

USING THE HELLO TALK APPLICATION TO IMPROVE THE ARABIC LANGUAGE ABILITY OF EARLY CHILDREN

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the hello talk application helps users develop Arabic language skills, both in the aspects of listening, speaking, reading, or writing. And provide advice to Arabic language learners in utilizing this application optimally in order to improve their abilities, especially among the younger generation who are familiar with technology. The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive in which data is obtained using indirect interview techniques through research instruments in the form of guided interview questions to users of the hello talk application who are learning Arabic. And data analysis is done with several stages according to Miles and Huberman. The results showed that the use of the hello talk application for Arabic language learning showed significant potential, especially in reading, writing and speaking skills.

Keywords: Technology, Hello Talk, skills

1. Introduction

The need to master foreign languages, especially Arabic, is increasing, both for academic, professional, and personal purposes. HelloTalk has emerged as a practical solution for learning languages directly with native speakers from various parts of the world. HelloTalk was founded by Zachary Ngai in 2012. Ngai's vision was to create a language learning platform that would enable people from various countries to interact directly with native speakers through digital technology.

created HelloTalk with a focus on natural and contextual language learning methods, closer to real-world experiences. With interactive features such as voice, text, and video messaging, HelloTalk is designed to help users practice language directly in everyday situations, thereby improving their language skills quickly and efficiently.

HelloTalk combines text chat, voice messaging, video calling, and tools like instant translation and auto-correction, simplifying the process of language learning in real-world contexts. In an era of globalization, this application provides users with the opportunity to not only learn a language but also understand the culture associated with it directly from native speakers. Through HelloTalk, language learning becomes more dynamic, flexible, and relevant in the ever-evolving digital age.

Advances in information technology have paved the way for Arabic learners and speakers to utilize various digital platforms to easily access information, communicate, and learn Arabic. Language learning apps, social media, and automatic translation tools are now widely available in Arabic, making it easier for those who want to learn or communicate with Arabic speakers.

Language is a vital component of our lives, serving as a tool for human interaction and understanding. Language skills are crucial for mediation and understanding, which in turn helps overcome various learning challenges. Over time, confidence in Arabic has increased, and it has become one of the languages that must be mastered, along with Indonesian (Mudinillah et al., 2022).

Language allows a person to express their thoughts and feelings to others. It is a tool humans use to interact with each other. There are several different perspectives on how people view Arabic learners. Because Arabic is considered a tool for studying holy books, some believe it is a religious language.

Arabic is highly sought after in many countries, including Indonesia. One reason to learn Arabic is to understand the various fields within the Arabic language and the Quran. Seeing the importance of learning Arabic, parents and communities begin teaching their children Arabic from a young age because they understand its importance. (Putri, 2019)

Information technology has impacted almost all aspects of life, including education, particularly language learning. Language typically serves as a means of communication because it conveys messages from one person to another. Language is increasingly used to communicate about technology, culture, and other fields of research in the era of globalization. Many children learn Arabic and English due to the rapid development of foreign languages.

Nowadays, those who choose to learn and deepen their knowledge of Arabic are considered outdated, as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) teach Arabic only to teachers (*ustadz*) and female teachers (*ustadzah*). The national education system prioritizes general education over the Arabic language learning process. This results in underdevelopment and lagging behind in Arabic language learning. It is hoped that the development of Arabic language learning will improve due to increasingly sophisticated technology and media. (Mudinillah et al., 2022)

One linguistic factor that makes learning Arabic difficult is the differences in detail compared to other languages in the world. This presents a challenge for learners, although some see this as an advantage of Arabic, whose uniqueness lies in its detail and interesting structure. Thus, while this complexity can be challenging, many people still acknowledge that this uniqueness contributes to the appeal of learning Arabic. (Suib, 2022)

The importance of learning Arabic through the HelloTalk app is increasingly apparent in the modern era, especially with the need to understand cultures, literature, and religions that primarily use Arabic. Arabic, spoken by over 400 million speakers and recognized as an official language in over 20 countries, offers significant opportunities for anyone looking to broaden their horizons and improve their global communication skills.

The app's features allow users to practice conversations, receive live corrections, and experience how Arabic is used in everyday life. Furthermore, the app simplifies learning with translation support, auto-correction, and other tools that facilitate a smooth learning process. Therefore, learning Arabic through HelloTalk can provide a deeper understanding of both the language and culture, which is essential for becoming part of the global community.

The benefits of utilizing media in learning include helping individuals learn Arabic. Improve Speaking Skills. Users can practice conversations directly with native speakers, which helps improve their speaking skills and understanding of Arabic culture. By learning new vocabulary through everyday conversations, users can enrich their Arabic vocabulary, both in formal and informal contexts. Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the Hello Talk app helps users develop their Arabic language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also provides advice to Arabic learners on how to optimally utilize this app to improve their skills, especially among the younger generation who are familiar with technology.

2. Theoretical Review

Most people have access to the internet. However, its use has not been optimized for more productive

purposes, such as enhancing Arabic language learning. Smartphones are technological tools that support Arabic language learning, including the use of various interactive applications to improve language skills. (Suhendar, 2022, p. 243)

One way to maximize smartphone use is to use them for Arabic language learning. There are now many smartphone applications that can facilitate Arabic language learning, both paid and free. However, these applications remain underutilized and rarely known to the general public, especially among students, as the popularity of many social media programs and online games makes these learning programs less competitive. (Suhendar, 2022, p. 243)

HelloTalk claims to be the best language learning application. HelloTalk has a 4.5 rating on the Google Play Store. Released on December 16, 2013, HelloTalk is an application created by the dedicated international language team of HelloTalk, Inc. headquartered in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China. This application combines the concept of online language exchange with social networking, where users can connect with native speakers who act as both teachers and learners. HelloTalk supports various types of foreign language learning, including Arabic. This application can be used for Arabic language learning because it allows learners to communicate directly with native speakers, providing opportunities for feedback that can improve language skills. With supporting features such as dictionaries, translation tools, and more, HelloTalk learning allows users to consult directly with native speakers. HelloTalk is expected to support foreign language learners in gaining language knowledge outside the classroom without being limited by space and time. (Imanina & Palupi, 2023, p. 198)

Arabic is one of the Central Semitic languages, belonging to the Semitic language family and related to Hebrew and Neo-Arabic. Arabic has the largest number of speakers compared to other languages in the Semitic family. More than 280 million people speak this language as their mother tongue, with the majority living in North Africa and the Middle East. (Suryaningrat, 2018, p. 19)

The HelloTalk app has great potential to improve Arabic language skills through an interactive and practical approach. Using the principles of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), users can connect directly with native speakers or fellow Arabic learners. This interaction creates an authentic learning experience, where users can practice speaking, writing, and listening skills in real-life situations. The live correction feature from a learning partner also helps users understand errors and improve their language use effectively. (Imanina & Palupi, 2023, pp. 197–198)

In the context of Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, HelloTalk enables learners to move from their current ability zone to their maximum potential through interactions with more advanced learning partners. App features such as text, voice, and video support a multimodal learning approach, allowing users to learn Arabic in a variety of ways that suit their learning style. Meanwhile, the gamification elements in this application, such as rewards and achievements, increase learners' motivation to continue practicing and mastering new skills. (Salsabila, 2024, p. 822)

However, HelloTalk's impact on improving Arabic language skills depends heavily on user consistency. This application is optimally used as a complement to formal learning, as it provides opportunities to apply Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory in everyday conversation. By utilizing its interactive features, users not only improve their technical Arabic skills but also understand the cultural and social contexts inherent in the language. (Hakim, 2016, p. 231)

3. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach. The results are descriptive in nature and emphasize the analysis and understanding of individual or group behavior. The goal is to analyze the developments occurring in these individuals or groups (Mudinillah et al., 2022). The type of research used in this study is a descriptive method,

where data collected consists of words, images, and behavior, rather than numbers. Therefore, this study will present a description of the collected data. As explained above, the focus of this study is to examine the impact of Hello Talk app usage on Arabic language skills.

Data collection was conducted using indirect interviews, obtained using a research instrument in the form of interview guides with Hello Talk app users who are learning Arabic. The interviews were conducted via WhatsApp. After conducting the interviews, data sources were obtained in the form of chat conversations between the researcher and Hello Talk app users. According to Miles and Huberman, data analysis is carried out in several stages. First, the data obtained is reduced. Next, the data is presented by grouping it into several categories. Finally, data verification is carried out if the conclusions resulting from the inductive analysis are still temporary. (Sugiyono 2006, qualitative method book & d)

4. Results and Discussion

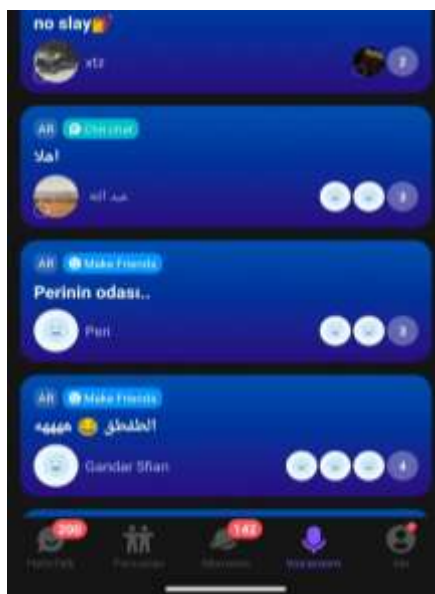
Introduction to the Hello Talk Application

In today's digital era, information technology has brought significant changes to language learning methods, including Arabic. One prominent application in this area is HelloTalk, which allows users to interact directly with native speakers through a language exchange platform. With over 50 million members worldwide, HelloTalk serves not only as a language learning app but also as a social media platform that connects people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

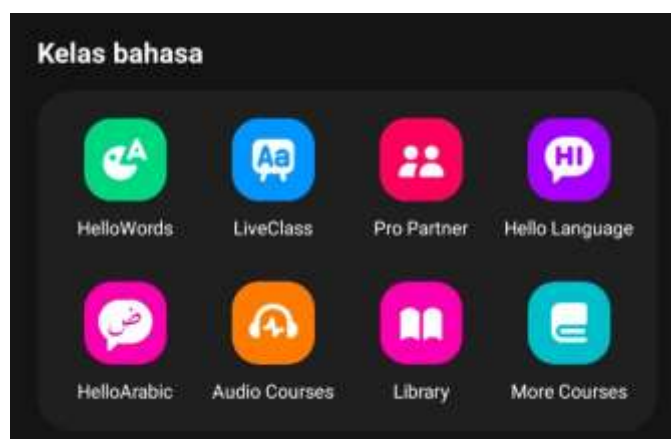
Using HelloTalk in Arabic learning makes it easy for users to practice speaking, listening, and understanding the cultural context underlying the language. Through features like text chat, voice, and video calls, users can communicate in real time with native speakers who are ready to assist them in their learning process. Furthermore, the application is equipped with tools such as live translation and grammar correction, which are very useful for beginners improving their Arabic language skills. Here are some of the HelloTalk application features that we describe:



HelloTalk's text chat feature allows you to send messages in Arabic using partner autocorrection and live translation. If errors occur, partners can correct the text directly, helping learners understand their mistakes. Voice notes allow you to send and receive voice recordings, helping you practice pronunciation and hear native accents. The text-to-speech feature converts text to speech, helping users learn correct pronunciation. Partners can also provide pronunciation feedback via voice messages, helping learners speak more accurately.



The Voice Room feature in HelloTalk allows users to join group voice chat rooms to learn the language collectively. In Voice Rooms, users can practice speaking and listening to Arabic with many learners and native speakers. Here are some of the main functions of this feature: learning from live discussions, practicing listening and speaking skills, increasing self-confidence, and connecting directly with native speakers. This Voice Room feature is suitable for practicing maharah istima' (listening skills) and maharah kalam (speaking skills).



In the language class feature in the hello talk application, there are several features in it, namely helloword, liveclass, pro partner, hello language, helloarabic, audio courses, library, one of the main features is hello word, which is useful for adding new vocabulary through structured exercises.

Analysis results

The results of the study with HelloTalk app users will be discussed and analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the HelloTalk app for learning Arabic. Intensity of HelloTalk use

Regular use of the HelloTalk app demonstrates the informant's seriousness in the language learning process. By opening the app almost daily, users create consistent study habits, which are crucial in language learning. The varying duration, depending on how comfortable they are with their study partners, demonstrates the importance of social interaction in language learning. According to the computer-mediated communication (CMC) perspective, longer, quality interactions can strengthen users' motivation to continue learning and practicing, as well as foster better interpersonal relationships with native speakers.

a. Completing a HelloTalk profile

The informant immediately completed their profile and set learning goals. A complete profile helps other users understand who they are and increases opportunities to connect with native speakers and fellow learners with similar interests. Afterward, the informant explored the app's features. By reviewing various features, such as text chat and voice conversations, they were able to choose the most appropriate method for practicing Arabic. Finding users who speak Arabic is a strategic move because direct interaction with native speakers provides a more authentic learning experience. Therefore, using HelloTalk as a learning tool is not only about learning vocabulary or grammar, but also about building social connections that support the overall learning process.

b. Chat and Correction Features in HelloTalk

Regarding frequently used features in the HelloTalk application, several key points can be analyzed. Informants mentioned that they typically use the chat and correction features. The chat feature makes it easier for users to communicate directly with native speakers, which is also an important part of the language learning process. Through chat, users can practice writing and improve their grammar. Furthermore, the translation feature helps users understand the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases, thus facilitating communication and accelerating the learning process.

Informants who frequently use this feature revealed that direct communication with native speakers helps them practice writing and correct grammatical errors in real time. Although informants feel less confident using the voice room feature due to limited vocabulary, the feature still provides an opportunity to practice speaking. This difficulty is often faced by language learners, where awkwardness can hinder speaking skills. Overall, these findings indicate that HelloTalk functions not only as a language learning tool but also as a social platform that encourages interaction and cultural exchange, enhancing users' learning experience.

c. Arabic learning progress on HelloTalk

Informants' statements while using the HelloTalk application indicate positive developments in several aspects, including vocabulary mastery, speaking ability, and writing skills. The "Hello Word" feature helped them expand their vocabulary, which is a crucial element in language learning. This vocabulary improvement enabled them to communicate more effectively and broaden their understanding of Arabic.

Furthermore, the use of the voice room also contributed to the informants' increased confidence in speaking. Although still in the learning stage, informants expressed greater confidence when speaking, demonstrating significant progress in their speaking skills. The experience of interacting directly with native speakers through this feature helped reduce the awkwardness often experienced by language learners. Furthermore, informants' writing skills also improved, as evidenced by their mastery of Arabic script through the chat feature. This shows that written interaction not only improves grammar but also helps users recognize and understand written structures in Arabic.

d. Platform and User Limitations

Despite several HelloTalk features that assist users in the language learning process, HelloTalk also faces challenges experienced by informants. HelloTalk has a membership system that differentiates between regular and VIP accounts. Regular accounts are free, while VIP accounts are paid. One of these is the paid Hello Language feature.

The obstacles faced by informants in learning Arabic through the HelloTalk application also

pose a challenge for foreign language learners. Difficulty understanding different accents and dialects among Arabic speakers demonstrates the complexities.

5. Conclusion

The use of the Hello Talk app for Arabic language learning shows significant potential, but it also faces several challenges. These include the difficulty understanding the diverse accents and dialects of native speakers and Arabic grammar. Furthermore, the challenge of finding active study partners also reduces opportunities for regular practice. Limited access to paid features also hinders users' ability to utilize available learning tools.

While Hello Talk offers a variety of interactive features such as chat, voice rooms, and other tools, social support and consistency are also essential in the Arabic language learning process. To maximize the learning experience, users need to build stronger social connections and find ways to increase community engagement. Therefore, Hello Talk can be an effective tool for learning Arabic if users can overcome these challenges and make optimal use of its features.

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