

The Need of Applying English Learning Apps to Help Van Lang University Students Improve Their Spoken English Performance

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the cutting edge of technology in AI has made many language learning apps available to assist learners. English, the current lingua franca, has focused on many language learning app developments. Numerous studies have examined the benefits and limitations of some English learning apps. Evidence from the studies shows that user-friendly displays and a wide variety of topics from the apps have helped learners gain competencies in English overall. However, not many studies examine these apps' effectiveness in developing English-speaking competence. With the attempt to shed more light on this gap, the researchers focus on analyzing the use of some English learning apps to improve students' speaking skills within Van Lang University's scope. To collect data for the research, 20 open-ended questionnaires and 10 semi-structured interview questions were distributed with the random sampling method to 400 students from Van Lang University in 04 majors, which require good English-speaking skills. The result shows that Elsa Speak, Duolingo, and BBC Learning English are the most famous apps for learning English speaking skills with high effectiveness levels.

Keywords: Spoken performance, software, learning apps, speaking ability, English learning

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overall

According to Adminz [1], living within the new era has been associating with recent technology's flourishing; it is necessary to take advantage of technology to apply in all of the human aspects and bring great benefits to life. Technology is like a 'leading arrow' that every field wants to possess to advance itself, whether in economics, politics, or education. Duc [2] claims that technology is a big contributor to the developments in many fields, especially in education.

The advent of technology has led to significant changes in the teaching methods around the world, and it has done so too Vietnam. In the process of acquiring and integrating, technology has brought education closer to the world's civilization, especially languages [3]. Tran & Nguyen [4] emphasize that language is a factor that brings every nation around the world together and is also one of the many factors determining success and development in economic, cultural, and social fields. Education is Vietnam's frontline national policy [5]. Recognizing the importance and benefits of languages in education and economics, Vietnam has taken advantage of technology to equip and renew the language teaching methods [5].

CFL [6] proves that English is the world's second international language and it has been used globally. Therefore, Vietnamese current education policies focus on English teaching to equip the nation's human resources [7]. According to the Japan International Cooperation Agency [8], Vietnam has been receiving a tremendous source of investments from many developed countries and is developing rapidly to be one of the new gems in Southeast Asia. Within that context, high levels of English proficiency focus on helping Vietnam adapt to the global interconnectedness and create opportunities for the labor resources [9].

According to Huynh [10], of all different aspects of English, speaking skills are still the main tools in many situations. Therefore, people who can communicate in English well will usually receive respect and admiration. In simple real-life situations like when applying for jobs or complicated situations when signing contracts and communicating with partners, companies always focus on people with English speaking ability. Erin [11] clarifies that considering in all aspects, from culture, society, economy to politics in the age of adaptation and integration, mastering English speaking skills is an urgent issue that requires attentive attention to equip people for their career development.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Erin [11] argues that learning English is vital for adolescents in Viet Nam. According to Phan [12], companies are always appreciated by companies, offered a well-paying job, and have advancement prospects in their careers as long as they can speak English. With the realization of the important role of English in a person's career development and the development of a nation, many universities in Vietnam have changed their teaching English approaches, and Van Lang University is one among those.

With a deep awareness of the importance of learning foreign languages, especially in learning English, Van Lang University (VLU) has kept on investing and developing the teaching resources to equip its students with a good level of English after graduation. VLU holds annual language proficiency exams for the new students that contribute to the classification and correct assessment of students' ability to use English and provides E-learning labs to create modern learning environments for students [13].

Tue [14] argues that VLU students carry a strong spirit in learning and improving their English skills. To gain that good reputation, there are a lot of non-stop and collaborative efforts behind to fuel the students' spirit. One of the main efforts is that VLU has kept expanding its recruitment to have a qualified and dedicated teaching staff. Next, VLU has set up a clear output for the 26th classes and onwards to achieve the band-score IELTS 6.0 before graduation. Moreover, the Foreign Languages Faculty has had many different joined programs in training and teaching for VLU students and staff, and the Memorandum of Understanding with the British Council is the significant one [15].

Although there have been concerted efforts and substantial investments to English teaching, from facilities to programs, VLU students are not completely satisfied with the current teaching methods (the conclusion is drawn upon a quick survey from the researchers and is confirmed later by the statistics from the surveys). Students expect to have more modern technology applications to the traditional teaching and learning setting to help them improve their speaking skills in English effectively and efficiently.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is twofold. First, the research illustrates which English-speaking learning apps available on the market nowadays that VLU students know and use. This section is an important component of the study as it will help the researchers to acknowledge which English-speaking learning apps are popular to VLU students. Second, the study assesses the effectiveness of these learning apps on the students. This second component is to help the researchers gain in-depth information about the features and utilities of the apps. Particularly, the researchers expect that if the level of effectiveness is high among the available apps, there will be some key factors that help VLU students engage with the apps.

The study aims to show the feasibility of the needs of applying software to the current English-speaking teaching method of Van Lang University. The researchers analyze data from 400 students at Van Lang University and use both quantitative and qualitative methods to respond to two research questions. The independent variables and the intervening variables will be statistically controlled in the study.

1.4. Significance of the study

It is self-evident that with the rise of AI and learning apps in many subjects, and in English especially, using technology gadgets to support learning is no longer unfamiliar to learners. Thus, the findings from the study are to demonstrate the roles and benefits of applying English learning apps to the traditional classroom in VLU. Particularly, the study argues that despite the efforts of equipping learning and teaching facilities, e.g., projectors, TVs, and computers, there is a real expectation from students to VLU in innovating the English teaching methods through embedding learning apps in the classroom.

Besides the illustration of the usefulness of English learning apps to VLU students, an implication is drawn from the study. The approach of using learning apps is mutually beneficial to many parties. Suppose VLU considers equipping learning apps in learning and teaching. In that case, it helps its students learn better, and its staff teaches better, but it also helps to build up the reputation of the school – a place where innovative actions in teaching are flourished.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Theoretical concepts*

This literature review examines the impacts of software and apps in education. The review particularly focuses on how software and learning apps generate benefits to students in learning English.

According to Lai [16], nowadays, technology plays an important role that can satisfy the entire learning ecosystem. Technology is expected to enhance language both inside and outside the classroom, without any restrictions. Generally, with the diverse application ecosystem, digitization of education has strongly innovative pedagogy, and it will help teachers eliminate a pile of unnamed work [17]. Furthermore, Ramya and Madhumathi [18] claim that mobile technology has now represented an educational revolution. The teaching method and learning process have been supported by wi-fi gadgets and many other devices, which have taken them to a new level - thanks to the integration of mobile devices into education in recent days.

Moreover, Heba [19] clarifies that innovation has been utilized as a procedure to move forward learning and educating strategies by technology. In like manner, software applications have been implemented broadly in learning the second language since smartphones and tablets are accessible most of the time. Ramya and Madhumathi [18] suggest that mobile apps are software applications that can simply be downloaded from your phone's operating system. Some of them are free, while some others require a subscription. Agnes [20] argues that mobile learning apps are similar to learning software running on a PC, but some of the mobile ones may have some limitations. Research by Mpine and Thulile [21] reveals that in the field of language learning, mobile apps become a 'place' where users can learn and practice languages anywhere at any time whenever they want.

Research by Rao [22] proves that nowadays, anything which links to good English and good speaking skills is a passport for greater career prospects. Since English has become an international language and is widely used worldwide, there is a need for learners to improve communication skills to be successful in their respective fields [23]. According to Kusmaryani et al. [24], the software offers many features, such as instant communication via social media, video player, voice recording, etc. These elements can be incorporated effectively into teaching and learning English-speaking skills. Sharing the same opinion, Richard [25] claims that software application is implemented in different tasks such as visual or auditory learning and play an effective support tool for students to improve their English communication ability.

Also, Liu and He [26] emphasize that students continuously overcome their linguistic limitations during the progress of using certain apps to practice English-speaking skills and happily communicate their thoughts and ideas. That is why CAE TEAM [27] has drawn the inference that taking advantage of technology makes students feel free to practice language and have the motivation to enhance their English-speaking skills by using devices and mobile features like voice recognition, multimedia tasks, etc. Software application helps students immerse themselves in learning a language and enrich their linguistic knowledge. As a result, students are more active in speaking English naturally and fluently.

2.2. *Previous research studies*

Ahmadi [28] study illustrates the benefits and advantages of technology in many different aspects that teachers should recognize in developing learners' learning language skills. The paper shows that learners should use technology to reinforce their language skills because language plays an important role in expanding learners' creativity, promotes learners' autonomy, and helps them feel more flexible in using language. Another aspect of this study is the supplement to the lack of interaction between teachers and learners, which provides comprehensible input and output. Therefore, teaching and learning have become smoother since then.

Parveen [29] conducted research on speaking skills to consider it a crucial skill for learning a language. The findings obtained from this study revealed that students would be judged based on their speaking performance in real-life situations. Therefore, the learners have to be excellent in English speaking ability. The study suggests that technologies should be introduced to teaching English in classrooms and help and encourage the playfulness of learners in different ways. Based on that statement, the author figures out some modern technologies available in education today (such as Speech Recognition Software, Video Library, Communication Lab) to upgrade the effectiveness that delivering a practical environment in speaking skills.

Another study was done by Mustafa [30] on using modern apps related to daily requirements such as Youtube, Skype, Whatsapp also help to fulfill the lack of the target language. The researcher also states that both education apps and social networking can boost students' oral speech skills. For example, Youtube is famous for being a free-access app that allows users to upload various fields from over the world, and English subtitle is the most common language

in videos. As a consequence, viewers are more likely to absorb language without being forced. Hence, technology becomes a vital part of the learning speaking process.

Research by Farman [31] reveals that the "Learn to Speak English", a software used for practicing speaking English has made a significant improvement in students' English-speaking skill development and their interest in it. The researcher set up a study that applied the quasi-experimental method using two groups' pretest-posttest to make this theory more reliable. This study's population is the third year of English Department classes with 320 students. The results of this study indicated that this app had the ability to improve students' interest in the process of study English-speaking skills. Most of them desired the application of this app as a teaching method because of its efficacy in creating motivation in learning speaking.

Riswandi's [32] framework of the study also emphasizes that the implementation of YouTube-based videos in teaching speaking can improve the students' speaking skills and motivation. To investigate the utilization of YouTube-based Videos in teaching and learning, a qualitative approach using an Action Research (AR) method was employed during this study. The findings conclude that the learners were actively involved in learning activities and had high motivation to utilize YouTube-based videos within the speaking class. The other finding of this study clarified some aspects of students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and content.

Millrood [33] carried out a study in Tambov State Technical University that designed the learning environment for learners, particularly in constructing a discussion of what students read in a text. The researcher used the "cognitive dissonance" technology, which was first implemented to stimulate participants' oral speech activity in communication. The second technology is the "information gap" which enhanced learners' critical thinking and boosting the effects of decision making. And the final technology used in the study was "logical impasse" with the aim of discovering opposing views, barriers, or blocking in students' flow of logic after boosted decision-making results of structured proved that participants had a significant to discover thoughts and speech activities in the experimental lessons.

Ratnaningsih et al. [34] performed a study, the CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) media has created many benefits in discussion method and lecturing for English-speaking skill. To justify the theory, the researchers have created quantitative research using an experimental design, the population of this study were the 50 cadets of Politeknik Pelayaran the Surabaya; all of them were studying ESP Maritime English. The finding indicated that English-speaking skills in both the discussion group and the lecture group kept on increasing with such a significant level.

In another study, Kusmaryani et al. [35] claim that we can extract lots of benefits from mobile devices like web browsing, social media, etc. These benefits can become useful in both teaching and learning, which greatly influence all fields of education. And to make this information more valid, the Wilcoxon signed ranks test, which was used to determine differences in the two pair sample of their study, has been used by the researchers to evaluate the students' English-speaking skills. This study's population was 38 students in speaking class at the English department of Borneo University Tarakan Indonesia. Ultimately, all of these students have developed their speaking skills after a period of time using mobile applications as learning assistance. However, the participants were still inadequate to demonstrate this research's effectiveness.

A research study by Baniabdelrahman [36] used a previously built website, adding a replacement blog page that's secured with a password that gives the experiment to 2 groups that have an identical background. This paper's results, the shared diary method, had a positive side and a better effect on the scholars speaking skill than what the normal method had. Using online "shared dairies" offers the scholars chance to use the language within the classroom, and everywhere which can provide richness to the event of the language, which could not be the case within the traditional way of teaching speaking. However, it is hard to keep students' information private in the era of technology. Also, the blog page was not enough to help students interact with their partners. On the other hand, many apps in the market nowadays have the same features, such as the above methods, and keep students from stealing personal information and securing information, and increasing interaction between people through communication.

According to Abdelmageed's study [37], through the process of testing 8 first-year students of the school with digital storytelling software, the results of this study indicated that the program could affect the participants' speaking skills and attitudes positively. The learners' English-speaking skills, such as pronunciation, grammar, etc., can be improved through the WeVideo. This app provides digital storytelling, a completely new learning method that can effectively enhance learners' English-speaking proficiency.

These 10 studies demonstrate that the development of technology has, step by step, supported the education system thanks to the utilities of intelligent technology software. English learning apps can boost students' oral speech skills, but they also motivate learners to practice English speaking and absorb the language naturally and more likely to absorb language without being forced. However, these studies have not demonstrated the levels of effectiveness when using the learning apps; thus this paper aims to seek and illustrate those levels.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research questions

Research question 1: What kind of practice speaking English software and learning apps have already been available in the current market that popular to VLU students?

Research question 2: Which level of effectiveness do VLU students achieve after using software/learning apps to practicing their English-speaking ability?

3.2. Research context

The study is conducted at Van Lang University. Founded in 1995, Van Lang university carries a bold national name full of pride, filled with glorious heroic Vietnam's history. On September 17 in 1995, the very first 4469 students became the pioneer generation for Van Lang's education. Their dreams and hopes were spread widely at the 1st opening ceremony. With 45 undergraduate majors, Van Lang university is now becoming a home for more than 17.000 students. There are three main campuses of Van Lang University, which are located respectively in district 1, Binh Thanh district, and Go Vap district. The school has equipped with modern and state-of-the-art quality for lecturers and students' teaching and learning work. A quality study environment and modern teaching curriculum are under maximized and flexibly developed for students comprehensively, with high expectations in the growth of the education system, as well as the advancement of intellectual resources for the country in the future. Alongside, the slogan "Morality, Will, Creativity" is set out with the consensus, unanimity, and determination to build a solid foundation and development for the school. The vision and destiny of Van Lang will become a wing for students, helping them fly far and high to achieve their dreams. And someday, they will dedicate themselves to the development of Vietnam.

3.3. Population and sampling methods

The population in this study is K24 students in all majors of VLU. The reason for choosing this segment is because they are third-year students who are still learning and developing at this school. They are the ones who understand best about the method of teaching and learning in English subjects. After the learning, earning knowledge, and experience process, these K24 students can point out the strengths as well as a shortcoming in the school's application of technology when teaching English. They can also give the most objective opinions to develop the teaching method by applying new technology appropriately and effectively.

3.3.1. Participants of the questionnaires

Table 1.

Participants information

Background information		Number (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	93	23%
	Female	307	77%
Faculty	Foreign languages	112	28%
	Public relations and communications	165	41%
	Commerce	89	22%
	Tourism	34	9%
Course	Freshman (K26)	0	0%
	Sophomore (K25)	0	0%
	Junior (K24)	400	100%
	Senior (K23)	0	0%

As shown above, 400 students in course 24 from non-English majors and English majors of Van Lang university will participate (93 males and 307 females). Therefore, the researchers choose four majors that usually use English in learning: Faculty of foreign languages (28%); Faculty of public relations and communications (41%); Faculty of commerce (22%), and Faculty of tourism (9%) to perform the survey.

3.3.2. Participants of the interviewing

Table 2.

Summary of participants' background

No.	Name	Gender	Course	Faculty
1	Nhi	Female	K24	Commerce
2	Huy	Male	K24	FL
3	Hien	Female	K24	FL
4	Phuong	Female	K24	PR&C
5	Uyen	Female	K24	Tourism
6	Long	Male	K24	PR&C
7	Quynh	Female	K24	Commerce
8	Khai	Male	K24	Tourism

*FL (Foreign languages)

*PR&C (Public relations and communications)

At the set of this study, Table 2 has shown 08 students from 04 selected majors above have been selected for the interviewing part to support more detailed information for the research questions.

3.3.3. *Sampling methods*

This research uses probability sampling techniques because it can specify the probability that a participant will be chosen from a population, and the sampling method is random sampling.

3.4. *Research design*

The design of this research is two types, including survey and interview. The first design of the analysis consists of 20 open-ended questionnaires. The second design used is a semi-structured interview. The reason for us to choose these two research designs is because of the ease and the accuracy of data collection, and it is best served to answer the research questions and the purposes of the study.

3.5. *Instrument*

3.5.1. *Questionnaires*

The data from questionnaires in the current study is to examine to respond to the research questions. According to Cheung [38], the questionnaire is a document consisting of a set of generic questions with a specified scheme that defines the precise wording and order of the questions to collect information from the respondents. Moreover, an effective questionnaire should have a clear purpose, and questions should be answered in a reasonable way, questions that are easy to understand, and responses to achieve a correct and good result [39]. In this study, the researchers are using an open-ended questionnaire. So, the participants can answer the queries with ease, and the researcher can also easily collect the result.

3.5.2. *Interview questions*

For this research, interview questions were used as additional data to support the questionnaire result. McNamara [40] claims that interviews are particularly useful to urge the story behind the experiences of the participant; therefore the interviewer may seek in-depth details on the topic. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview could be a meeting where the interviewer doesn't strictly follow a formalized list of questions. Instead, they are going to raise additional open-ended questions allowing a discussion with the interviewee rather than a simple question and answer format [41]. Thus, a semi-structured interview was used by the researchers. Also, the interview was recorded with the permission of the interviewees for information transcripts.

3.6. *The produce of data collection*

The data collection method for this study went through 4 steps:

Step 1: The researchers use the group discussion method to create an exploratory survey to explore, adjust, and add observational variables measuring research concepts. Based on information obtained after group discussion, the variables of the technology application software model and other factors that affect the motivation of learning needs in suitable conditions of students at Van Lang University. A questionnaire was formed, and this questionnaire was built on the basis of the research model of the topic to gather information for analysis and testing of research hypotheses.

Step 2: The researchers use quantitative methods in this step. The quantitative methods research was done through income data obtained from the online survey through social media to 400 students in the 24th course of Van Lang University (Faculty of foreign languages (112 students); Faculty of public relations and communications (165 students); Faculty of commerce (89 students); Faculty of tourism (34 students) was established from step 1 to answer for the research questions.

Step 3: The researchers use qualitative methods through direct interviews of 08 students in 04 selected majors. They are using the semi-structured questionnaire to collect identifying information for the research paper. The researcher interview randomly participants in the study population. Each interview lasted for about 10 minutes and was recorded by smartphone with these students' permission. To identify difficulties that students face when learning English and understand deeper about students' desire when the school starts to replace the old teaching method with the application of technology into teaching English.

Step 4: The researchers use results analysis and data processing methods.

3.7. Data analysis

Once sufficient data are available, the researchers continue collecting information from the open-end questionnaire and semi-structured interview for assessment. The researchers will consider and sift through the information gathered to answers the research questions for the questionnaire. For the interview, the researchers have to listen to all audios from the smartphone that had been recorded. Subsequently, translated into English and head to the conclusions about the point of each individual interviewed. This helps to add more points to answer the research questions. After that, all necessary information will be filtered and presented properly in the research paper.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Questionnaires results

Table 3.

Students' views on the current issues

No.	Questionnaire items	Answers	Number (N=400)	Percentage (%)
1	English speaking skill is the most vital and necessary for you?	Yes	391	98%
		No	9	2%
2	With the current English teaching method of the school, do you have any problems in speaking English?	Yes	321	80%
		No	79	20%
3	Do you want the school to improve and focus more on teaching English speaking skills?	Yes	392	98%
		No	8	2%
4	Do you have the desire to apply software application in the school's current English-speaking teaching method?	Yes	358	90%
		No	42	10%

According to Table 3, 98% of students at Van Lang University believe that speaking is the most vital and essential skill for them when learning English. However, 80% of students are having difficulty speaking English fluently with the school's current teaching method. Therefore, 98% of students want Van Lang University to improve their speaking performance. With the current trend of learning is using technical devices, 90% of learners wish to apply software to Van Lang University's current English teaching method.

Table 4.

The apps to practice speaking skill that Van Lang University students know

No.	Questionnaire items	Number (N=1046)	Percentage (%)
1	Elsa Speak	216	21%
2	Duolingo	237	23%
3	Cake	170	16%
4	eJOY English	89	8%
5	Memrise	48	5%
6	Speak – Practice Your English	86	8%
7	BBC Learning English	143	14%
8	Say It	25	2%
9	Others	32	3%

The collected data on awareness of English software available in the market is shown in Table 4. Specifically, Table 4 shows the awareness of popular apps that students know when searching for an app to practice speaking in a total of 392 responses received. As can be seen, Duolingo and Elsa are the two most well-known popular apps (23% and 21% on each app). Following after is Cake, which account for 16% of the answers received. Moreover, BBC Learning English is also accounted for 14% based on the answers received. This table is the answer to research question 1.

Since the coverage of the English-speaking practice apps above is massive hence, it's difficult to be sure whether or not students from Van Lang are using them. What are applications used by Van Lang University students to practice their English-speaking abilities? The answer is given as follows.

Table 5.

The apps to practice speaking skill that Van Lang University students use

No.	Questionnaire items	Number (N=770)	Percentage (%)
1	Elsa Speak	170	22%
2	Duolingo	194	25%
3	Cake	128	17%
4	eJOY English	53	7%
5	Memrise	27	3%
6	Speak – Practice Your English	51	7%
7	BBC Learning English	96	12%
8	Say It	12	2%
9	Others	39	5%

Table 5 displays students' applications to practice speaking skills through 294 survey responses. As revealed, Duolingo stands on top of the survey with 24% in total answers received. In the second place, we have Elsa with 22% in total answers received, next is the BBC Learning English with 19% in total answers. And last but not least, with 14% of total responses received, Cake holds fourth place.

It can be seen that the majority of students have used the above apps to practice speaking English. So, what level of efficiency does it bring to students after using? The following is the answer obtained.

Table 6.

The level of efficiency of practice speaking English software

No.	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	More confidence when communicating in English	2.9147	2.000692
2	Practice self-study skills	3.8571	1.809284
3	Practice study time management skills	2.3233	1.884406
4	Improve vocabulary	4.0877	1.680459
5	Save on study costs	3.8170	1.827789
6	Know more effective speaking techniques	2.3533	1.894963
7	Native standard pronunciation	2.3433	1.891504

With the mean scores of all seven items ranging from 2.34 to 4.08 (out of 5), Table 6 indicates the advantages students get when practicing English speaking by using these applications. In particular, item 4 (M= 4.08) belongs to the highest mean score that helps students improve a lot of new vocabulary. Next is item 2 (M= 3.85), helping students practice self-study skills, especially item 1 (M= 2.91), which demonstrates that students are more confident in speaking English by using these apps. This is also the response to research question 2. Besides, what are the

successful features of the training apps listed above that students are pleased with? The answers are shown in the table below.

Table 7.

Successful features of these apps listed above

No.	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Have visual, easy to remember with pictures and videos	3.6566	1.891504
2	There is a native speaker voice guiding	3.8170	1.827789
3	There are games that incorporated into exercises in order to increase fun	2.6541	1.972340
4	Stay in regular contact with English audios and videos	2.8947	1.999735
5	Practice speaking on real conversation patterns according to each topic	2.7944	1.991910
6	Learn new vocabulary by topic and then apply it to speaking immediately	3.3157	1.977391
7	Detect errors of the learner pronounce and correct them immediately	2.4436	1.923460

In Table 7, the most successful feature that software brings to students is item 2 (M= 3.81) practice speaking skills with the native speaker's support. Furthermore, item 1 (M= 3.65) showing that the students all pleased with the benefits of learning through images and videos, which had raised their interest' in improving speaking skills. Besides, expanding vocabulary is genuinely worth it for the students when learning English and serves the communication purpose (M= 3.31). In general, those features' applications were qualified to suit students' learning needs, especially in the speaking section. Not only that, what utilities of the Apps listed above help students learning to speak English conveniently? The answers are listed in detail in the table below.

Table 8.

Some utilities of the Apps listed above help students learning to speak English conveniently.

No.	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Installed on very small, convenient and fast technology devices	3.9223	1.003250
2	Full curriculums from basic to advanced	3.7719	1.058876
3	Learn anytime, anywhere, without being fixed in one place	3.9849	1.044138
4	Help interact with online partners to study together	3.6115	1.080650
5	Point out the pronunciation mistakes and how to correct them	3.9323	1.013939
6	Use native speakers' voices to help learner pronounce better	4.0501	.9628755

In Table 8, it can see all the benefits which have been mentioned above had a pronounced effect on measurements in English speaking practice. In this table, the action of using the native speaker's voice to improve the student's English pronunciation stands on top of the table (M= 4.05). Next, top 2 of the table is the application of English-speaking practice software gives student benefit is that they can study wherever they want (M= 3.98); Meanwhile, these apps help students point out mistakes in their pronunciation and correcting them (M= 3.93) stand on top 3 of the table. Not only that, the installation of English-speaking practice apps on technology devices which are convenient and fast (M= 3.92). Through all of the benefits that have been collected and mentioned above. Table 5 will answer the question about the efficiency of these English-speaking practice apps after a period time of use.

4.2. Interviewing audios results

With 10 interview questions, consist of both fixed questions and improvisational questions. The researchers have collected the necessary data and documents, which will be presented and analyzed below.

4.2.1. Difficulties that students are facing when learn to speak in English

Through the interview process, the researchers asked about the difficulties which constantly occurred in the English learning process, especially is the English-speaking skill of Van Lang University's students in every major.

Nhi, one of the interviews, said that: *The difficulties she had to deal with in her English learning process were the inefficiency. She even got tired of learning English because the school only focused on teaching specialized vocabulary and grammar, so she did not be able to improve the speaking skill.*

Furthermore, another interview named Quynh also shared that: *Her intensity of learning English is only one day per week, and the current teaching methods were not effective. She felt bored along with less concentrated, and it was difficult for her to find a suitable person to practice with. Furthermore, each of them had a different pronunciation about the teacher, which was hard for students to follow.*

And with Hien - a student who specializes in the English language: *She still cannot feel the efficacy in the school's English teaching method. She usually went to the coffee shop with native speakers to practice speaking English as well as practice through self-online studying to improve her English ability.*

All of the interviews have one thing in common is that they have a hard time practicing speaking English. The school's teaching methods have not helped them develop completely and create an environment for them to improve their English-speaking skills.

4.2.2. *Desire of students*

The researchers had known more about their desire and aspirations from the difficulties that went on constantly among the English learning process of students.

Phuong shared: *She desires to have a learning method that applies technology to take advantage of the technology's outstanding features. Also, incorporate the experience and the coordination of teachers into the teaching process and brought into play the power of both methods.*

And Nhi: *Her desire is to have an environment to practice English outside of the classroom more effectively. More active and more enjoyable during the English learning process for those who wanted to improve their speaking skills.*

Hien said that: *She was looking forward to the development of modern technology that could help her develop her English-speaking ability through the process of studying in speaking classes at school, such as pronunciation practice and developing student's confidence when speaking English.*

All of them have a common desire to apply technology and take advantage of its advantages in teaching methods and create an enhanced, more efficient, modern, and more productive learning environment for students.

4.2.3. *Suggestion from students*

After an observation process, the researcher adds opening requirements questions about the English learning method through software applications.

Long shared that: *Through the learning process with the app, he has approach native speakers talked in videos, movies, or get grammar correct and improve his pronunciation directly through the app. He also thinks that science and technology development gave students a chance to approach new, streamlined, attractive, and easy-to-understand learning methods.*

Khai also had the same point of view: *He felt the mobile application could support him in fixing, reminding as well as creating motivation when learning with many interesting contents, suitable to an individual level. Through the study process, he can be exposed to native speakers and gained confidence when speaking English.*

Phuong believed that: *The software was compact, convenient, and could be learned anytime, anywhere. Modern technology and AI analysis of apps like Duolingo, Elsa Speak helped readers gradually improve their speaking level, and they would feel extremely excited if the school integrates speaking software into the English teaching methods of Van Lang University.*

Hien shared that: *The Discord application can help you gain confidence, English speaking reflexes, and the ability to express that in English speaking classes at school that not provide yet. However, this app could not help her improves pronunciation. She also said that apps like Duolingo or Elsa are only suitable for those who at the beginner level, helping them build up an English-speaking platform.*

And Huy, another interview said that: *The Ted Talk app would be suitable for students who specialize in languages or have an English background. Therefore, for beginners, he recommended Elsa Speak.*

The common point of their desires was that the training environment, confidence in communication, creating opportunities to speak English like a native.

5. DISCUSSION

Regarding the first research question, with the development of the digital age, the number of Van Lang University's students using electric appliances increases for learning English speaking purposes. Most of the students have at least one technology device, such as a smartphone, an iPad, or a laptop. As a consequence, those applications that were available on gadgets that had been renowned for supporting students' learning were analyzed in Tables 4 and 5. The coverage of Speaking Practice Apps pervasive the market enormously, such as Elsa Speak, Duolingo, Cambly... but the number of the students using these apps had an upward trend. It is proved that learners were having problems in improving their English-speaking skills by the current English Teaching Method. As a result, Van Lang University's students desire to enhance speaking skills thanks to Van Lang University's assistance. According to Ms. Van [42] - the founder of Elsa Speak has emphasized that if a person does not speak English well, they are more likely to lose 32% of their career and business opportunities. Over the years, English has gradually transformed itself into an official working language in many fields such as Finance, Science, and Politics. Therefore, it is necessary to be fluent in English to boost reliability and productivity in a company; moreover, students can also broaden their horizons on career paths. In this survey, 90% of Van Lang University's students desire to apply software in the current English Teaching Method, especially in practicing speaking skills.

The answer to the second research question is quite clear in Table 6. After using these English applications, the results depicted the efficiency positively impacting learners. Additionally, the software had overcome most of the difficulties that students were facing when learning speaking skills. It helps them become more confident in communicating in English, acquiring vocabulary, improving self-study skills, and suchlike. It could not be more obvious that VLU's pupils won a lot of benefits from these applications. New College Group [43] clarified that applying technology to teaching is taking benefits for students and teachers to save time and be efficient in teaching practices while integrating technology in the classroom.

To determine whether the speaking practice apps were successful, it depends on the features offered in Table 7. Nagata [44] has proved that educational software integrates multimedia content and provides users a high interactivity level. Therefore, the efficiency between traditional teaching methods and application software methods to teach spoken English is strongly different. It can be seen that those features such as practicing pronunciation with a native speaker's guide, using visual and vivid images which were valuable for drawing students closer to speaking English. Hence, it helps students absorb language easily, as well as the learning process is no longer exhausted. To conclude, it is a great necessity in the current 4.0 era.

Moreover, using speaking practice software on technology devices brings many advantages to Van Lang's pupils, shown in table 8. Students will no longer be passive in their learning; they will be more proactive in their learning time, places, and ways to learn speaking through the mentioned apps. Those apps also create a huge benefit for Van Lang's students when tested to determine their level before starting to use the app. They will arrange the curriculum rationally from basic to advanced for students to learn easier based on their levels. The most important thing that students gained when using this software is if they make any mistake, the app will point it out in any second and the solution to it.

This study suggests that there are a lot of benefits to applying software application in learning English for Van Lang University's students. At the same time, it is pointed out that the current trend of students' learning is through technology equipment. Current research supports the combination of technology equipment and software in learning is a liberating and innovative combination in the digital age.

However, there are still downsides that need to be carefully noted when applying technology software. We need to carefully consider to develop suitable software that meets the English-speaking learning needs of each university. Also, through this study, the researchers found a significant gap in some famous software on the market nowadays is the "free-option".

Firstly, Duolingo was created by a thoughtful and visionary founder who has deep philosophies about creating a software application for learning English. According to Ahn [45] – the founder of Duolingo affirmed that they believe true equality is when spending more can't buy people a better education. Duolingo was created with bright spots from their business point of view, providing optimal benefits for learning English, but the "free-option" contributed to the motivation and promotion of civilized language educational background development.

Secondly, Elsa Speak - English learning application software connects outstanding and effective features to meet learners' needs. Moreover, the difference between the "free-option" and the Plus version of Elsa is not too much, basic learners can still access solid knowledge bases. The subsidy policy of Elsa speaking further enhances the students' love, as well as the motivation, creating a perfect and desirable environment for learners.

Thirdly, BBC learning - software for the free application of English learning has the founder to invest knowledge in people is a valuable resource. The software is born with features that help learners improve and improve their language skills with completely no fee.

Therefore, the outstanding feature that helps learners improve and enhance their foreign language skills is the "free-option". The subsidy feature has made these apps more accessible to users. Because the majority of English learning apps users are students and they don't have the habit of paying for expensive courses through mobile software. Many factors affect the public's perception and behavior when using technology software to learn. So, the price is one of the important reasons leading to their decision of choosing which learning app. Hence, a good, useful application that is also supported by price or completely free of tuition fees. Hence, students know and widely use English learning applications mainly because of the "free-option".

6. CONCLUSION

In this essay, in the framework of the student report, the researchers have developed a study based on Van Lang University students' opinions in Viet Nam. They were thereby deploying the role as well as the necessity of applying technology software into the English teaching method for Van Lang University students. The obtained findings are gratifying. Because with the current technological era, Van Lang students mostly use technology equipment for serving learning purposes, and they adapt to the trend of learning English through the speaking training software available on the market such as Elsa Speak, Duolingo. Hence, the students expressed their desires to apply the software mentioned above to Van Lang University's English-speaking method to improve their speaking performance.

The study also showed how effective those apps are after using data. With many special benefits and features that these applications have brought, applying software that helps students improve their speaking skills is like a breath of fresh air in traditional English classrooms. It is worth considering Van Lang University in improving English speaking teaching methods for students.

While the study has achieved its target, there are several major limitations. First, because the duration of the study is short, just seven weeks, so there is clearly a time limit. Second, the number of participants in the interviews and survey restricts the reliability of the findings. Whether there will be more members, the reliability and validity of this research can be improved. However, the study also pointed out an interesting gap that suggests other researchers look deeper into the "free-option" of some famous speaking-English learning software.

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