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ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH LITMATCH

by

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Abstract.

This study aims to find out students' perceptions of the use of Litmatch to improve speaking skills. With a quantitative descriptive research design, 27 students in the third semester of the STKIP PGRI Pacitan English Education Study Program were made research subjects. The data source was obtained from the results of student surveys through a Google Form questionnaire in the speaking class. The data collection technique also uses this instrument. After the instrument meets the valid and reliable requirements, the data is then analyzed using descriptive analysis calculation techniques. The statistical technique in this study uses percentages. The results showed that 13 respondents (48.1%) "agreed" that the Litmatch app was easy to use and had simple navigation; 14 respondents (51.9%) "agreed" that Litmatch provides a feature for practicing speaking; 16 respondents (59.3%) "agreed" to be able to improve speaking skills; 15 respondents (55.6%) "agreed" that Litmatch motivates users to practice speaking English more often; and 22 respondents (81.5%) recommend Litmatch to improve speaking skills. In conclusion, the Litmatch application is generally well-received by college students as a tool to improve their speaking skills. Litmatch also offers an easy feature to practice English. Implicitly, educators and policymakers should consider the integration of technology-based language learning media to improve student learning outcomes and to meet the evolving needs of language learners in the digital age.

Keywords: *students, perceptions, speaking, skill, Litmatch*

Abstrak.

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan Litmatch untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara. Dengan desain penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif, 27 mahasiswa semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP PGRI Pacitan dijadikan subjek penelitian. Sumber data diperoleh dari hasil survei mahasiswa melalui angket Google-form di kelas berbicara. Teknik pengambilan data juga menggunakan instrumen ini. Setelah instrumen memenuhi persyaratan valid dan reliabel, selanjutnya data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik hitung analisis deskriptif. Teknik statistik dalam penelitian ini menggunakan persentase. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 13 responden (48,1%) "setuju" aplikasi Litmatch mudah digunakan dan memiliki navigasi sederhana; 14 responden (51,9%) "setuju" Litmatch menyediakan fitur untuk berlatih berbicara; 16 responden (59,3%) "setuju" mampu meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara; 15 responden (55,6%) "setuju" Litmatch

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memotivasi pengguna untuk berlatih berbicara bahasa Inggris lebih sering; dan 22 responden (81,5%) merekomendasikan Litmatch untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara. Kesimpulannya, secara umum aplikasi Litmatch diterima dengan baik oleh mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara. Litmatch juga menawarkan fitur yang mudah untuk berlatih bahasa Inggris. Implikasinya, para pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan agar mempertimbangkan integrasi media pembelajaran bahasa berbasis teknologi untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa dan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan pembelajar bahasa yang terus berkembang di era digital.

***Kata kunci**: siswa, persepsi, berbicara, keterampilan, Litmatch*

INTRODUCTION

Oviogun and Veerdee (2020) stated that language includes everything used to communicate, both verbal and nonverbal signs. Nonverbal signs include the sound of a bell, car bell, morse, limb movements or gestures, and so on (Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). So, this emphasizes that language is a tool or medium of communication used by humans to interact with each other and among members of society. Language, the sound symbols produced by human speech organs, is the most essential thing in a person's life. Humans need communication to help them survive. One way is to use language to communicate (Apriyanto, 2022; Mailani et al., 2022). The higher the level of someone's language proficiency, the better the use of language in communication. Good language proficiency is developed and learned, especially when learning a foreign language.

English is a universally accepted language, one of the foreign languages studied. Therefore, English plays a vital role in academics, including contributing to studies for researchers in English (Turmudi, 2020). For example, in college-level education, several courses require the use of foreign language literature, especially English. In this case, mastering English is significant because it is not just about translating but also understanding (Rohmah, 2019). In addition, students' English skills can also be used as a means of preparing themselves to face the world of work. Siregar et al. (2023) stated that teaching English in college is not just teaching a language but aims to enable students to use English skills every day (Siregar et al., 2023). So, it is essential to master English skills to support students' potential in college.

The English skills that students must master are reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Speaking English is a productive skill that requires students to produce words or

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expressions in English. Speaking skills are a challenge for students because they often struggle with speaking English. Some issues that arise and affect student confidence include low vocabulary, difficulty in determining ideas and topics of conversation, weak mastery of English grammar, the influence of the mother tongue, stress in English, learning motivation, teaching methods of lecturers, and cross-language English and Indonesian. These issues also happen to English education students at STKIP PGRI Pacitan. Improving English speaking skills cannot be achieved solely through classroom teaching and learning activities; students must also become accustomed to using English frequently through various platforms. Students need support from platforms that can improve and develop their English skills, especially speaking skills (Fitriani, 2022).

One of the supporting platforms for developing students' English skills is technology. Technology in the education sector plays an important role in developing other important skills in the 21st century. Technology is an important communication tool for smooth interactions between students and educators. It supports teamwork and practical communication skills in the modern workplace. In addition, students who are adaptive to technology in developing digital literacy can equip themselves with the ability to evaluate and navigate vast amounts of online information critically (Lohans Kumar Kalyani, 2024).

Digital literacy skills help handle all information on digital media, such as social media. Social media is an internet-based application that users widely adopt because it enables the connection and dissemination of information from anywhere, without limitations of space and time. Social media can spread information more easily and quickly (Isnaini et al., 2023). With the increasingly rapid development of technology, Indonesians now frequently use many types of social media. Starting with YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and many others. Ramadani et al. (2024) said that examples of social media are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Litmatch, and others (Ramadani et al., 2024).

Litmach is a trending app among teenagers. It was released on March 30, 2019, by Construct Teknologi Pte. Litmatch users can find and make new friends online. Users can chat via text, voice, or video calls and share status (Sinurat et al., 2022). Features in the Litmatch application include 1) Chatting, which is communication between two people,

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namely readers and recipients, by typing messages using the internet network; 2) Telephone (voice). This feature makes it easier for users to communicate and hear the voices of their interlocutors; 3) Chat Room, where users in the room can chat freely with 10 people at the same time; 4) Status/Feed, which is a place to express user moments to be shared with other litmatch users. In the Litmatch feed, users can upload text, photos, videos, and voice recordings (Mahatni, 2023). In the language learning context, Litmatch is designed to support language learners in improving their productive skills through various interactive features, including voice recognition, conversation simulations, and real-time feedback.

This study explores students' views on implementing Litmach in language learning, with a focus on improving speaking skills. By understanding students' perspectives, constructive feedback can be obtained to improve the quality and effectiveness of using Litmatch social media in learning. Through this research, solutions or suggestions for improvement can support the development of a more modern, efficient learning assessment system that meets current educational needs. Therefore, researchers aim to investigate students' perspectives on the application of Litmach in enhancing the speaking skills of students in the English language education study program at STKIP PGRI Pacitan.

METHOD

Design

This research uses a quantitative approach because it emphasizes numbers (numerical), which are then processed using statistics. It aligns with Sugiyono's opinion (2020), which states that "this method is called a quantitative method because the research data is in the form of numbers and is analyzed using statistics(Sugiyono, 2020)." The method employed is descriptive, utilizing survey techniques to collect data through a questionnaire on the use of Litmatch for improving speaking skills(Creswell, JW, 2015). A descriptive survey aims to describe or record conditions and attitudes to understand what exists today. "Descriptive surveys seek to reveal the current situation related to a particular topic of study (John & Timothy, 2021)." Scholars further state that one of the advantages of survey research

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is that it can be used to examine a problem or research question in an actual situation (Shukla, 2017).

Participant

This study involved 27 students, 15 females and 12 males. The subjects were taken from the third-semester Speaking class in the English Education Study Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The topic of the lecture at the time of data collection was personal opinion, which included details of the subject matter, namely, a Discussion of A Hot Topic.

Instrument

Data sources were obtained from survey results through a Google Forms questionnaire. The questionnaire contains a list of questions arranged using a Likert scale. The Likert scale measures the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group of people about social phenomena(Sugiyono, 2020). It has characteristics that include using positive and negative questions and using answer choices such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree; each answer choice is given a score, and the results of the answers are used as research variables. Sugiyono (2020) states that the Likert scale is a scale that contains five levels of answers regarding the respondent's agreement with the statements or statements put forward preceding the answer options provided. There are 20 questions, each related to four indicators, given to respondents. The questions explore information about student perceptions of the Litmatch application: 1) students' opinion of ease of use; 2) perceived features' usefulness to practice speaking; 3) perceived usefulness of Litmatch in improving English speaking; and 4) perceived usefulness of Litmatch in motivating users to practice speaking English more frequently. In other words, the purpose of this instrument is to measure students' interest in practicing English and assess their level of fluency. The results of the questionnaire are presented in numerical data.

After the type of research instrument is determined, the next step is to test the validity and reliability of the instrument. Validity testing using expert judgment was carried out by reviewing the instrument lattice, specifically examining whether it aligned with the research objectives, the suitability of the research measuring instrument, and the items of questions asked of respondents. After several questions were deemed relevant, the authors tested the

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instrument on 27 third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at STKIP PGRI Pacitan. Reliability testing in this instrumented test is achieved through internal consistency, which involves testing the instrument after data collection and analysis using specific techniques.

Data collection technique

In collecting data, researchers used a questionnaire to obtain information from respondents. The questionnaire used is a type of questionnaire that asks respondents to choose one predetermined answer. For alternative answers in this questionnaire, a score is assigned to each option using a modified Likert scale. Thus, in this study, respondents answering questions had five answer options, namely strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (NA), and strongly disagree (VNA). The answer to the question has a score weight with the following details: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA); 4 = Agree (A); 3 = Neutral (N); 2 = Disagree (D); and 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD). The researchers took the data collection process in this study by (1) visiting the research subjects, and (2) explaining the questionnaire-filling technique to prospective respondents. If anything was unclear, prospective respondents were invited to ask. (3) Collecting data by distributing questionnaires directly and then collecting them upon completion. The primary data is obtained by filling out a questionnaire that contains data on the problems given, and (4) having obtained the data, the next step is to analyze it.

Data analysis technique

After collecting data from the respondents, the researcher analyzes the data. The data obtained by researchers is raw data containing answers from respondents regarding the problem under study. One of the data analysis objectives is to simplify all data and then present it in a systematic arrangement. After that, interpret the data obtained. In the current study, there are several steps in analyzing data, namely: (1) data coding involves systematically organizing raw data (in the questionnaire) into a form that is easily readable by a data processing machine,(2) data entry is moving the coded data into the data processing machine,(3) data cleaning ensures that all data entered into the data processing machine is accurate, (4) presentation of data (data output) is the data resulting from data processing, and

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(5) data analysis is an advanced process of data processing that aims to interpret and analyze data from existing results at the stage of data processing.

The data obtained by researchers is quantitative with a Likert scale, so it needs to be processed for the conclusion-drawing process. The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive statistics, which involves using percentages to describe the research variables in the measurement. It does not use inferential statistics because this study has no hypothesis.

A scholar stated that descriptive statistics are statistics that have the task of organizing and analyzing numerical data to provide an organized, concise, and precise description of a symptom, event, or situation so that a particular understanding or meaning can be drawn (Riinawati, 2021). This study aims to determine students' perceptions of using Litmatch to improve speaking skills. The percentage for each possible answer is obtained by dividing the frequency obtained by the number of samples and multiplying by 100% (Sholihah, 2021). Lastly, the supporting application is MS Word and the Referencing tool "Mendeley Desktop" to arrange and guarantee the cited works and synchronization between in-text and list of references under a previous study(Turmudi, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The description of the data presented from the results of this study is to provide a general overview of the distribution of data obtained in the field. The data was obtained using a structured questionnaire data collection method. From the data collection results distributed using Google, 27 respondents were obtained from the third semester of the English Language Education Study Program. The data presented is in the form of raw data, which is then processed using descriptive statistical techniques. The data in this data description is presented as a frequency distribution per indicator, including the frequency and score acquisition percentage. The data obtained has been previously verified to remove invalid data that will affect the results of the research data analysis.

The researcher provides results from the collected and analyzed questionnaire data, as seen in the diagram below.

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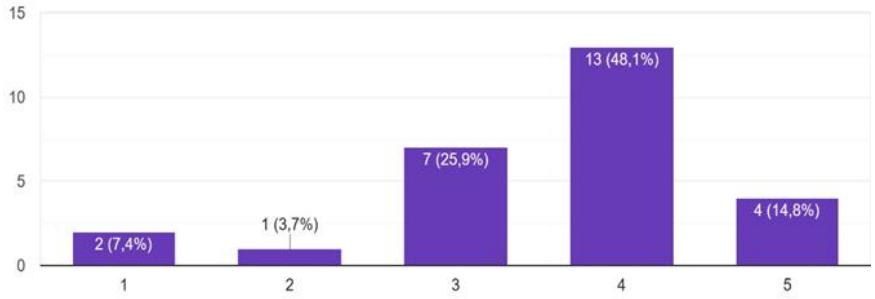

Figure 1. Students' opinion of Litmatch ease of use

The above shows that most respondents agree that Litmatch is easy to use (48.1% agree), 14.8% strongly agree, 25.9% are neutral, 3.7% disagree, and 7.4% strongly disagree. As a new application, Litmatch, which operates in the communication platform, does not want to lose to its competitors. Here are some of the superior features of the Litmatch application: Finding New Friends in One Click, Soul Match, Voice Match, and Movie Match. Users can find and install the Litmatch application on Google Play and the App Store. Using it is the same as other social media; simply register and follow the prompts. Registering for the Litmatch application is easy; users can use Facebook or Google. After that, click. Next, instruct the user to fill in their nickname, date of birth, and age, provide hobby information, and select an avatar, as Litmatch does not use real photos. After completing the form, the user will be directed to the Litmatch homepage, where they can view recommendations for people with whom they can chat based on the profile content from their earlier registration. According to the percentage of students' opinions and the explanation above, the Litmatch application is user-friendly and easy to navigate.

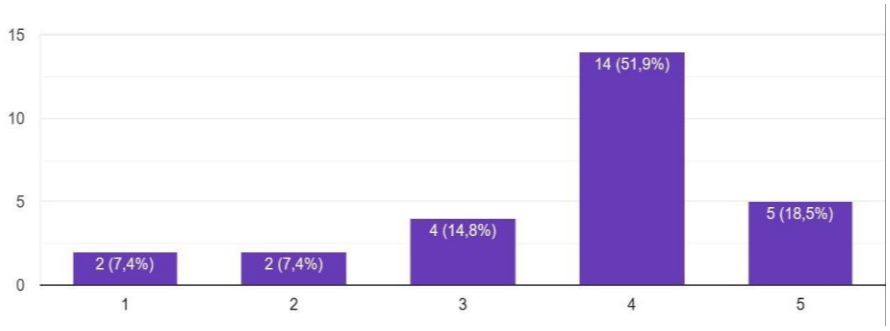

Figure 2. Litmatch provides features to practice speaking

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Based on the results of the questionnaire on the second indicator, namely whether Litmatch provides a feature for practicing speaking, it shows that 51.9% of respondents agree that Litmatch provides a helpful feature for practicing speaking, 18.5% strongly agree, 14.8% are neutral, and 14.8% disagree and strongly disagree. Litmatch not only provides a feature for creating statuses in the form of text and images, but also offers additional customization options. There is also a voice status feature. Users can use this feature to learn to make podcasts and sing. The advantage of the status feature on Litmatch is that all active users can see users at that time. That way, users do not have to follow each other or wait for friendship confirmation. In addition to creating statuses on the homepage, Litmatch also provides chat and telephone features for a limited time. Named Soulgame, this feature aims to find the users' soulmates. When users are fluent in chatting with someone, they need to press the like button to continue the conversation. In addition to text, a random chat can be done by two people in a group. From the percentage results in Figure 2 and the supported explanations, most respondents agree that Litmatch provides features and convenience for its users to practice speaking.

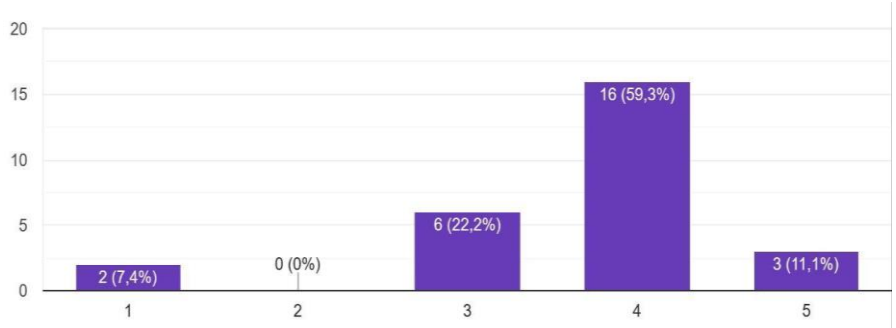

Figure 3. The litmatch improves speaking skills

Regarding Litmatch's role in improving speaking skills, Figure 3 indicates that 59.3% of respondents agree it does, 11.1% strongly agree, 22.2% are neutral, and 7.4% strongly disagree. In the Litmatch application, a group chat feature connects users with others from within the country and abroad, potentially expanding their friendship networks. This group chat feature is not only for idle chat. Users can find various communities, such as English clubs, podcast services, and organizations/communities that connect users with other users wherever they are. Not only that, but users can also develop their public speaking skills by

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participating in various competition events, such as quizzes, debates, and other entertainment events. Based on the percentage results and supporting information, the Litmatch application has great potential to improve the speaking skills of its users.

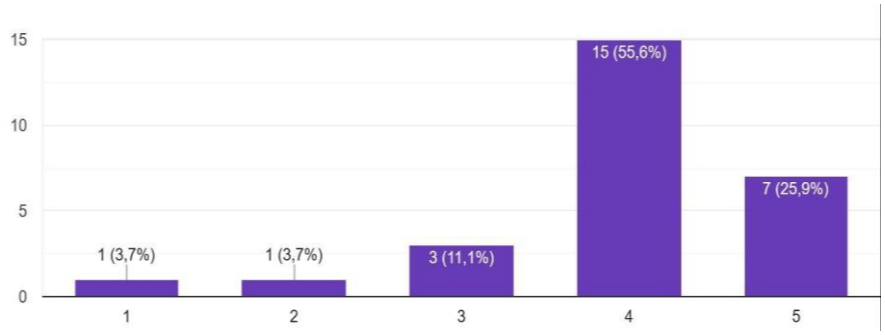

Figure 4. Litmatch motivates users to practice speaking English more frequently

In addition, as shown in Figure 4, 55.6% of respondents agreed that Litmatch motivates users to practice English more often, with 25.9% strongly agreeing, 11.1% neutral, and 7.4% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing. Litmatch is where users can connect with friends to chat quickly. Users can even make random video calls, despite a daily limit. The Soul Match feature is one of the application's key features, enabling users to chat anonymously through random matches and add each other as friends if they feel compatible. In contrast, the Voice match feature is a 7-minute voice call. If the user clicks on this feature, it will immediately call another user to start a conversation, with a limit of 8 calls per day. Based on the percentage of Litmatch users who are motivated to practice English more often, as illustrated in Figure 4, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents from third-semester students in the English Education Study Program agree that the existence of the Litmatch application can motivate them to practice English more often.

Discussion

Litmatch is a popular social media platform that has become a technology influencing human life worldwide. Not only as a communication tool, Litmatch social media has evolved into a multifunctional platform that includes entertainment, education, business, and public opinion formation. In his opinion, Syahira et al. (2024) said that in the context of English learning, social media, one of which is Litmatch, presents new opportunities for flexible and interactive learning. Users from various cultural backgrounds can connect, share knowledge,

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and learn from each other through videos, discussions, or content collaboration (Syahira et al., 2024). For example, students can follow English learning accounts, watch videos from native speakers, or participate in communities that focus on speaking practice.

The findings show that the Litmatch application is generally considered positive by students of the English Language Education Study Program at STKIP PGRI Pacitan. Users from various countries can access Litmatch. Finding and installing it is also relatively easy through the Google Play Store or App Store. According to data from kompas.com (accessed in January 2023), the number of users of dating applications has increased over the last 3 years, reaching 323.9 million users in 2021. The Litmatch application has been downloaded over 50 million times with a 4-star rating. Mahatni stated it. Mahatni further said that with the many features in the Litmatch application, users will find it easier to find friends or soulmates. With the large number of Litmatch application users, the application's operation is both friendly and easy to use.

The ease of use of the Litmatch application as a technology and the various features offered, such as speaking practice, are highlighted as significant benefits. It allows users to interact with others and practice their English in a supportive environment. Like other social media applications, the Litmatch application enables users to quickly connect with friends and even make video calls without any limitations. Litmatch features that support speaking practice include: 1) Finding New Friends in One Click. This application allows users to find new friends and start private or group chats with other users; 2) Soul Match. With this feature, users can chat anonymously with others. It can be done through random matches, and when users feel that they match with the person, they can add them as friends. 3) Voice Match. Users can make voice calls with a maximum duration of 7 minutes. By using this feature, users can directly call other users, but can only use this feature 8 times per day; 4) Movie Match. With this feature, users can watch videos together. In addition, users can find new topics to discuss through chat after watching videos together. From this explanation, it is clear that Litmatch provides features and convenience for its users to practice speaking. It is the opinion of Sinuhaji (2020) that this application provides a solution for the needs of the younger generation and the need for social interaction through social media (Kusuma et al., 2023).

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Litmatch aims to improve speaking skills for its users, enabling them to express themselves freely without worrying about talking to the right person. Users do not need to feel embarrassed if they make mistakes when speaking because they can choose to hide or display their identity in this application. Users here can communicate through the many available online features. Soul Match is a feature of the Litmatch application that enables users to chat anonymously through random matches and add each other as friends if they feel a connection. Another feature is Voice Match, which is a 7-minute voice call. If the user clicks on this feature, it will immediately call another user to start a conversation, with a limit of 8 calls per day.

Furthermore, to develop their English speaking skills using Litmatch, users can participate in various competitions, such as quizzes, debates, and other entertainment events. From this explanation, it can be concluded that Litmatch can be used to improve speaking skills. Mukaran (2024) supports the statement that this Litmatch application is beneficial for those with limited public speaking experience (Aflisia et al., 2021)

The existence of technology can also have a significant influence on increasing students' learning motivation. Litmatch, as a form of technology, also plays a role in improving speaking skills. In its application, Litmatch users can learn and practice anytime and anywhere, according to their needs and convenience. This flexibility can increase learning motivation because users feel complete control over their learning time and location (Alhamdi, 2018). The application's influence on user engagement can also impact the user experience and their level of engagement. Applications with engaging, interactive, and valuable features motivate users to use the application for a longer duration. Features such as progress tracking, personalized content, or an attractive interface can increase user interest and engagement (Huang, R., 2019).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The findings from this study reveal that the Litmatch application is generally well-received by students for improving speaking skills, offering a user-friendly interface, and having valuable features for practicing English. Litmatch is designed to support language

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learners through various interactive features, engaging them to practice speaking English in a fun and interactive manner. The social aspect of the app, which facilitates making new friends and engaging in group discussions, was greatly valued, and the app's non-judgmental environment helped reduce speaking anxiety. Student perceptions underscore its effectiveness: 48.1% of respondents agreed that Litmatch is easy to use and has simple navigation, 59.3% agreed that it improves speaking skills, and 55.6% agreed that it motivates users to practice speaking English more frequently. These findings indicate that Litmatch can significantly enhance speaking skills, especially for beginners.

When using Litmatch, a stable Internet connection and adequate storage space are necessary. In addition to improving language learning, it is hoped that additional features such as pronunciation guides and vocabulary tests will be added. Although positive peer influence significantly impacts application use, continuous updates and improvements are needed to meet the various needs of users and ensure a safe user environment. Overall, Litmatch has the potential to be a valuable tool for improving speaking skills, but overcoming the identified challenges will be important for its continued development and effectiveness.

Limitation

Although this study provides significant insights into the perceptions of English Education students regarding the Litmatch application, it is important to recognize that certain limitations may have affected the application or interpretation of the findings. Concerning the study's limitations, this research focuses only on students' perceptions of using the Litmatch app to improve their English speaking skills. The resulting data and findings may not fully reflect the experiences or views of individuals in the context of using such apps beyond the scope of this study. In addition, the generalizability of the findings may be limited to the population of English language education students only. It cannot be directly extended to other populations, such as secondary school students or adults learning English independently.

Implication

The implications are significant for future research endeavors and educational policy decisions in English language education. By demonstrating the effectiveness of the Litmatch application in improving speaking skills among English Education students, this research

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highlights the potential of technology-enhanced language learning platforms in facilitating language acquisition and proficiency. The findings suggest that integrating such platforms into language learning curricula can offer students additional opportunities for practice, interaction, and skill development outside the traditional classroom setting. This has implications for educators and policymakers considering integrating technology-based language learning tools into educational programs to enhance student learning outcomes. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of ongoing technological innovation and development in educational technology to meet the evolving needs of language learners in the digital age.

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