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Interactive Learning Through Hello English Application

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking remains a challenging aspect of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly for vocational school students who often struggle with limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and low confidence when communicating in English. While mobile language-learning applications have been widely used to support language development, less is known about how learners experience these tools in relation to public speaking development. This study explores the use of the Hello English application as an interactive learning tool for supporting public speaking skills among vocational EFL learners. Adopting a qualitative case study design, the study involved 30 tenth-grade students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung over a four-week implementation period. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed four interconnected themes: developing confidence through repeated practice, expanding vocabulary through interactive learning activities, improving pronunciation through immediate feedback, and strengthening fluency and non-verbal communication. The results suggest that the application contributed not only to linguistic development but also to students' willingness to communicate and participate in speaking activities. The study further highlights the role of mobile learning applications as supportive communicative learning spaces that encourage learner agency, self-directed practice, and meaningful engagement with language. These findings contribute to current discussions on technology-assisted language learning and offer practical insights for integrating digital tools into speaking instruction in vocational EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Hello English Application, Public Speaking Skills, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Vocational EFL Learners, Interactive Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking plays an important role in academic, professional, and everyday communication. Through public speaking, individuals are able to express ideas, share information, and interact with others in meaningful ways. For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), however, speaking in front of an audience is often a demanding task. In addition to producing grammatically accurate language, students are expected to organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, pronounce words clearly, and communicate confidently. As noted by [1], speaking requires learners to combine multiple linguistic and psychological resources at the same time, making it one of the most challenging language skills to develop.

Many EFL learners continue to struggle with speaking despite years of formal English instruction. Difficulties such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence often discourage students from participating actively in speaking activities. As a result, learners may understand English lessons but still feel uncomfortable when required to communicate orally. This situation is particularly common in contexts where classroom learning focuses heavily on textbooks, memorization, and written exercises, while opportunities for meaningful communication remain limited.

The issue is especially relevant in vocational education, where students are expected to develop practical communication skills that will support their future careers. In many professional settings, the ability to communicate confidently in English is increasingly valued. However, observations at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung revealed that many students still experience difficulties when speaking English in front of others. They often hesitate to express their

ideas, rely heavily on prepared scripts, and show limited confidence during presentations and classroom speaking activities. Similar challenges have also been reported in other Indonesian EFL contexts, where students' speaking proficiency is often constrained by limited exposure to authentic communication and insufficient opportunities to practice speaking regularly [2].

In recent years, educational technology has offered new possibilities for supporting language learning. Mobile applications, online platforms, and other digital resources allow students to learn beyond the classroom and practice language skills more independently. The growing popularity of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) reflects a broader shift toward more flexible and learner-centered approaches to language education. Through digital tools, learners can access learning materials at their own pace, receive immediate feedback, and engage in repeated practice that may not always be possible during classroom instruction.

Research has shown that digital technologies can support language learning in various ways. [3], for example, found that AI-generated summaries helped students comprehend complex texts by providing accessible learning support and encouraging independent learning. Similarly, [4] reported that Indonesian EFL students frequently use digital technologies to support self-directed language learning. These studies suggest that technology can play an important role in creating additional learning opportunities and helping learners become more actively involved in their own learning process.

At the same time, recent studies have emphasized that language learning is not simply a matter of mastering grammar and vocabulary. Learners often draw on multiple linguistic resources, modes of communication, and learning strategies as they make meaning and interact with others. [5] found that translanguaging and multimodal learning practices enhanced students' enjoyment and language development by creating more engaging learning experiences. Likewise, [6] reported that students viewed translanguaging positively because it enabled them to use all available linguistic resources while learning English. Together, these studies highlight the importance of creating learning environments that are supportive, flexible, and responsive to learners' needs.

One digital learning tool that has attracted growing attention is the Hello English application. Designed specifically for language learners, the application provides a range of interactive features, including vocabulary exercises, pronunciation practice, grammar lessons, conversation activities, and speech recognition technology. These features allow learners to practice English in ways that are more interactive and personalized than traditional classroom activities. According to [7], the application supports vocabulary development and encourages learners to practice English more frequently both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, digital platforms may provide a less intimidating environment for speaking practice, allowing students to learn from mistakes and build confidence gradually (Madzlan et al., 2020).

Previous studies have reported positive outcomes associated with the use of Hello English. [8] found improvements in students' pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension after using the application. Similarly, [9] reported that the application contributed positively to students' speaking development and classroom engagement. While these studies demonstrate the educational potential of Hello English, most have focused primarily on measurable improvements in language performance [10]. Comparatively little attention has been given to how students experience the application during the learning process and how it may contribute to broader aspects of public speaking development, such as confidence, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary growth, and non-verbal communication [11].

Recent work in applied linguistics has also highlighted the importance of confidence, agency, and participation in language learning. [12] as well as [13] showed that successful language users often develop resilience and communicative confidence despite linguistic limitations. These findings suggest that becoming an effective language user involves more than acquiring linguistic knowledge; it also involves developing the confidence and willingness to communicate in real situations. Nevertheless, limited research has explored how mobile language-learning applications may support these dimensions of speaking development, particularly among vocational school students in Indonesia.

To address this gap, the present study explores the use of the Hello English application as a learning tool for developing public speaking skills among vocational EFL learners. Rather than focusing solely on language achievement, this study examines students' experiences and perceptions of using the application, with particular attention to confidence, vocabulary development, pronunciation, fluency, and non-verbal communication. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to current discussions on technology-assisted language learning and provide practical insights for teachers interested in integrating digital tools into speaking instruction.

1) How do vocational EFL students perceive the use of the Hello English application in developing their public speaking skills?
2) In what ways does the Hello English application contribute to students' confidence, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, fluency, and non-verbal communication?

2. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore how students experienced the use of the Hello English application in developing their public speaking skills. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study sought to understand students' perspectives, experiences, and learning processes in depth rather than measuring learning outcomes statistically. The case study design allowed the researchers to examine the implementation of the application within a specific educational setting and to gain a detailed understanding of students' speaking development during the learning process.

The study was conducted at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung and involved 30 tenth-grade students. The participants were selected purposively because they shared similar characteristics relevant to the study. Most of them had basic English proficiency but continued to experience difficulties in speaking English, particularly in terms of confidence, vocabulary use, pronunciation, and oral presentation skills. These challenges made them suitable participants for investigating the potential contribution of a digital language-learning application to speaking development.

The implementation of the Hello English application took place over four weeks. During this period, students were encouraged to use the application regularly both during classroom activities and in their own time. The application provided various interactive features, including vocabulary exercises, pronunciation practice, speaking simulations, and conversation-based activities. Classroom speaking tasks were designed to complement these activities and provide students with opportunities to apply what they had learned through the application in more authentic communicative situations.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and reflections after using the application. Questions focused on how the application influenced their confidence, vocabulary development, pronunciation, speaking fluency, and overall public speaking experience. To allow students to express their thoughts more freely, the interviews were conducted in Indonesian and later translated into English for analysis.

Classroom observations were carried out during speaking activities throughout the implementation period. Particular attention was given to students' participation, confidence, interaction patterns, and speaking performance. Observation notes were used to document changes in students' behavior and engagement as they interacted with the application and participated in classroom speaking tasks.

To strengthen the credibility of the findings, data from interviews and observations were compared and interpreted together. This process made it possible to examine students' experiences from different perspectives and to identify recurring patterns across the data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following [14]. The researchers first read the interview transcripts and observation notes several times to become familiar with the data. Relevant segments were then coded and grouped into broader categories. Through an iterative process of reviewing and refining these categories, several themes emerged that captured students' experiences of using the Hello English application. The final themes focused on the development of confidence, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, speaking fluency, and non-verbal communication in public speaking activities.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews revealed that students generally perceived the Hello English application as a helpful and engaging tool for developing their public speaking skills. Across the data, four interconnected themes emerged: (1) developing confidence through repeated practice, (2) expanding vocabulary through interactive learning activities, (3) improving pronunciation through immediate feedback, and (4) strengthening fluency and non-verbal communication during speaking performances.

To provide an overview of the findings, Table 1 presents the major themes identified from the thematic analysis together with supporting evidence from both interviews and classroom observations.

Table 1. Emergent Themes and Supporting Evidence

Theme	Evidence from Interviews	Observation Findings
Developing Confidence Through Repeated Practice	Students reported feeling less anxious and more willing to speak after repeated practice.	Increased participation and willingness to volunteer during speaking activities.
Expanding Vocabulary Through Interactive Learning Activities	Students reported learning and using new vocabulary more frequently.	Students used more varied vocabulary during presentations and discussions.
Improving Pronunciation Through Immediate Feedback	Students valued instant correction and pronunciation guidance.	Clearer pronunciation and greater awareness of pronunciation accuracy were observed.
Strengthening Fluency and Non-Verbal Communication	Students reported becoming less dependent on written scripts and more aware of gestures and eye contact.	Students demonstrated more natural delivery, audience engagement, and communicative presence.

Table 1 provides an overview of the four major themes that emerged from the analysis of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Taken together, the findings suggest that students experienced the Hello English application not merely as a tool for learning English but as a supportive environment that facilitated their participation in public speaking activities. The themes reveal that students' development extended beyond linguistic improvement and involved changes in confidence, communication behaviors, and engagement with speaking tasks.

The first theme, *Developing Confidence Through Repeated Practice*, highlights the importance of repeated exposure to speaking activities. Interview data indicated that students gradually became less anxious and more willing to communicate after practicing independently through the

application. These perceptions were supported by classroom observations, which showed increased participation and a greater willingness to volunteer during speaking activities. This pattern suggests that confidence was not developed instantly but emerged through a gradual process of repeated practice and familiarization with speaking tasks.

The second theme, *Expanding Vocabulary Through Interactive Learning Activities*, demonstrates the role of the application in supporting students' lexical development. Students frequently reported learning new vocabulary and becoming more comfortable using English words in communication. Classroom observations further revealed that students incorporated a wider range of vocabulary during presentations and discussions. The consistency between interview responses and observation data suggests that vocabulary learning was closely connected to opportunities for meaningful language use rather than simple memorization.

The third theme, *Improving Pronunciation Through Immediate Feedback*, emphasizes the value of the application's pronunciation and speech-recognition features. Students appreciated receiving immediate correction and guidance, which enabled them to identify pronunciation problems independently and practice repeatedly until they felt satisfied with their performance. Observation data similarly indicated noticeable improvements in pronunciation clarity and students' awareness of pronunciation accuracy. This finding suggests that timely feedback played an important role in supporting students' speaking development.

Finally, the theme *Strengthening Fluency and Non-Verbal Communication* reveals that students' development extended beyond verbal language production. Interview responses showed that students became less dependent on written scripts and more aware of communicative elements such as eye contact, gestures, and body posture. These perceptions were reinforced by classroom observations, which documented more natural speech delivery, stronger audience engagement, and increased communicative presence during presentations. This finding indicates that students gradually began to view public speaking as a communicative performance involving both verbal and non-verbal resources.

The themes presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the contribution of the Hello English application was multidimensional. Rather than affecting a single aspect of speaking ability, the application appeared to support interconnected areas of development, including confidence, vocabulary use, pronunciation, fluency, and communicative awareness. These themes provide the foundation for the more detailed discussion presented in the following sections.

In addition, representative excerpts from participant interviews are presented in Table 2 to illustrate students' experiences more directly.

Table 2. Representative Students' Perceptions of the Hello English Application

Participant	Representative Statement
S1	"The app made learning fun, and now speaking in front of others feels easier."
S2	"I like how the app tells me right away if I mispronounce a word. I don't have to wait for the teacher to correct me."
S3	"The pronunciation exercises showed me exactly where I was making mistakes."
S4	"I can practice as much as I want before speaking in front of the class."
S5	"Now I try to use gestures and maintain eye contact when speaking."
S6	"I can now speak without looking at my paper."
S7	"I use more interesting words and feel more confident when speaking."
S8	"I could practice pronunciation until I got it right."
S9	"I can express myself better not only through words but also through gestures."

Table 2 presents representative excerpts from participants' interview responses and provides further insight into how students experienced the use of the Hello English application during the study. Although each statement reflects an individual experience, several common patterns can be observed across the participants' responses.

First, many students emphasized the role of the application in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence when speaking English. Statements from S1 and S4 indicate that the opportunity to practice repeatedly before speaking in front of classmates helped students feel more prepared and less fearful of making mistakes. These responses suggest that confidence was developed gradually through repeated exposure to speaking tasks rather than through direct instruction alone.

Second, several participants highlighted the value of immediate feedback, particularly regarding pronunciation. Responses from S2, S3, and S8 demonstrate that students appreciated receiving instant correction and guidance from the application. Rather than depending entirely on teacher feedback, they were able to identify pronunciation errors independently and continue practicing until they achieved greater accuracy. This indicates that the feedback features played an important role in supporting students' self-monitoring and learning autonomy.

Third, the interview excerpts reveal that vocabulary development contributed directly to students' speaking confidence. For example, S7 reported using a wider range of vocabulary and feeling more confident during speaking activities. This finding suggests that vocabulary learning was closely linked to students' ability to express ideas and participate more actively in communication. As students expanded their lexical resources, they also appeared to become more comfortable engaging in public speaking tasks.

Finally, several participants referred to improvements in fluency and non-verbal communication. Statements from S5, S6, and S9 indicate that students became less dependent on written scripts and more aware of communicative elements such as eye contact, gestures, and audience engagement. These responses suggest that students increasingly viewed public speaking as a communicative performance involving both verbal and non-verbal resources rather than simply producing grammatically correct sentences.

Taken together, the responses presented in Table 2 illustrate that students' experiences of using the Hello English application extended beyond language accuracy alone. Their perceptions reflect a broader process of communicative development involving confidence, vocabulary growth, pronunciation awareness, fluency, and audience engagement. These recurring patterns provide further support for the four themes identified in Table 1 and form the basis for the detailed discussion presented in the following sections.

3.1 Developing Confidence Through Repeated Practice

One of the most noticeable changes observed during the implementation of the Hello English application was the development of students' confidence in speaking English. Before the intervention, many participants described public speaking as an intimidating activity. They frequently expressed concerns about making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing words, or receiving negative reactions from classmates. Classroom observations conducted during the early stages of the study showed that many students appeared reluctant to speak voluntarily. Several students spoke softly, avoided eye contact, and relied heavily on written notes when presenting.

As students became familiar with the application, however, these behaviors gradually changed. The opportunity to practice independently and repeatedly appeared to reduce the pressure often associated with classroom speaking activities. Students appreciated being able to repeat speaking exercises multiple times before presenting in front of others. This sense of preparation helped them approach speaking tasks with greater confidence.

One student explained:

"I was nervous at first, but the application made learning more enjoyable and less stressful. I could practice my pronunciation repeatedly until I felt more confident." (S1)

This finding suggests that repeated practice created a sense of security that enabled students to engage more actively in speaking activities. Rather than avoiding mistakes, students gradually became more willing to take risks and participate in communication. Observation notes also

indicated that students who were initially passive became increasingly willing to volunteer during discussions and presentations.

Another participant stated:

"I was afraid of making mistakes, but with this app, I can practice as much as I want before speaking in front of the class." (S4)

These findings indicate that confidence was developed gradually through repeated exposure to speaking tasks and opportunities for self-paced practice.

3.2 Expanding Vocabulary Through Interactive Learning Activities

Vocabulary development emerged as another important theme. Many students reported that one of their biggest challenges in speaking English was finding the right words to express their ideas. As a result, they often produced very short responses or relied on simple and repetitive vocabulary.

The interactive vocabulary activities available in the application appeared to help address this issue. Students described the vocabulary exercises as enjoyable and engaging, particularly because they were presented in a game-like format. Unlike traditional vocabulary memorization activities, the application encouraged repeated interaction with words through different tasks and challenges.

One participant explained:

"The vocabulary games were very interesting, and they helped me remember new words easily. I often practiced outside the classroom because the activities were enjoyable." (S2)

Another student noted:

"I noticed I was using more interesting words in my speeches, and I felt more confident when speaking." (S7)

Classroom observations supported these perceptions. During later speaking activities, students appeared more capable of elaborating on their ideas and expressing themselves with greater detail. Compared with their initial performances, they relied less on repetitive vocabulary and demonstrated a broader range of lexical choices. These findings suggest that vocabulary learning became closely connected to communicative use rather than functioning as a separate memorization activity.

3.3 Improving Pronunciation Through Immediate Feedback

Pronunciation improvement constituted the third major theme identified in the data. Before using the application, many students reported uncertainty about whether they were pronouncing English words correctly. Although teachers occasionally corrected pronunciation errors, students explained that feedback was not always immediate and therefore did not always support independent improvement.

The pronunciation and speech recognition features of the application appeared to play an important role in addressing this challenge. Students consistently highlighted the value of receiving immediate feedback after completing speaking exercises. The ability to identify mistakes instantly allowed learners to revise and improve their pronunciation independently.

One participant stated:

"I like how the app tells me right away if I mispronounce a word. I don't have to wait for the teacher to correct me, and that helps me learn faster." (S2)

Another student remarked:

"The pronunciation exercises showed me exactly where I was making mistakes, and I can now speak more clearly." (S3)

Similarly, another participant explained:

"The pronunciation exercises helped me hear the correct sounds, and I could practice until I got it right." (S8)

Observation data further demonstrated that students became increasingly willing to speak aloud and experiment with unfamiliar vocabulary. By the end of the study, pronunciation was generally clearer and more intelligible, particularly during presentations and role-play activities.

3.4 Strengthening Fluency and Non-Verbal Communication

The final theme concerned students' development of fluency and non-verbal communication skills. Initially, many students depended heavily on written scripts and frequently paused during presentations. Their attention was often directed toward remembering words rather than communicating effectively with the audience.

As students engaged in speaking simulations and communicative tasks through the application, they gradually became more comfortable speaking spontaneously. They appeared less dependent on written notes and more capable of maintaining the flow of communication.

One participant commented:

"At first, I always had to read what I wrote, but now I can speak without looking at my paper. I feel more fluent." (S6)

An equally important development involved students' awareness of non-verbal communication. Throughout the implementation period, students became increasingly conscious of posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact.

One participant reflected:

"I never realized how important it was to stand up straight and use my hands when I spoke. Now, I try to look at my friends while speaking, and I think it makes me sound more convincing." (S5)

Another participant stated:

"I have learned to stand up straight and make eye contact with the audience. I feel like I can express myself better now, not only with words but also with gestures." (S9)

Observation notes confirmed these developments. Students appeared more relaxed, more expressive, and more engaged with their audience during presentations. Their communication increasingly involved both verbal and non-verbal resources, resulting in more effective and natural speaking performances.

3.5 Challenges During Implementation

Despite the generally positive experiences reported by participants, several challenges emerged during the implementation process. The most common difficulties involved unstable internet connectivity and limited access to mobile devices outside school. Some students were unable to practice consistently at home because they shared devices with family members or experienced connectivity problems.

Nevertheless, these challenges did not appear to reduce students' overall engagement with the application. Teacher support and classroom guidance helped students overcome technological barriers and maintain participation throughout the study.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Hello English application contributed to students' public speaking development in multiple ways. Beyond supporting vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation improvement, the application also helped students develop confidence, fluency, audience awareness, and greater willingness to participate in English communication.

3.6 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Hello English application contributed to students' public speaking development in ways that extend beyond improvements in linguistic performance alone. While previous studies have largely emphasized measurable gains in speaking achievement, the present findings suggest that the application also influenced affective, interactional, and communicative dimensions of speaking. Students reported becoming more confident, more willing to participate in speaking activities, and more capable of expressing ideas in front of an audience. These findings highlight the importance of viewing speaking development not merely as the acquisition of linguistic knowledge but as a broader process involving confidence, participation, and communicative engagement.

One of the most prominent findings was the reduction of speaking anxiety and the development of greater confidence. Many participants initially described speaking English as an intimidating experience because they feared making mistakes or being negatively evaluated by their peers. However, the opportunity to practice repeatedly in a private and supportive environment appeared to reduce this anxiety over time. Rather than immediately performing in front of classmates, students were able to rehearse, experiment, and improve their performance independently before engaging in public speaking activities.

This finding resonates with Ramadani and Dharmawan (2025), who found that increased exposure to English communication opportunities contributed to greater speaking confidence among Indonesian learners. The present study similarly suggests that confidence develops not only through formal instruction but also through repeated opportunities to use language in low-risk environments. In this sense, the application functioned as a bridge between individual practice and public performance. Students gradually became more willing to communicate because they felt better prepared and more capable of managing speaking challenges.

The findings also support recent discussions in applied linguistics concerning learner agency and communicative participation. Ali, Prasatyo, and Dharmawan (2025), as well as Ali, Sugiharto, and Manara (2025), argue that successful language users often develop resilience despite linguistic limitations. The experiences of students in this study reflect a similar process. Improvement did not occur because students suddenly achieved perfect linguistic competence; rather, they became increasingly willing to participate despite imperfections in their English. This suggests that confidence itself may be an important component of communicative competence and should be viewed as an integral part of speaking development.

A second important finding concerns vocabulary development. Students consistently reported that the gamified vocabulary activities encouraged them to learn and use new words more frequently. Unlike conventional vocabulary learning, which is often associated with memorization, the application presented vocabulary in an interactive format that students perceived as enjoyable and meaningful. As students expanded their vocabulary repertoire, they also reported feeling more capable of expressing ideas during speaking tasks.

This finding aligns with [15], who demonstrated that meaningful and interactive learning activities can facilitate language development by increasing student engagement and active participation. The present study suggests that vocabulary growth was not simply the result of exposure to new lexical items but emerged through repeated interaction with language in communicative contexts. Students did not learn vocabulary solely for assessment purposes; rather, they learned vocabulary because it enabled them to communicate more effectively. This relationship between vocabulary knowledge and communicative confidence appeared throughout the data and became one of the key mechanisms through which speaking performance improved.

Another significant finding relates to pronunciation development through immediate feedback. Students consistently identified the speech recognition and pronunciation correction features as among the most beneficial aspects of the application. The ability to receive instant feedback allowed learners to recognize mistakes independently and make adjustments without

waiting for teacher intervention. This process encouraged greater self-monitoring and fostered a stronger sense of responsibility for learning.

This finding can be understood through the concept of digital scaffolding. Mustafa and Dharmawan (2026) demonstrated that technology can support language learning by providing learners with immediate and accessible assistance that helps them perform beyond their current level of competence. Although their study focused on reading comprehension, the underlying principle is equally relevant to speaking development. In the present study, pronunciation feedback functioned as a form of scaffold that guided learners toward more accurate language production. Rather than relying exclusively on teacher correction, students were able to engage in a cycle of practice, feedback, and revision that promoted more independent learning.

The findings also reveal that speaking development involved more than linguistic improvement. Students described becoming increasingly aware of non-verbal communication, including eye contact, posture, gestures, and audience engagement. This is a particularly important finding because public speaking is inherently multimodal. Effective speakers communicate not only through words but also through bodily actions, facial expressions, and other semiotic resources that contribute to meaning making.

This observation is consistent with Hidayati et al. (2024), who found that multimodal learning environments enhance students' language learning experiences by allowing them to utilize multiple communicative resources simultaneously. Although the Hello English application primarily focuses on language practice, the speaking activities it facilitated encouraged students to pay greater attention to how messages were delivered. As a result, students began to view speaking as a communicative performance rather than merely the production of grammatically correct sentences. This shift is significant because it reflects a broader understanding of communication that extends beyond traditional language-learning objectives.

The findings can also be interpreted through the lens of translanguaging-oriented perspectives on language learning. Recent studies have increasingly challenged the assumption that language learning involves the exclusive use of a target language. Instead, learners draw upon diverse linguistic and semiotic resources when constructing meaning and participating in communication (Cahyanti & Dharmawan, 2025; Hidayati et al., 2024). While translanguaging was not the primary focus of the present study, students frequently described how the application enabled them to move between familiar and unfamiliar linguistic resources as they developed speaking confidence. This suggests that digital learning environments may provide flexible spaces where learners can experiment with language, negotiate meaning, and gradually expand their communicative repertoires.

Another contribution of this study concerns the relationship between technology and communicative language teaching. The findings indicate that the Hello English application complemented rather than replaced classroom instruction. The application provided opportunities for individual practice, while classroom activities allowed students to apply their learning in authentic communicative situations. This combination reflects the central principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize meaningful interaction, learner participation, and the practical use of language. Students were not simply learning vocabulary or grammar in isolation; they were using language to communicate ideas, express opinions, and interact with others.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the value of the Hello English application lies not only in its technological features but also in its ability to create a supportive communicative environment. The application encouraged students to practice more frequently, reflect on their performance, and engage more actively in speaking activities. Consequently, speaking development emerged as a multidimensional process involving linguistic growth, increased confidence, learner agency, and communicative participation.

Nevertheless, several challenges remained. Limited internet access and unequal access to digital devices affected some students' opportunities for independent practice. These findings

remind us that the effectiveness of educational technology is shaped not only by pedagogical design but also by broader issues of technological access and infrastructure. Furthermore, students continued to rely on teacher support, particularly during the early stages of implementation. This suggests that digital applications are most effective when integrated into a supportive instructional environment rather than being used as stand-alone learning tools.

Overall, this study contributes to current discussions on technology-assisted language learning by demonstrating that mobile language-learning applications can support public speaking development in multiple ways. More importantly, the findings suggest that speaking development should be understood as a communicative and social process involving confidence, participation, and learner agency, rather than as a purely linguistic achievement. Such a perspective broadens our understanding of how digital technologies can support language learning in vocational education and highlights the importance of creating learning environments that empower students to become active and confident communicators.

CONCLUSION

This study explored vocational EFL students' experiences of using the Hello English application to support the development of public speaking skills. The findings suggest that the application was perceived positively by students and contributed to multiple aspects of speaking development, including confidence, vocabulary growth, pronunciation improvement, speaking fluency, and non-verbal communication. More importantly, students did not view the application merely as a tool for practicing English; rather, they experienced it as a supportive learning space that allowed them to rehearse, experiment with language, and gradually become more comfortable communicating in English.

The findings indicate that speaking development involves more than linguistic improvement alone. While students reported gains in vocabulary and pronunciation, the most meaningful changes were often related to increased confidence, willingness to communicate, and active participation in speaking activities. This suggests that public speaking should be understood as a multidimensional process that combines linguistic, affective, and interactional elements. From this perspective, successful speaking instruction is not only concerned with helping learners produce accurate language but also with creating conditions that enable them to participate confidently in communication.

The study also contributes to current discussions on technology-assisted language learning by demonstrating how mobile learning applications can function as communicative learning spaces rather than simply digital learning tools. The Hello English application provided opportunities for repeated practice, immediate feedback, and self-paced learning, allowing students to take a more active role in their own development. In this respect, the findings support growing arguments within applied linguistics that learner agency, confidence, and communicative participation are central dimensions of language learning.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that integrating mobile learning applications into speaking instruction can complement classroom-based learning and provide additional opportunities for practice beyond limited classroom hours. Rather than replacing teachers, digital applications may serve as supportive resources that extend communicative practice and encourage greater learner engagement. Teachers may therefore consider incorporating interactive digital tools as part of a broader communicative approach to speaking instruction, particularly in vocational education contexts where practical communication skills are highly valued.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. This study was conducted within a single vocational school and involved a relatively small number of participants. In addition, the implementation period was limited to four weeks, which may not fully capture longer-term changes in students' speaking development. Future research may examine the use of mobile language-learning applications across different educational settings, involve larger participant groups, and

investigate how sustained use of digital learning tools influences learners' communicative competence over time.

Overall, this study suggests that the value of the Hello English application extends beyond improving speaking performance. By creating opportunities for meaningful practice, reflection, and participation, the application helped students become more confident and engaged language users. These findings reinforce the importance of viewing technology not simply as a delivery tool for language content, but as a resource that can support learners' development as active and capable communicators.

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