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The Effectiveness of Let's Read Application to Improve Student's Speaking Skill

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ABSTRACT

Media plays a significant role in enhancing students' English language skills, and the development of digital media has provided new learning tools. One such tool, the *Let's Read* application, offers accessible resources for improving speaking abilities. This study aims to assess the effect of the *Let's Read* application on students' speaking proficiency. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group used digital media from the *Let's Read* application, while the control group used printed stories from the same application. The study sample consisted of Grade 10 students, with classes 10.2 and 10.3, each containing 30 students. Data were collected through speaking assessments conducted as pre-tests and post-tests. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25. Inter-rater reliability was assessed with a t-test to check for score consistency between two raters, and hypothesis testing was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U test, due to non-normality and heterogeneity in the data. The results showed that the inter-rater reliability values (Sig. 2-tailed) were all above 0.05, indicating no significant differences between raters' scores, which confirms the data's reliability. Further analysis revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group, with a mean rank score of 36.72 compared to 24.28 for the control group. The Mann-Whitney U test yielded a significance value of 0.005, indicating that the *Let's Read* application effectively improved students' speaking ability.

Keywords: teaching media, let's read application, speaking ability

Introduction

Speaking is a core component of oral communication and it plays a pivotal role in students' language development. Early conceptualisations of speaking emphasise that learners must integrate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation and other speaking-related subskills to communicate effectively (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Linse & Nunan, 2005). More recently, research positions speaking as an interactive and dynamic process: one not only of production but of receiving and processing information in real time for meaning construction (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Tymoshchuk, 2025). Recent findings emphasize that digital platforms can effectively facilitate vocabulary and speaking development through interactive tools (Haque et al., 2024).

Given this complexity, teaching speaking requires deliberate design of learning tasks and appropriate evaluation. Harmer (2007) argues that speaking can be developed through planned activities and clear competency indicators. In today's technology-rich world, digital media are often chosen because they provide flexible, engaging opportunities for learners to practise outside conventional classroom settings. Digital media, defined as digitised content accessible via internet or computer networks (Abraham, 2020), offer new affordances for speaking instruction.

Among digital media, mobile-applications stand out for their anytime-anywhere access, interactive audio-visual features and potential for sustained engagement. One such tool is the *Let's Read* application, originally designed for reading but equipped with audio narration and attractive images. It holds potential for repurposing into speaking practice via extensive speaking activities involving narrative texts. Prior studies of *Let's Read* targeted reading habits (Ermerawati, 2019), vocabulary growth (Mardiah, 2022) and short-story e-books for vocabulary enrichment (Fitriah, 2023). These works establish a baseline, yet none explicitly focus on speaking ability. Meanwhile, empirical studies on mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) show significant effects on speaking skills (Li, 2024; Rajendran & Yunus, 2021) and research on digital storytelling demonstrates positive impact on speaking proficiency (Nair & Md Yunus, 2022; Tymoshchuk, 2025). Students' self-efficacy and motivation have been shown to strongly influence language performance and learning persistence (Apriliyani & Usuludin, 2023).

Hence, there is a clear research gap: the effectiveness of the *Let's Read* application as a media specifically for speaking ability remains unexplored. Accordingly, this study poses the research question: Is there a significant effect of using the *Let's Read* application as media on students' speaking ability? The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of the application in improving speaking proficiency. The scope is limited to the use of the *Let's Read* application in extensive speaking activities and narrative texts.

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Methods

The design of this research is experimental with a quantitative approach, utilizing a quasi-experimental design. According to Trochim (2020), a quasi-experimental design incorporates many features of randomized experimental designs but does not use random assignment. For this study, two classes were chosen: the experimental class and the control class. Collaborative classroom strategies have been found to enhance comprehension and peers' interaction in EFL settings (Rohmah, 2025). The goal of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Let's Read* application in teaching speaking to first-grade students at MAN 2 Gresik. The two groups involved in the research are the experimental group (class 10.2) and the control group (class 10.3). The experimental group used the *Let's Read* media program, which included visualizing fable texts and listening to audio, while the control group received traditional methods using printed stories from the same application.

The independent variable in this study is the use of the *Let's Read* application in teaching speaking, while the dependent variable is the improvement in speaking ability as measured through pre-tests and post-tests. This research was conducted at MAN 2 Gresik, located on Jl. Raya Metatu No. 7, Kecamatan Benjeng, Kabupaten Gresik, East Java. The school has 11 classes, each containing approximately 30 students. The research took place during the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025.

The population for this research comprises the first-grade students of MAN 2 Gresik, with each class consisting of 30 students. Purposive sampling was employed to select two classes, 10.2 and 10.3, as the research sample. These classes were chosen due to their superior facilities, including the availability of an LCD projector, Wi-Fi, and student access to smartphones for learning. These resources were important for ensuring that the experimental group could fully engage with the *Let's Read* application. The research was designed with the aim of completing it within a shorter timeframe.

The instrument used in this study was a speaking test, which included both pre-tests and post-tests. The treatments for the experimental and control classes are outlined in the table below:

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Table 1

Treatment Activities

Experimental Class	Control Class
Opening a. Teacher greets students and checks attendance. b. Teacher invites students to pray together. c. Teacher and students make class agreements. d. Teacher administers pre-test. e. Teacher displays pictures with trigger questions. f. Teacher presents learning objectives. g. Teacher discusses benefits of learning the material. h. Teacher explains learning steps.	Opening a. Teacher greets students and checks attendance. b. Teacher invites students to pray together. c. Teacher and students make class agreements. d. Teacher administers pre-test. e. Teacher displays pictures with trigger questions. f. Teacher presents learning objectives. g. Teacher discusses benefits of learning the material. h. Teacher explains learning steps.

Table 2

Treatment Activities

Experimental Class	Control Class
Building knowledge of the field (BKoF) a. Teacher displays several story covers from *Let's Read* application. b. Teacher introduces the *Let's Read* application, including its features and usage. c. Teacher instructs students to download and use the application. d. Teacher explains narrative text, including social function, structure, and language features. Modeling of Text (MoT) a. Teacher shows an example of a narrative text titled "The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water" from *Let's Read*. b. Teacher instructs students to observe, read, and listen to the audio. c. Teacher clarifies vocabulary questions. d. Teacher and students identify social functions and text structures.	Building knowledge of the field (BKoF) a. Teacher displays narrative story covers from *Let's Read*. b. Teacher explains narrative text social functions, structures, and language features. Modeling of Text (MoT) a. Teacher presents a narrative titled "The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water." b. Teacher guides students to observe and read the story. c. Teacher answers vocabulary questions. d. Teacher and students identify social functions and structures.

Table 3

Treatment activities

Experimental Class	Control Class
Joint Construction of Text (JCoT)	Joint Construction of Text (JCoT) a. The teacher instructs students to form four groups.

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a. The teacher instructs students to form four groups. b. The teacher directs students to observe, read silently, and listen to the audio of the story "*Spirit of Journey*" from the *Let's Read* application. c. The teacher guides students to identify the social function, generic structure, language features, and moral value of the story in their groups. d. The teacher and students discuss the results of their analysis, including the structure, language features, social functions, and moral values. e. The teacher encourages students to reflect on how the elements of the story contribute to its meaning.	b. The teacher directs students to observe, read silently, and engage with the story "*Spirit of Journey*" (printed version adapted from the *Let's Read* application). c. The teacher guides students to identify the social function, generic structure, language features, and moral value of the story in their groups. d. The teacher and students discuss the results of their analysis, including the structure, language features, social functions, and moral values. e. The teacher encourages students to reflect on how the elements of the story contribute to its meaning.

Table 4

Treatment activities

Experimental Class	Control Class
Independent Construction of Text (ICT) a. The teacher asks students to individually retell the narrative story they selected from the *Let's Read* application. b. Each student is given 5 minutes to retell the story, focusing on elements such as plot, characters, setting, and the moral value of the story. c. The teacher assesses students' performance using a speaking rubric, evaluating fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and accuracy. d. The teacher provides individualized feedback to students after their retelling.	Independent Construction of Text (ICT) a. The teacher asks students to individually retell the narrative story they selected from the printed version of the *Let's Read* story. b. Each student is given 5 minutes to retell the story, focusing on elements such as plot, characters, setting, and the moral value of the story. c. The teacher assesses students' performance using a speaking rubric, evaluating fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and accuracy. d. The teacher provides individualized feedback to students after their retelling.

After the *Independent Construction of Text (ICT)* activity, the students were assessed individually by the teacher. In the experimental class, students were asked to retell the narrative story they had selected using the *Let's Read* application. The same procedure was applied to the control class, where students retold the story selected from the printed version of the *Let's Read* application. The retelling focused on key narrative elements such as the plot, characters, setting, and the moral lesson of the story. Each student was allotted 5 minutes to

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present their retelling. This exercise aimed to assess the students' speaking fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and accuracy in delivering the content of the story.

The assessment was conducted using a detailed speaking rubric, which evaluated four key aspects: fluency, content, pronunciation, and accuracy. Each aspect was scored on a scale of 1 to 5, and the maximum total score for each student was 25 points. Afterward, the teacher provided individualized feedback, allowing students to understand their strengths and areas for improvement. This approach not only measured the students' ability to retell the story but also helped them practice critical thinking and speaking skills. As stated by Hibatulloh et al. (2024), task-based approaches provide structured opportunities for learners to practice speaking in authentic contexts.

For data analysis, the pre-test and post-test scores were compared to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the differences in speaking performance between the experimental and control groups. This non-parametric test was chosen because the data did not meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, making the Mann-Whitney U test the appropriate statistical method for this analysis. The significance level was set at 0.05 to determine whether the use of the *Let's Read* application had a statistically significant impact on students' speaking abilities.

Result and Discussion

1. The Result of Pre-Test

The pre-test was administered to measure students' speaking ability before the treatment was given to both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group took the pre-test on January 23, 2025, and the control group took it on January 24, 2025. Table 5 presents the summary of the pre-test results for both the experimental and control groups.

Table 5

Pre-test results of experimental and control groups

Class	N	Sum	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance
Control Class	30	1724	57.47	58.00	60	7.464	55.706
Experimental Class	30	1872	62.40	64.00	64	7.015	49.214

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The pre-test descriptive statistics indicate that both groups consist of 30 students. The maximum score for both groups was 72, with the minimum score being 48 for both. The experimental group had a higher mean score of 62.40 compared to the control group's mean score of 57.47. Additionally, the experimental group had a median value of 64.00, while the control group had a median of 58.00. The mode value for the experimental group was 64, and for the control group, it was 60. The standard deviation for the experimental group was 7.015, while for the control group, it was 7.464, indicating a slightly higher variation in scores in the control group.

2. The Result of Post-Test

The post-test was conducted after the treatments were given to both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group took the post-test on February 6, 2025, and the control group on February 14, 2025. Table 6 presents the summary of the post-test results.

Table 6

The Result of Post-Test Statistics

Class	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance	Minimum	Maximum	Sum
Control Class	30	62.13	60.00	60	8.050	64.809	48	76	1864
Experimental Class	30	67.87	68.00	64	6.516	42.464	52	76	2036

The descriptive statistics for the post-test show that the maximum score for both groups was 76. The minimum score for the experimental group was 52, while the control group's minimum score was 48. The experimental group had a higher mean score of 67.87 compared to the control group's mean score of 62.13. The median value for the experimental group was 68.00, while for the control group, it was 60.00. The mode value for the experimental group was 64, and for the control group, it was 60. The standard deviation for the experimental group was 6.516, compared to 8.050 for the control group, indicating less variability in the experimental group's scores.

3. Inter-Rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability measures the level of agreement between two raters who score or evaluate the same test. In this study, two raters assessed the students' speaking abilities. The researcher was the first rater, and a colleague acted as the second rater. The inter-rater

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reliability for both the pre-test and post-test was evaluated using the T-test. Table 5 shows the inter-rater reliability for both the experimental and control groups.

- For the pre-test experimental group (Table 5), the mean score for rater 1 was 62.40, and for rater 2 it was 61.07. The T-test results (Sig. = 0.453) indicated no significant difference between the scores given by the two raters, confirming that the reliability was satisfactory.
- For the post-test experimental group (Table 6), the mean score for rater 1 was 67.87, and for rater 2 it was 65.33. The T-test results (Sig. = 0.150) showed no significant difference between the raters' scores, ensuring reliable assessments.
- For the pre-test control group (Table 5), the mean score for rater 1 was 57.47, and for rater 2 it was 56.93. The T-test results (Sig. = 0.768) also indicated no significant difference between the scores.
- For the post-test control group (Table 6), the mean score for rater 1 was 62.13, and for rater 2 it was 60.40. Again, the T-test results (Sig. = 0.397) showed no significant difference, further confirming the reliability of the assessments.

4. The Result of Hypothesis Testing

To verify the hypothesis of this study, the was used. The test results are shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7

The Result of Rank Mann-Whitney U Test

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Control Class	30	24.28	728.50
Experimental Class	30	36.72	1101.50

Table 8

The Result of Mann-Whitney U Test

Test Statistics	Value
Mann-Whitney U	263.500
Wilcoxon W	728.500
Z	-2.791
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005

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The Mann-Whitney U test showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, with a significance value of 0.005 (which is less than the 0.05 threshold). This indicates that the *Let's Read* application significantly improved speaking ability compared to the traditional printed material.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the *Let's Read* application is effective in improving students' speaking skills. The Mann-Whitney U test results showed that the experimental group had a significantly higher mean rank compared to the control group, supporting the effectiveness of the application in teaching speaking. The pre-test and post-test data revealed that the experimental group showed notable improvement in speaking ability after using the *Let's Read* application, as evidenced by the higher mean, median, and mode scores compared to the control group.

This finding aligns with Richard and Renandya (2002), who emphasize the importance of speaking in communication. The improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary as a result of using *Let's Read* is consistent with Harmer (2001), who asserts that pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition are essential for enhancing speaking abilities. Furthermore, the findings also support Mardiah's (2022) research, which highlighted the effectiveness of the *Let's Read* application in vocabulary teaching, as demonstrated by the increase in vocabulary scores in this study.

Moreover, the use of digital media, such as the *Let's Read* application, has been shown to increase students' interest in learning. As Abraham (2020) notes, digital media is often preferred because it is engaging and effective, enhancing the learning experience. This aligns with the findings of Sanaky (2009), who argues that digital media motivates students, makes learning more interesting, and helps clarify complex material. Further, contextualized learning media can improve students' motivation and engagement in English classes (Darussalam & Ningrum, 2023). The effectiveness of language learning is also influenced by the broader support system around students, such as parental involvement (Nauvianti, 2025). Students in the experimental group expressed greater interest and engagement with speaking tasks due

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to the interactive features of the *Let's Read* application. Group-based digital activities foster collaboration and communication among learners (Sholikhah & Ningsih, 2023). Emotional engagement is crucial for sustaining students' positive perspectives and willingness to communicate (Wulansari & Fakhrurriana, 2024).

Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study "There is a significant difference in speaking skills between students who are taught using narrative stories from the *Let's Read* application and students who are taught using printed narrative stories" was accepted. The study demonstrated that the *Let's Read* application is an effective tool for improving speaking skills in the classroom.

Conclusion

Following the presentation of the results and discussion in the previous chapter, this chapter summarizes the findings and concludes that the use of the *Let's Read* application is highly effective in improving students' speaking ability. This conclusion is supported by the data from the pre-test and post-test results in both the control and experimental groups.

In the experimental group, the mean rank of the post-test was 36.72, while the control group had a mean rank of 24.28. This indicates a notable improvement in speaking ability in the experimental group compared to the control group. Furthermore, the inter-rater reliability analysis revealed no significant difference between the scores of the two raters, as evidenced by the pre-test and post-test values for both groups (pre-test control: 0.768, post-test control: 0.397, pre-test experimental: 0.453, and post-test experimental: 0.150). These results indicate strong agreement between the raters, ensuring the reliability of the assessments.

Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U hypothesis test yielded a significance value of 0.005, which is below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates a significant difference between the experimental group, which used the *Let's Read* application, and the control group, which used printed narrative stories. Consequently, the results show that the *Let's Read* application effectively improves students' speaking ability.

Based on these conclusions, the researcher recommends that English teachers continue to incorporate digital media such as the *Let's Read* application in their teaching to

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help students expand their vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and enhance both their reading and speaking skills. Teachers should also explore other features within the application and select engaging stories to maintain student interest and motivation during lessons.

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