Students' Perception of The Use of Mobile Application Pingolearn in Learning to Speak English

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Abstract

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of using the Pingolearn mobile application as a learning tool to improve English speaking skills. Rapid technological advances have encouraged many students to use application-based learning tools to improve the quality of students' English speaking skills. This research focuses on finding out the effectiveness and benefits of the Pingolearn application when used by students. A qualitative approach with the case study method used. This research involved 30 students from Prayatna Medan High School, one of the high schools in Medan City, consisting of 18 female students and 12 male students. The selection of participants in this study used a purposive sampling technique. Data collection techniques include observation, questionnaires and interviews to explore students' experiences and perceptions of the Pingolearn application. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed it using Thematic Analysis. The research results show that the majority of students responded positively to the Pingolearn application, especially in growing self-confidence when speaking. They also stated that interactive features, such as AI voice dialogue and conversation simulations, were very interesting and useful. However, there were several challenges that faced students when using them. These findings indicate that Pingolearn is a mobile-assisted learning tool that can be used in English speaking learning to improve English language skills. The results of this study confirm that the use of technology in language learning has great potential to significantly increase students' motivation, self-confidence and speaking abilities.

Keywords: Pingolearn Application; Speaking Skills; Students' Perception

Introduction

Technology has become a major driver of change in various aspects of life. Technology also plays an important role in encouraging students to participate in appropriate activities and has a great influence on teaching methods, including education (Sosas, 2021). Technology has become a very important tool for teachers and students in today's educational landscape (Granic and Marangunic, 2019). As a result of using technology in English language instruction, many opportunities to improve learning and engagement have emerged. In learning English as a foreign language, the use of digital technology has been shown to improve learning achievement, communication efficiency, academic motivation, and interactive learning environment Furthermore, the integration of digital tools can increase academic motivation by making language learning more accessible (Polakova and Klimova, 2019). Learners can access resources at their own pace, receive immediate feedback and track their progress. This results in a sense of achievement and a desire to continue learning the language.

Through interactive language learning applications, web-based data bases, and virtual classrooms, students now have access to a wealth of knowledge and practice materials that they can use (Kazhan and Hamaniuk, 2020). Multimedia components, such as audio files, movies, and interactive programs, have also improved the effectiveness

and efficiency of education. Interactive software, online platforms and diverse learning applications make learning more enjoyable. Technology not only provides a wide variety of learning content, but also makes the learning environment interesting and immersive (Jalkanen, 2015).

Technology helps students learn in a more effectively and enjoyable way through multimedia methods and real-life simulations. Apps for education can help ESL students of all backgrounds and skill levels to develop their learning experience (Yanthi et al., 2020). Moreover, apps powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) can offer engaging and contextualized learning experiences that simulate real-life conversations, helping students improve their language skills in a realistic environment. In ESL classrooms, these features are particularly beneficial as students often have difficulties with pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension of language usage (Zhou and Sun, 2021).

Artificial intelligence (AI) has great potential in the field of education, as stated (Luckin and Holmes, 2016). This shows that advancements in language learning can have a significant impact in improving communication skills. The use of smartphones and mobile devices is beginning to influence learning in various fields and contexts, including language learning (Shadiev et al., 2022). The majority of students use the mobile application technology. They have a few application recommendations that they may use to continue their studies (Syafi'i et al., 2024). This shows how important technology is in education, especially in the field of language, which often requires specialized instruction and training.

According to Arifiyana and Dzulfikri (2023) as a country that uses ESL (English as a second language) or EFL (English as a foreign language), speaking is the most important language skill out of the four languages, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Kuning (2019), speaking in a foreign language, especially English, is a challenge, especially for foreign language learners because in communication must require the ability to use English consistently in social interaction. Tenth grade students at SMA Prayatna Medan think that English is still a challenges.

Classroom observations show that students experience several problems when speaking English, including lack of motivation, anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of speaking incorrectly. Environmental factors and ineffective learning strategies are also to blame. Due to a lack of vocabulary, many students have difficulty speaking in English. They also often make many pronunciation mistakes. The condition that actually inhibits them from speaking is when their classmates ridicule them. In some cases, some students may have a perfectionist mindset, fearing that they have to speak perfectly. Students may lack confidence in their language skills, fearing that others will judge them for making mistakes.

Researchers can see from this phenomenon that teachers are very important in creating a supportive environment to overcome this problem. By understanding the reasons why students fear speaking in English, teachers can help create a interest and enjoyable language learning experience. One of the most important components in English learning is speaking skills. Good speaking skills can help students communicate and increase their confidence in speaking. Speaking is a skill to communicate ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings to others through verbal and nonverbal images. According to Bandura (1986), he states that a person's level of confidence in their ability to complete a task has an effect on how well they complete it.

Students who have high English speaking ability will be more confident in speaking, less anxious, and more motivated to practice. Four main components, according to Bandura, influence Self-Efficacy experiences of success, experiences through others, social support, and emotional and physical conditions. If students often speak in English

and receive support from teachers or friends, their confidence will increase and they will be more willing to communicate in the language. Therefore, increasing students' independence can be an effective strategy to help them speak English more fluently and confidently. Speaking is one of the skills where students need to pay extra attention to the audience (Chaniago et al., 2024).

This skill ensures that the message is clearly conveyed and well understood by the listener (Redjeki and Muhajir, 2017). As the skill most often used in daily interactions speaking is very important for students (Syabina et al, 2024). The development of technology in learning, especially in foreign language learning, is highly dependent on the advancement of technology itself. Nowadays, the technology that assists learning is not only computer-based, but has turned into a mobile-based device called Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The main idea behind the development of MALL is the implementation of foreign language learning tools within such mobile devices.

MALL has developed into an attraction for educators, especially teachers, because it can improve language learning methods, approaches and strategies (Rajendran ans Yunus, 2021). MALL has important characteristics that can support language learning, such as making foreign language learning more personal, spontaneous, contextual and informal, and through MALL students can learn more effectively wherever they want (Hikmah et al., 2023). Apps like ELSA Speak, Fondi, Duolingo and many more work as MALL on mobile devices. One of them is Pingolearn.

Therefore, to overcome students' problems in speaking, specialized a speaking learning app is needed. Commonly used applications such as ELSA Speak, Duolingo, Cake, etc. For learning to speak have been developed, but the researcher suggests Pingolearn app to improve students' speaking ability. This application is still relatively new and it is still rare for people to know and use it This app is a language learning app designed to improve the user's speaking ability, especially in English. Pingolearn application is developed by Pingolearn Education Private Limited which is located in India.

You can find this app on the App store or Play store, and you can utilize its features for free or for a fee. Pingolearn's innovative features help users become more confident in communicating, especially in foreign languages. Users can practice interactive speaking with artificial intelligence through the Chat Voice AI feature. Partner Calls practice allows users to get used to speaking in various situations by simulating phone conversations with virtual partners. In addition, the Talking Through Simulated Conversations feature offers real-life scenarios that help users improve their speaking skills in contexts related to topics associated with daily life.

In addition, the feedback feature instantly analyzes and suggests improvements, so users can understand their weaknesses and continue to improve. Pingolearn helps you build confidence while speaking fluently and naturally with this combination of features. Pingolearn provides a promising alternative by creating a supportive and engaging learning environment. No one has researcher this Pingolearn app in English speaking learning, especially regarding students' perceptions of its effectiveness in improving speaking skills. Most researchers focus more on more commonly used apps.

Previous research has explored the use of technology and language learning applications such as, According to Fitrah and Rahmaniah (2024) the ELSA Speak application can improve speaking skills and its features also satisfy users. Secondly according to Fitria et al., (2023) he stated Duolingo as a flexible learning tool in learning English. Third, according to Ridhallah et al., (2024) he stated that the Cake application can improve speaking skills and vocabulary. Fourth, according to Firdaus (2023) stated that the Bussu application is an effective technology-based learning tool in supporting the

mastery of speaking skills. Amran (2024) his research focused on the discussion of gamification features in the Fondi application which proved effective in increasing student engagement in improving speaking skills.

Meanwhile, research by Johnson and Brown (2019) highlights the importance of student engagement in app-based learning, but does not highlight student perceptions in depth. In the context of app-based learning, student perceptions are often overlooked in research that is more oriented towards app effectiveness (Garcia, 2022). In fact, students' perception can provide important information about user experience, emotional engagement and desire to learn. Sensory data can be interpreted and made sense of through perception. A person's perception of the people in their life is one of the components that influence their success. This study addresses this gap by exploring students' perceptions of the Pingolearn app as a speaking skills learning tool.

By focusing on user experience, this study provides new insights into the pedagogical implications of mobile-assisted language learning tools. As such, this study not only provides helpful recommendations for educators but also assists in the development of learning applications. Therefore, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of the Pingolearn app. Thus, it is expected that this study can make a significant contribution towards the development of a more efficient technology-based learning approach that enhances students' speaking skills. This study is different from previous studies because previous studies discussed popular apps such as ELSA Speak, Duolingo, Cake, Busuu, and Fondi, and previous studies discussed students' perceptions of the usage experience in using the features on those apps.

Meanwhile, this study explores the perceptions of grade X students at SMA Prayatna Medan towards the effectiveness of the Pingolearn application regarding student experiences benefits and constraints when using the Pingolearn application in speaking practice. Then, how do students perception towards the use of mobile application Pingolearn in learning to speaking English, What benefits and challenges do students experience when using Pingolearn for speaking practice, Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide insight into the effectiveness of Pingolearn application as a learning tool and contribute to the development of effective methods for improving English speaking skills that are beneficial to students.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This method is used because it can help understand the reasons someone has certain views or actions (Meagen, 2016). A qualitative case study method was used to assess students' experiences and perspectives on their English speaking skills after using the Pingolearn application. Case studies are suitable for understanding complex phenomena in their original context to provide deeper understanding (Yin, 2018). This study involved 30 students at SMA Prayatna Medan, one of the high schools in Medan City, consisting of 18 female students and 12 male students. The selection of participants in this research used a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is determining samples for certain purposes and meeting the requirements (Arikunto, 2010). Researchers chose high school students because they tend to play with gadgets and get bored easily with conventional/monotonous education. Before collecting data, researchers made observations first, namely introducing the Pingolearn application to the students. After that, the students were given about two weeks to use the app and learn its features so that they had a more natural experience in using it. This research uses questionnaires and interviews as instruments to collect data from participants. The questionnaire was used to determine students' perceptions about using the Pingolearn application in improving their

speaking skills. Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences in using this application. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed it using Thematic Analysis, which is a method used to identify, analyze, and organize the main themes of the data obtained (Nowell et al., 2017).

Results And Discussion

This study aims to explore the students perception of using the Pingolearn app on the English speaking skills of high school students. The researcher collected data using qualitative methods with a case study approach. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 30 students and conducted interviews with 5 people selected based on their skills to use the app. And below is a table of the findings of the 10 statements of the student questionnaire in using the Pingolearn application.

Table 1. Students' Perception of The Use Pingolearn Application to Speaking Practice

No	The Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Pingolearn application helps me improve my English speaking skills.	63,3%	33,3%	3,3%	0%
2	Pingolearn application is effective in helping me improve English pronunciation.	50%	40%	10%	0%
3	This application has interactive features that can be enjoyed and is easy to understand and use.	50%	26,7%	23,3%	0%
4	The Pingolearn application provides speaking learning materials that suit my needs.	43,3%	36,7%	20%	0%
5	I'm interested learning to speak English using the Pingolearn because the topics are not boring.	36,7%	33,3%	30%	0%

The results showed that Pingolearn app received positive perceptions/responses from the students who have used it. Most of the students stated that Pingolearn app is an easy-to-use app in learning to speak English. In addition to being easy to use, the topics available in the Pingolearn application are in accordance with the material needed by students. Students are also interested in learning to speak using Pingolearn because the topics are not boring. The results of the questionnaire showed that as many as 50% of students strongly agreed and 40% of students agreed that Pingolearn app is effective in helping students improve their English pronunciation. In addition to using questionnaires, the researcher also conducted interviews. Based on the results of the interviews, the majority of students rated Pingolearn app as effective in helping them improve their pronunciation skills in speaking English. This is revealed from the statement of one of the students, namely Intan, that:

In my opinion, Pingolearn app helps me speak English and pronounce words correctly (Interview, 11 January 2025).

The researcher found three main perception from students regarding the use of this Pingolearn application:

1. Students' Perception of The Use Pingolearn App in Learning to Speak English

The use of the Pingolearn application in learning to speak English provides a significant response in supporting the student learning process.

a. The Effectivness of Pingolearn Application

With the significant improvement in students' pronunciation when using Pingolearn, this app can clearly help improve students' speaking skills. This finding is in line with Tampubolon et al., (2023) The use of learning applications such as ELSA Speak, a similar application that is effective in learning English, can help students learn correct pronunciation.

Table 2. Students' Perception The Benefits of Pingolearn Application for Students

No	The Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	By using the Pingolearn application I feel happy to use it and I am more enthusiastic and confident to improve my speaking skills.	66,7%	23,3%	10%	0%
2	By practicing speaking using the Pingolearn application, it can help me add English vocabulary.	56,7%	33,3%	10%	0%
3	Pingolearn app can be one of the media to learn to speak English.	50%	50%	0%	0%
4	This application provides clear and helpful feedback to improve my speaking skills.	43,3%	40%	16,7%	0%
5	Learning to speak using Pingolearn is more fun.	50%	50%	0%	0%

2. Students' Feelings When Using Pingolearn App

Students' feelings when using the Pingolearn application in learning to speak English provide many benefits that can improve students' speaking skills.

a. The Benefit of Pingolearn Application For Students

Using Pingolearn app in learning English speaking provides many benefits for students in improving their English speaking ability. From the questionnaire results, 66,7% of students strongly agreed and 23,3% agreed that by using Pingolearn app they feel happy, more enthusiastic and confident in improving their speaking skills. Students also get a lot of new vocabulary through Pingolearn app. Based on the interview results the majority of students stated that pingolearn app is beneficial for them in improving their speaking skills.

And other interview results show that the features contained in the pingolearn application are very interesting. The questionnaire results stated that 50% of students astrongly agreed and 50% students agreed that pingolearn app can be one of the media to learn English speaking and the learning atmosphere becomes more fun. The interview results also support this finding with several student statements, namely according to Rania and Enjel, they said:

> I really like the AI chat feature because I can speak in different situations and the learning topics are like real life conversations. So, I can be more confident in speaking English (Interview, 11 January 2025).
> I am interested in the voice calls feature because it can talk train my speaking skills with other people. The Pingolearn app is nice and easy to use, and with it I can practice speaking English whenever I want (Interview, 11 January 2025).

Students stated that the features available in the Pingolearn application are based on everyday life. This finding is in line with Aswaty (2022) She stated that the ELSA Speak learning application, a similar application shows that the learning application not

only offers theory but also a practical context that users can use.And by using the Pingolearn app students can be more confident in improving their speaking skills. The findings of this study are in line with Al-Syarif (2023) this study found that English learning apps can help students improve their speaking ability, enhance their skills, and increase their confidence in speaking English. And students said that Pingolearn app is good and easy to use, and with this app they can practice speaking English whenever they want The findings of this study are in line with Raj amd Baisel (2022) he stated that the role of mobile applications can make it easier for students to speak English whenever they want.

3. Challenges Students Experience When Using Pingolearn App in Speaking Practice

The learners also faced some issues while using the Pingolearn app. Every app, whether on mobile or on computer, has its drawbacks, which become obstacles for learners while using it.This was expressed by some students in the following statements, namely according to Romi and Angga, they said:

> The challenge I face in using the app is trying to understand words/language that I don't understand (Interview, 11 January 2025).
> The challenges is that some of the features are paid and learning with this app requires strong internet connectivity and the app uses a lot of strorage space which can fill up your phone's memory (Interview, 11 January 2025).

Some challenges, such as students can't enjoy other interesting features because they have to pay. The second challenge is that students have difficulty in trying to understand words/language that were not previously understood. In addition, learning with this application requires strong internet connectivity and requires a large storage space to install it. This finding is in line with Azzahra et al., (2024) the study found that although applications such as ELSA Speak and Duolingo help improve listening and speaking skills, students face limitations such as the need for a stable internet connection, features that must be subscribed, and adequate device storage capacity.

However, there are many online apps that provide language courses nowadays, but not all are of high quallity and complete to support the learning process. Also, learning a language online is very flexible, and using an app always allows you to make a better study plan. Based on the findings in this study, the use of Pingolearn application is proven to be effective in improving students' English speaking ability. This finding is in line with the Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) theory proposed by Hikmah et al., (2023) which explains that mobile device-based technology can help students learn languages more flexibly, interactively, and effectively.

The Pingolearn application allows students to practice speaking anytime and anywhere with the interactive features offered, such as AI Voice Chat and conversation simulation, and immediate feedback allows students to practice speaking in various real-life situations. This is in line with the MALL theory supporting technology-based language learning which states that an interactive learning environment can increase students' motivation in learning a foreign language (Rajendran and Yunus, 2021). With the immediate feedback from the app, students can immediately know their mistakes in pronunciation and sentence structure, so they can correct them directly so that students feel more confident in speaking, and are able to improve their pronunciation and expand their vocabulary.

These advantages make Pingolearn one of the effective technology-based learning tools to improve students' speaking skills. However, while this app provides many benefits, there are some challenges faced by students in its use. One of the main obstacles

is the limited access to premium features that require additional fees, so not all students can enjoy the full learning experience. In addition, the app requires a stable internet connection for optimal use. This can be a barrier for students living in areas with limited internet access. These challenges show that while technology can provide innovative solutions in language learning, accessibility and affordability remain important aspects that need to be considered in its implementation in education.

When compared to previous studies, there are several similarities and differences that can be found. According to Fitrah (2024), the ELSA Speak application is also effective in improving pronunciation and providing accurate feedback. This shows that the ELSA Speak application has similarities with the Pingolearn application, but the ELSA Speak application is more specific for pronunciation practice, while Pingolearn is broader with conversation simulation features. Research by Fitria et al., (2024) on Duolingo shows that this application is flexible and interesting for learning English, especially in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

However, the Duolingo application focuses less on direct speaking practice while the Pingolearn application can help someone improve their English speaking skills. Furthermore, Ridhallah et al., (2024) found that the Cake application helps students improve their speaking skills and enrich their vocabulary. The similarity with Pingolearn lies in improving vocabulary, but Cake does not have a live conversation feature like the one available in the Pingolearn feature. Firdaus (2023) examined the Busuu application which is effective in structured speaking learning. However, Busuu focuses more on learning modules, while Pingolearn prioritizes interactive speaking simulations. Finally, Amran et al., (2024) discussed the Fondi application which uses gamification to increase student engagement.

Although Fondi makes learning more fun, Pingolearn is superior in providing a real conversation experience with AI technology. Thus, while all of these apps have their advantages, Pingolearn stands out because it is able to combine interactive speaking exercises with artificial intelligence technology that provides immediate feedback. This makes students more confident, motivated and comfortable when practicing speaking English. Therefore, apps like Pingolearn are very relevant to use in English language learning, especially to improve students' speaking skills in today's digital era.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, the Pingolearn application is proven to have a positive impact on improving students' English speaking skills. Interactive features such as AI Voice Chat, daily conversation simulations, and automatic feedback make significant contributions in improving pronunciation, expanding vocabulary, increasing fluency, and growing students' confidence in speaking English. These findings show that technology-based learning applications such as Pingolearn can be an innovative solution to overcome various obstacles faced by students in improving their English speaking skills. For educators, the Pingolearn application is useful as a learning medium that can support the English language teaching process. Students get the opportunity to practice speaking independently outside formal lesson hours, while teachers can use this application as an additional means to monitor student progress. With the automatic feedback feature provided, teachers can more easily identify difficulties faced by students and provide more targeted guidance according to student needs. However, this study has several limitations. The research was only carried out in one school with a limited number of participants, so the results of this research cannot be generalized to a wider population. Apart from that, technical obstacles such as the need for a stable internet connection and limited access to the application's premium features are obstacles for some students in

utilizing the application optimally. For further research, it is recommended that studies be conducted in various schools with more diverse student backgrounds. Future research could also explore the integration of the Pingolearn application with conventional learning methods to create a more comprehensive learning approach. In addition, further research can evaluate the effectiveness of this application over a longer period of use. Overall, the Pingolearn app has proven to be effective in helping students improve their English speaking skills. Although there are several limitations, the results of this study confirm that the use of technology in language learning has great potential to significantly increase students' motivation, self-confidence and speaking abilities.

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