

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING THE MANGO LANGUAGES APPLICATION IN PRACTICING CONVERSATIONS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

English speaking skill is an essential competency in the 21st century, yet many Indonesian students face challenges such as limited practice, low confidence, and lack of opportunities in class. This study explored students' perceptions of using the Mango Languages application to practice conversations and enhance speaking skills. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected from 15 English education students through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed five themes: enhanced confidence, vocabulary and pronunciation development, flexibility and accessibility, motivation and engagement, and challenges and limitations. Based on these identified themes, Mango Languages showed potential in reducing students' anxiety, improving pronunciation accuracy, and supporting independent learning. However, challenges such as limited conversation topics, lack of direct teacher feedback, and technical barriers were also reported. Therefore, Mango Languages was best positioned as a supplementary tool for improving speaking skills in higher education when integrated with classroom instruction..

Keywords: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Mango Languages, student perception

INTRODUCTION

English speaking skill plays a vital role in global communication and is considered one of the most essential competencies in 21st-century education. As a productive language skill, speaking enables individuals to express ideas, participate in conversations, and engage in real-world interactions. In the context of language learning (Ahmad, 2016), especially for students in non-English-speaking countries like Indonesia, mastering speaking is often more challenging than reading or writing due to limited practice and low confidence. Therefore, developing students' speaking skills has become a key focus in English education, particularly as communication demands continue to increase in both academic and professional settings (Franscy & Ramli, 2022).

However, in practice, many students still struggle to master English speaking skills. This is due to several factors, such as limited time for speaking practice in class, a strong focus on grammar and reading, and a lack of confidence in public speaking. Furthermore, traditional learning often does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking in real

and meaningful contexts. Therefore, a more interactive and student-centered learning approach is needed to enable students to develop their speaking skills actively and independently ("Effect of Interactive Approach on Students Speaking Skill in English Language in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State of Nigeria," 2024).

As technology advances, various digital innovations are increasingly utilized in education, including English language learning. One approach that is increasingly implemented is Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which uses mobile-based applications to facilitate flexible and independent language learning. One application that offers interactive speaking features is Mango Languages. This application provides real-life conversation simulations, pronunciation exercises, and exposure to cultural contexts that encourage students to actively use English in relevant situations. With its user-friendly interface and accessible materials, Mango Languages is considered a potential alternative to help students improve their speaking skills in a fun and engaging way (Kukulska-Hulme, 2020).

To provide a clearer understanding of the learning tool used in this study, Figure 1 shows the interface of the Mango Languages application. The application allows students to select conversation topics, engage in real-life dialogue simulations, and practice pronunciation with audio support. In addition, the progress-tracking feature enables learners to monitor their learning progress consistently. The Mango Languages application provides students with an interactive platform to practice English speaking. The application allows learners to, Select language and conversation topics, Engage in real-life conversation simulations with audio support, Practice pronunciation using the voice-recording feature, Track their learning progress through progress-monitoring tools.

Various studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of language learning applications in improving speaking skills. Internationally, a study by Akbar (2024) found that the use of the Mango Languages application among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia helped improve conversational skills through interactive dialogue simulations and vocabulary practice. Meanwhile, in the

Indonesian context, several studies have revealed that students have positive perceptions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) because its interactive and flexible features encourage independent speaking practice outside the classroom. These studies indicate that digital application-based learning can be an effective medium for improving students' speaking skills. A previous study found that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) based on contextual problems was proven to be valid and effective in enhancing the English-speaking skills of fourth-grade elementary school students (Darmawati, 2018).

However, most existing studies have focused on elementary to senior high school levels, and only a limited number of studies have specifically examined the perceptions of college students in Indonesia toward applications such as Mango Languages. Based on the above description, it can be concluded that speaking skills are an important aspect but still a challenge for many students in Indonesia. Although various language learning applications such as Mango Languages have been used and shown positive results in several

contexts, there is still little research specifically exploring collage students' perceptions of their use in English conversation practice. Therefore, this study aims to explore how students interpret their experiences using the Mango Languages application to practice speaking skills.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and how they make meaning of those experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In this qualitative study, the phenomenological approach was employed to explore and understand the lived experiences of students using the Mango Languages application as a tool for practicing conversations. This approach sought to uncover how students perceived, interpreted, and assigned meaning to their experiences when engaging with the application to enhance their speaking skills. Participants in this study were 15 students, selected through purposive sampling based on the criteria that they were enrolled in semesters 2 to 4 of the English language education department at one of the universities in Medan City. The selection of participants aimed to obtain

their personal perspectives, feelings, and reflections. This also sought to capture the essence of their experiences and provide in-depth insights into how the Mango Languages application influenced their language learning process.

The data in this study were collected using two main instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather general information regarding students' usage patterns, frequency, and overall perceptions of the Mango Languages application in practicing conversations. Following the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more in-depth and nuanced insights into students' lived experiences, allowing participants to elaborate on their perceptions, challenges, and the benefits they experienced while using the application to improve their speaking skills. The semi-structured format enabled the researcher to maintain a consistent line of inquiry while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes during the interviews (Gu, 2016).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved several systematic

steps: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts; (2) generating initial codes to capture significant features relevant to the research objectives; (3) identifying and reviewing potential themes that emerged from the data; (4) refining and naming the themes to ensure clarity and coherence; and (5) synthesizing the findings to interpret how students perceived and made meaning of their experiences in using the Mango Languages application to practice conversations and improve their speaking skills. This analytical approach allowed the researcher to capture both common patterns and unique individual perspectives among participants (Lochmiller, 2021).

The data from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. The process involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading, coding significant statements, grouping codes into themes, and refining these themes to ensure accuracy and coherence. The final themes were then synthesized into a clear narrative, supported by participants' direct quotations, to

capture how students perceived and interpreted their experiences in using the Mango Languages application to practice conversations and improve their speaking skills (Naeem et al., 2023).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, which addressed the research objective of exploring students' perceptions of using the Mango Languages application to practice conversations and improve speaking skills. Based on the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews, several key themes were identified, illustrating how students perceived the use of Mango Languages in developing their speaking skills. These themes provided insights into both the benefits and the challenges experienced by students during their learning process..

This study aimed to explore how students interpreted their experiences using the Mango Languages application to practice speaking skills. These themes provided a comprehensive view of how the application supported students' speaking development while also highlighting certain challenges.

1. Enhanced Speaking Confidence, One of the most prominent themes that

emerged from the data was students' increased confidence in speaking English. Many participants expressed that the interactive conversation practices in the Mango Languages application helped them overcome fear and anxiety when using English in real-life situations.

As shown in Figure 1, more than half of the respondents acknowledged a positive effect on their confidence. Specifically, 33.3% of the students selected "Agree" and another 33.3% selected "Strongly Agree." Meanwhile, 26.7% remained neutral, and only a small proportion expressed disagreement. This suggests that the majority of students perceived Mango Languages as a useful tool for reducing anxiety and building their speaking confidence..

In addition to the questionnaire data, the interview findings also reinforced this theme. Several participants emphasized that the real-life conversation simulations provided by the application allowed them to practice speaking in a safe and non-judgmental environment. One student stated, "Menggunakan Mango Languages meningkatkan rasa percaya diri saya dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris." Another participant explained

that repeated practice through the application helped them feel more comfortable engaging in conversations without worrying too much about making mistakes..

These results indicated that Mango Languages not only supported the technical aspects of language learning but also played an important role in shaping students' psychological readiness to communicate in English. The combination of practice, repetition, and contextual conversation scenarios offered by the application effectively helped students overcome fear and hesitation in speaking.

2. Vocabulary and Pronunciation Development, Another recurring theme that emerged from the data was the perceived improvement in vocabulary and pronunciation. The majority of students reported that the application's vocabulary features and pronunciation tools supported them in expanding their lexical knowledge and refining their speech accuracy.

The questionnaire data revealed that a majority of the participants perceived the pronunciation practice feature as effective. As shown in Figure 2, 33.3% of the students selected "Agree" and another 33.3% selected "Strongly Agree." Meanwhile, 26.7%

remained neutral, and only a very small proportion expressed strong disagreement.

These results indicated that most students experienced tangible benefits in terms of clearer and more accurate pronunciation after consistent use of the application. This quantitative finding was further supported by the interview data. Several participants shared that repeating words and sentences in the application helped them recognize correct stress and intonation patterns.

One participant stated, "Latihan pelafalan di Mango Languages membuat pengucapan saya menjadi lebih baik." Another student emphasized that mimicking the native-like audio provided in the application gave them more confidence to speak with correct pronunciation in real-life contexts. The combination of structured vocabulary practice and pronunciation training available in Mango Languages appeared to significantly enhance learners' speaking accuracy. It not only expanded students' lexical repertoire but also supported them in producing words with proper articulation, thereby strengthening their overall communicative competence.

3. Flexibility and accessibility of Learning, Flexibility and accessibility also emerged as important aspects valued by the participants. They highlighted that the mobile-based nature of the Mango Languages application allowed them to practice speaking anytime and anywhere, beyond the limitations of traditional classroom settings.

As shown in Figure 3, 33.3% of the students selected "Agree" and 26.7% selected "Strongly Agree," while another 33.3% chose "Neutral." Only a very small percentage expressed disagreement. These findings suggested that Mango Languages effectively enabled students to extend their speaking practice beyond formal learning environments, thereby supporting more autonomous learning habits.

The interview data further reinforced this theme. Students explained that the mobile-based nature of the application allowed them to practice English anytime and anywhere, which they found particularly helpful when they had limited opportunities to speak English in the classroom. One participant commented, "Mango Languages memberikan kesempatan yang cukup

bagi saya untuk berlatih berbicara secara mandiri di luar kelas."

This indicated that the application created a flexible learning space that reduced students' dependency on classroom instruction. Overall, the findings demonstrated that Mango Languages not only complemented classroom learning but also empowered students to take greater control of their language development. The accessibility of practice materials on mobile devices encouraged consistent engagement with English, thereby promoting independent speaking practice as part of students' daily routines.

4. Motivation and Engagement in Learning In addition, students consistently emphasized the motivational and engaging aspects of using the application. The interactive design and user-friendly interface were considered effective in making the learning process more enjoyable and in encouraging consistent practice.

As shown in Figure 4, 46.7% of the respondents selected "Neutral," while 33.3% chose "Agree," and 13.3% selected "Strongly Agree." Only a very small proportion expressed disagreement. This distribution indicated that although nearly half of the

students remained neutral, a considerable percentage acknowledged that the application provided meaningful encouragement to continue practicing.

The interview findings further supported this perspective. Several students explained that the interactive features and user-friendly design of the application made the learning process feel less formal and more enjoyable. One participant noted, "Saya merasa lebih termotivasi untuk berlatih berbicara bahasa Inggris karena menggunakan Mango Languages." Another student added that the application's gamified elements, such as progress tracking and instant feedback, encouraged them to practice more consistently compared to traditional learning methods.

Overall, these findings highlighted that Mango Languages played an important role not only in skill development but also in sustaining learners' motivation. The application's engaging design and accessible features contributed to a more positive learning experience, which in turn fostered students' willingness to engage regularly in English speaking practice.

5. Challenges and Limitations, Despite the benefits, several challenges and limitations were also identified by the participants. Some students noted the restricted scope of conversation topics, the lack of direct teacher feedback, and occasional technical issues, such as internet connectivity problems, as barriers to maximizing the application's potential.

As shown in Figure 5, the majority of students perceived the application as having a positive impact on their speaking skills, with 53.3% selecting "Agree" and 26.7% selecting "Strongly Agree." However, a smaller portion of the respondents expressed neutrality (6.7%) or disagreement (6.7%), and 6.7% strongly disagreed. This indicated that although most students found Mango Languages beneficial, not all participants experienced consistent improvements.

The interview data provided further insight into these mixed perceptions. Some students explained that while the application offered helpful features, it remained limited in terms of conversation variety and the depth of feedback. For instance, one participant mentioned that the absence of direct teacher guidance sometimes made them unsure whether their progress

was accurate. Another student highlighted that internet connectivity and device limitations occasionally interrupted their practice sessions, thereby reducing learning effectiveness. These findings suggested that although Mango Languages was effective in enhancing students' speaking skills, its reliance on technology and the absence of personalized feedback remained significant limitations. Addressing these challenges—such as integrating the application with classroom activities or providing more diverse speaking scenarios—could further maximize its potential as a supplementary language learning tool.

The findings of this study provided important insights into students' perceptions of using the Mango Languages application for practicing speaking skills. The themes identified from the questionnaire and interview data highlighted both the strengths and the limitations of the application, demonstrating how it contributed to the development of students' speaking skills while also revealing areas for improvement (Evans, 2018).

The first theme, enhanced speaking confidence, demonstrated

that Mango Languages helped students overcome anxiety and hesitation in speaking English. The majority of respondents agreed that the application contributed to their confidence, which was also evident in interview comments regarding a reduced fear of making mistakes. This finding aligned with previous research by Alshammari (2020), who found that interactive digital tools could reduce learners' anxiety and foster a supportive environment for communication. In this sense, the application not only improved students' technical competence but also addressed psychological barriers to speaking (Huang, 2025).

The second theme, vocabulary and pronunciation development, indicated that students benefited from the structured practice and pronunciation features of the application. Students reported improvements in their ability to articulate words more accurately and to expand their vocabulary repertoire. This finding was consistent with previous studies, which highlighted that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applications enhance learners' lexical knowledge and oral accuracy by providing repeated exposure to authentic input. Furthermore, the audio-

based modeling in Mango Languages reflected the effectiveness of contextual and imitation-based learning in language acquisition (Al-Abri et al., 2024).

The third theme, flexibility and accessibility, showed that students valued the opportunity to practice English independently outside of the classroom. The portability of mobile devices made it possible for students to integrate English practice into their daily routines. This finding was consistent with previous studies, which emphasized that the mobility of digital learning fosters learner autonomy and continuous engagement in language learning. By reducing dependence on formal classroom instruction, Mango Languages empowered students to take greater responsibility for their learning progress.

The fourth theme, motivation and engagement, highlighted the role of interactive and user-friendly design in sustaining learners' interest. While some students expressed neutral views, many acknowledged that gamified features and progress tracking encouraged them to practice more consistently. This finding was in line with previous studies, which argued that engagement-driven features in

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can maintain learners' motivation more effectively than traditional classroom tasks. The results of this study suggested that enjoyment and sustained practice were critical elements of effective language learning, and Mango Languages provided both to a meaningful degree (Chua et al., 2021).

Finally, the theme of challenges and limitations pointed to areas in which Mango Languages may have fallen short. Some students identified limited conversation scenarios and the absence of direct teacher feedback as barriers to effective learning. Others noted technical constraints, such as unstable internet connections, which occasionally disrupted their learning process. This finding was consistent with previous studies, which noted that although mobile applications offer flexibility, they cannot entirely replace the scaffolding and adaptive feedback provided by teachers. Thus, the results suggested that Mango Languages worked most effectively when integrated with formal classroom instruction, ensuring that learners received both technological support and pedagogical guidance.

Overall, this study confirmed that Mango Languages was a valuable tool for enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in boosting confidence, improving pronunciation, and supporting independent practice.

However, the findings also showed that technological tools alone were not sufficient; their effectiveness increased when combined with classroom-based feedback and opportunities for authentic communication. By capturing university students' lived experiences, this research contributed to the broader literature on Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and highlighted the potential of digital applications to transform language learning in higher education (Kamaşak et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study explored students' perceptions of using the Mango Languages application to practice conversations and improve speaking skills. The findings revealed five key themes: enhanced speaking confidence, vocabulary and pronunciation development, flexibility and accessibility of learning, motivation and engagement, as well as challenges and limitations. The results indicated that Mango Languages provided

significant benefits in reducing students' anxiety, improving pronunciation accuracy, expanding vocabulary, and enabling independent and flexible speaking practice beyond classroom boundaries. Moreover, the interactive features of the application helped sustain students' motivation and engagement in speaking practice (Kamaşak et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the study also identified certain limitations, such as the restricted range of conversation topics, the lack of direct teacher feedback, and technical issues related to internet connectivity. These factors suggested that while Mango Languages was effective as a supplementary tool, it could not entirely replace the role of teachers and structured classroom activities.

In conclusion, Mango Languages had the potential to be an effective digital resource for enhancing students' speaking skills in higher education, particularly in fostering confidence and supporting independent learning. However, its effectiveness was maximized when integrated with classroom instruction and supported by appropriate pedagogical guidance. Future research could further investigate how combining mobile applications with formal teaching

strategies can create a more comprehensive and effective approach to improving students' communicative competence in English.

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