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EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF VIDEO CHAT APPLICATIONS (UMINGLE) TO INCREASE STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has created many opportunities for learning English through online platforms, one of which is Umingle. This study aims to explore the use of Umingle as a tool for improving English speaking skills and building users' confidence. This research uses a literature review method by examining several relevant journal articles and studies about online communication applications in language learning. The findings show that Umingle allows users to communicate with people from different countries, helping them improve their speaking fluency, increase their vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and reduce speaking anxiety. In addition, regular interaction with other users can help learners become more confident when using English in real-life conversations. However, some challenges were also found, such as limited free features, difficulty in finding suitable conversation partners, and exposure to inappropriate behavior from some users. Overall, Umingle can be a useful tool for English language learning when it is used properly and safely.

Keywords: *Umingle, English learning, speaking skills, speaking anxiety, self-confidence*

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language used in various fields, such as education, technology, business, and global communication. English language skills are very important because they can help a person interact and communicate with people

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from various countries. In learning English, there are four main skills that must be mastered, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Of these four skills, speaking is one of the important skills because through speaking a person can convey his ideas, opinions, and feelings directly to others. Therefore, the ability to speak English must be trained continuously so that a person is able to communicate well and fluently (Nilayon & Brahmakasikara, 2018).

However, in reality, there are still many students who have difficulty speaking English. These difficulties can be caused by several factors, such as limited vocabulary, lack of proper pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, and low confidence when speaking in English (Helmie 2019). Lack of confidence makes many students feel nervous and hesitant to express their opinions in English. As a result, they tend to be passive and less active in the learning process and daily communication. In fact, confidence has an important role in supporting speaking skills because a confident person will be more courageous to try to speak and express his ideas (Amalia Nur, Fadiah & Dalimunte, 2025).

To overcome these problems, media or learning methods are needed that can help students feel more comfortable and confident in speaking English. Along with the development of digital technology, the language learning process is now not only carried out in the classroom, but can also be done through various online platforms that are more interactive and communicative. The use of technology in learning English provides a very wide opportunity for them to practice speaking in a more flexible and fun atmosphere. Digital communication-based technology is also considered to be able to increase learning motivation and help obtain a more authentic communication experience (Nilayon & Brahmakasikara, 2018).

One of the technologies that can be used in learning to speak is a video chat application. Video chat applications can help communicate directly with other people from various countries through video conversations in real time. Through these interactions, students can practice speaking skills, improve pronunciation, increase vocabulary, and give courage in using English. Direct communication experiences also help them become more accustomed to using English in real situations so that nervousness and fear of speaking can be reduced (Helmie, Giani, and Saepuloh 2024). One of the video chat applications that can be used to practice English speaking skills is Umingle. Umingle is an application that helps students communicate with people from various countries through live video calls. This application provides them with the opportunity to practice speaking English with native speakers in real and more interactive communication. In addition to helping improve speaking skills, the use of video chat applications such as Umingle can also create a more interesting and less monotonous learning atmosphere because students can exchange information and get to know new cultures from their interlocutors. With continuous communication practice, students can become more confident in using English (Jalil et al., 2024).



Several previous studies have shown that the use of digital media and online communication applications can help improve speaking skills and confidence in learning English. The study found that the use of video conferencing technology can help improve students' speaking skills and confidence in using English. In addition, his research also shows that video-based media and digital communication can make them more motivated, active, and comfortable when practicing speaking English (Amalia Nur, Fadiah & Dalimunte, 2025).

Various studies have discussed the use of digital media and online communication applications in English learning. However, studies that specifically discuss the use of the Umingle application are still relatively limited. Most of the previous research focused more on video conferencing platforms or other online learning media, while Umingle has a different and unique characteristic because it allows students to interact directly with foreigners from various countries with different backgrounds through a random matching system. This characteristic provides students with the opportunity to gain a more authentic communication experience and get closer to real communication situations. In addition, this application allows students to practice English in a more diverse communication context than learning that is only done in the classroom. (Jalil, Islam, and Hamdany 2024)

The development of digital communication technology makes English learning no longer limited to interaction between lecturers and students in the classroom. Various online communication-based applications provide opportunities for students to get a more flexible and interactive learning experience. In addition, the use of digital applications in learning can also help students get independent learning opportunities outside of lecture hours so that the intensity of English practice is higher (Mulyana, Burki, and Helmie 2024). This can also expand students' opportunities to practice independently and effectively. Therefore, research on the use of applications such as Umingle is very important to be carried out to find out the potential and challenges it has as an English learning medium in the digital era. (Nilayon and Brahmakasikara 2018)

However, the use of the Umingle application as a learning medium also has various advantages and disadvantages that need to be further researched. Although this application can provide a more real communication experience and help increase confidence in speaking English, the use of the Umingle application can also provide several challenges in the learning process. Therefore, this research was conducted to answer the following questions: (1) How is the use of the Umingle application in increasing the confidence to speak English? (2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Umingle application as an English learning medium?



METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the literature review method. This approach was chosen because the research was not carried out directly in the field, but focused on assessing and analyzing various sources and results of previous research related to the use of the Umingle video chat application in increasing confidence in speaking English.

The data sources in this study were obtained from articles from national and international scientific journals, books, and other academic sources relevant to the research topic. The data was obtained through searching on various academic platforms, such as Google Scholar and other journal databases. The search process was carried out using several keywords, such as video chat applications, Umingle, confidence in speaking English, speaking skills, and learning English.

To maintain the relevance of the data, the sources used are limited to publications within the last 10 years. In the data collection process, researchers apply inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include articles that discuss the use of video chat applications in English language learning, research related to improving speaking confidence, and articles that are available in full-text form. Meanwhile, articles that are not relevant to the focus of the research, do not have a clear methodological explanation, or are not fully available are excluded from the analysis process.

The data analysis technique is carried out qualitatively using a content analysis approach. The analysis stages include the identification and selection of relevant sources, data grouping based on the research theme, and analysis of the similarities and differences in previous research results. Furthermore, the researcher draws conclusions based on the synthesis of various sources that have been analyzed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the use of the Umingle application in increasing English speaking confidence.

In order to maintain the validity of the data, the researcher cross-checked the various sources used by comparing the results of several different studies. This step is done so that the results of the research obtained are more objective and not only dependent on one specific source.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Utilization of the Umingle Application in Increasing Confidence in Speaking English Based on the results of analysis from several previous studies, the use of video chat applications in learning English provides many benefits for students, especially in practicing speaking skills. Research conducted by (Khlaif et al., 2021) shows that video conferencing and video chat-based learning media are considered



more flexible because they can be used anytime and anywhere without limited space and time. In addition, the communication process carried out directly through video calls can create a more interactive and fun learning atmosphere than traditional learning in the classroom. With the Umingle application, students can communicate with people from various countries so that they get a more real and communicative speaking experience. This experience helps students become more accustomed to using English in daily communication.

Not only does it provide convenience in the learning process, users of video chat applications such as Umingle are also considered to be able to increase students' confidence in speaking English. Research conducted (Sari & Dewi, 2021) explains that real-time communication can help students reduce fear and nervousness when speaking in English. Students become more courageous and confident to express their opinions or ideas because they are used to having direct conversations with interlocutors from various country backgrounds. In addition, continuous interaction can also help them practice pronunciation and fluency in speaking. The more often students communicate through video chat, the greater their courage to use English in real situations.

In addition to increasing confidence, the use of video chat applications also helps students add new vocabulary in English. Research conducted by (Sunardi, 2021) states that when having direct conversations, students often find various new expressions and vocabulary used in daily communication. This helps them understand the use of English more naturally and contextually. Other research also shows that digital communication-based learning media can increase learning motivation because the learning process feels more fun and less monotonous. Students become more active and interested in continuing to practice speaking in English because they can interact directly with other students freely and they can even communicate directly with native speakers which can make the English learning process easier. Therefore, students are expected to remain consistent in using video chat applications such as Umingle so that their speaking skills can develop over time.

However, the use of the Umingle application as an English learning medium also has several obstacles that need to be considered. Research conducted by (Safitri & Tyas, 2022) found that one of the most frequent obstacles is the problem of an unstable internet connection during the video call process. Poor connections cause the voice to be unclear and conversations are often interrupted so that communication does not run optimally. In addition, some students also experience technical issues such as audio interference, cameras, and difficulties when accessing the application. This condition can interfere with students' comfort when practicing speaking using video chat applications in the learning process.

On the other hand, the use of the Umingle application also has challenges in understanding various accents from interlocutors from different countries. The



difference in pronunciation and speed of speech often makes it difficult for students to understand the content of the conversation, especially for those who still have basic speaking skills. In addition, the interlocutor in the video chat application is random so not all students have the same goal of learning English. This condition sometimes makes communication less effective and less focused on learning. In the early stages of using the application, some students also still feel embarrassed, awkward and nervous when they have to talk directly to strangers using English. However, this nervousness will slowly decrease as the communication experience they have through the video chat application increases. (Khlaif et al., 2021)

Based on some of the results of these studies, it can be concluded that video chat applications such as Umingle provide many benefits in learning English, especially in practicing speaking skills and increasing students' confidence. The use of this application helps students gain a more authentic communication experience, expand vocabulary, and increase their courage in using English directly. In addition, students can also gain experience interacting with students from various countries so that the practice of speaking English becomes more interesting and fun. Although there are still several obstacles, such as internet network problems, technical issues, and accent differences, the Umingle video chat application can still be an effective learning medium if used appropriately and consistently in the English learning process.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Umingle Application as an English Learning Media

The use of video chat applications such as Umingle provides a new experience in the foreign language acquisition process. Based on an analysis of several available features, this application has a number of advantages and disadvantages when used as an individual English learning medium.

Advantages

1. Improving Speaking Fluency through Real-Time Interactivity

One of the main features in video chat applications like Umingle is the service of direct video conversations between two students (1-on-1). This feature encourages students to communicate spontaneously using English. Unlike text-based communication that gives time to think about answers and formulate grammar in advance, video conversations demand faster and more natural responses.

Through this direct interaction, students are trained to think quickly in English (thinking on your feet). They must immediately understand the interlocutor



and give direct responses. This process can help improve verbal fluency while gradually developing listening skills.

2. Lowering Negative Affection (Fear of Wrong) due to the Effect of Anonymity

One of the advantages of the Umingle application is the flexible registration feature and the freedom for students to use pseudonyms. This feature provides a sense of psychological security because the student's real identity does not have to be known by the interlocutor. In the context of learning English, this condition can help reduce the social pressure that learners often feel when they have to speak in a foreign language.

Many students experience language anxiety, especially because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes, mispronunciations, or fear of being judged negatively by others. This feeling often makes them reluctant to speak and choose to remain silent even though they actually have enough skills. However, through the anonymity system implemented by Umingle, students can practice speaking more freely without worrying about the social consequences that may occur in a real environment.

When a conversation feels uncomfortable or students feel embarrassed for making a mistake, they can immediately press the Next button to move on to the next interlocutor. This convenience creates a more relaxed and low-risk learning environment. Students don't need to maintain interactions that make them anxious, so they are more courageous to try new vocabulary, express opinions, and practice spontaneous speaking skills.

In addition, reducing the fear of negative judgments can increase self-confidence in communicating. The more often students engage in conversations without excessive pressure, the greater their chances of developing speaking fluency and reducing psychological barriers in using English. Thus, the anonymity feature on Umingle not only serves as a means of privacy, but also as a factor that supports the creation of a comfortable, safe, and effective learning environment for English learners. (Pattirajawana Hs 2025). As well as communicating directly with native speakers and other users can help reduce fear and increase the level of comfort in social activities. (Anggini and Salmiah 2025)

Disadvantages

1. Uncertainty of the Quality of the Interlocutor (Lack of Pedagogical Control)

One of the main limitations of the random matching system on Umingle is the lack of control over the characteristics and quality of the interlocutor that will be encountered. Unlike language learning platforms that are specifically designed for educational purposes, such as Duolingo or Cambly, Umingle is a public platform



that brings together students randomly without considering their goals, language proficiency level, or commitment to the learning process.

As a result, English learners do not always get interaction experiences that support the development of language skills. In many situations, they may be paired with students who have no interest in having meaningful conversations, are less responsive, or even just use apps for entertainment. Some students may end the conversation abruptly, give very brief responses, or show no interest in maintaining communication in English.

In addition, because there is no strict filtering system regarding the purpose of using the application, there is a possibility that students may encounter individuals who use disrespectful language, exhibit disrespectful behavior, or discuss topics that are not relevant to learning. Situations like this can reduce the effectiveness of speaking exercises and hinder the creation of a conducive learning environment.

From a pedagogical perspective, these conditions cause the learning process to be less structured and difficult to predict. Learners cannot be sure whether each conversation session will provide enough opportunities to practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and other communication skills. The quality of the learning experience depends largely on who the system happens to meet at that time. (Jalil, Islam, and Hamdany 2024)

However, this challenge can also be a means for learners to practice adaptability in various real communication situations. However, without control over the quality of the interlocutor, the effectiveness of Umingle as an English learning medium tends to be inconsistent and can vary from student to student and from conversation session to student. (Melati 2024)

2. Limited Access to Premium Filter Features

One of the obstacles that students who use the Umingle application can encounter is the limited access to the filtering feature which is actually very helpful in finding the right interlocutor for your learning needs. Features such as gender selection or student location are often only available to students who have coins or subscribe to premium services. As a result, students in the free version cannot freely determine the criteria for the interlocutor they want.

For English learners who use this app as a means of self-practice, these limitations can reduce the efficiency of the learning process. For example, a student who wants to practice with a speaker from a certain country or is looking for an interlocutor who has a relevant language background has to rely entirely on a random matching system. This means that they often have to press the Next button many times to find someone who fits their learning goals.



The repetitive search process is not only time-consuming, but it can also reduce the opportunity to do actual speaking exercises. Time that should be used to interact and develop communication skills is actually used to find the right conversation partner. In the long run, this experience can be frustrating, especially for students or independent learners who rely on free apps as the primary medium for practicing English.

In addition, without access to adequate filter features, the quality of the learning experience becomes less consistent. Students may often encounter people who do not use the language they want to learn, have different usage goals, or are not interested in having conversations that support the learning process. Therefore, while premium systems can help improve the quality of student matching, restricting access to these features is one of the drawbacks that should be considered by learners who prioritize the use of free apps.

3. Security issues and inappropriate content

The video feature that is open in general and without strong censorship from the application owner sometimes raises a lot of concerns about the use of this video chat application. Because not a few users have hidden intentions in the use of the following applications. Such as exhibitionism and other uncommendable actions.

This can also have a bad effect on students, this condition can cause discomfort, surprise, and even worse can cause trauma to students who seriously want to learn to use this application in language learning. For this reason, students are expected to be more vigilant and careful in using the application, by reporting the user's account or by pressing the next button to find an interlocutor who has the same goal in using this platform.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review that has been conducted, the use of video chat applications such as Umingle can make a positive contribution to increasing students' confidence in speaking English. Through direct interaction with students from various countries, students have the opportunity to practice English in a more real communication situation. This experience helps them to be more courageous in expressing their opinions, reducing the fear of making mistakes, and improving fluency in speaking and vocabulary mastery. In addition, the real-time communication process makes learning feel more interesting and interactive so that it can increase students' motivation to continue practicing using English.

This increase in confidence is inseparable from the various advantages that the Umingle application has. The live video conversation feature allows students to practice speaking spontaneously and naturally as happens in daily communication.



In addition, the available anonymity system provides a sense of security and comfort for students to practice without fear of receiving negative judgments from others. This condition can help reduce their anxiety in language while encouraging students to be more active in using English in conversation.

Although it provides various benefits, the use of Umingle also has some limitations that need to be considered. Obstacles that are often found include unstable internet connection quality, technical glitches during the video call process, and difficulty in understanding various accents from interlocutors from different countries. In addition, the random student matching system causes the quality and purpose of the interlocutor to not always match the learning needs. Limited access to premium filter features can also reduce students' effectiveness in finding relevant conversation partners to practice English.

Despite the various limitations found, the results of the study show that Umingle has the potential as an English learning medium that can help increase students' speaking confidence. Although there are still some obstacles in its use, the benefits obtained through hands-on communication experiences, increased speaking courage, and opportunities to interact with users from different countries make this application an effective learning alternative. In addition to supporting the development of speaking skills, this application also provides students with the opportunity to gain a broader communication experience in an international environment. Thus, the appropriate and consistent use of Umingle can be an effective means to support the development of English speaking skills in real communication situations.

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