motivation in speaking by incorporating DST and HelloTalk.

REFERENCES

- Al-Amri, H. M. (2020). Digital Storytelling as a Communicative Language Teaching Based Method in EFL Classrooms. *Arab World English Journal*, 11 (1) 270-281.
- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2013). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.
- Larasati, F. (2018). Student centered learning: an approach to develop speaking skill in EFL classroom. *English Community Journal*, 2(1), 153-157.
- Moradi, H., & Chen, H. (2019). Digital storytelling in language education. *Behavioral Sciences*, 9(12), 147.
- Nair, V., Yunus, M.M. A Systematic Review of Digital Storytelling in Improving Speaking Skills. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 9829.

- Nair, V., & Md Yunus, M. (2022). Using Digital Storytelling to Improve Pupils' Speaking Skills in the Age of COVID 19. *Sustainability*, 14(15), 9215.
- Nazara, S. (2011). Students' perception on EFL speaking skill development. *Journal of English teaching*, 1(1), 28-43.
- Nushi, M., & Makiabadi, H. (2018). HelloTalk: A language exchange app on your smartphone. *Roshd Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 33(2), 16-23.
- Kallinikou, E., & Nicolaidou, I. (2019). Digital storytelling to enhance adults' speaking skills in learning foreign languages: A case study. *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 3(3), 59.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. State University of New York Press.
- Reinders, H. (2011). Digital Storytelling in the Foreign Language Classroom. *ELTWO Journal*. 3. Rivera, A. V. (2017). HelloTalk. *calico journal*, 34(3), 384-392.
- Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2023). Top Ten Characteristics of 21st Century English Language Teachers. In *English Language Teacher Education in Changing Times* (pp. 37-49). Routledge.
- Rivera, A. V. (2017). HelloTalk. *calico journal*, 34(3), 384-392.
- Robin, Bernard. (2016). The Power of Digital Storytelling to Support Teaching and Learning. *Digital Education Review*. 30. 17-29.
- Saenboonsong, S., & Poonsawadb, A. (2020). A Digital Storytelling on Video to Improve English Speaking Skills of Thai EFL Undergraduate Students. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Multidisciplinary Conference on Education, Language and Technology (IMELT 2020)*, Singapore (pp. 005-004).
- Smeda, N., Dakich, E., & Sharda, N. (2014). The effectiveness of digital storytelling in the classrooms: a comprehensive study. *Smart Learning Environments*, 1, 1-21.
- Sosas, R.V. (2021). Technology in teaching speaking and its effects to students learning English. *Journal Smeda, N., Dakich, E., & Sharda, N. (2014). The effectiveness of digital storytelling in the classrooms: a comprehensive study. Smart Learning Environments*, 1, 1-21.
- Sosas, R.V. (2021). Technology in teaching speaking and its effects to students learning English. *Journal*