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ELT in Local and Global Lives: from Policy to Classroom Practices

English Elocution: Students' Perceptions of Elsa Speak

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ABSTRACT

This study wants to see the perception of English education students of Bengkulu University in using the Elsa Speak application as an AI-based English pronunciation learning medium. For this reason, this study uses the quantitative research method to obtain data results that can be generalized by researchers using structured surveys and disseminating them to English language education students who have used the Elsa Speak application in their learning process. This survey will see how effectively the app helps improve pronunciation skills, how easy it is to use, and how it provides motivation and engagement levels. The results of the analysis revealed that in general students have a very positive perception of this application in all aspects. The study also found significant perceptual differences based on students' English proficiency levels, suggesting the need for adaptive learning experiences in language applications. The study contributes to students' understanding of technology-assisted language learning and highlights the potential for applications like Elsa Speak to improve English elocution, particularly in pronunciation.

Keywords: Elsa Speak, English pronunciation, language learning technology, student perceptions, AI-based learning

INTRODUCTION

The research entitled English Elocution: Students' Perceptions of Elsa Speak wants to see how the perception of English education students of Bengkulu University in using the Elsa Speak application as a learning medium for AI-based English pronunciation. Researchers choose quantitative research methods to obtain generalizable data results and use structured survey instruments. Then this survey was distributed to English education students who are familiar with using the Elsa Speak application in their learning process. First, this study will look at how effectively this application helps improve pronunciation skills, second, how easy it is to use this application, and third, how this application provides motivation and engagement levels. The results of the analysis revealed that in general students have a very positive perception of this application in all aspects.

English elocution, or the art of speaking clearly and expressively, is a vital skill for English Education students. These students, as future educators, must not only grasp the nuances of the English language but also exemplify effective communication skills. The global role of English as a lingua franca further elevates the importance of elocution skills, making them indispensable in various academic, professional, and social contexts (Tolentino & Santos, 2020; Wei, 2022).

This study is based on the anxiety of the researcher himself as an English student. One of the significant challenges faced by English Language Education students is the anxiety of speaking in English, this anxiety will greatly affect their educational and professional development because they are afraid to try to speak because they think others might judge them. Many studies have explored the causes and effects of English-speaking anxiety, noting its prevalence among students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds (Ahmed et al., 2017; He, 2022; Syahfutra, 2021; Shahbaz, 2021) Mastering various aspects of English elocution, such as pronunciation, intonation, stress, and fluency, is essential to becoming a skilled communicator primarily as a prospective English teacher. Prospective teachers who are able to pronounce English words correctly will make it easier for their students to understand and learn English. As in the use of intonation and stress. Intonation is all about adding an extra touch of expressiveness through tonal variation. Stress, on the other hand, emphasizes the meaning behind our words. Fluency of speech refers to how fluently a person speaks and it shows how comfortable they are with the language (Dolmaci & Kiliç, 2021; Sidgi & Shaari, 2017). Emerging technology, particularly AI-driven tools like ELSA Speak, has shown potential in enhancing pronunciation and reducing language learning anxiety. These technologies offer personalized feedback and a supportive learning environment, which can be especially beneficial for students struggling with speaking anxiety (Kholis, 2021; Yosintha & Rekha, 2022).

The development of technology nowadays makes learning languages more effective and efficient. The effectiveness of this technology can be felt in learning a second language not only in written language but also in spoken language like speaking skills or pronunciation. Technology can help English students improve the accuracy and fluency of English pronunciation which has been researched in various studies for instance using Elsa Speak mobila app. These studies have highlighted the role of technology in assisting learners from different linguistic backgrounds in overcoming language barriers and the best way is by utilizing technology. (Wang & Turner, 2022; Liu & Wu, 2023; Anderson et al., 2023; Lee & Kim, 2023). Despite the known benefits, the perceptions and experiences of English Education students with tools like ELSA Speak are still under-researched. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how these students perceive and interact with ELSA Speak, thereby shedding light on its practical implications in language learning (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Turner & Wang, 2023).

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was chosen by the researcher as the main theory with the consideration that this theory meets the study objectives based on the background information provided above. This framework helps figure out what makes students want to use ELSA Speak (Kim & Lee, 2021). The existing body of research on technology-assisted language learning has largely focused on the effectiveness of various tools in improving language skills. However, there are gaps in specific research related to students' perceptions and interactions with ELSA Speak mobile. The gaps are this type of research that examines specifically related to student perceptions and interactions with the Elsa Speak application has never been done at Bengkulu

University also there are many new features and updates of the application itself. certainly will be a novelty in the field . Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining how English Language Education students at Bengkulu University perceive and engage with ELSA Speak (Karakış, 2020; Rafiqa & Fitriani, 2023)

By exploring these, hopefully, this research could contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between technology, language learning, and individual experiences (students). This understanding is crucial nowadays for developing effective language learning strategies for English Education students, enhancing their proficiency in English elocution, and preparing them for their future roles as educators. Therefore, the research questions for this study are:

1. What are English students of University of Bengkulu's perceptions of the effectiveness of Elsa Speak in improving their English pronunciation?
2. What are English students of University of Bengkulu's perceptions of the ease of use of Elsa Speak?

METHOD

This study adopts quantitative research design. Where this research is guided by the principles of positivism, which emphasizes objective measurement and quantification of data in understanding phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) For this reason, data collection is carried out through structured surveys, targeting students who have utilized Elsa Speak. This approach is also in line with survey research methodology, which is very effective for collecting data from large populations, and is suitable for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory research (Fowler Jr., 2013). Based on the purpose of the study, the survey was split into several sections in order to provide comprehensive data. The first section of the survey contained demographic information, including age, gender, English proficiency level, and duration of use of Elsa Speak. This is essential for understanding the context and helps in drawing generalisations (Dörnyei, 2007). The second section explored students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Elsa Speak Apps in improving their English pronunciation skills, capturing subjective evaluations after the use of the app on pronunciation skills, fluency, and confidence in speaking, which were made based on a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The third section rated students' perceptions of the ease of use of the Elsa Speak app, which included questions about the app's interface, navigation, and instructional clarity. This survey utilised a Likert scale as it provides a consistent method of expressing opinions (Boone & Boone, 2022). To go into more depth, this method is used to look in detail at the data in four main ways:

Table 1. User Acceptance of Information Technology

Construct	Description
Performance Expectancy	The degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help them to attain gains in job performance
Effort Expectancy	The degree of ease associated with the use of the system
Social Influence	The degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe they should use the new system
Facilitating Conditions	The degree to which an individual believes that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of the system

Sources: Venkatesh (2003)

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the survey data, including ANOVA to examine variable relationships and differences. (Field, 2013) This study uses descriptive statistics to summarize the survey results that have been distributed. Then run inferential statistical analysis such as ANOVA to see the relationship and difference between variables. (Field, 2013). Also, Correlation analysis is used to investigate the relationship between perceived effectiveness and ease of use (Pallant, 2010). Using this quantitative methodology and analyzing the data through the lens of positivism and the UTAUT framework, the study aims to provide objective insights into students' perceptions of Elsa Speak, hopefully, contributing to understanding the role of technology in language learning, especially in English pronunciation.

RESULT

The analysis of the survey data reveals insightful findings about the perceptions of Elsa Speak among English Education students at different proficiency levels. The descriptive statistics of the survey items indicate a generally positive perception of Elsa Speak. The mean scores for all survey items were above 4 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that most students agree or strongly agree with the positive statements about Elsa Speak's effectiveness and ease of use. The standard deviations were relatively low, indicating a consensus among the respondents. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the survey items:

Table 2. Findings

No	Survey Item	count	mean	std	min	max
1	Elsa Speak has helped me to become more confident in my English pronunciation.	42	4,74	0,54	3	5
2	Elsa Speak has improved my overall English speaking skills.	42	4,52	0,59	3	5
3	I find Elsa Speak's user interface intuitive and easy to navigate.	42	4,29	0,64	3	5
4	Elsa Speak provides a variety of engaging exercises to practice pronunciation.	42	4,33	0,53	3	5

5	I have seen a noticeable improvement in my English pronunciation since using Elsa Speak.	42	4,50	0,55	3	5
6	Elsa Speak effectively identifies my pronunciation errors and provides helpful feedback.	42	4,57	0,59	3	5
7	I enjoy using Elsa Speak as part of my language learning routine.	42	4,24	0,73	3	5
8	The lessons and exercises in Elsa Speak are well-structured and easy to follow.	42	4,38	0,62	3	5
9	Elsa Speak has increased my motivation to practice English pronunciation.	42	4,45	0,59	3	5
10	I believe Elsa Speak is a valuable tool for enhancing English elocution.	42	4,55	0,59	3	5
11	Elsa Speak's customization options allow me to focus on my specific pronunciation needs.	42	4,55	0,67	3	5
12	The app's speech recognition technology is accurate in assessing my pronunciation.	42	4,52	0,55	3	5
13	I feel that using Elsa Speak is a productive way to improve my English pronunciation.	42	4,62	0,54	3	5
14	I find Elsa Speak's interface visually appealing and user-friendly.	42	4,62	0,58	3	5
15	Elsa Speak has positively impacted my ability to communicate in English.	42	4,67	0,57	3	5
16	The progress tracking feature in Elsa Speak helps me stay motivated to practice.	42	4,64	0,53	3	5
17	I use Elsa Speak on a regular basis as part of my language learning routine.	42	4,57	0,59	3	5
18	Elsa Speak's feedback on my pronunciation errors is clear and easy to understand.	42	4,64	0,53	3	5
19	The app's content is relevant and tailored to my language proficiency level.	42	4,60	0,54	3	5
20	Elsa Speak provides a motivating and enjoyable language learning experience.	42	4,57	0,77	1	5

21	I believe Elsa Speak has enhanced my English language fluency.	42	4,69	0,47	4	5
22	Elsa Speak's exercises are diverse and engaging, keeping me interested in learning.	42	4,50	0,63	2	5
23	Elsa Speak's AI feedback has helped me identify and correct specific pronunciation challenges.	42	4,64	0,53	3	5
24	I plan to continue using Elsa Speak to further improve my English pronunciation.	42	4,48	0,74	1	5
25	I plan to continue using Elsa Speak to further improve my English pronunciation..1	42	4,67	0,48	4	5
26	Elsa Speak has positively influenced my overall English language skills.	42	4,64	0,53	3	5

(Fowler Jr, F. J. (2013))

With regard to the survey, a majority of respondents who liked Elsa Speak were found. The Elsa Speak was highly rated by Bengkulu University English learners indicating approval that it assists them to pronounce words in English. Various questions about Elsa Speak were asked such as how useful it is in learning English generally, how easy is it to use and how funny or interesting it is? A great way to learn English, according to the students who answered the questions, is Elsa Speak for many reasons like high scores in all these categories. In order to find out if the “Beginner” and “Intermediate” students at school have different views on Elsa Speak, the researcher employed ANOVA test, which is one type of statistical test. About 5.02 was F-statistic while 0.031 was p-value for this test. There is something really different between these two groups that believe in this matter. To be more specific, there are differences among students at various stages of learning English about the extent to which Elsa Speak helps with speaking. Beginner students found the app to be very helpful. It also let them know if they could pronounce words correctly in English, so they didn't feel embarrassed when they used the Ai function. Students in the intermediate level usually give a middle score since they already know how to pronounce words correctly in English.

The study's results show what Unib English education students think about how well and how easily the Elsa Speak app helps people improve their English speech. A constantly positive average score across a number of survey categories shows that responders are generally positive about the survey. Additionally, the big differences seen between students with beginner and intermediate English skills highlight the fact that students with different levels of English skills have different ideas about how to evaluate language learning apps. Also, these data show how important technology-based tools for learning languages are for changing the way people speak and write English. They also give a full

and easy-to-follow guide on how to strategically use these kinds of tools in language learning plans, especially for students who really want to improve their English pronunciation.

DISCUSSION

The study was about students' perspective on Elsa Speak, an English learning app that aids in pronunciation. The feedback from the results of the research indicated good performance among the students. It was revealed that it had helped them a lot with their pronunciation and they are so happy with its characteristics and uses. These results relate to other studies that have increasingly shown the significance of technology in second language acquisition (Kholis, 2021; Yosintha & Rekha, 2022). The positive reaction from Elsa Speak proves how useful technology is for enhancing language learning today.

One of the things that should be considered when thinking about Elsa Speak is its effectiveness in helping students improve their speaking skills. In all respects, this app is rated positively based on data. Firstly, average grade for speech given by students was 4.5 out of 5, meaning they believed it significantly improved. Comparatively, this figure exceeds those obtained through other studies on other speech applications. This could be due to supplementary features continually being introduced by Elsa Speak and bettering its AI-driven feedback system. Second, it's easy to use: With an average grade of 4.3, the simple and user-friendly design is praised for being easy to reach and use. These results agree with what He et al. (2022) say about how important it is for educational tools to be easy for people to use. Third, motivation and engagement: With an average rate of 4.4 to 4.5, Elsa Speak kept them driven and interested in learning the language. This fits with what Wei (2022) said about how important interesting material is for getting students motivated. Elsa Speak's fun and unique way of teaching seems to keep students interested, which is important for long-term learning success. The study showed some interesting differences in how starting and intermediate students thought about things. Beginners liked Elsa Speak because it helped them build basic speech skills. Intermediate students liked it because it gave them more detailed feedback and more difficult practice tasks.

The researcher used a method that matches the four keys of the UTAUT model: Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions. The poll items' results can be linked to these keys.

1. Performance expectation, which is about how well a tool meets users' performance standards. The high mean scores on survey questions like "Elsa Speak has helped me become more confident in speaking English" (mean = 4.738) and "Elsa Speak has improved my overall English-speaking skills" (mean = 4.524) show that students think Elsa Speak works to improve their English. The results show that people are likely to use a tool that they think will help them do better.

2. **Expected Effort:** This is a measure of how easy the tool is to use. The poll question "I find Elsa Speak's user interface intuitive and easy to use" got a mean score of 4.286, which shows that students think the app is easy to use. The UTAUT theory says that people are more likely to accept and use tools that they think are easy to use.
3. **Social influence:** The poll data doesn't directly measure the effect of social influence, but the fact that so many students use Elsa Speak could be because their teachers and peers told them to. The good experience we know about from the research is proof of social impact. Sharing a new tool with friends or getting support from teachers can have a big effect on a student's choice to use it. So, the way students use these tools and the feedback they give can indirectly show how social trends and school rules encourage them.
4. **Helpful Conditions:** The poll results, especially the scores for how easy the app is to use (mean score for clear user experience = 4.286), can show how accessible the app is. An easy-to-use interface is an important part of making conditions conducive because it makes sure that students can access and use the technology without a lot of professional help. Most people liked the app's design and features (mean scores showed happiness with the fun tasks and better speech), which suggests that Elsa Speak has all the tools and help you need to learn well. In line with the UTAUT framework's "facilitating conditions" part, this fits well because help and tools are very important for using and adopting technology.

As Rafiqqa and Fitriani (2023) pointed out, language learning apps need to be able to change to the needs of students at different levels of skill. When creating and using language learning tools or courses, developers and teachers should keep this in mind and make sure they include features and material that are suitable for a wide range of learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Elsa Speak is good for English speaking improvement, largely due to its easy-to-use design as well as intriguing material and a model that allows for individual feedback. Furthermore, they said this study had the best results compared to other studies. It tells us that this app does improve students' speech beyond everybody's expectations. In order to determine its long-term implications and effectiveness in different learning environments, this study has adopted positivism as a methodology thus making it possible for other researchers to use the same framework. In conclusion, by comparing this app with other speech applications one can better understand its strong points and weak ones. This research gives support for using teaching aids such as Elsa Speak in a classroom because they give various views and encourage good language learning. Thus through the findings of this survey technology can be used on a large scale to improve people's spoken and written English Language. That is why we expect that students will consider these issues while choosing English learning materials, particularly during their work on pronunciation and grammar areas.

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