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

by

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Abstract.

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa terhadap penggunaan Litmatch untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara. Dengan desain penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif, sejumlah 27 mahasiswa yang berasal dari 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. Persentase adalah teknik statistik yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan 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 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.

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, sejumlah 27 mahasiswa yang berasal dari 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. Persentase adalah teknik statistik yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan 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 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 contain the sound of a bell, car bell, limb

movements or gestures, morse, and so on (Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). So, this emphasizes that language is a human's communication tool or medium to interact by each other and among members of society. Language is the sound symbols produced by human speech organs and is the most essential thing in a person's life. Humans require communication to assist them in surviving. A main 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 attempted and learned, especially if the language being learned is a foreign language.

English is a universally accepted language as one of the foreign languages studied. Therefore, English plays a vital role in academics. For instance, in college-level education, some courses require using foreign language literature, especially English. In this case, mastering English is significant. It is not only about translating but also understanding (Subekti, 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). Therefore, students must master language skills to support their potential at tertiary institutions.

English language skills that students must master are reading and listening as receptive skills, and speaking and writing skill as productive skills. Speaking English itself is a productive skill that requires students to be able to produce words or expressions in English. Speaking skills are a challenge for students because students generally have problems speaking English. Some issues that arise so that students are not confident 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 can not only be achieved through classroom teaching and learning activities; students should also get used to using English as often as possible on any platform. 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 essential skills in the 21st era. Technology is one of important communication tool for smooth interactions between students and educators and 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 through the ability to critically analyze and interpret large amounts of information online (Kalyani, 2024).

Digital literacy skills help handle all information on digital media, such as social media. It is an internet-based application that users widely adopt because it can connect and disseminate information from all over without limitations of space and time. Social media can spread information more easily and quickly (Syahfira et al., 2023). Due to the increasingly rapid technology development, 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, 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, especially 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 want to examine students' perspectives on the application of Litmach to improve the students' speaking skills in the English education study program at STKIP PGRI Pacitan.

METHOD

Design

9 A quantitative approach is used in this study because it emphasizes numbers (numerical), which are then processed using statistics. It is in line with Sugiyono's opinion (2012), which says that "the method is a quantitative because the research data is in the form of numerical values and is analyzed using statistical methods." The method used is descriptive with survey techniques, namely by collecting data using a questionnaire regarding using Litmatch to improve speaking skills (Sahir, 2021) (Hardani, 2020). According to Morissan, a descriptive survey seeks to explain or record conditions or attitudes to explain what exists today. "Descriptive surveys seek to reveal the current situation related to a particular topic of study." Morissan further states that one of the advantages of survey research is that it can be used to examine a problem or research question in an actual situation (Morissan, 2017).

Participant

2 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. Personal opinion was the topic of lecture at the time of data collection, which included details of the subject matter, namely, a Discussion of A Hot Topic.

Instrument

7 Data sources were obtained from survey results through a Google Forms questionnaire. The questionnaire contains a list of questions arranged using the Likert scale. It measures a person's or group's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2013) (Zulfikar, 2024). 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. 10 Sutrisno Hadi (1991: 19) states that the Likert scale is a measurement scale that contains five levels of answers to statements or questions. Respondents are asked to decide on their level of agreement on a particular scale (Abubakar, 2021). There are 20 questions of 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 of Litmatch to improve English speaking; and 4) perceived 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.

3 After the type of research instrument is determined, The following phase is to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Validity testing using expert judgment is carried out by examining the instrument grid, whether it is in accordance with the research aims,

the research validity of the measuring instrument, and the questions posed to the respondents. After several questions were considered relevant, the authors tested the instrument on third-semester PBI students in STKIP PGRI Pacitan, totaling 27 students. Reliability testing in this instrumented test is done by internal consistency, which is done by testing the instrument once the data is obtained and analyzed with specific techniques.

Data collecting Technique

In collecting data, researchers used a questionnaire to obtain data from respondents. The questionnaire used is a type of questionnaire that asks respondents to choose one of the predetermined answers. For alternative answers in this questionnaire, a score is given to each option using a modified Likert scale. Hence, in this survey, respondents responding to questions had five answer options, namely strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (NA), and strongly disagree (VNA). This answer to these questions has weighted values with the following details: 5 = strongly agree (SA); 4 = agree (A); 3 = neutral (N); 2 = disagree (D); and 1 = strongly disagree (SD). The stages of the research data collection process in this study are:

1. The researchers themselves carried out data collection by visiting the research subjects.
2. The researcher explained the questionnaire-filling technique to prospective respondents, and if anything was unclear, prospective respondents were invited to ask.
3. The researcher collected data by distributing questionnaires directly, and after completion, the researcher collected the questionnaire.
4. Primary data is obtained from filling out a questionnaire containing data on the problems given.
5. After the data is obtained, the following process is to analyze the data.

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 or interpret the data obtained. According to Prasetyo and Jannah (2010), there are several steps in analyzing data, namely:

1. Data coding is systematically organizing raw data (in the questionnaire) into a form easily read by a data processing machine.
2. Data entering 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.
5. Data analysis represents an advanced data processing sequence that summarizes and analyzes the data, from existing results at the stage of data processing results. (Rahmadi, 2011) (Sihotang, 2023)

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 employed in this research is descriptive statistical, using percentages to describe the research variables in measurements. It does not use inferential statistics because this research has no hypothesis.

Anas Sudijono (2010) stated that descriptive statistics are numerical analyses that classify and analyze numerical data to provide an organized, precise, and concise description of a symptom, event, or phenomenon so that a certain 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).

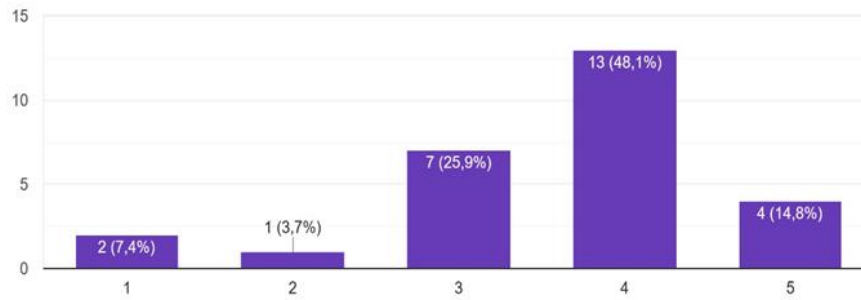
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The overview of the data presented in this study's findings outlines 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, twenty-seven respondents were obtained from the third semester of PBI students. The data shown is raw and then analyzed using analytical statistical techniques. The data in this data description is in the form of a frequency distribution presented per indicator, along with the frequency and score acquisition percentage. The data obtained was earlier verified to eliminate invalid data that will influence the findings of the research analysis.

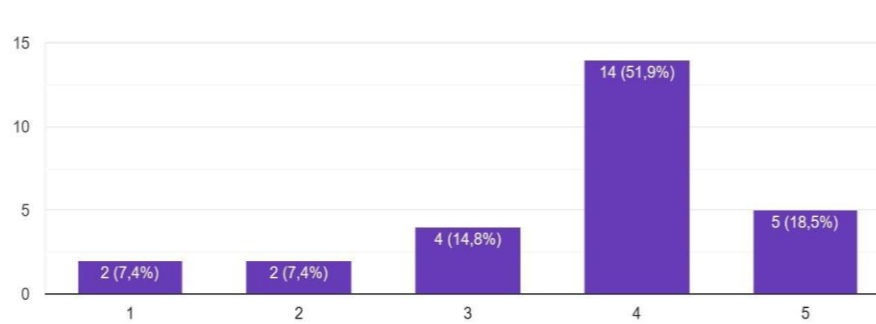
The researcher provides results from the collected and analyzed questionnaire data, as seen in the diagram below.

Figure 1. Students' Opinion of Litmatch Ease of Use



15 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; register and continue as requested. Registering for the Litmatch application is easy; users can use Facebook or Google. After that, click. Then, direct it to fill in the nickname, date of birth, and age, provide hobby information, and select the avatar the user uses because Litmatch does not use real photos. After completing the form, the user will be directed to the Litmatch homepage; there, the user can see recommendations for people with whom the user can chat based on the profile content from when the user registered earlier. According to the percentage of students' opinions and the explanation above, the Litmatch application is user-friendly and easy to navigate.

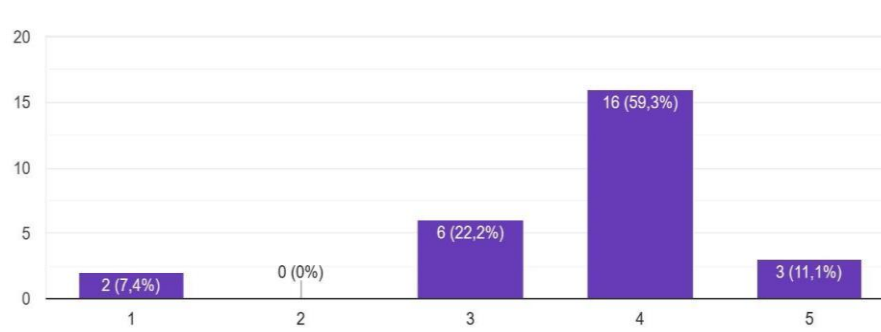
Figure 2. Litmatch Provides Features to Practice Speaking



19 Based on questionnaire results 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. 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, the users do not have to

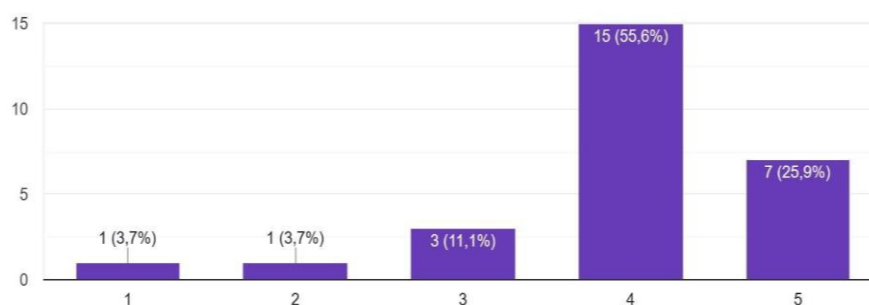
bother following each other or waiting for confirmation of friendship. In addition to creating statuses on the homepage, Litmatch also provides chat and telephone features for a limited time. Named Soulgame, this feature aims to find the users' soulmates. When the users are fluent in chatting with someone, they have to press the like button to chat longer. 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



Concerning the existence of Litmatch in improving speaking skills, figure 3 shows that 59.3% of respondents agree that Litmatch improves speaking skills, 11.1% strongly agree, 22.2% are neutral, and 7.4% strongly disagree. In the Litmatch application, there is a group chat feature that connects a user with all users from within the country and abroad and can increase 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 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 get friends to chat within just a short time. Users can even chat with random video calls despite a daily limit. The Soul Match feature itself is one of the features in this application that allows 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 and is limited to only 8 times per day. Based on the percentage of Litmatch being able to motivate users to practice English more often, as illustrated in Figure 4, it can be summed up that the larger part of respondents from third-semester PBI students agree that the existence of the Litmatch application can motivate them to practice English more often.

Discussion

Litmatch is a kind of social media platform that is currently popular and has become one of the technologies that has influenced 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, and learn from each other through videos, discussions, or content collaboration (Syahira, 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 PBI students 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. Based on data from kompas.com (accessed in January 2023), the number of users of dating applications has increased in the last 3 years, and in 2021, it reached 323.9 million users. The Litmatch application has been downloaded over 50 million times with a 4-star rating. It was stated by (Mahatni, 2023). 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 operation of this application is 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 allows users to get friends to chat with quickly

and even chat via 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, 2023).

Concerning the existence of Litmatch to improve speaking skills for its users, Litmatch users can express themselves 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 one of the features of this Litmatch application, which allows users to chat anonymously through random matches and add each other as friends if they feel suitable. 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 and is limited to only 8 times 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 (Ghozali, 2018). The influence of the application on the duration of user use can also affect 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

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 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 essential to recognize that specific barriers may have impacted the applicability or interpretation of the results. 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 validity of the results may be limited to the group of English education students only. It cannot be directly extended to other populations, such as secondary school students or adults learning English independently.

IMPLICATION

22 The implications are significant for future research endeavors and educational policy decisions in English language education. By demonstrating the utility of the Litmatch mobile app in enhancing speaking skills within PBI students, this research 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 fulfill the changing needs of language learners in the digital age.

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