

HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION FOR STUDENTS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

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Articel Received: 25/09/2023; **Accepted:** 10/10/2023

ABSTRACT

Technology in education benefits both the learning process and the results. Many studies have determined that using technology in the classroom can help students learn a language. Artificial intelligence's involvement in education has significant implications for English language teaching and learning. One of the artificial intelligences that can aid English language teaching and learning is the ELSA Speak App. The ELSA Speak App includes a plethora of videos and practice exercises, making it ideal for practicing pronunciation or even listening. This application can aid students in improving their English pronunciation as well as speaking proficiency. The objective of this literature review is to explore the potential of ELSA Speak Application for enhancing language practices in the context of speaking proficiency. Additionally, this review will evaluate its effectiveness as a language learning tool and propose recommendations for future research on its use for students' speaking proficiency and language learning more broadly.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, ELSA Speak App, Speaking Proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

In this current era, English is used mostly in every aspect of our lives, and it requires everyone to be able to know how to speak in English or even understand English words. As a result, many people are now interested in learning English. They devote a lot of attention into enhancing the four main skills in addition to concentrating on grammar and structure or even pronunciation. Besides, speaking is one of the skills that should be learned, and it is regarded as the most crucial and practical skill among those skills because it is required for conversing, working, and other activities. However, in the classroom, some students have good speaking abilities while some of them also struggle with speaking English fluently and using whole sentences to convey their ideas. To address this issue, it is better for teachers to find strategies or techniques to help the students in the classroom. One way to overcome this problem is by implementing and integrating technology in the classroom. With the advent of technology, language assessment has undergone a transformation, many studies exploring innovative ways to harness the potential of technology to assess speaking proficiency. One such innovative

app is ELSA Speak, which claims to use Artificial Intelligence to assess speaking proficiency.

In the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution, the utilization of IoT (internet of things) and AI (artificial intelligence) has become progressively widespread across a variety of domains, including education, commerce, networking, and business (Kholis, 2021). Pokrivčáková (2019) stated that an artificial intelligence (AI) system is a computer system or machine that can mimic the cognitive abilities of the human mind, such as learning and problem-solving. Makhoul (2021) also stated that utilizing artificial intelligence can encourage students to talk by giving them genuine tasks to complete. Utilizing AI offered great chances for low and intermediate achievers to engage with and learn from high achievers. As a result, students who are shy and students with low academic achievement were more driven to participate and engage. Additionally, learning became more learner centered as artificial intelligence (AI) helped students gain a sense of leadership and ownership throughout their learning. Kim (2018) argued that utilizing AI tools in the classroom is a beneficial technique to enhance oral skills due to the accurate assessment and updated features of AI applications. Regarding the issue mentioned at the beginning of this section above, one of the ways to assist students in developing their speaking skill is by using ELSA Speak app in the classroom. ELSA Speak is one of the artificial intelligences (AI) that stands for English Language Speech Assistant. ELSA Speak attempts to address this issue through a bevy of videos and practice exercises and the app is extremely useful for practicing pronunciation or even listening. This is a tool which can help students in developing their speaking skill in terms of their English pronunciation as well as improve their listening skill. This literature review will explore the potential of ELSA Speak Application for enhancing language practices in the context of speaking proficiency as well as evaluate its effectiveness as a language learning tool.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective, a review of literature was conducted. Review of literature is a method of systematically collecting and synthesizing previous research on a specific topic (Snyder, 2019). It involves researching, reading, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing scholarly literature about a particular subject (*Research Guides: Research Methods: Literature Reviews*, 2011). This process enables the researcher to identify the current state of knowledge in the field and to identify gaps in the existing literature, thus highlighting areas for future research. This research was conducted to answer the two research questions. Based on the given objectives, the research questions can be framed as follows: 1) What potential does the ELSA Speak app hold for enhancing English speaking proficiency? 2) How effective is the ELSA Speak app as a language learning tool for students?. The databases searched included Google Scholar, ERIC, and other relevant scholarly databases. Meanwhile, the studies selected for the review was published in English and focus on the use of the ELSA Speak App for

assessing speaking proficiency in language learners. Only peer-reviewed articles and academic publications were included, and studies must have been published in the last 10 years. Moreover, the data was extracted on the methodology, findings, and limitations of each study. Themes and patterns were identified, and data was synthesized using a narrative approach and meta-analysis where appropriate. Studies were evaluated for quality using criteria such as study design, sample size, data analysis, and the use of appropriate statistical methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementing ELSA Speak app in the classroom is very gainful, especially when it comes to teaching speaking skill. It is important to utilize ELSA Speak in the classroom because it offers lots of advantages that teachers and students can gain when using this app. This app is interactive because ELSA Speak is an engaging and enjoyable tool which will help the students to improve their English pronunciation. The artificial intelligence technology developed by ELSA was created using voice data collected from individuals speaking English with different accents. This enables ELSA to recognize non-native speakers' speech patterns and distinguish it from many other voice recognition technological innovations. A study by Becker & Edalatishams (2019) shows that ELSA Speak App allows learner to listen to the target sound's pronunciation before recording themselves and then assesses the recording's accuracy and offers feedback on both correct and incorrect pronunciations. During the feedback, the learners receive a score up to 100 along with a bell sound for the correct pronunciation and a buzzer sound for incorrect pronunciation. Additionally, the app provides the user with the correct pronunciation of the sound or word and an opportunity to revisit and compare the previously recorded incorrect sound. Continual feedback to the learners can provide them with a perspective on their advancement and highlight areas that require attention to enhance their performance (Rismawati, Suryana, & Agustiana, 2021). ELSA Speak is an excellent app for the purpose of practicing English pronunciation because the lessons are brief, students can complete as many or as few as students like in a day. The pronunciation exercise allows users to verbally articulate a given word or phrase, and subsequently receive feedback on each individual phoneme, visually represented by a color-coded system (Anguera & Van, 2016). Additionally, the app provides phonetic suggestions to address and correct any existing errors. A study by Bonilla & De La Rosa Prudente (2023) also stated that the ELSA Speak app is an incredibly useful resource for self-directed learning, and one of the top tools available today to assess and enhance one's English pronunciation because its efficacy lies in its ability to easily detect the distinct accent of non-native English speakers based on their voice, enabling constant repetition of words until they are mastered accurately. In line with this, Saragih & Muthmainnah (2021) also mentioned that ELSA Speak provides an opportunity for students to acquire accurate pronunciation models from native speakers, as well as the

ability to practice their pronunciation and receive digital feedback for subsequent correction.

Even if the students are practicing the same skill, ELSA Speak facilitates the students with numerous exercises that can help to keep things interesting. There are some functions of ELSA Speak app. To begin, ELSA Speak App includes many native speaker speech audios that are organized into various lessons. As a result, users can practice and enhance their speaking and listening skills daily, as well as remember the accents of native speakers. The accent used in all sounds is completely correct, allowing users to practice correctly from the start. This makes the students believe that the software is excellent for use in learning pronunciation (Samad & Aminullah, 2019). Furthermore, this app can accurately recognize users' voice and compare it to the standard accent of native speakers. Elsa Speak App will therefore automatically correct your pronunciation and give the proper correction if it is incorrect or if it significantly differs from that of native speakers. Below is the picture showing the pronunciation as well as the assessment practice and the result of speech recognition.

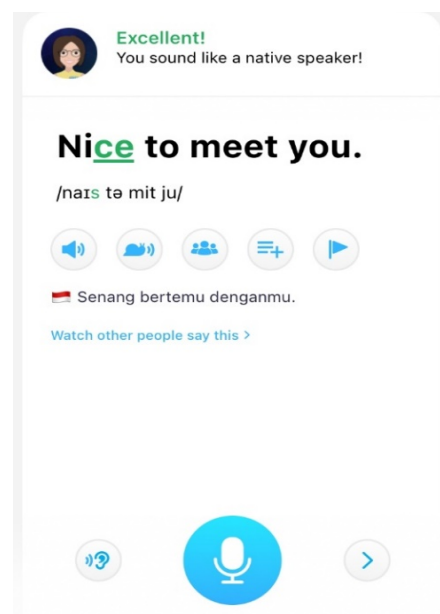


Figure 1. Result of speech recognition

Hereafter, as technology continues to evolve, it allows for greater precision in measuring various elements of the English language, which presents significant benefits in education when paired with instantaneous feedback and low to negligible expenses (Li & Kim, 2022). A study by Flora & Farías (2022) also shows ELSA Speak can assess and facilitate enhancements in all four evaluated criteria of speaking that include fluency, content and vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication skills, with a particular emphasis on the criterion of pronunciation. In addition, a study by Nguyen & Vo (2021) revealed that ELSA Speak is the most popular and highly effective tool for

learning English speaking. Kholis (2021) also highlighted how ELSA Speak can encourage students to engage in learning how to pronounce words as well as help them improve their pronunciation skills as the features provided by this app, such as real-time feedback, allowed for precise pronunciation among students. In line with this, Aratusa (2019) claimed that the ELSA Speak app can develop students' pronunciation of English words, phonemic and phonetic sounds. It is simple to use outside of the classroom, students can learn or practice information that can be managed at any time and from any location, taking advantage of its convenience. It was also thought to be advantageous and effective to their learning, in addition to being simple to use (Darsih & Asikin, 2020).

Furthermore, many research or even English teachers and users strongly suggest the ELSA Speak Application because there are four reasons why teachers should choose this application to assist students in improving speaking or even listening skill. The first reason is because the students will have the opportunity to study English in a native and professional atmosphere due to the fact that this tool uses the accent of native speakers and American English pronunciation. This means that in order to have a decent learning environment, students do not need to go to an English center where they may interact with native speakers or teachers. The second reason is because this application provides several learning strategies for teachers or even students, including audio lessons, conversations, music, as well as more. Students can also access a variety of topics like education, business, finance, banking, presenting presentations, and far more, depending on students' needs. The third reason is because this app offers the standard test that is requested to evaluate students' level of speaking ability. Additionally, it can detect words that are typically pronounced incorrectly and prompt the students to practice them more frequently. Finally, and most importantly, the program of this application offers a friendly user design with stunning colors, outstanding images, and logical categories. With its AI technology, ELSA Speak effectively detects voices and provides feedback on speech, intonation, and rhythm. Additionally, the application can be conveniently accessed on both iOS and Android mobile devices, making it accessible to users worldwide. Its implementation of speech technology and artificial intelligence assists non-native English speakers in feeling more confident and fluent when speaking the language.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the literature surrounding the ELSA Speak app suggests that it holds significant potential for assessing students' speaking proficiency accurately and efficiently. The app's use of AI technology and speech analysis provides learners with a personalized and adaptive experience aimed at improving their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. The app's convenience, accessibility, and ability to provide focused exercises have the potential to enhance language learning outcomes and support language teachers in assessing students' speaking ability in an efficient and

accurate manner. ELSA Speak app can be beneficial to both EFL/ESL teachers and learners who want to teach or learn English pronunciation with high level of satisfaction. ELSA Speak is an English learning app that connects incredible and effective features to meet learners' needs. Furthermore, the app's features, such as instant feedback, helped the students pronounce words correctly. ELSA Speak can also effectively and efficiently improve students' pronunciation skills, and it can motivate students to participate in the learning process, particularly pronunciation learning. However, further research on the app's effectiveness and implementation in various educational settings is necessary to fully understand its potential.

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