The Comparative Study between Speak Pal and Fully Fluent Application toward Students' Speaking Skill

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Abstract: This study aims to compare two mobile applications, Speak Pal and Fully Fluent, to evaluate their benefits towards EFL learners' speaking skills. Speak Pal connects users with native speakers worldwide, offering real-time conversation practice with various accents and dialects. Meanwhile, Fully Fluent utilizes an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tutor, "Fifi," to simulate native-speaker interactions, providing personalized feedback and practice across multiple languages. Moreover, this research employed qualitative descriptive techniques, involving observation and interviews with postgraduate student at the Islamic State University in Banten. Participants engaged in conversations using both applications to assess their fluency, comfort, and confidence. The findings reveal that Speak Pal offers more authentic interactions but can be challenging due to accent variability and limited free usage time. Fully Fluent, though less natural due to AI's robotic tone, supports users with text and audio aids, role-play scenarios, and adaptive learning paths, It is also often hindered by frequent advertisements in the free version. The study concludes that both applications have unique strengths and weaknesses. Speak Pal excels in providing real human interaction, which is crucial for advanced learners, while Fully Fluent offers structured practice and instant feedback, beneficial for building foundational speaking skills.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan dua aplikasi seluler, Speak Pal dan Fully Fluent, untuk mengevaluasi manfaatnya terhadap keterampilan berbicara pelajar EFL. Speak Pal menghubungkan pengguna dengan penutur asli di seluruh dunia, menawarkan latihan percakapan waktu nyata dengan berbagai aksen dan dialek. Sementara itu, Fully Fluent menggunakan tutor Kecerdasan Buatan (AI), "Fifi," untuk mensimulasikan interaksi penutur asli, memberikan umpan balik dan latihan yang dipersonalisasi dalam berbagai bahasa. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggunakan teknik deskriptif kualitatif, yang melibatkan observasi dan wawancara dengan mahasiswa pascasarjana di Universitas Islam Negeri Banten. Peserta terlibat dalam percakapan menggunakan kedua aplikasi untuk menilai kelancaran, kenyamanan, dan kepercayaan diri mereka. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa Speak Pal menawarkan interaksi yang lebih autentik tetapi dapat menjadi tantangan karena variabilitas aksen dan waktu penggunaan gratis yang terbatas. Fully Fluent, meskipun kurang alami karena nada robotik AI, mendukung pengguna dengan bantuan teks dan audio, skenario permainan peran, dan jalur pembelajaran adaptif. Aplikasi ini juga sering terhalang oleh iklan yang sering muncul dalam versi gratis. Studi tersebut menyimpulkan bahwa kedua aplikasi tersebut memiliki kekuatan dan kelemahan yang unik. Speak Pal unggul dalam menyediakan interaksi manusia nyata, yang sangat penting bagi pelajar tingkat lanjut, sementara Fully Fluent menawarkan latihan terstruktur dan umpan balik instan, yang bermanfaat untuk membangun keterampilan berbicara dasar.

Introduction

English as the international language has become a lingua franca in many countries. It has the role of communication in many sectors including education, business, medicine, engineering, advanced studies, tourism, banking, technology, computing, etc. Moreover, the existence of software development today enables us to access the available internet for communication. In addition, a variety of websites and applications are all carried out in English. As a result, English has an essential role and it is taught around the world as a second language nowadays (Kadamovna, 2021). Therefore, people are required to have good fluency in speaking to achieve the goal of communication.

In career growth, the ability to deliver ideas and arguments fluently in oral communication is very crucial as English become the most common language in the corporate world. Therefore, good communication skills including presentation skills, negotiation, and interpersonal skills using English are needed as important employability skills (Pawar, 2022). Not only speaking, good listening comprehension will support a good quality of communication. These skills have an effective role in building direct interaction and keeping the flow of conversation. As a result, speaking and listening become the core of language learning (Athoillah, 2022). In more detail, the capability of speaking skills can be measured by the information that the speaking partner can understand. This capability can motivate students to improve their speaking skills as one of the most important skills in language. In short, speaking can be defined as a skill to convey someone's ideas to other people through oral communication (Tekin et al., 2022).

Furthermore, English as a foreign language is a medium to connect with people from other regions all over the world. To enable us to conduct good communication with them, the opportunity to speak with a native speaker is greatly meaningful. This opportunity brings significant benefits such as improving the daily expression, vocabulary, phrases, and idioms in real-life conversation. From the authentic conversation, English learner will get the opportunity to expand their useful vocabulary and phrases that probably not be taught classically in the textbook. This insight enables students to adapt in various communicative situations with a native speaker. Besides, interaction with a native speaker in real-life oral communication has a positive influence on improving learners' listening comprehension. By communicating with them, English learner can examine their brain to understand the content of speech. This way can help them not only become a good speaker in conveying ideas but also good listeners in understanding the point of conversation and responding to the speaking partners (Riski, 2023).

Meanwhile, related to the previous research, Many EFL learner still struggle with their English, have low capability, and a lack of confidence in speaking skills (Permana et al., 2021). This problem become a barrier in English conversation. Moreover, Handayani stated that speaking is one of the most stressful processes in

language skills, due to the way of conveying ideas directly. It can effect the anxiety in learner's communication skills. (Handayani et al., 2020)

Based on the problem above, Athoillah (2022) stated that the teacher can help English learners by applying Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as a learning media in the classroom. Learning a target language especially English by using a mobile application has become popular. The applications that are connected to the smartphone help English learners to be more independent in the study. Therefore, they will find it easier to get exposure and immerse their selves in English content. In addition, several mobile applications provide quizzes, interesting material, and speaking partners for them. This technique will improve learners' engagement in learning English, especially in building interaction with other people (Athoillah, 2022).

In this case, language learner needs to change the perspective that they stand as an English speaker, not an English learner. Then, in real conversation, native speakers probably speak very fast, and students will never understand exactly what they will say. If students only focus on grammar and translation in their brains, they will break the flow of conversation. Unfortunately, Hoge (2014) stated that the first and most obvious problem that he found in language learning at school was the way that the teacher used it. Most of the teachers frequently used the grammar-translation method. Like its' name, this method only focused on the translation and grammatical structure. Hence, students tend to analyze the grammar of sentences and memorize the vocabulary (Hoge, 2014).

As pointed out by Thornton and Houser, it is believed that the existence of mobile learning devices and applications programmed for such devices can help expand opportunities for exposure and practice in language learning and/or teaching contexts (Thornton & Houser, 2005). This problem encourages students to be more independent in practicing their English capability and not only rely on the English material that is taught in the classroom. In more detail, English learning is not only the learning of language skills but also the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence. The cultural environment has an important influence on the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence. While a positive cultural environment helps to improve learners' intercultural communicative competence and cultural sensitivity, it can also give them opportunities to communicate and collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds and enable them to recognize and respect cultural differences (Zhang, 2023).

In addition, nowadays, in the second language (L2) teaching method, many teachers have been implemented technological innovations. For instance, the implementation of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has developed in teaching a target language and it tends to be preferred in certain circumstances when compared to traditional learning such as textbook-based language learning and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (Nushi & Askarian, 2021). In MALL, educational tasks typically include repeated practice, instant feedback, and interactive exercises that adhere to behaviorist principles. For instance, language-learning applications commonly employ drill-and-practice activities, which reflect behaviorist

strategies by rewarding correct answers through repetition and positive reinforcement. This approach effectively aids learners in acquiring new language elements and vocabulary, similar to how behaviorist methods encourage desired behaviors (Alzieni, 2024).

The mobile device can offer "the personal assistant" to its user. Moreover, in learning another language, the language learner need a constant and immediate access to one or more people who are always willing and supporting the learner in the process of learning, practicing and communicating with the language (Ally et al., 2016). Mobile learning, also known as learning through mobile devices and wireless communication, is education or training using ICT that is customized, measurable, adaptable, personalized, self-directed, and collaborative. The proliferation of mobile devices has led to the emergence of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), a specialized field focused on integrating mobile technology into language learning. MALL represents an innovative approach to language education, utilizing handheld devices like smartphones, tablets, MP3/MP4 players, and personal digital assistants to enrich the learning experience (Aliakbari & Mardani, 2022).

In this globalization era, people are provided by various kinds of platform to help them in improving their English capability, such as HelloTalk, Italki, OmeTv, free4talk.com, etc. These platforms enable people to be connected with foreigners from many countries. This way becomes the opportunity for EFL learners in practicing their English in oral communication. There are many studies about the benefits of these kinds of platforms towards ELF learners' capability, such as:

Firstly, Speak Pal application has the positive effects in developing the intercultural communicative skill, intercultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness (Emecen & Saricoban, 2023). Then, Suryanto and Fitrawan (2023), stated that their study about utilizing OmeTv as one of the platforms that provides EFL learners to connect with foreigners. From the result he stated that OmeTv has a positive influence toward learners' speaking skill due to the supportive and entertaining environment for English exposure. It can be seen from the enthusiasm and engagement from learners in communicating with their speaking partners. They meet with the respectful speaking partner and get the insight about useful phrase, daily expression and grammatical knowledge (Suryanto & Fitrawan, 2023). Another study was conducted by Lestari et al (2023). In their study, the researchers revealed that Free4talk.com, which the website that can connect learners with native speaker has effective role in creating a good fluency in English speaking skill. This platform give the opportunity to train peoples' critical thinking, speaking ability and listening comprehension. Moreover, this platform also boost their bravery and confidence (Lestari et al., 2023).

On the other hand, the advanced technology use AI (Artificial Intelligence) as the personal assistant for EFL learners, such as ELSA Speak, Babbel, FluentU, Interpals, etc. This advance technology enables educational websites and applications to provide the supportive environments. They stand out in increasing self-directed learning engagement among students when it allows them to improve their own speaking skills

and have their work corrected by AI rather than waiting for criticism and adjustments from teachers (Hùng Cường, 2024).

Furthermore, the potential of artificial intelligence to mimic human intelligence has allowed it to grow significantly in recent years and become ingrained in many facets of life. AI is being investigated as a potentially useful tool in education to help and improve language acquisition, especially in the area of communication skills development. Artificial intelligence (AI) presents the possibility of customized, interactive, and adaptable learning environments that meet the requirements and preferences of specific students. Through practice opportunities, chatbots, real-time feedback, and AI-based interactive platforms have been found to improve learners' fluency and engagement in spoken English. It has been demonstrated that adaptive learning technologies using AI algorithms may tailor language training to each learner's needs and enable customized learning experiences (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023).

In fact, AI has been significantly used in the field of education and there are many researchers who interested on exploring AI technology in language learning (Bennett, 2003). The first previous study stated that the implementation of AI in English learning process has the positive impact towards students' speaking ability. It can improve their enthusiasm and motivation for learning English (Abraham et al., 2024). Moreover, other study showed the positive impact from students' interactive activities. Then, the result showed the social network based interaction and it was effectively improved their speaking ability in AI context. In addition, the quantitative data showed that the participant got the significantly higher score in the post-test. It was supported by participants' strong belief that AI apps can help EFL learner to develop various skills, including oral fluency, grammatical structure, intonation, idea organizational skill, and another speaking aspects (Zou et al., 2023).

It was in line with the study result from Rumiyanto et al. Their study stated that AI integration in language learning environments encourages learner autonomy by giving students the freedom to practice on their own, access resources, and get feedback. Then, AI-powered systems provide adaptive tests and tailored learning paths based on the interests, progress, and learning styles of users (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023).
In short, there are various studies about website and application towards students' speaking skill. To fill this gap, the researcher focuses on comparing between Speak Pal Application and the Fully Fluent Application.

Then, the researcher formulates two research questions about these two applications, including:
1. What are the different features between the Speak Pal application and the Fully Fluent application?
2. What are the differences in EFL learners' speaking performance when using the Speak Pal application compared to the Fully Fluent application?

Research Methodology

This study was carried out using a qualitative descriptive methodology. According to Brumfit and Mitchell, descriptive qualitative is a technique to find reliable and precise data from current practice through observation and interviews (Brumfit, 1988).

In more detail, the qualitative approach is a research methodology that is founded on post-positivism theory and it is used to observe the object's natural condition. In this study, the researcher takes on the role of the instrument and is responsible for gathering data through interviews and observations (Sugiyono, 2013). Qualitative research results prioritize meaning in depth over-generalization. As a result, the researcher used the descriptive method to investigate: First, the comparison between Speak Pal application and the Fully-Fluent application. Second, to investigate the difference between AI tools and real native speakers as the speaking partner in oral communication.

1. Research Instruments

In this research, there are some instruments used by the researcher as follows:

a. Observation

In the observation process, the participant tried to have several conversations with the speaking partner by using the Speaking Pal application and Fully Fluent Application. The participant can feel the different vibe between conversations with the real foreigner through Speaking Pal and conversations with AI tool through Fully Fluent Application. Furthermore, the researcher observed directly by using both applications to find another perception after using the applications.

b. Interview

To emphasize the data, the researcher interviewed the secondary data. In the interview, the researcher gave some questions about the participant's impression of the process of conversation through Speaking Pal and Fully Fluent application. Moreover, the researcher asked participants about the different features, strengths, and weaknesses of both applications.

2. Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The focus of this research is Postgraduate students at Islamic State University in Banten and specifically one student in the English Education Department. The researcher selected the participant as the purposive sample in this research due to several reasons including:

a) The participant is the student from English education department who got difficulties in finding the real speaking partner for speaking English.

b) The participant has an experience in using Speak Pal and Fully Fluent application.

c) The participant has an interest on Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL).

Findings

**1. The different features between Speak Pal App and Fully Fluent App**

a. Speak Pal

According to https://speakpal.club/, Speak Pal is an application that helps language learners improve their listening and speaking abilities. Language learners will come across individuals with a variety of accents, backgrounds, and interests from various nations. It will assist them in developing their ability to communicate on a variety of subjects and comprehend individuals from around the globe. Users with English proficiency levels B1, B2, C1, and C2 are advised to use this app. The user can immediately register for the Speak Pal application by using an email or Google account. In more detail, the Speak Pal application has several features such as a call button, and a button for finding a perfect partner to call. This feature will help us to find a speaking partner that is suitable for our age, level, or target language. The application also shows us about other users who are ready to talk with their information profile such as name, gender, level, etc. It can be seen in picture 1.1 below.
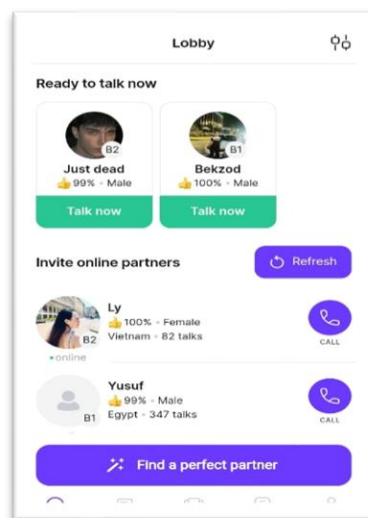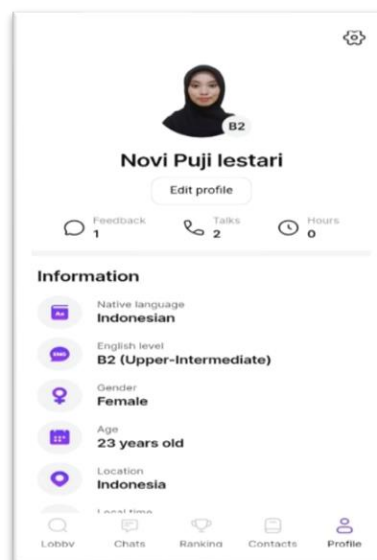

Picture 1.1

The user also can learn more about the profile information of speaking partners including their English level, gender, age, location, history of talk, and feedback by clicking the photo profile. This information will help the app user to choose the most suitable partner before they click the button for calling. It can be seen in picture 1.2. On the other hand, the user also can fill in their profile information such as gender, location, native language, age, etc. Therefore, other users can know about the user information. It can be seen in picture 1.3.
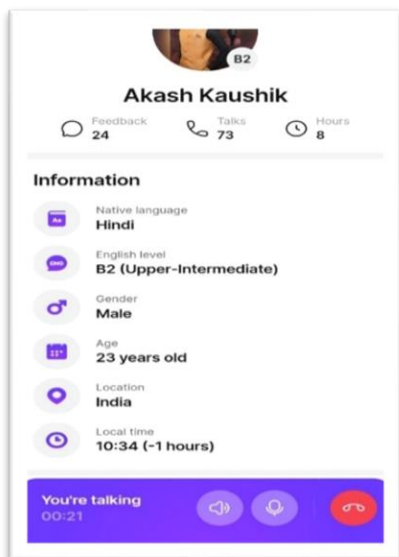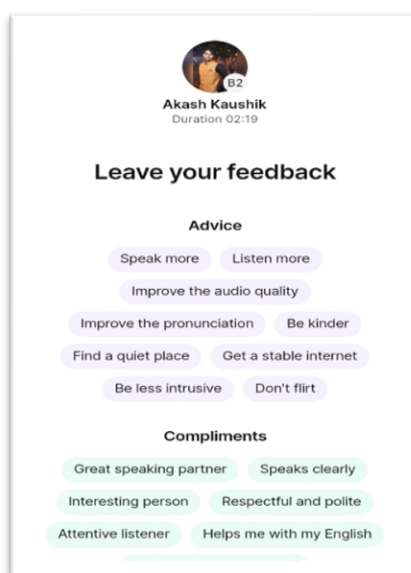
Picture 1.2

Picture 1.3

Moreover, there are two versions of the Speak Pal application: a Free version and a Premium one. The user's time limit in the free edition is ten minutes. In the meantime, the user has unlimited access to calls during the premium version. Following the call with the speaking partner, the user can provide feedback to them, such as how happy they were with the discussion, suggestions for improvement, and positive remarks. The user can also send the speaking partner a public review right away. It can be seen in picture 1.4
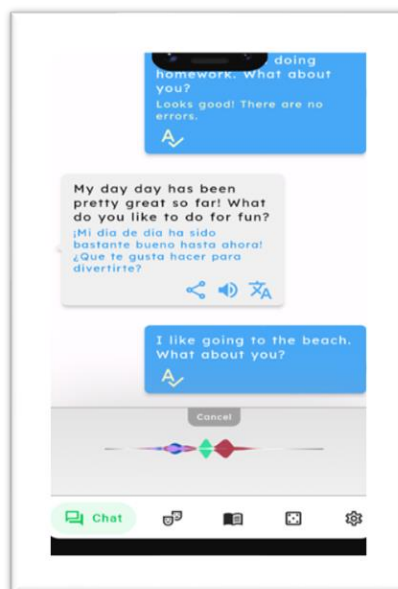

Picture 1.4

b. Fully Fluent Application

Fully fluent application is an application with an Artificial intelligence tutor. The user can imagine speaking like a native on the job or while traveling with this application. Fully Fluent provides the feature for the user to speak English, Spanish, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, and more. The advanced technology provides personalized feedback to help language learners to speak naturally and effortlessly like when speaking with a native speaker.

With the advanced capability of an Artificial Intelligent tutor named "Fifi". The fully fluent application provides the platform for the App user to speak by answering each question from AI orally. In this application, we also can ask a question to the AI tutor and it will immediately answer your questions. It can be seen in picture 2.1. However, because this app uses the AI feature, the interaction will not be the same as the communication with the real human such as natural breath, thinking time, and fillers of speech. Furthermore, in the fully fluent application, the App user needs to answer the question from AI directly because the user's speech will be recorded by the audio of the application. Moreover, based on the researcher's experience, in the free version, the application has a lot of advertisements that can disturb the flow of conversation.

Picture 2.1

Furthermore, this app also provides the platform to hold conversations with the AI about several topics. We can talk with the AI application with our target language related to the topic and we can get the score about our quality speaking. It can be seen in picture 2.2. Then, there is the feature "role-play". In this part, language learners can practice their target language in any different situation. Such as ordering the food at a restaurant, practicing the job interview, etc. The existence of AI become the partner of our speaking. This application has 2 versions including premium and free version. In the

free version, not all topics of role-plays and games can be accessed. It can be seen in picture 2.3.
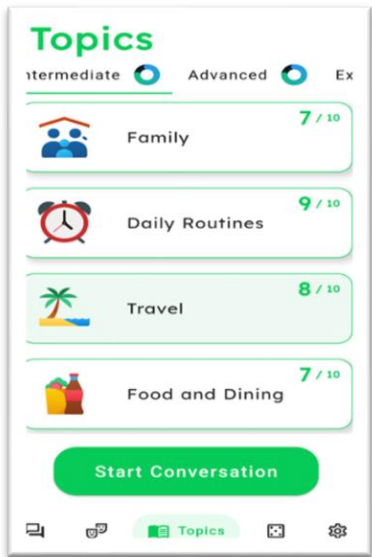
Picture 2.2

Picture 2.3

In more detail, the Fully-fluent application has the feature "tap to speak". Therefore, if the users can prepare to think and respond to the AI tool. Then, this AI application is supported by the feature "tap to cancel". This feature can help user to cancel their speech when the user is not sure about the word they delivered before.

2. **EFL learners' speaking performance when using the Speak Pal application compared to the Fully Fluent application**

In the observation procedure, the participant was given the opportunity to speak with a native speaker for at least 20 minutes via the Speak-Pal application and 20 minutes via the Fully Fluent application. During the process of observation, the researcher will observe participant's speaking skill (including engagement and confidence) and interaction flow in conversation. Moreover, to strengthen the result data, the researcher was conducted the interview towards participant as the secondary data. The result can be seen in the following table:

Comparative Aspects	Speaking Pal	Fully Fluent App
	1. In Speak Pal, the participant enjoyed the natural process of conversation. However, sometimes the participant got unfamiliar vocabulary and asked the foreigner to repeat the statement. 2. The participant was encouraged to speak, respond, and engage in many	1. Through Fully-Fluent with AI tool, the participant felt a different vibe as long as the AI sound tone was like a robot and different from the real human. 2. The sound of AI was supported by the written message. This concept

Speaking Practice	topics of conversation. 3. Not all users in Speak Pal has the willingness for correcting others' English performance. Several users have a tendency to be racist and underestimate other's speaking skill	helps the user a lot in understanding the message from the speaking partner. 3. The participant feels more comfortable and confidence in speaking with AI due to the supportive speaking partner without underestimating the learner's speaking performance. The participant can ask for the correction of their speaking skill, either from the grammatical structure or to AI as the personal assistant. 4. It is completed by features "tap to speak" and "tap to cancel". These features help them to prepare themselves for speak and respond the AI questions.
Interaction Flow	1. Building the interaction in Speak Pal is more difficult. In the Speak Pal application, the user met with many characteristics of people from humble or probably ignorant people. 2. In Speak Pal, the participant was frequently stuck in thinking and speaking. This condition can be solved if the speaking partners are active and excited to have a conversation. Meanwhile, if the Speak Pal partner is inactive, not dominant, and tends to be ignorant, the participant gets stuck in finding another topic to talk. 3. In the free version of the application, the app user has a limitation of time (10 minutes). It can limit the access of users to practice English more with the same partner.	1. The fully fluent application helped the participant in keeping the flow of conversation. The AI tool always responds and asks follow-up questions relating to the topic to the participant so that the participant can directly respond to the statement. 2. The feature "Role Play" is provided on several topics such as ordering food at a restaurant, an interview session, booking a hotel, etc. It can give the opportunity to participants to practice English in different contexts. 3. In the free version of the Fully-Fluent application, users frequently get advertisement videos that disturb the flow of conversation. It will affect the user's focus during the conversation.

a. Speaking Practice

Firstly, during the observation, the first application was the Speak-Pal application. Participants conducted a conversation with several native speakers by using Speak Pal, the researcher found that participants enjoyed the natural process of conversation. It can be seen from the engagement and enthusiasm in responding the foreigners when discussing many topics. However, sometimes participants got unfamiliar vocabulary and asked the foreigner to repeat the statement. This is in line with the statement from participant who stated that:

> *"I'm happy to be able to enjoy conversations with foreigners here, it's fun especially if someone is of the same frequency. Then, we seem to be so motivated to talk and respond to what he says".*

This result was in line with the previous study from Emecen and Saricoban (2023) that Speak Pal application has the positive effects in developing the intercultural communicative skill, intercultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness due to the engagement and enthusiasm in conversation with foreigner. Moreover, this result was supported by the study from Suryanto & Fitrawan in 2023 that mobile application that enables us to communicate with foreigners influence learners' speaking skill due to the supportive and entertaining environment for English exposure. It can be seen from the enthusiasm and engagement from learners in communicating with their speaking partners.

Meanwhile, when using the Fully-Fluent application with AI tool, the participant felt a different vibe as long as the AI sound tone was like a robot and different from the real human. However, in the Fully-Fluent application, the conversation room has two features including text and audio. Therefore, the sound of the speaking partner was supported by the written message. This concept helps the user a lot in understanding the message from the speaking partner. These results were in line with the statement from the participant after using this application as follows:

> *"Because it's AI and there's text like that. Yes, very helpful. Because apart from that, there is also audio, and there is writing too, right? Even though it's called AI, it won't be the same as chatting with a person, right? Stiff, definitely stiff. But you can still improve your speaking skills."*

This result was supported by the previous study from Rusmiyanto et al that artificial intelligence (AI) presents the possibility of customized, interactive, and adaptable learning environments that meet the requirements and preferences of specific students. Through practice opportunities, chatbots, real-time feedback, and AI-based interactive platforms have been found to improve learners' fluency and engagement in spoken English. (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023).

Secondly, in Speak Pal, not all users of Speak Pal are willing to correct others' English performance. On the other hand, several users tend to be racist

and underestimate other's language skills. It can appear to be anxiety in EFL learner when practicing their speaking skill. These results were in line with the statement from the participant after using this application as follows:

> *"It's also uncomfortable to ask them to correct our English or ask about our vocabulary, so sometimes it also affects our confidence in speaking."*

This result is in contrast with another statement by Rusmiyanto et al that EFL learners meet with a respectful speaking partner and get insight into useful phrases, daily expressions, and grammatical knowledge (Suryanto & Fitrawan, 2023).

Meanwhile, in the fully fluent app, the participant feels more comfortable and confident speaking with AI due to the supportive personal speaking partner, who will never underestimate the learner's speaking performance. Then, the participant can ask for the correction of their speaking skill, either from the grammatical structure or to AI as the personal assistant. This result supports the previous result from Ally et al that The mobile device can offer "the personal assistant" to its user. Moreover, in learning another language, the language learner needs constant and immediate access to one or more people who are always willing and supporting the learner in the process of learning, practicing, and communicating with the language (Ally et al., 2016).

This result also was in line with the statement from the participant after using this application as follows:

> *"Because it's basically a robot, so I feel more confident when I speak. Moreover, I can immediately ask for correction or ask him for English vocabulary, either from a British or American accent."*

The next, the Fully-fluent application has the feature "tap to speak". Therefore, if the users can prepare to think and respond to the AI tool. Then, this AI application is supported by the feature "tap to cancel". This feature can help user to cancel their speech when the user is not sure about the word they delivered before. It was in line with the experience of the participant who felt difficulties when thinking in English. Meanwhile, in the Speak Pal application, the user is required to speak directly and not to think too much to keep the flow of communication. It can help students to speak with the real native speaker. However, it will be quite challenging for the user at the basic level.

b. The Interaction flow

Firstly, the researcher found that building the interaction in Speak Pal is more difficult than the Fully-Fluent application. In the Speak Pal application, the user met with many characteristics of people from humble or probably ignorant people. This case will be very challenging if the participant cannot keep the flow of communication by engaging actively in conversation. During the observation of using the Speak Pal application, the researcher found that the participant was frequently stuck in thinking and speaking. This condition can be solved if the speaking partners are active and excited to have a conversation. Meanwhile, if

the speaking partner is inactive, not dominant, and tends to be ignorant, the participant got stuck in finding another topic to talk. This result was in line with the statement from the participant as follows:

> *"Sometimes there are people who don't respond, we start to say hello and start the conversation, but it seems like some of the strangers just keep quiet or say little. But, some are active or even dominant when communicating. That's really fun."*

On the other hand, a Fully-Fluent application helped the participant in keeping the flow of conversation. The AI tool always responds and asks follow-up questions relating to the topic to the participant so that the participant can directly respond to the statement.

> *"Since fully fluent uses AI, it's actually not difficult to build interactions. Because AI has already built interactions with us. For example, like earlier in the role play, we already have what we want to say, there is already a theme and what we want to say. So it's not that difficult. Meanwhile, for speak-pals, we interact with people directly. So in my opinion, building interaction is more difficult in speak-pal. because AI will never run out of topics".*

This result also was in line with the previous research that AI integration in language learning environments encourages learner autonomy by giving students the freedom to practice on their own, access resources, and get feedback. AI-powered systems provide adaptive tests and tailored learning paths based on the interests, progress, and learning styles of users (Rusmiyanto et al., 2023).

Secondly, In Speak Pal, the participant was frequently stuck in thinking and speaking. This condition can be solved if the speaking partners are active and excited to have a conversation. Meanwhile, if the Speak Pal partner is inactive, not dominant, and tends to be ignorant, the participant gets stuck in finding another topic to talk. This result is closely similar to the previous study from Lestari et al in 2023, the mobile platform that enables us to connect with foreigners has an effective role in training critical thinking, speaking ability, and listening comprehension. The new finding is that good interaction will be created when the speaking partner is active, friendly, and has the same willingness to hold the conversation. On the other hand, a good interaction flow will never happen when the speaking partner tends to be passive.

The last, from the weakness aspect, when using the free version of the Fully-Fluent application, users frequently get advertisement videos that disturb the flow of conversation. It will affect the user's focus during the conversation. Meanwhile, in the free version of the Speak-Pal application, the app user has a limitation of time (10 minutes). It can limit the access of users to practice English more with the same partner.

Conclusion

Speak Pal and Fully Fluent have significant differences in features in supporting EFL students' speaking skills. Speak Pal provides a communication experience with native speakers from various backgrounds, allowing users to practice listening and speaking in a variety of accents and dialects. This feature helps users adapt to more authentic conversation situations. Meanwhile, Fully Fluent uses an AI tutor called "Fifi," which provides live feedback and simulated conversations via text and audio. Features like "tap to speak" and "tap to cancel" on Fully Fluent give users the illusion of managing their interactions, making the app more suitable for students who need structure and guidance in their learning process.

In terms of speaking performance & interaction flow, Speak Pal users show improvements in engagement and response in natural conversations with native speakers. However, challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary and potentially less supportive interactions from conversation partners sometimes hinder the learning experience. In contrast, Fully Fluent users feel more comfortable and confident talking to AI because the environment is more supportive and free from negative judgment. The AI in Fully Fluent gives students the opportunity to get real-time correction and feedback, which is important for building the foundation of their speaking skills.

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