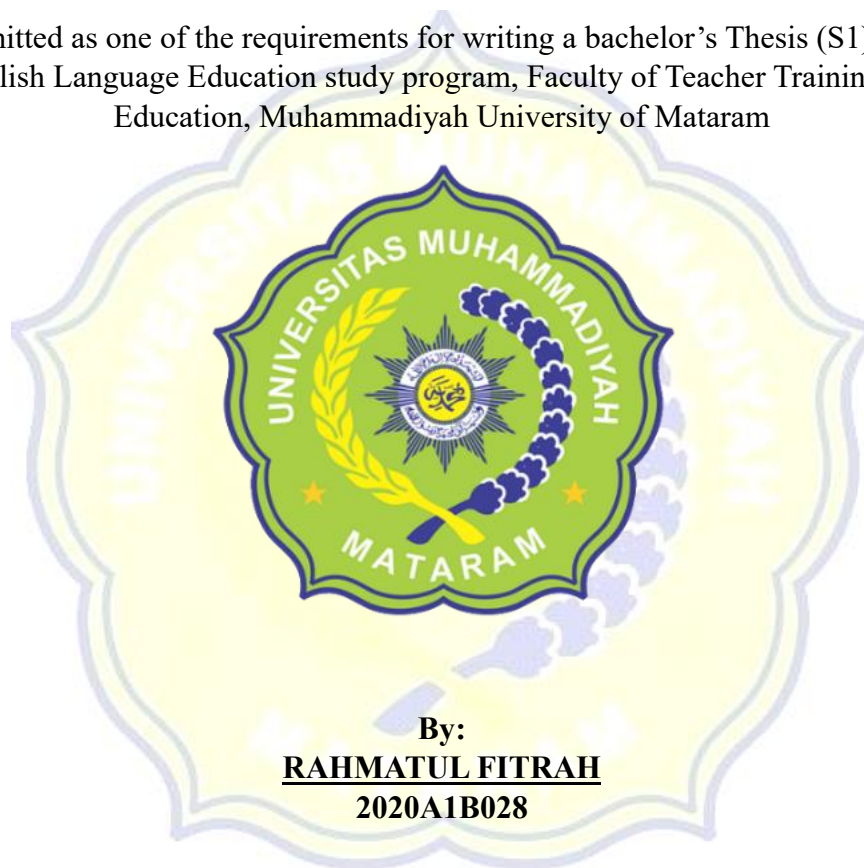# THESIS

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF USING THE ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH-SPEAKING

Submitted as one of the requirements for writing a bachelor's Thesis (S1) in the English Language Education study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Mataram

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ABSTRAK

ELSA Speak merupakan aplikasi seluler yang ditujukan untuk membantu orang-orang yang bukan penutur asli bahasa Inggris dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pengucapan dan berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa terhadap efektivitas aplikasi ELSA Speak dalam mengembangkan dan mempelajari keterampilan berbicara mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif, yang datanya dikumpulkan dari wawancara dan observasi selama dua minggu. Partisipan yang mengikuti penelitian ini adalah 12 mahasiswa semester dua program studi bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram. Dalam memperoleh data, peneliti menggunakan wawancara (wawancara semi terstruktur), observasi dan kuesioner. Setelah selesai melakukan wawancara, hasilnya diuraikan dan dianalisis oleh peneliti. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Aplikasi ELSA Speak memberikan dampak yang baik bagi mahasiswa dalam belajar dan mengembangkan berbicara berdasarkan persepsi mereka. Secara ringkas, hasil tersebut juga menunjukkan beberapa kelebihan (ada berbagai topik percakapan yang dapat Anda pilih dan coba untuk latihan berbicara yang akan meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara Anda dan membuat Anda lebih percaya diri saat berbicara secara langsung) dan kekurangan (kurangnya pembelajaran di tempat, harus memiliki koneksi internet yang baik, beberapa fitur berbayar/terbatas, hanya menerima satu aksen, dan penangkapan suara yang buruk) dari Aplikasi ELSA Speak.

Katakunci: Aplikasi ELSA Speak, Persepsi Siswa, Performa Berbicara

ABSTRACT

ELSA Speak is a mobile application that is intended to assist people that are not native English speakers in improving their pronunciation and speaking abilities in English. This research was conducted to determine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ELSA Speak application in developing and learning students' speaking skills. This research used a qualitative research approach, in which the data were collected from interviews and observation in two weeks. The participants taking part in this research were 12 second semester students of the English language study program at Muhammadiyah University of Mataram. In obtaining the data, the researchers used interviews (semi-structured interview), observation and questionnaire. After finishing the interview, the result was elaborated and analyzed by the researchers. The result of the study showed that ELSA Speak Application gave a good impact for the students in learning and developing speaking based on their perception. In summary, the result also showed some advantages (there are various conversation topics that you can choose and try for speaking practice which will improve your speaking performance and make you more confident when speaking directly) and disadvantages (lack of on-site learning, it must have a good internet connection, some features are paid/limited, only accepts one accent, and poor voice capture) of ELSA Speak Application.

Keywords: ELSA Speak Application, Students' Perception, Speaking Performance

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

5.1. Background of the Study

Currently, English is the most widely used language in the world for both native and non-native speakers. English is used as a medium in sharing information, commerce, education, and more other people around the world, making it an international language (Plailek & Essien, 2021). English continues to be the language of global communication, so language skills are essential for academic, professional and social success. As a result of globalisation, the importance of the English language, which has been labelled as the global trade language, has become more abundantly clear (Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021). In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language, which makes mastering it difficult and requires sufficient skills. The position of English in Indonesia is very important because it is included at the middle school, high school and even university levels. In essence, English is an important thing to learn and practice for speaking in everyday communication, especially EFL/ESL if we look at the explanation above.

Based on (N. Rahayu, 2015) there are four skills that must be mastered in English, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. One of the skills above that is important to be learned is Speaking, which is ability by using a language accurately to specific someone's idea, opinions, or feelings, to get statistics and information from different those who do communication, (AJ Laksana, 2016). Communication occurs when a speaker and listener participate in a communication or conversation. The first way to interact and communicate is by speaking. Crisianita & Mandasari (2022) states students can share information, expressing their ideas and

their feeling by speaking. Because talking is the most direct means for people to connect with one another, it is the foundation of human communication. Zulfiqar & Tahir (2015) states that somebody is considered successful in learning a foreign language when he or she has the ability to speak it.

From the explanation above, speaking is an important skill in language learning, but it is not an easy skill to learn or teach. Even students who have studied the language for years still find it difficult to speak when needed in real-time situations. This is because it requires students to directly create sentences. For foreign or second language learners, it is very difficult to compose sentences without understanding grammatical structures or good vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, EFL/ESL English learners have many problems in pronouncing English grammatical sentences. Researcher see that many English study program students at the University of Muhammadiyah Mataram still do not speak English either inside or outside the classroom. In the classroom, this usually happens to new students for several reasons, one of which is that they have not adapted. While outside the classroom, researcher see from events created by English study program students. For example, when an English debate competition was held, only a few students from the English study program participated in the event. Then, in the English Camp activity which requires communication during the activity using English, in reality there are still many and often those who do not use English in speaking or communicating.

Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions, (Dewi Sri Kuning, 2019). Many learners state that they have spent so many years studying English language but cannot speak it

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appropriately and understandably (Bueno, Madrid, & Mclaren, 2006, as cited in (Saadah & Ardi, 2020). Even students or learners have been equipped and taken speaking classes, but it is still difficult to be able to speak. According to Ur (1996, as cited in (Al Nakhalah, 2016), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking, and they areas follows: 1.Inhibition. Students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. 2.Nothing to say. Students have no motive to express themselves. 3.Low or uneven participation. Only one participant can talk at a time because of large classes and the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all. 4.Mother-tongue use. Learners who share the same mother tongue tend to use it because it is easier and because learners feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue. Several other factors are also related to the students themselves, learning strategies, curriculum, and environment. For example, many students are unable to dialogue because they lack the vocabulary to convey meaning. Lack of strategic and communication skills can be another reason for not maintaining engagement. Some students lack motivation to speak English. They don't really feel the need to learn or speak English. Therefore, it is necessary to look for the latest methods, strategies or ways of learning that are relevant to today's students that involve technology and are of course interesting with the aim of developing students' English language skills.

In the digital era, technological advances are revolutionizing many aspects of life, including education. In Le Phuong Thanh et al. (2021) claims that technology is a big contributor to the developments in many fields, especially in education. Technological developments provide various types of technology that can be used to support learning and teaching activities (Dewi et al., 2022). Almost all universities now have internet, and students can also use the internet. Everyone has a smart

phone with Internet access. Language learning in particular is undergoing major changes due to the integration of digital tools and applications. There are many technologies available to download from the Internet. To practice pronunciation, there is software called "ELSA - Learn English Speaking" which can be downloaded to your smartphone from the Play/App Store. ELSA Speak is a mobile application that is intended to assist people that are not native English speakers in improving their pronunciation and speaking abilities in English (Sholekhah & Fakhrurriana, 2023). The English Learning Speech Assistant (ELSA) application was designed by Vu Van in 2015 and is based in San Francisco, United States. it utilizes Artificial Intelligence (AI) and speech recognition to help improve and perfect English pronunciation (Pilar, 2013, as cited in Anggraini, 2022). Designed to help students speak English clearly, fluently and confidently. The features provided in this application aim to teach students to pronounce words such as vowels, consonants and word accents correctly. The ELSA Speak application can detect the user's mispronunciation with more than 95% accuracy.

Based on the explanation of the ELSA application above we can see that the ELSA Speak application is very adequate for learning and even increasing our English language skills, especially speaking. Considering how important speaking is in language learning, especially for English language students who are required to speak in class, researcher try to use the latest way to deal with this problem, namely by using the ELSA Speak app. An interesting application that has many features that students can choose according to their respective needs. Therefore, the researcher took the title "Student Perceptions of Using the ELSA SPEAK Application in Learning Speaking".

5.2.Statements of the Problem

Based on the background described above, the researcher stated the statements of the problem as follows: "What are the student's perceptions of using Elsa Speak app in learning speaking in second semester of the English study program at the University of Muhammadiyah Mataram?".

5.3.Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to describe the student's perceptions of using Elsa Speak app in learning speaking in second semester of the English study program at the University of Muhammadiyah Mataram.

5.4.Significance of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the perception of second semester students of English study program towards the use of ELSA Speak app in speaking learning. This study is also expected to find out ways to develop students' speaking performance and students' problems that can bring some improvements for students.

1.4.1 Theoretically

This study is expected to contribute to knowledge in the context of the use of technology in language learning, especially the use of apps such as ELSA Speak. This study also tries to provide an overview or empirical evidence of the effectiveness and challenges of technology-based tools/media such as ELSA Speak so that it can be a reference or information for readers and future research, of course in this field.

1.4.2 Practically

a. For the Students

Through this research, the researcher hopes that students will realize the essence of speaking and provide insight into the use of the ELSA Speak application and similar applications which have the potential to become media in learning to speak and other things which indirectly increase their abilities.

b. For the Lecturer

The researcher hopes that the results of this study can help teachers find learning methods or media to solve student problems. This study introduces and explains the impact of apps such as ELSA Speak and similar apps on student learning so that they can integrate apps such as ELSA Speak more effectively into their teaching strategies and provide more targeted support to students.

c. For the Institution

It is hoped that these findings can be useful additional documents and information as a reference in making the right decision about integrating an app like ELSA Speak into the curriculum that can be a learning medium that can improve the quality of language education offered as a whole.

5.5.Scope of the Study

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher decided on the limitation of the study. This study is limited or only focuses on the perception of second semester students of the English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram in using the ELSA Speak application in English speaking learning, so that the findings cannot be generalized to other institutions. In addition, this study also only focuses on the use of the ELSA Speak app to develop speaking skills without exploring its impact on other language skills. Of course, the data taken is from students who have downloaded and used the ELSA Speak app.

5.6.   The Definition of the Key Term

1.6.1 Perception

The concept of perception is complex and multi-layered. In philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science, perception is the process of gaining understanding or awareness of the sensory information around us, (Nazhira, 2021). So, in this study perception is intended as the opinion or experience of 2nd semester students of the English Language Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Mataram. Students' perceptions will contribute to determining whether the Application helps students improve their speaking performance and whether the application works well.

1.6.2 Speaking

One way to share information and feelings is to communicate, and speaking is one of the main elements of communication. Speaking can also

be said as the use of language to express thoughts and feelings, including responding or reacting to spoken words. In (Rao, Parupalli, 2019) speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language. In this study, the features of the ELSA Speak Application related to the speaking component will be the focus. The speaking performance of English students will be the researcher concern.

1.6.3 ELSA Speak Application

The ELSA Speak app is a type of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) that has many features such as speech recognition technology support, a proven personalized curriculum, a free online dictionary, and a free assessment test that can be a useful media and help students in language learning. ELSA Speaking is virtual language teacher software, used by individuals, language schools, universities and corporations around the world, (Rismawati et al., 2022).

CAPTHER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGUSTION

5.1. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to determine students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of using the ELSA Speak application to develop their speaking performance. The selected participants are second semester students and who have used the ELSA application. Based on research findings and discussions, apart from all the shortcomings of this application such as lack of on-site learning, it must have a good internet connection, some features are paid/limited, only accepts one accent (American accent), and poor voice capture. The author concludes that using the Elsa Speak application in developing speaking performance is quite effective. Apart from that, the ELSA Speak application provides many interesting features such as a personalization feature that allows users to get a study plan that suits them. Furthermore, there are various conversation topics that you can choose and try for speaking practice which will improve your speaking performance and make you more confident when speaking directly. Then the ELSA Speak application provides separate grammar and pronunciation sections so that users can focus on one thing.

In conclusion, the ELSA Speak app is an interesting and useful learning media that can help improve students' speaking p and confidence. However, educators should consider the challenges associated with using the

ELSA Speak app in the classroom and mix other media/methods and facilitate students a little to maximize its benefits.

5.2.Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, the researcher proposes several suggestions.

a. For teacher

Understand the needs of students and then create appropriate learning methods and make the class interesting and fun. Integrate the use of the ELSA Speak application into the learning curriculum to provide variations in the method of learning speaking skills. Facilitate students in using the application, especially for those who face technical difficulties or accent adaptation.

b. For students

Follow the learning well, don't be afraid to speak English. Use the ELSA Speak application regularly to get maximum results in improving English speaking performance. Make sure when using the application, the internet condition is good and use it in a quiet environment so that the application performance is maximized.

c. For institution

Provide more stable and easily accessible internet access to support the use of online learning applications such as ELSA Speak. Then Facilitate in the form of training for lecturers and students on the use of effective learning technology to improve English skills.

d. For application developer

Keep developing the application from time to time, especially on the features and accents available. Add some offline features to be used in conditions where there is no internet, for example in the dictionary featur