Evaluating Busuu.com application for speaking skills through Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): EFL Student's Perception

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Abstract

English proficiency is essential in a globalized world, particularly in academic and professional settings. This study examines students' perceptions of using Busuu, an online language learning application, to enhance their speaking skills. It also looked at students' views on their experience of the platform, including its advantages and disadvantages. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, among sixty-eight speaking class students at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Data were collected through a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) closed ended questionnaire and open-ended questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students generally perceive Busuu as a useful and user-friendly tool for improving speaking skills, pronunciation, and independent learning. The application's structured exercises, real-time feedback, and accessibility contributed to its positive reception. However, challenges such as technical issues, limited free features, and content limitations were identified as barriers to effective utilization. Future research should explore the long-term impact of Busuu on speaking proficiency, investigate ways to integrate it with classroom instruction, and address identified limitations to maximize its effectiveness in diverse educational settings. The study contributes to the broader discourse on digital learning by reinforcing the role of scaffolding and interactionist theories in second language acquisition.

Keywords: *Busuu; Perception; Speaking skills; Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); EFL students*

Introduction

In the globalization era, English proficiency is increasingly crucial as the world's lingua franca, particularly in business, technology, and science, with over 50% of scientific papers written in English (Iglesias, Ramires, & Carvalho, 2024; Melitz, 2016; Nunan, 2001; Nunan, 2015). The demand for skilled speakers is rising, especially in non-native-speaking countries, where trained instructors are urgently needed (Hien, 2021; Samuell, 2024; Sawalmeh & Dey, 2023). Effective communication is now essential for success across various fields (Be, 2022; Indrašienė et al., 2021).

Economic and cultural globalization has led many countries to mandate English learning from an early age, despite existing challenges (Nunan, 2001). The language's role as linguistic capital influences educational policies worldwide (Nasir, Lee, Pea, & De Royston, 2020; Park & Wee, 2013; Sigismondi, 2017). In academia, English proficiency supports research presentations, scientific discussions, and interdisciplinary collaborations (Nunan, 2001). Professionally, speaking skills are critical for negotiations, business interactions, and public speaking (Be, 2022) Interactive teaching methods such as project-based learning, role-play, and technology integration enhance confidence and fluency (Sawalmeh & Dey, 2023; Zhu, 2018)

Speaking is a fundamental language skill that English learners must master for communication. As an international language, English plays a crucial role globally, benefiting those who acquire it by expanding knowledge, improving skills, and enhancing job prospects (Kinasih & Olivia, 2022; Muslimin, Wulandari, & Widiati, 2022; Wibowo & Khairunas, 2020). Proficiency allows students to communicate effectively across cultures, especially when traveling (Dewi, Kultsum, & Armadi, 2016; Garg & Gautam, 2017)). To compete globally and prepare for future careers, students must develop strong speaking skills.

Furthermore, teaching speaking has been gaining attention, with ongoing debates on accent and intelligibility (Chan, 2020; Sewell, 2016; Zhu, 2018). However, English acquisition in Indonesia faces challenges including limited exposure to authentic communication, insufficient practice opportunities, and inadequate classroom time for speaking activities (Basir, Khamdanah, Umaemah, & Rizka, 2024; Fadilah & Fauziah Habibah, 2021; Suryani, Suarnajaya, & Pratiwi, 2020). Many learners struggle with confidence, pronunciation, and fluency due to teacher-centered approaches that prioritize grammar over communicative competence (Gusdian & Nurhidayah, 2020; Rachmawati, 2023).

In the context of modern education, the integration of technology, particularly through Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), has become pivotal. CALL includes various digital tools, such as software, internet resources, and mobile applications, that complement traditional classroom teaching and cater to individual learning needs (Haryanti, Kustinah, & Ratna Widayanti, 2023; Sukomardojo, 2022). As education and technology become more interconnected,

CALL has become a fundamental aspect of English language instruction, simplifying the distribution and storage of educational materials, thus providing an invaluable resource for language learners (Levy & Hubbard, 2005).

Online language-learning applications like Busuu offer an alternative by providing interactive exercises, AI-based feedback, and opportunities to engage with native speakers (Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2023; Utami & Astutik, 2024). These platforms create flexible learning experiences beyond traditional classrooms. However, research comparing the effectiveness of digital tools and conventional teaching methods remains limited. Studies indicate online applications enhance pronunciation and fluency (Nasim, Altameemy, Ali, & Sultana, 2022; Sun, 2023; Zhou, 2023), while others highlight potential drawbacks, such as the lack of face-to-face interaction, which may hinder long-term language development (Sritharan, Ragel, & Sritharan, 2024).

Busuu is a web-based language learning platform that helps users learn English and 11 other languages, including Spanish, French, German, and Mandarin (Samara, 2021). The app offers tiered lessons from beginner (A1) to intermediate (B2) levels, interactive exercises, a paid vocabulary feature for immediate evaluation, and personalized progress notes (Samara, 2021; Utami & Astutik, 2024). Its key advantages include a flexible self-learning system, level-based proficiency tests, interactive learning methods with multimedia elements like images and quizzes, and efficient storage (only 40 MB), making it accessible on various devices.

Additionally, Busuu fosters a global community where users can practice directly with native speakers via chat (Samara, 2021). However, some exercises and quizzes are restricted to premium users. Notwithstanding these limitations, Busuu is an ideal tool for self-directed language learning due to its systematic, engaging and community-driven approach (Samara, 2021; Utami & Astutik, 2024).

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of using the application, Busuu.com, this research was projected to explore the students' experience in using it based on their perceptions. Student perception refers to how learners interpret and respond to their educational environment, including their views on classroom instruction and feedback that aims to enhance learning for both educators and peers (Ananta, Sholahuddin, & Waloyo, 2024; Jumiaty, Atmowardoyo, & Salija, 2021; Shidu, 2003).

Perception influences students' attitudes toward their learning experiences, affecting their agreement or disagreement with specific teaching methods (Chen, Chung-Fat-yim, & Marian, 2022; Hong, Benet-Martínez, Chiu, & Morris, 2003). Adediwura & Tayo (2007) notes that students' perceptions of teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and teaching skills are shaped by their direct interactions with instructors, which ultimately influence their evaluations.

A multitude of studies have demonstrated the efficacy of the Busuu application in facilitating language acquisition, particularly with regard to enhancing spoken proficiency and augmenting vocabulary. Kuning (2020) emphasizes the importance of language for communication, while Arianto (2021) highlight that Busuu provides a suite of features designed to facilitate language acquisition, including lessons on speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

These features contribute to an engaging and effective learning experience. Meniwati & Mutiaraningrum (2022) report indicates that Busuu enhances vocabulary, facilitates listening exercises, and fosters autonomous learning. Its mobile accessibility and interactive features significantly benefit students. Afifka & Daulay (2024) determined that Busuu effectively enhances vocabulary, motivates active participation, and offers interactive audiovisual resources.

However, the study identified internet connectivity as a potential challenge. Rosell-Aguilar (2018) findings indicate that the majority of Busuu users are novices, prioritizing vocabulary expansion and utilizing the platform as their predominant language learning instrument. Finally, Ginting (2023) posits that Busuu's materials, ranging from A1 to B2 levels, are designed for independent language learning and have proven effective in developing all four language skills. A study suggests Busuu holds significant potential as an educational tool for language learners.

The novelty of the research focused on the Busuu mobile app is predicated upon its interactive, mobile-based approach to language learning. The aforementioned pedagogical approach offers a high degree of flexibility, as well as audiovisual aids, opportunities for interaction with native speakers, and real-time feedback. The unique features of the Busuu app differentiate it from conventional methods by augmenting vocabulary, enhancing spoken language proficiency, and fostering learner autonomy.

Notwithstanding the app's numerous benefits, there is a paucity of understanding and implementation of Busuu in Indonesian educational institutions, with many students lacking familiarity with the platform. A paucity of research exists on the integration of Busuu into the Indonesian EFL settings. Challenges such as internet access and teacher readiness require further examination. Additionally, there is a dearth of research on students' perceptions of the use of digital applications for the development of speaking skills.

This study investigates students' acceptance of technology use in English education, with a particular emphasis on the utilization of busuu.com for EFL speaking communication classes. Furthermore, this study investigated students' experiences using busuu.com in terms of both advantages and disadvantages based on their perceptions. This research endeavors to contribute in pedagogical aspects related to the use of online application in helping EFL students to enhance their speaking skills.

Method

Research design

This investigation employed a mixed methods research strategy, encompassing the administration of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaires and open- ended questionnaire with a select group of participants (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Quantitative data, procured through questionnaire responses, will facilitate appropriate statistical analysis using JASP.

Concurrently, qualitative data from open-ended survey questions will furnish profound insights into students' experiences with Busuu.com. Meanwhile, the qualitative data was gained from follow-up open-ended survey with some selected participants. This methodological combination is deemed essential to comprehensively investigate the language learning process, with a particular focus on spoken language proficiency. The employment of a mixed methods design is substantiated by the necessity to understand the dynamics, challenges, and strategies associated with the acquisition of English proficiency through Busuu, with a specific emphasis on enhancing English speaking skills.

Research Participants

The participants were students from Universitas Muhamadiyah Malang enrolled in speaking classes who were selected through purposive sampling. The sample consisted of 68 students with diverse English learning experiences who were familiar with digital tools and had access to the technology required to use Busuu.com effectively. According to McMillan (2005), he asserted that research subjects play a critical role in elucidating the theoretical framework by providing indispensable information.

This particular sample was selected on the basis of its relevance to the study, particularly in light of the students' pertinent experiences with language learning and their demonstrated capacity to engage with Busuu.com as a tool to enhance their English language proficiency. The data of demography participant are presented below:

Table.1. Demographic Participants

Age	Male	Female	Total
19	9	5	14
20	10	4	14
21	13	5	18
22	9	3	12
Total	**47**	**21**	**68**

Based on the Table 1, the participants consisted of 68 EFL students in one of private universities in Malang. Regarding the age distribution, it is divided into 19 years old: 14 individuals (20.6%); 20 years old: 14 individuals (20.6%); 21 years old: 18 individuals (26.5%); 22 years old: 12 individuals (17.6%); and 22 years old and above: 2 individuals (2.9%). Meanwhile, for the gender distribution, Male: 47 individuals (69.1%) and Female: 21 individuals (30.9%)

Data Collection

Data collection involved obtaining detailed information to address the research questions. As noted by Creswell (2017), data collection requires identifying participants, gaining necessary permissions, and collecting information through observations or surveys. In this research, the data collection process was conducted using the following steps:

1. The researcher designed the research instruments.
2. The researcher selected the research participants.
3. The researcher obtained participants' permission and distributed the informed consent form.
4. The researcher conducted a survey using a questionnaire.
5. Based on the questionnaire results, the researcher conducted follow-up open-ended questionnaire with selected participants.

Pilot study

Prior to full implementation, a pilot test was conducted with 10 students from the same population who were not part of the main study. The aim was to evaluate the clarity, coherence, and relevance of both the questionnaire and interview questions. Based on the pilot results, minor revisions were made to improve wording, remove ambiguous items, and enhance overall instrument reliability.

Procedures and Instruments

Closed- Ended Questionnaire Design

The researcher adapted a questionnaire from previous studies (Davis, 1989; Khoiriyah, Kairoty, & Virdhausya Aljasysyarin, 2022). The questionnaire consists of both closed-ended and open-ended questions to assess students' perceptions of using Busuu. The details of the questionnaire design are presented in the table below:

Table 2. The designed TAM questionnaire

Criteria	Number of questions
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	4 items
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	3 items
Intention to use	4 items
Attitude towards using the new technology	6 items

The final section of the questionnaire includes two open-ended questions to allow students to elaborate on their views regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using Busuu in speaking classes. These open-ended responses provide qualitative insights into learners' attitudes toward the platform.

Open-Ended Questionnaire Design

1. What are the advantages of using the Busuu app to practice your speaking skills? Explain in detail.
2. What are the disadvantages of using the Busuu app to practice your speaking skills? Explain in detail.

Validity and Reliability Measures

Quantitative Instrument (TAM Questionnaire):

The quantitative instrument used in this study, a Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) questionnaire, was carefully designed to ensure its validity and reliability. The content validity of the questionnaire was established by adapting items from well-validated models, including those by Davis (1989) and Khoiriyah et al. (2022). Additionally, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in the fields of language education and technology-enhanced learning to ensure its relevance and appropriateness. To assess construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, confirming that the items effectively measured the

intended constructs. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated through a pilot study, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Qualitative Instrument (Open-ended Protocol)

For the qualitative component of the study, an interview protocol was developed to ensure trustworthiness and consistency in data analysis. Trustworthiness was enhanced through member checking, a process in which selected participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to confirm the accuracy of the data. This step helped to ensure that the participants' perspectives were accurately represented.

Study Duration

The study was conducted over a period of 6 weeks. During the first week, pilot testing and refinement of research instruments were carried out to ensure validity and reliability. The second to fourth weeks were dedicated to data collection, where both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires were distributed to participants. The fifth week was focused on data analysis, including descriptive statistical analysis for the closed-ended questionnaire and thematic coding for the open-ended responses. Finally, the sixth week was allocated for validation, including member checking, reliability testing, and final reporting to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will involve both quantitative and qualitative techniques:

Quantitative Analysis

The questionnaire results will be analyzed using basic descriptive statistics via JASP Software (Silva de Souza & Borges, 2023) This includes calculating means and standard deviations to identify overall trends in students' perceptions of Busuu. The results from the closed-ended questions will be aggregated and presented using frequency distributions to identify patterns in students' attitudes and intentions to use Busuu. Below is the procedure for descriptive statistics analysis:

1. Import the survey data into JASP Software.
2. Select the variables corresponding to Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Intention to Use, and Attitude Toward Using Technology.
3. Use the "Descriptive Statistics" function to compute means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions.
4. Generate tables and visual representations such as bar charts and histograms to illustrate trends.
5. Create histograms to visualize the distribution of responses for each

variable, helping to identify central tendencies and variations.

6. Interpret the statistical outputs to understand students' overall perceptions of Busuu.

Qualitative Analysis

The responses to the open-ended questions will undergo thematic analysis. Key themes related to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of using Busuu will be identified through coding. A categorization of the findings according to pertinent themes and subthemes will be undertaken, with the objective of accentuating particular aspects concerning students' experiences with Busuu in the context of speaking classes. Below is the procedure for thematic analysis based on (Clarke & Braun, 2017):

1. Familiarize with the data by reading all open-ended responses multiple times.
2. Assign initial codes to key phrases and sentences that capture relevant meanings.
3. Group similar codes into overarching themes and sub-themes.
4. Review and refine themes to ensure consistency and relevance.
5. Interpret and present findings with supporting quotations from participants to illustrate key insights.

This integrated approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences with Busuu.com, combining statistical trends with in-depth qualitative insights.

Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to ethical guidelines established by Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang to protect participants' rights and data confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were provided with a clear explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participants' identities and coding the data to ensure privacy. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no incentives or coercion were involved. All collected data were securely stored, accessible only to the research team, ensuring data security and compliance with ethical research standards.

Results

The Students' Acceptance Toward the Use of Busuu for Enhancing Speaking Skills

For the interpretation of results, the score range was evaluated using Khoiriyah et al. (2022) methodology. Scores were categorized as follows: 1.00-1.89 as low, 1.90-2.69 as medium-low, 2.70-3.49 as moderate, 3.50-4.29 as medium-high, and 0.30-5.00 as high. Additional details are provided in the subsequent explanation.

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Analysis of the various aspects revealed that a majority of students expressed significant interest in areas related to Perceived Usefulness (PU), particularly regarding Busuu's benefits for online education and its effectiveness in enhancing speaking abilities. Nevertheless, responses were mixed concerning certain aspects, such as the utilization of Busuu beyond classroom hours. Table 3 below offers detailed insights into these discoveries.

Table 3. Perceived Usefulness

Aspect	Statements	Mean
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	Busuu is advantageous for online learning English	4.06
	I find Busuu useful to practice my speaking skill	4.24
	Using Busuu in my class helps me to out of the class time	3.71
	Using Busuu is useful for speaking class the task (making daily conversation easily)	4.06

Based on the data Table 3, four aspects were assessed to evaluate the usefulness of Busuu. In this aspect, students found Busuu beneficial for online learning and particularly useful for practicing their speaking skills (mean = 4.24). However, they expressed some doubts regarding its effectiveness in maximizing learning time outside the classroom (mean = 3.71). In other words, Busuu was considered effective in supporting speaking classes as it provided opportunities for practice and engagement.

Its features allowed students to enhance their speaking skills in a structured and interactive manner, making the learning process more engaging. Specifically, for speaking classes, Busuu contributed to a more dynamic learning experience by offering useful tools that facilitated conversation practice and language acquisition.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

The analysis of perceived ease of use reveals that the average scores for each aspect fall in the medium to high range. This indicates that while Busuu is generally user-friendly, some users may encounter minor difficulties. A detailed breakdown of these findings is presented in the subsequent table.

Table 4. Perceived Ease of Use

Aspect	Statements	Mean
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	It easy to become skillful at using Busuu	4.06
	I find it easy to use Busuu to out of the class time	3.82
	Using Busuu is easier to do than the other applications	3.65

As shown in the data Table 4, perceived ease of use aspect the highest mean in this aspect is students' ease in becoming skilful at using Busuu (4.06). Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 3.65, indicating that students found Busuu less easy to use compared to other applications. Additionally, the mean score of 3.82 suggests that while Busuu is relatively easy to use for learning outside the classroom, some students might still face challenges in utilizing it effectively. This implies that although Busuu is generally considered user-friendly, some students may require more familiarity with its features to maximize its learning potential.

Intention to Use

The third aspect, which comes after the examination of perceived ease of use, investigates students' willingness to adopt Busuu. This section comprises four items that evaluate whether students are receptive to incorporating Busuu into their learning strategies. The results show that the average scores predominantly fall within the low to medium-low ranges. A comprehensive breakdown of these aspects is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Intention to use

Aspect	Statements	Mean
Intention to use	As a student in the English department, I believe Busuu is useful in my classes	4.06
	I feel comfortable using Busuu to improve my English	4.24
	I plan to use Busuu often	3.71
	I think Busuu should be used in English classes in the future	3.94

In Table 5, the grand mean was 3.99, indicating that most respondents agreed with the statements regarding their intention to use Busuu. Additionally, students showed a positive attitude toward using Busuu as a learning tool, as reflected in the highest mean score of 4.24, where they felt comfortable using the application to improve their English. Moreover, students acknowledged the usefulness of Busuu in their classes (4.06) and agreed that it should be implemented in future English courses (3.94). However, the mean score for the intention to use Busuu frequently (3.71) was relatively lower, suggesting that while students found the app beneficial, they might not use it consistently.

Attitude Towards Using the New Technology

The fourth aspect, which follows the examination of usage intention, investigates students' perspectives on adopting the new technology. This section comprises four items that evaluate students' views and acceptance. The results show that the average scores were predominantly classified as high. A table presenting the specifics follows this information.

Table 6. Attitude towards using the new technology

Aspect	Statements	Mean
Attitude towards using the new technology	Using Busuu in class is good	4.29
	Busuu for speaking activities in the class is favorable	3.88
	It is a positive influence for me to use Busuu in class	4.00
	I think it valuable to use Busuu for my speaking class	3.94
	Overall, I am satisfied with the use of busuu for my speaking class	3.88
	As a whole, I am happy with the use of busuu for my speaking class	4.00

As shown in Table 6, the items began with a statement regarding the usefulness of Busuu for students' learning activities, resulting in a high mean of 4.12. This indicates that most students generally agreed on Busuu's usefulness. The next statement measured students' comfort in using Busuu to enhance their English skills, with a mean of 3.98, which is close to the grand mean (3.94). This suggests that students felt comfortable using Busuu for their English learning. However, the lowest mean score (3.65) was observed in the third item, indicating that some students did not intend to use Busuu frequently in the long term, despite the positive responses regarding its benefits.

Furthermore, to ascertain the pattern of each participant's feedback regarding the acceptance of the Busuu application, an examination utilizing JASP software was presented in the subsequent.
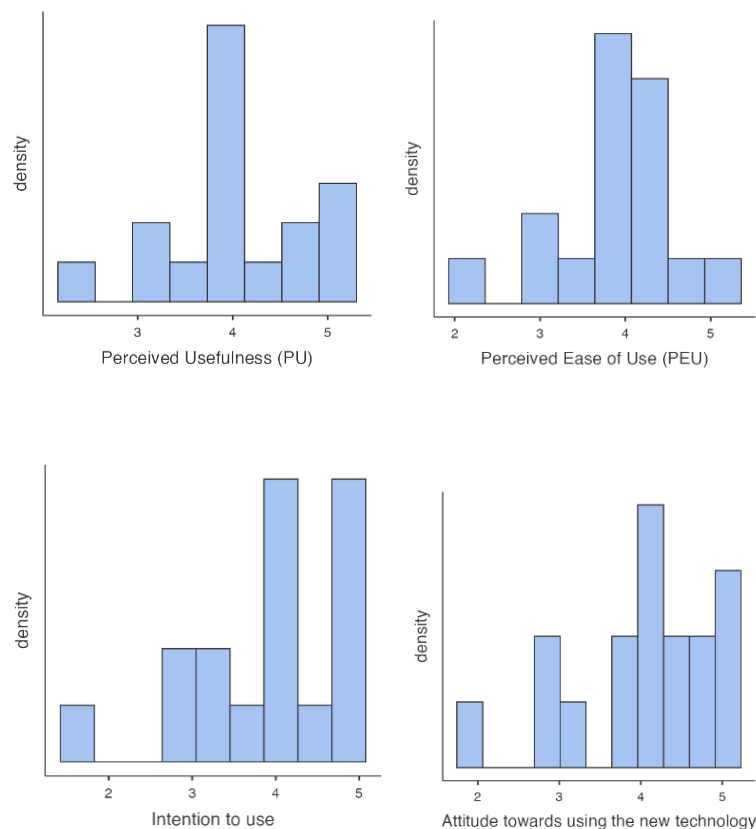

Figure 1. The overall trend of the TAM questionnaire for each participant regarding the use of busuu Applications for enhance speaking skills

Based on the results of the data analysis, the Busuu app was generally well received by students in the learning process. The majority of students rated the app as useful (Perceived Usefulness) and relatively easy to use (Perceived Ease of Use), although there was some variation in perceived ease. In addition, students' intention to use the app (Intention to Use) tends to be high, indicating that they see added value from its use. Students' attitudes towards the app were also largely positive (Attitude Towards Using the New Technology), indicating that they felt comfortable and motivated in using Busuu as a learning tool. Although there were some respondents with lower perceptions, overall, the Busuu app shows good potential in supporting language learning.

Advantages and Disadvantages That Students Gained from Their Experience in Using the Busuu App for Speaking Skills

The second finding of this study focuses on students' perspectives regarding the use of the Busuu application. Overall, students perceived both advantages and disadvantages of using Busuu in their speaking classes. Most students acknowledged that the application's features were effective in improving their speaking skills. The following sections outline these perspectives in greater detail.

Advantages of Using the Busuu Application

Students highlighted several key advantages of using the Busuu application, particularly in improving their speaking skills, pronunciation, and accessibility. The following subsections provide a more in-depth discussion of these benefits.

Enhancement of Speaking Skills

One of the most frequently mentioned benefits of the Busuu application was its effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills. Through structured exercises and real-time feedback, students found that Busuu helped them practice speaking in a more engaging and effective manner. Many reported improvements in their fluency and ability to express themselves in English. Some of their responses include:

"Can improve English language skills." (Student 1)

"Spontaneously sharpens our skills." (Student 2)

"With Busuu we can practice basic skills and more gradually so that we are able to examine our mistakes and shortcomings in English skills specific to using Busuu itself." (Student 9)

"It trains listening skills and grammar too." (Student 13)

"Busuu has many uses for practicing my English speaking." (Student 17)

Pronunciation and Speaking Practice

Another major advantage of Busuu is its ability to improve pronunciation and oral communication skills. The application provides structured pronunciation exercises that allow users to refine their accent and intonation by mimicking native speakers. Students expressed appreciation for this feature, stating:

“Make it easy for us to recognize or learn daily vocabulary properly and correctly.” (Student 3)

"We are asked to repeat sentences that have previously been spoken by the speaker." (Student 4)

“The advantage of Busuu is that it makes us understand which words are appropriate.” (Student 5)

"The advantage of using Busuu is that it really trains my speaking skills because the pronunciation and punctuation used in the application are very precise (I mean as a native in general) so we have to pay close attention to the pronunciation." (Student 7)

"It's easy to use and understand, and there are listening questions that we can mimic the pronounce." (Student 10)

"Busuu is very useful for improving English language skills, Busuu helps to learn to pronounce new vocab correctly, the combination of listening, grammar, and new vocab in each question really trains your English." (Student 11)

"By using this app, we can find out about all the speaking questions. Starting from the low level, to the difficult one. When we make a mistake, Busuu can tell us which one to correct." (Student 15).

Accessibility and Independent Learning

Many students appreciated Busuu's accessibility and flexibility, which allowed them to practice speaking at their own pace. The ability to learn independently outside of formal classroom settings was seen as a significant advantage, as indicated in the following statements:

"You can learn online and independently, and it's quite easy to understand and understand." (Student 6)

"Easy to understand, easy to access anywhere even outside of class." (Student 8)

"Because the application is easily accessible so we can easily use the Busuu

application outside of class hours, the learning method is also very interesting and not boring."(Student 12)

"Can train confidence to speak English with others." (Student 14)

"You can learn independently and also learn directly with the experts." (Student 16)

Disadvantages of Using the Busuu Application

Despite the advantages, students also faced several challenges while using the Busuu application. These challenges, which affected their overall learning experience, are categorized into four main areas: technical and internet issues, limited free features, content and usability limitations, and a lack of awareness or identified disadvantages.

Technical and Internet-Related Issues

One of the most common challenges students encountered was technical difficulties, primarily related to internet connectivity and application performance. Many students reported experiencing lag, slow response times, or issues with app functionality, as reflected in the following statements:

"It's lagging." (Student 1)

For a few tries the Busuu app was a little ineffective probably due to signal influence, so far so good. (Students 3)

"My phone is slow and needs a good signal so it doesn't lag." (Student 4)

"The network is difficult, if the server is slow, the point is that if there is no internet, it cannot be accessed." (Student 6)

"Sometimes there are errors in the application including slow when opening even though the network is good." (Student 8)

"The network is slow when used on HP." (Student 13)

"Sometimes it's lagging" (Student 15*)*

Limited Free Features

Another drawback of the Busuu application is its paid subscription model, which restricts access to many advanced features. Some students felt that the financial cost was a significant barrier to fully utilizing the application. Their concerns included:

"The full package is paid." (Student 2)

"The disadvantages of Busuu are that it's a paid app so you can't access all the features or services provided in their entirety and the internet network used

(sometimes slow or often disconnected)." (Student 7)

"For the lack of this application there are some that must be paid so it is a little hampering." (Student 9)

Content and Usability Limitations

Some students felt that the content offered in Busuu was not comprehensive enough, particularly in terms of lesson structure and topic coverage. Additionally, they noted that Busuu was not widely discussed in academic settings, making it less familiar to learners. The following comments highlight these concerns:

"Not many people use Busuu and the topic is sometimes discussed." (Student 5)

"Some of the material is not arranged in detail." (Student 11)

"Lack of explanation in some lessons." (Student 14)

Lack of Awareness or Identified Disadvantages

Interestingly, some students reported that they did not perceive any significant disadvantages in using Busuu. While this suggests a generally positive reception, it also indicates that user experience can vary. The following statements reflect this perspective:

I don't know the shortcomings yet. (Student 10)

so far so good (Student 12)

Nothing (Student 16)

I haven't found any flaws in the busuu app so far. (Student 17)

The findings indicate that students predominantly view the Busuu application as a beneficial instrument for enhancing linguistic proficiency, pronunciation, and self-directed learning. Nevertheless, significant challenges, including internet dependence, restricted complimentary access, and inadequate content coverage, were also observed. While many students expressed appreciation for Busuu's structured approach to language acquisition, addressing these limitations has the potential to enhance the application's efficacy in supporting the development of speaking skills.

Discussion

The results indicate that students generally consider the Busuu application to be a useful instrument for enhancing their speaking abilities. The structured exercises and real-time feedback provided by the application enabled students to effectively practice pronunciation, fluency, and speaking competence (Meniwati &

Mutiaraningrum, 2022; Rosell-Aguilar, 2018).The majority of the participants in the study reported improvements in their ability to articulate their ideas, which is consistent with prior research on technology-assisted language learning(Meniwati & Mutiaraningrum, 2022; Rosell-Aguilar, 2018).

Nevertheless, while students reported finding value in the platform offered by Busuu, several challenges were identified. The most prevalent issues pertain to technical difficulties, including but not limited to slowness, internet dependency, and restrictions on premium features (Khan, Nazim, & Alzubi, 2024). These obstacles, in alignment with prior research highlighting technological limitations as barriers to digital language learning   (Afifka & Daulay, 2024; Zhou, 2023), may impede the platform's full utilization.

This is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which posits that perceived ease of use significantly influences adoption rates (Davis, 1989; Khoiriyah et al., 2022). The integration of Busuu with institutional learning management systems has been identified as a strategy to mitigate these limitations and enhance accessibility (Gu, 2024; Sridhivya, Gurusamy, & Balamurali, 2024; Xia, Shin, & Kim, 2024)

The present investigation yielded insights into variations in students' perceptions of the ease of use of Busuu. A considerable proportion of the student sample found the platform easy to use; however, a proportion found challenges with its interface in comparison to other applications. Moreover, there were concerns about the structured nature of the lessons, with some students expressing that certain topics lacked sufficient depth or explanation (Xu, Sun, & Hu, 2025).

These findings underscore the necessity for adaptive learning technologies that can cater to the diverse learning requirements of individual users (Akram, Yingxiu, Al-Adwan, & Alkhalifah, 2021; Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018). The application of cognitive load theory is instrumental in the optimization of content presentation, with the concomitant objective of mitigating potential barriers to engagement (Krieglstein, Beege, Wesenberg, Rey, & Schneider, 2024; Sweller, 1988; van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2005).

This study's reliance on student perception data from closed and open-ended questionnaires precludes the direct measurement of objective linguistic improvement. Additionally, extraneous variables such as English proficiency, cultural attitudes toward technology, and the learning environment potentially influence students' perceptions of Busuu. The identified limitations underscore the necessity for future research integrating baseline and end-line tests to evaluate genuine language improvement while simultaneously accounting for contextual influences on students' app usage. Moreover, a longitudinal study could yield more profound insights into the longitudinal development of student's language

proficiency and the question of whether Busuu fosters sustainable language learning habits.

A review of extant literature suggests digital applications like Busuu can play a substantial role in enhancing spoken proficiency. These applications offer an interactive, structured learning environment that can facilitate the development of communicative competencies in a technologically assisted manner (Tang, Zhai, Li, Liu, & Deng, 2024). The positive reception of Busuu underscores the viability of technology-assisted language learning models in higher education, particularly for students seeking flexible, self-directed learning opportunities (Rad, Alipour, Jafarpour, & Hashemian, 2024; Sridhivya et al., 2024).

This research contributes to the discourse on digital learning by substantiating the importance of interactionist theories and scaffolding mechanisms in second language acquisition (Chang, Hsu, Chien, & Kuo, 2025; Reiser, 2018). The efficacy of such applications in educational contexts may be enhanced by addressing the limitations that have been identified, including technical constraints and depth of content. Institutions should consider hybrid learning models integrating Busuu with instructor-led sessions to balance structured guidance and self-directed learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2012).

The findings of this study offer critical insights for educators and institutions aiming to enhance language learning through digital platforms. To maximize the effectiveness of Busuu, institutions should integrate it into a blended learning framework that combines digital learning with instructor-led sessions(Aprilia, Syahril, & Azhar, 2024; Mehran, Alizadeh, Koguchi, & Takemura, 2017).   Educators can leverage Busuu as a supplementary tool rather than a standalone resource, ensuring that students receive structured guidance and support (Lo et al., 2025).

Additionally, training workshops should be provided to familiarize students with the application and optimize their engagement. Furthermore, educators should tailor Busuu-based activities to align with course objectives, incorporating peer interaction and collaborative learning to complement the platform's individual practice model (Ayodele & Zhou, 2024).

Although Busuu has demonstrated its potential to improve speaking skills, its structured nature may not be suitable for all learners. The lack of flexibility in lesson depth may hinder students who require more extensive explanations(Rosell-Aguilar, 2018; Solmaz, 2024). Additionally, the dependence on internet access and premium features presents a challenge for students from varying socio-economic backgrounds (Ascarza, Netzer, & Runge, 2024; Brüggemann & Lehmann-Zschunke, 2023). This highlights the need for more inclusive and accessible digital learning solutions. Moreover, while students

reported perceived improvements in their speaking skills, the absence of an objective measurement tool raises questions about the actual linguistic gains. These findings suggest that while Busuu is an effective supplement, it cannot entirely replace traditional speaking practice with human instructors.

To address the technical challenges associated with Busuu, institutions should invest in robust IT infrastructure and provide students with access to reliable internet connections. Offering institutional subscriptions to Busuu's premium features could also mitigate issues related to restricted access (Balouchi & Samad, 2021; Gupta, Su, Kunkel, & Funk, 2022).

To enhance the depth of content, Busuu could collaborate with language experts to develop advanced modules tailored to specific proficiency levels or professional contexts. Additionally, incorporating artificial intelligence-driven feedback mechanisms could further refine pronunciation accuracy and provide more personalized learning experiences(Dakhil, Karimi, Al-Jashami, & Ghabanchi, 2025; Solmaz, 2024).

Future research should address the limitations identified in this study by employing mixed-method approaches that combine student perception data with objective linguistic assessments. Longitudinal studies tracking students' language progression over an extended period can provide deeper insights into the sustainability of digital language learning. Additionally, experimental studies with pre- and post-tests can establish causality between Busuu usage and improvements in speaking proficiency.

Further research should also explore how different learner demographics, such as age, proficiency level, and cultural background, influence engagement with digital language learning applications. Investigating AI-driven feedback mechanisms and their impact on pronunciation accuracy could contribute to the development of more personalized learning experiences. Finally, research into hybrid instructional models that integrate Busuu with structured classroom activities can offer valuable insights into optimizing the role of digital tools in language education.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on technology-assisted language learning by providing empirical evidence of Busuu's effectiveness in enhancing speaking proficiency. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on general language skills, this research specifically highlights the platform's impact on speaking competence, a critical yet often overlooked aspect of language learning. Furthermore, the study identifies key challenges and proposes actionable solutions, thereby offering a balanced perspective on the potential and limitations of Busuu. By integrating insights from the Technology Acceptance Model, this research also advances theoretical understanding of how digital tools can be optimized for language learning.

Conclusion

This study examined students' perceptions of utilizing the Busuu application to enhance their speaking proficiency. The results revealed that the Busuu app was generally well-received by students, with many acknowledging its effectiveness in improving pronunciation, fluency, and overall speaking competence. The structured exercises, real-time feedback, and platform accessibility were identified as factors contributing to the positive reception.

A thorough analysis revealed that the students found the Busuu platform to be beneficial for online learning, as indicated by their perception of usefulness. The platform was also perceived to be relatively straightforward to utilize, reflecting its perceived ease of use. The analysis further indicated that the majority of the participants expressed a positive intention of continuing the utilization of the app. Additionally, they conveyed a favorable disposition towards the integration of the app into English language learning. Nevertheless, certain limitations were identified. These limitations included technical issues pertaining to internet dependency, restricted access to premium features, and reservations regarding the depth of the content.

The present findings are consistent with those of earlier research in the field of technology-assisted language learning, which has demonstrated the efficacy of digital tools in the development of speaking skills. However, in order to maximize the potential of this platform, challenges such as technological barriers and content limitations must be surmounted. Educational institutions may integrate Busuu with traditional teaching methods to create a more comprehensive learning experience.

The enhancement of the efficacy of Busuu can be best achieved by the undertaking of experimental research to explore its long-term impacts on spoken proficiency. Furthermore, the integration of Busuu with conventional classroom teaching methods, such as blended learning models, is a promising avenue for the optimization of digital language learning. The overcoming of technical limitations as well as the augmentation of complimentary content have the potential to improve both user engagement and learning outcomes.

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