

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is a foreign language in Indonesia; thus, most EFL learners there will probably struggle a little when asked to speak English. One of the burning issues in English education today is the persistent gap between classroom instruction and real-life communication needs, especially in speaking skills. Although students may learn English for years, many still lack confidence and fluency in actual conversations. Ratnasari (2020), stated that speaking is the hardest skill because it requires a lot of practice because learners need to express their ideas orally. This reflects a growing need for accessible, practical tools that support speaking practice beyond traditional settings, one of which is the Hallo application, an English learning platform designed to improve learners' speaking skills.

Hallo application is one of the English language learning applications that has artificial intelligence (AI) as a component. Cristy et al. (2022) stated speaking skills have increased dramatically for learners due to the Hallo application. Similar to Cristy, Le Thi et al. (2023) stated in his study that using Hallo greatly increased learners' ability to speak English and allowed them to engage with people better. Hallo application has been used by several learners since 2022 until now. It is used as their English language learning medium. Hallo helps them to improve their speaking and be more confident to speak and socialize with people. Based on that phenomenon, the researcher wants to explore how she perceived the usefulness of the Hallo application and what makes her continue using it.

Several researchers have studied the topic of the Hallo application for English language learning; among others are Cristy et al. (2022), who stated that using Hallo as an English learning resource has significantly improved learners' speaking abilities. Furthermore, Huda (2023) stated that the Hallo application is useful as an educational tool in senior high school and helps learners to improve their speaking skills.

Based on the findings of previous studies, our current study focuses on depicting a phenomenon as performed by a participant who uses the Hallo application in her English language acquisition. She said the Hallo app improved her learning performance, vocabulary, and speaking. As a result of the phenomenon, this study is being conducted to gather more information about the perceived usefulness of using Hallo in her English language learning through a qualitative study titled Perceived Usefulness of the Hallo Application in English Language Learning: EFL Learner's Perception.

B. Formulation of the Problem

How is the EFL learner's perceived usefulness of using the Hallo application in her English learning?

C. Operational Definitions

To prevent misunderstandings regarding the terminology used in this study, the researcher provides the following definitions:

1. EFL Learners : EFL learners are English language learners who use the Hallo application as the medium to learn and practice their English.
2. Perceived of usefulness : Perceived usefulness is the degree to which someone feels that Hallo application can help learner perform better at learning English enhancement.
3. Hallo Application : Hallo application is an application that has several features used in learning English, such as word introduction, role play, and online classes.

D. Aim of the Research

This research aims to find out how the EFL learner perceived the usefulness of the Hallo application as the medium to learn English.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Uses : This study supports the concept of perceived usefulness from Davis (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), showing that learners view Hallo as beneficial for improving vocabulary, fluency, and confidence in real learning contexts.
2. Practical Uses : This study is practically beneficial for English teachers, EFL learners, and educational app developers. Teachers may consider integrating tools like Hallo to support speaking activities outside classroom. Learners can use this study as a reference in selecting apps that suit their speaking practice needs in a flexible and interactive manner. App developers may also gain insight into which features users find genuinely useful for language learning.
3. Empirical Uses : This study provides empirical insight into an EFL learner's experience with the Hallo application. Through interviews, it demonstrates how the Hallo application supports vocabulary development, speaking fluency, and learner confidence. These findings offer factual data on the effective use of mobile-based platforms in supporting speaking practice, especially in informal or self-directed learning contexts.