

STUDENTS PERCEPTION ON THE USE “ELSA SPEAK” APPLICATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Seluler (MALL) telah merevolusi pemerolehan bahasa dengan menawarkan pengalaman belajar yang fleksibel dan interaktif. Penelitian ini menyelidiki persepsi siswa tentang penggunaan aplikasi ELSA Speak dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas penggunaan aplikasi ELSA Speak dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Desain deskriptif kualitatif digunakan, memanfaatkan kuesioner tertutup dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Penelitian ini dilakukan di lingkungan tertentu dengan sepuluh peserta, terdiri dari enam laki-laki dan empat perempuan. Kuesioner terdiri dari tema-tema tentang efektivitas yang dirasakan dan motivasi belajar, sementara pedoman wawancara mengeksplorasi empat tema: pengalaman siswa, manfaat yang dirasakan, tantangan, dan saran untuk perbaikan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa umumnya memiliki persepsi positif terhadap ELSA Speak, menganggapnya mudah diakses dan sangat efektif, terutama untuk meningkatkan pelafalan, motivasi belajar, dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara. Antarmuka aplikasi yang ramah pengguna dan umpan balik langsung merupakan kontributor signifikan terhadap efektivitas yang dirasakan, mendorong peningkatan motivasi dan keterlibatan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa ELSA Speak adalah sumber daya tambahan yang berharga dalam pemerolehan bahasa, mendorong keterlibatan berkelanjutan dan sikap positif terhadap pembelajaran.

Kata kunci : Elsa Speak, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berbasis Seluler, Pelafalan Bahasa Inggris.

ABSTRACT

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has revolutionized language acquisition by offering flexible and interactive learning experiences. This study investigates students' perceptions of using the ELSA Speak application in English language learning. The research aims to explore the effectiveness of using ELSA Speak application in learning English. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, utilizing both close-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The research was conducted in a specific setting with ten participants, comprising six males and four females. The questionnaire consisted of themes on perceived effectiveness and learning motivation, while the interview guideline explored four themes: student experience, perceived benefits, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Findings indicate that students generally hold positive perceptions of ELSA Speak, finding it accessible and highly effective, particularly for improving pronunciation, learning motivation and boosting speaking confidence. The application's user-friendly interface and immediate feedback were significant contributors to its perceived efficacy, fostering enhanced motivation and engagement. The study concludes that ELSA Speak is a valuable supplementary resource in language acquisition, promoting sustained engagement and a positive attitude towards learning.

Keywords: ELSA Speak, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, English Pronunciation.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) within English language education has profoundly reshaped how students acquire linguistic competencies. By harnessing the capabilities of mobile technology, MALL facilitates adaptable, individualized, and highly interactive learning experiences. Digital tools, such as specialized mobile applications and conversational chatbots, empower learners to practice crucial language skills—including listening comprehension, oral production, reading fluency, and written expression—both within structured classroom settings and through independent study. Extensive research consistently demonstrates that MALL significantly boosts learners' engagement, motivation, and self-directed learning, while simultaneously enhancing proficiency in areas like pronunciation and vocabulary. For instance, a meta-analysis by Hussain and Al-Harbi (2023) affirmed the substantial positive impact of MALL on improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills, highlighting its overall effectiveness in diverse educational contexts.

Among the various applications within Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), ELSA Speak stands out as a prominent AI-powered tool. It has emerged as a significant resource in English language instruction, particularly for enhancing spoken proficiency. ELSA offers dynamic features such as real-time pronunciation feedback, detailed fluency analysis, and customized lessons meticulously crafted to address individual learning needs. Numerous studies have underscored its efficacy in advancing students' speaking abilities. For example, Al-Harbi (2024) observed that Saudi university students utilizing ELSA demonstrated marked improvements across several speaking domains, including articulation, rhythm, and lexical richness. Similarly, Nguyen (2022) reported that EFL learners in Vietnam experienced notable gains in their pronunciation skills after consistent engagement with the ELSA application, reinforcing its potential as an effective, AI-driven resource for English language learners globally.

Within the Indonesian high school context, the ELSA Speak application has

proven to be an effective instrument for augmenting students' English language capabilities. ELSA provides students with ample opportunities for repetitive and interactive speaking practice, made possible by AI features that offer immediate pronunciation analysis and adapt to personalized learning trajectories. A 2023 study by Kusumawati and Handayani at an Indonesian senior high school noted significant enhancements in students' speaking skills, leading to a measurable increase in their average scores after intervention. Additionally, Sari and Nurjanah (2024) emphasized that ELSA not only improved speaking proficiency but also fostered greater self-confidence among students when using English in classroom interactions. These collective findings underscore ELSA's viability as a practical and accessible solution for addressing common instructional challenges in English language learning within Indonesian high schools.

Despite its advantages, the application of ELSA in the Indonesian learning process frequently encounters various challenges. A primary obstacle often experienced by students is difficulty in speaking English, particularly stemming from a limited vocabulary. This poses a significant hurdle for learners striving to enhance their interactive communication skills and comprehend lesson material effectively. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to increasing students' English language proficiency. A study by Wulandari and Hidayat (2023) highlights that while ELSA contributes to expanding vocabulary and improving oral communication, the application also faces limitations such as challenges in recognizing non-native accents and providing comprehensive grammar lessons. To gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences and perceptions regarding the program, this research will conduct a study exploring their views on using ELSA in the classroom.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach. The research was conducted at a university in Bogor, involving five students from the English Education program as participants. All participants had been actively using the Duolingo application for

more than one month. The limited number of participants was deliberately chosen to allow the researcher to gather in-depth information about individual experiences.

Data were collected using two primary techniques: closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to measure participants' perceptions of Duolingo's gamification features.

Meanwhile, the interviews aimed to gain deeper qualitative insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives on the effectiveness of gamification in supporting English language learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher will discuss the results of the study by focusing on the research purposes. The study aims to know how students' perception to work the use ELSA Speak in learning English. To find out the results, researcher used questionnaires and interviews guideline as instruments. To fulfill the findings, researchers used questionnaires and interviews as an instrument. This section will briefly discuss the overall results.

Students' perception to work the use ELSA Speak in learning English.

The research findings indicate that students generally hold a positive view of using ELSA Speak for learning English. Based on questionnaire results, a significant number of participants agreed that ELSA Speak was easy to use and accessible during classroom activities, they frequently cited the application's ease of use as a significant factor contributing to their positive reception. This accessibility is a common advantage of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, as highlighted by Alisoy and Sadig (2024), who note how such apps make learning readily available. Furthermore, our research clearly demonstrated that ELSA Speak enhances English pronunciation. This aligns with the understanding that AI-powered language applications, like ELSA Speak, are crucial for improving speaking skills and fostering confidence through features such as personalized feedback and interactive exercises (Tran & Vu, 2024).

The app's capability to provide precise feedback on spoken sounds is particularly beneficial, especially when considering the common errors Indonesian speakers make when articulating English consonant sounds (Pakpahan, 2023). Other studies also suggest that AI-based applications can significantly boost students' pronunciation accuracy and intonation (Chen, Zhang, & Wang, 2023). Additionally, personalized learning facilitated by AI can address specific student challenges, such as diverse accents, thereby making the overall learning process more effective (Nuraini, Setyawan, & Pambayun, 2024).

Beyond its user-friendliness and pronunciation benefits, students highly valued the clarity and utility of the feedback provided by ELSA Speak. They found that direct and actionable advice is fundamental for effective language learning. This observation is consistent with the idea that language applications offering immediate feedback significantly enhance student motivation and engagement (Gao & Zhang, 2021). The app's comprehensive support for improving English speaking skills was also well-received. Students recognized its contribution to their understanding of correct English speech patterns and their development of vocabulary and pronunciation. This broad support for speaking skills reinforces the notion that ELSA Speak provides practice tailored to individual learning needs, a major advantage of mobile-based learning tools (Pérez-Paredes & Zhang, 2022).

ELSA Speak also plays a significant role in making English practice more enjoyable and engaging, which subsequently boosts learning motivation (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). This increased engagement, in turn, helps students feel more confident speaking English, thereby improving their self-assurance in language learning. Moreover, ELSA Speak encourages more frequent English speaking practice, supporting the idea that engaging digital tools can lead to regular language use. The sustained involvement and motivation are further strengthened by students generally agreeing that ELSA Speak makes learning English a more enjoyable experience. The app's intuitive design and interactive features are key to making learning both pleasant and

accessible. Ultimately, these positive experiences lead to students being very willing to recommend ELSA Speak to their peers for English learning. This strong positive sentiment underscores the effectiveness and value of ELSA Speak as a language learning tool. These findings generally concur with research showing that technology-assisted language learning tools, like ELSA Speak, offer personalized feedback that helps students overcome common difficulties, which then boosts their confidence and improves their learning outcomes (Arvanitis & Krystalli, 2021).

However, despite these clear advantages, the study also identified some user challenges, particularly concerning access and technical limitations. The necessity to purchase premium features emerged as a potential financial barrier for some students, which could hinder their consistent practice. Additionally, occasional inaccuracies in the AI voice recognition system were a source of frustration, potentially diminishing the effectiveness of pronunciation training. These issues are common in AI-powered language learning, where the accuracy of speech recognition still requires substantial improvement, especially for non-native speakers with diverse accents (Chen, Zhang, & Wang, 2023). Nevertheless, these challenges did not deter the students. Instead, they often motivated them to persevere and adapt, viewing obstacles as opportunities to further refine their English skills. This resilience highlights the importance of continuous technological advancement and ensuring equitable access to fully leverage applications like ELSA Speak for effective language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study thoroughly investigated students' perceptions regarding the use of ELSA Speak in English language learning, revealing a largely positive perception. The findings consistently highlight that students find ELSA Speak to be an accessible and highly effective tool, particularly for improving pronunciation, motivation and confidence in speaking English. The application's user-friendly interface and its provision of clear, immediate feedback from AI were identified as key factors contributing to its perceived efficacy. This

positive reception underscores ELSA Speak's potential as a valuable supplementary resource in language acquisition, aligning with broader trends in mobile-assisted language learning that emphasize convenience and personalized feedback.

Furthermore, the research indicates that ELSA Speak significantly contributes to enhancing student motivation and engagement in English language practice. The interactive nature of the application transforms routine language drills into a more enjoyable and stimulating experience, encouraging students to engage more frequently with English. This sustained engagement not only aids in skill development but also cultivates a more positive attitude towards language learning, ultimately empowering students to take greater ownership of their learning journey. The high willingness of students to recommend ELSA Speak to their peers further validates its perceived utility and positive impact on their learning experiences.

Despite its pronounced benefits, the study also identified practical challenges that influence the overall user experience. These include financial barriers associated with access to premium features and occasional inaccuracies in the AI voice recognition system. While these limitations can cause frustration, they do not diminish students' overall positive perception of ELSA Speak. Instead, students often demonstrate resilience and adaptability, viewing these obstacles as opportunities for further learning and skill refinement. Addressing these challenges through continuous technological improvements and promoting equitable access will be crucial for maximizing ELSA Speak's potential as a universally beneficial language learning instrument.

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