

# The Implementation of WhatsApp Voice Note to Improve Students' Speaking Skills at SMK Labschool Tangerang Raya: A Classroom Action Research

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## Abstract

This study aimed to improve the speaking skills of twelfth-grade students at *SMK Labschool Tangerang Raya* through the implementation of WhatsApp *voice note*. To achieve this objective, the researchers employed technology-based media to support the teaching and learning process. The WhatsApp *voice note* feature was utilized as a *Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)* medium in instructional activities. This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings involving seventeen students. Data were collected through classroom observations, speaking performance tests, and questionnaires. The speaking assessment was conducted through storytelling performances using a scoring rubric based on pronunciation, fluency, intonation, and accuracy. The results indicated a consistent and gradual improvement in students' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of fluency and pronunciation accuracy. In addition, the students demonstrated increased engagement during classroom activities. There was an increase in students' average speaking scores from 36.76 in Cycle 1 to 43.38 in Cycle 2, with a mean gain score of 6.62 points. Questionnaire findings also indicated increased student engagement during speaking activities using WhatsApp *voice notes*. The reflection from these findings suggest that WhatsApp *voice notes* can support the improvement of students' speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** *speaking skills; voice note; WhatsApp*

## INTRODUCTION

As language learners, there are generally four essential skills to master: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Tarigan (2021) highlights four fundamental aspects of language proficiency, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ability to communicate effectively in English has become a crucial aspect in academic and professional fields in today's globalized world (Mawalim et al., 2025). Through communication skills, individuals can engage in direct conversations and exchange ideas fluently. This perspective aligns with (Richards, 2008) view that speaking is a vital skill in language learning, enabling learners not only to express ideas or thoughts but also to respond effectively. Kashinathan & Aziz (2021) further emphasize that speaking proficiency is beneficial for both speakers and listeners in oral communication, facilitating

information exchange and fostering long-term relationships. Therefore, a learner's ability to speak in the target language is often considered a benchmark for successful language acquisition (Manurung, 2015).

Despite the importance of speaking competence, many learners often struggle to develop their speaking skills. Speaking is considered one of the most challenging skills to master in second language acquisition, as a productive skill that typically requires rigorous practice and strong determination to achieve high proficiency (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). Common challenges learners face in speaking including pronunciation, fluency, and self-confidence (Novia et al., 2025). Manurung (2015) further explains additional difficulties, such as learners struggling to form grammatically correct sentences due to significant differences from their native language structure. Speaking in a different language can be difficult and sometimes embarrassing (Zou et al., 2023). The lack of speaking proficiency can be attributed to several factors, including low motivation, limited practice time, and inadequate learning facilities/media (Semiun et al., 2022). Meanwhile, (Riadil, 2020) highlights another issue affecting speaking ability: psychological barriers related to emotional state, physical condition, and self-productivity, such as nervousness or embarrassment when speaking English. All these challenges undoubtedly hinder the development of speaking skills.

Based on pre-observation carried out at *SMK Labschool Tangerang Raya, Kabupaten Tangerang*, the researchers found that many 12<sup>th</sup> grade students still experienced difficulties in speaking proficiency. The learning process was still conducted using conventional methods and the teacher had not maximized the use of technolodge-based media to support speaking practice. In addition, due to the limited number of English teachers, some English classes were occasionally handled by substitute teachers from different subject areas. As a result, students had limited opportunities to practice speaking actively in class. Consequently, They faced problems in pronunciation, low fluency, limited vocabulary, and a lack of self-confidence. They were often hesitant to speak because they were afraid of making mistakes, which reduced their participation in the learning process. Furthermore, the students were not motivated in the learning and they did not take responsibility for the assignment given by the teacher. Therefore, appropriate strategies and techniques in language learning are essential to enhance speaking skills.

To overcome these problems, the researchers introduced the WhatsApp *voice note* feature as a learning medium to improve students' speaking skills. Through this feature, students could practice speaking and submit their responses more actively and confidently. WhatsApp is an instant messaging application with several features that can help teachers and students in the learning and teaching process. One of its features is *the voice note* function, which allows users to send audio messages. It is considered an appropriate solution to solve the students' speaking problem in the pre-observation. Since the students face difficulties in pronunciation, low fluency, limited vocabulary, and lack of self-confidence, *voice notes* provide a more flexible and less stressful environment for practice (Sesa & Margana, 2025). Students can record their speech repeatedly and listen to their own recordings, which helps them identify and improve mispronunciations and reduce pauses, thereby enhancing their fluency (Maldonado & Dack, 2024). Furthermore, the use of *voice notes* helps reduce students' fear of making mistakes, as they are not required to speak directly in front of the class. As cited by Hapsari et al. (2022) that revealed 83,8% of students perceived *voice notes* as a less stressful and less pressure than video calls. Hence, they prefer *voice note*. This condition encourages shy

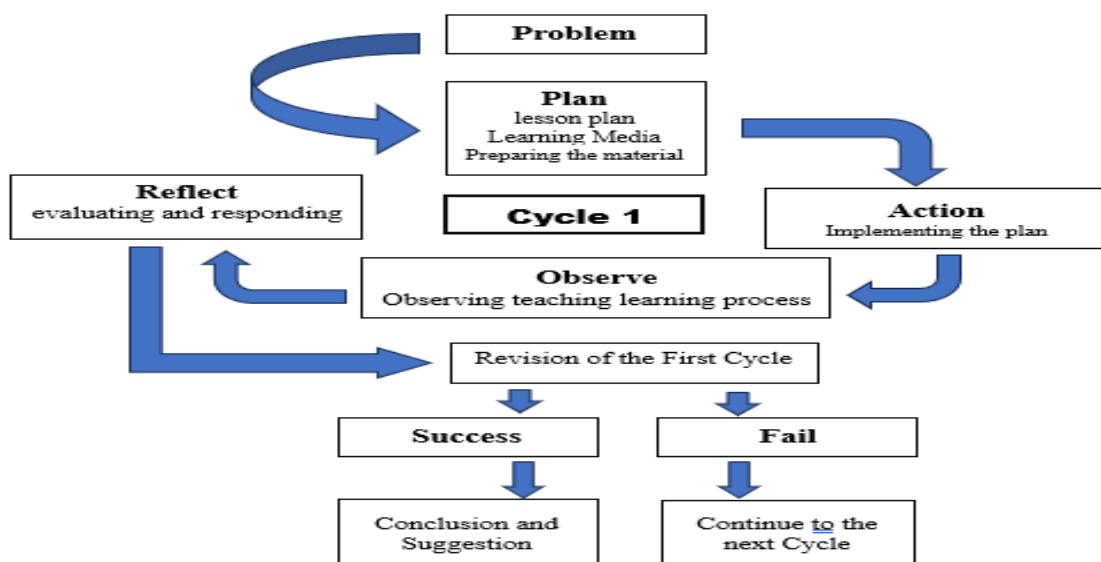
students to participate more actively and gradually build their confidence. The accessibility of WhatsApp also allows students to practice anytime and anywhere, which can increase their motivation and sense of responsibility in completing speaking tasks.

In today's globalization era, technology has become an important tool in language learning, particularly through Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which facilitates English teaching and learning through mobile devices (Jasrial, 2019; Suciati et al., 2023). Since smartphones are widely used by learners, WhatsApp has become one of the most popular messaging applications in education due to its convenient features, free access, low data usage, and flexibility to be accessed anytime and anywhere (Abdullah & Yamat, 2022; Handayani et al., 2021; Widari et al., 2025). Among its various features, *voice notes* are considered useful in supporting speaking activities because they allow learners to record, listen to, and repeat their speech practice independently. Previous studies revealed that WhatsApp *voice notes* can help learners improve pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, confidence, and speaking participation through repeated practice and feedback (Bano et al., 2022; Fatimah & Nurmanik, 2021; M. Amin et al., 2023; Nurazizah et al., 2019; Rafi'i & Niswa, 2025; Sesa & Margana, 2025; Tareh et al., 2023). In addition, the flexibility of *voice note* features enables learners to practice speaking in a less stressful environment, which may reduce speaking anxiety and encourage more active participation in the learning process (Hapsari et al., 2022; Sesa & Margana, 2025).

Considering the problems as described above, this study was conducted to develop students' speaking skills through the implementation of digital communication technology in the form of the WhatsApp *voice note* feature as a learning medium that facilitated students in the learning process. However, although previous studies have discussed the use of WhatsApp in English learning, they have focused on specific aspects separately. The implementation of WhatsApp *voice note* features to promote speaking skills in vocational high school classrooms through Classroom Action Research still requires further exploration. Furthermore, this study also aimed to identify the challenges in implementing *voice notes* and to explore students' perceptions toward the use of *voice notes* in the classroom.

## **METHOD**

The objective of this research is to improve the students' speaking skill using WhatsApp *voice note* as a tool for teaching and learning English. To fulfill this research study, the researchers used Classroom Action Research (CAR) which design by Kemmis and Mc Taggart. It consisted of four steps: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The CAR flow can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Classroom Action Research Flow

This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The acting stage was carried out through three phases: pre-activity, main-activity, and post-activity, focusing on teaching narrative text using WhatsApp *voice notes*.

#### 1. Pre-Activity

In the pre-activity, the researchers prepared the classroom by greeting the students, leading a short prayer, and checking attendance. The researchers explained the learning objectives, particularly the understanding and production of narrative texts through speaking activities using WhatsApp *voice notes*. The students were motivated by being encouraged not to be afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. To activate students' background knowledge, the researchers asked several guiding questions related to narrative texts, such as students' experiences with folklore or legends they had heard before.

#### 2. Main-Activity

During the main-activity, the researchers introduced the concept of narrative text, including its social function, generic structure (orientation, complication, and resolution), and language features. The researchers then shared a narrative video entitled *The Legend of Crying Stone* through a link posted in the WhatsApp group. After watching the video, the students were asked to identify the generic structure and language features of the narrative text, including past tense verbs, time conjunctions, and vocabulary related to the story. They also identified difficult words to pronounce and wrote them in the WhatsApp group.

The researchers provided explanations and pronunciation models through WhatsApp *voice notes*, and students were asked to imitate the pronunciation by listening and repeating. Next, the students were divided into groups and asked to create a short oral summary of the narrative text. While the students were working, the researchers monitored their progress and provided assistance. After completing the task, the students recorded their group summaries using WhatsApp *voice notes* and submitted them to the WhatsApp group. The researchers gave feedback on students' recordings, especially on pronunciation and fluency. Subsequently, the students were

instructed to record the narrative summary individually using WhatsApp *voice notes* and submit their recordings for further evaluation.

### 3. Post-Activity

In the post-activity, the researchers provided overall feedback on students' speaking performance and comprehension of narrative texts. Together with the students, the researchers concluded the lesson by reviewing the key elements of narrative text and common pronunciation issues. At the end of the activity, the students were instructed to prepare for an individual storytelling performance of a narrative text in the following meeting.

CAR was chosen for its iterative nature, which allows for the identification of barriers and successes, ensuring continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The research was conducted at *Labschool Tangerang Raya* vocational high school. The subject of this research were 17 twelfth-grade students in the first semester of academic year 2025/2026. The research conducted from October to November 2025 and it done in two cycles which each cycle consisted of two meetings, so the whole meeting was four meetings. The data were collected by using two kinds of instrument, including speaking test (Pre-test & Post-test), and questionnaires. The speaking ability of the students was assessed using a scoring rubric from the assessment rubric provided in the lesson plan, which refers to the Indonesian Education and Culture Ministry *Kemendikbud* (2017) standard. The rubric consisted of four aspects: pronunciation, intonation, fluency, accuracy. Each aspect was scored on a scale from one to five, where one indicates very poor performance and five indicates excellent performance. The final score was calculated by averaging the scores of all aspects. Next, for the technique of data analysis the researchers used reduction, description, and verification. Based on the data, the researchers draws conclusion regarding the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

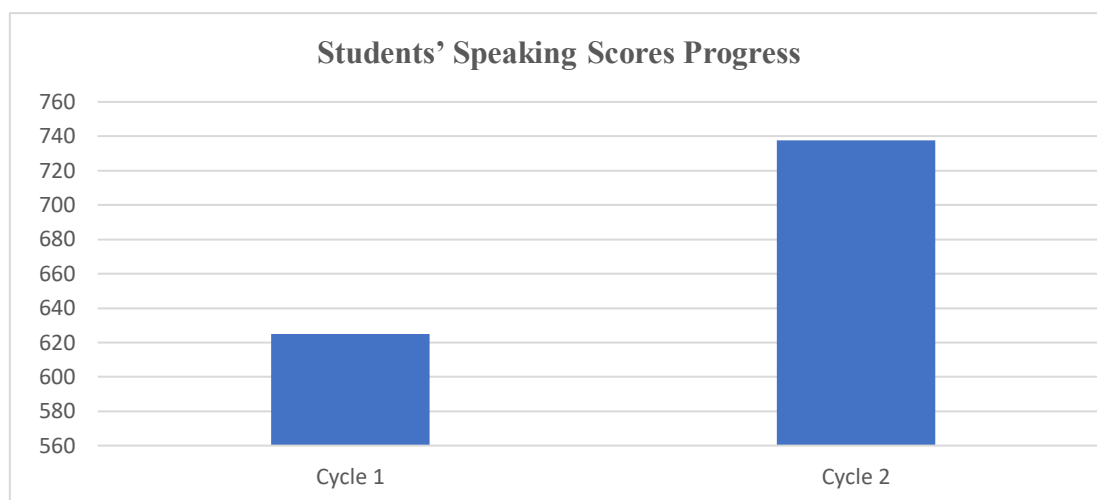
In the initial phase of the research, the researchers identified several problems faced by the students during the learning process. The students experienced difficulties in pronunciation, as they mispronounced certain English words. Furthermore, the students felt afraid and hesitant to speak due to their limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Therefore, the researchers utilized the WhatsApp voice note feature to create a comfortable, enjoyable, and low-anxiety learning environment in order to encourage students to participate actively in the learning process.

The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The findings were obtained from the students' speaking scores in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, which were analyzed to identify changes in students' speaking performance after the implementation of the treatment. The results are listed in table 1.

**Table 1. Students' Speaking Scores in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2**

Students	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Gain
S1	31,25	43,75	12,50
S2	87,50	93,75	6,25
S3	37,50	43,75	6,25
S4	43,75	50,00	6,25
S5	25,00	31,25	6,25
S6	50,00	62,50	12,50
S7	56,25	56,25	0,00
S8	81,25	93,75	12,50
S9	37,50	43,75	6,25
S10	50,00	75,00	25,00
S11	25,00	43,75	18,75
S12	50,00	62,50	12,50
S13	68,75	87,50	18,75
S14	43,75	62,50	18,75
S15	62,50	62,50	0,00
S16	43,75	50,00	6,25
S17	68,75	68,75	0,00
Average	36,76	43,38	6,62

In table 1, it shows an improvement score between cycle 1 and cycle 2 in speaking skills achieved by students after the implementation of WhatsApp voice note. It can be seen from average the cycle 1 score of 36,76 to 43,38 in cycle 2, with an average gain of 6,62 points. Furthermore, several students showed positive improvement, although the level of improvement varied among students. Student 10 achieved the highest improvement with a gain score of 25 points, followed by student 11, student 13, and student 14 with gains of 18,75 points. In contrast, student 7, student 15, and student 17 did not show improvement, as their scores remained same in both cycles.



**Figure 2.** The improvement of students' score between cycle 2

The total score in Cycle 1 was 625, while the total score in Cycle 2 increased to 737,5. This represents a total gain of 112,5 points, demonstrating that students' speaking ability improved after learning activities were conducted using WhatsApp *voice notes*. Moreover, the gain scores reveal that most students experienced positive improvement, with several students showing significant progress in their speaking performance. Other students also demonstrated noticeable improvement. However, a few students did not show improvement, as their scores remained unchanged across both cycles.

The comparison between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 scores, as illustrated in the chart, clearly shows that the overall speaking performance in Cycle 2 was higher than in Cycle 1. This finding indicates that the use of WhatsApp *voice notes* had a positive impact on students' speaking skills, particularly in terms of pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of WhatsApp *voice notes* contributed to the improvement of students' speaking performance, although individual differences in learning progress were still observed among the students.

## Discussion

The use of the WhatsApp *voice note* feature to improve the speaking proficiency of twelfth-grade students demonstrated improvement across various aspects of speaking skills. This improvement was observed from the activity through two research cycles. CAR provided students with opportunities to develop their speaking abilities gradually yet consistently.

During the pre-observation activity, many students experienced difficulties in speaking activities, particularly feelings of hesitation and fear during speaking tasks, which may have been caused by limited speaking practice and anxiety when performing oral activities directly in front of others. After the implementation of WhatsApp *voice note* in Cycle 1, students became more engaged and active during classroom activities. Although a few students were not fully engaged due to distractions from other applications, most students reported that they enjoyed the learning process and felt it was fun and motivating. This improvement may be related to the asynchronous nature of voice note activities, which allowed students to record, repeat, and practice their responses before submitting them. Such flexibility may have reduced students' anxiety and created a more comfortable learning environment during speaking activities. As a result, students were able to participate more confidently without the immediate pressure of direct

classroom performance. This is in line with the questionnaire results, which show that students had positive responses to the use of WhatsApp *voice notes* as a learning medium. Students reported that they were interested and engaged when the teacher used WhatsApp *voice notes* during the learning process. The results indicate that 54.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 31.8% agreed, and 13.6% gave neutral responses. No respondents chose disagree or strongly disagree. In addition, the findings support the concept of MALL, which emphasizes that mobile technology can facilitate language learning through flexible, interactive, and student-centered activities. Through repeated speaking practice and self-monitoring opportunities, students may become more aware of their speaking performance and gradually improve their oral communication skills.

Speaking fluency, as indicated by the number of words articulated per minute, showed improvement across the research cycles. Almost all students experienced an increase in their fluency scores. The improvement in students' speaking fluency may be associated with the opportunities for repeated speaking practice provided by WhatsApp *voice notes*. Through asynchronous speaking activities, students had more time to organize their ideas and practice before submitting their recordings. This condition may have helped students speak more smoothly and confidently during speaking tasks. These findings support previous studies by Hamsia & Id (2024) and Sherine et al. (2020), which suggest that mobile-assisted speaking activities can increase students' speaking fluency through continuous oral practice. Pronunciation accuracy also showed a significant improvement across the research cycles. During the pre-test activity, most students were positioned within scale levels 2–3, as they made numerous pronunciation errors. After the first cycle, several students reduced their pronunciation errors and progressed to scale levels 4–5. By the second cycle, almost all students demonstrated consistent improvement and produced only minor pronunciation errors. This improvement may have occurred because the WhatsApp *voice note* feature allowed students to replay their recordings, recognize pronunciation errors, and make corrections independently before submission. Such self-monitoring activities may increase students' awareness of their pronunciation and encourage gradual improvement in speaking accuracy. This finding is consistent with Fitri & Pratiwi (2021) and Sherine et al. (2020), who found that *voice note* activities provide learners with opportunities for repeated listening and pronunciation practice. Furthermore, Young & West (2018) argue that media-based oral communication, such as WhatsApp *voice notes*, can increase the quantity and enhance the quality of speaking ability by providing learners with more opportunities to practice speaking and to develop greater learner awareness.

Another aspect that showed improvement as a result of the impact of speaking instruction through *voice notes* was students' self-confidence. Self-confidence plays an important role in speaking performance because students who feel comfortable are generally more willing to participate in oral activities (Dheressa et al., 2023; Maharani & Afifi, 2024; Saidah, 2024). Many students felt more confident because they were not immediately exposed to peer judgment during the recording process. This increased confidence encouraged students to participate more actively in speaking activities, which contributed to their improved performance in Cycle 2. This finding supports the idea that asynchronous speaking activities can foster students' willingness to speak and practice oral skills.

Despite the advantages offered by WhatsApp application features, the use of WhatsApp *voice notes* is not without challenges. These challenges include technical issues, such as unstable internet connections and limited access to devices, as well as non-

technical issues, including loss of focus and a lack of student seriousness, which may hinder the effective use of WhatsApp as a learning medium. Therefore, clear guidelines and adequate supervision from teachers are essential. Moreover, combining traditional face-to-face instruction with asynchronous classroom activities using WhatsApp can serve as a viable solution to these challenges, enabling students to receive comprehensive support throughout their learning process.

The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies on MALL, which highlight the role of mobile technology in facilitating flexible and interactive language learning activities. WhatsApp *voice notes* function as a practical MALL tool that supports speaking development by providing opportunities for repeated practice, feedback, and increased learner confidence. Therefore, this study suggest that WhatsApp *voice notes* can serve as a useful medium to improve students' speaking skills.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of WhatsApp *voice notes* in speaking instruction demonstrated improvement in speaking performance of twelfth-grade students at *SMK Labschool Tangerang Raya*. The study indicated improvements in students' speaking scores, engagement during classroom activities, and confidence in expressing their ideas. WhatsApp *voice notes* enabled students to refine their speaking skills in a more flexible and less anxiety-inducing learning environment. Moreover, this feature allowed students to practice speaking in variety of context, which may support gradual improvement in students' speaking performance. However, due to the small number of participants and limited research cycles, the findings may not be generalizable to other EFL learning settings. In addition, several challenges were identified during the implementation process, including technical issues and students' lack of focus during learning activities. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that WhatsApp *voice notes* can support the improvement of students' speaking skills in EFL classrooms. Therefore, educators are encouraged to developed MALL-based speaking activities, particulary asynchronous voice-note tasks, to proved students with opportunities for feedback. In contemporary language learning context, technology can effectively facilitate more flexible and interactive English learning experiences.

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