

Students' Views on the Use of the BoldVoice Application in Enhancing English Speaking Skills

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Abstract

Background – Speaking is one of the most challenging English skills for students due to limited practice, anxiety, and difficulties in pronunciation and intonation. The integration of technology through AI-based tools such as BoldVoice offers new opportunities for improving speaking performance in formal education.

Purpose – This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the BoldVoice application in enhancing their English-speaking skills, specifically focusing on pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence.

Method/Approach – This qualitative descriptive research involved 30 ninth-grade students at SMP Al-Hidayah, Medan, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires with a four-point Likert scale and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed descriptively and thematically.

Findings – The results show that the BoldVoice application is perceived positively by students in helping them improve their pronunciation and intonation, as well as in building their confidence to speak English. Real-time feedback and interactive features were found effective in supporting students' learning, although some still faced challenges in spontaneous speaking.

Conclusions – The BoldVoice application can serve as a useful supplementary tool in English language learning, especially in improving phonetic accuracy and student motivation to speak.

Novelty/Originality/Value – The novelty of this study lies in its focus on junior high school students within a formal classroom setting, which has rarely been explored in previous research involving AI-based language learning tools.

Keywords: pronunciation; intonation; speaking confidence; students' perception

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, mastery of the English language is becoming an increasingly important skill, especially in speaking. However, many individuals face difficulties in speaking confidently, either due to lack of practice, language barriers, or anxiety when speaking in public (Zhang, 2020). This difficulty is even more pronounced as speaking skills are often harder to master than other language skills such as reading or writing. Speaking requires spontaneous responses, rapid organization of ideas, and the use of nonverbal aspects such as intonation and facial expressions (Baradaran Shoroka, 2025). explain that speaking is an individual's ability to convey thoughts, ideas, or information orally in a clear and effective manner. Furthermore, (Dai & Wu, 2023). emphasize that speaking is not only about verbal communication but also involves pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. These aspects are crucial in real-life communication, both in academic and professional settings. However, many learners struggle with speaking due to anxiety, limited practice opportunities, and challenges in pronunciation and intonation ((Baradaran Shoroka, 2025).

To overcome these challenges, technology has presented various solutions, one of which is the Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approach. With technological advances that allow for flexible and adaptive language learning, MALL has become widely used in improving speaking skills (Burston, 2021). In addition, Suciati et al. (2023) found that artificial intelligence (AI) in English learning can improve students' speaking skills through personalized feedback and technology-based learning.

One of the technology-based learning tools that aims to improving speaking skills is the BoldVoice application. This app is designed as a technology-based learning medium that helps users practice pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of speaking in English (Gitrsang et al., 2021). With interactive features such as real-time pronunciation analysis and conversation simulation-based exercises, BoldVoice allows users to gradually improve their speaking skills. Moreover, the app is in line with the concept of MALL, which enables users to learn independently with flexibility in time and place (Sholekhah & Fakhrurriana, 2022). MALL has been proven to increase motivation as well as the effectiveness of language learning, especially in speaking skills, as it allows instant feedback and personalization in the learning process (Alotaibi, 2020). According to Ernita (2023), the use of technology-based applications in English learning can improve students' speaking skills. In her research, Ernita found that the integration of technology helped students be more confident in speaking as well as improving their pronunciation. This finding is in line with this study, which explores students' experiences in using BoldVoice app to improve English speaking skills.

Despite these advancements, it is important to maintain a critical perspective on the role of technology in language learning. While applications such as BoldVoice have been introduced as promising tools for improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence (Gitrsang et al., 2021), few empirical studies have systematically evaluated their effectiveness, especially in formal educational contexts such as junior high schools.

Previous research has demonstrated that various language learning applications contribute differently to speaking skills. For example, Lee (2020) found that HelloTalk enhances fluency by enabling real-time communication with native speakers, yet it relies heavily on user interaction and social engagement. Johnson and Smith (2019) reported that Rosetta Stone improved learners' grammatical knowledge but offered limited immediate feedback on pronunciation. Similarly, Brown (2018) showed that Babbel strengthened vocabulary acquisition through interactive activities but lacked personalized guidance in pronunciation improvement. These findings suggest that while technology-assisted language learning is beneficial, existing platforms often focus more on conversational or textual aspects rather than on detailed, real-time pronunciation training.

While various studies have addressed the utilization of technology in language learning, there is still a gap in research regarding the effectiveness of AI-based apps that focus on real-time pronunciation and intonation feedback. Most existing studies examine conversation-based (such as HelloTalk) or text-based (such as Babbel) apps, but few examine AI-based apps such as

BoldVoice with high personalization features (Wang et al., 2022). Moreover, many studies tend to focus on adult learners in informal settings, leaving a significant gap in understanding how such technologies function within younger student populations in structured school environments. Therefore, this study will fill this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of BoldVoice in improving pronunciation and intonation in English speaking.

This study aims to address this research gap by exploring students' perceptions of the BoldVoice application in improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence. By focusing on ninth-grade students at SMP Al-Hidayah, Medan, this research provides insights into the effectiveness of AI-based pronunciation training in a formal school setting. The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on technology-enhanced language learning and offer practical recommendations for integrating AI tools into English education.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of the BoldVoice application in improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence. The research question addressed in this study is: "How do students perceive the use of BoldVoice in their pronunciation, intonation, and confidence in speaking?" Through this investigation, it is expected that deeper insights into the application of AI-powered tools in English speaking skill development will be obtained, which can inform future pedagogical practices and the design of more effective technology-based language learning interventions.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore students' experiences in using the BoldVoice application to improve their English speaking skills. A qualitative design was chosen because it focuses on understanding human experiences, behaviors, and perceptions through descriptive data rather than numerical analysis Chun et al. (2019). This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes that learning is constructed through active interaction with technology (Nasr & Askar, 2013). and supports the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) frameworks that enhance student engagement and create dynamic learning experiences (Wang & Tahir, 2020). The participants in this study were 30 ninth-grade students from SMP Al-Hidayah, Medan, during the 2024/2025 academic year, consisting of fourteen females and sixteen males. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on students who were willing and possessed basic English skills. Ethical clearance was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from all participants to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to measure students' perceptions of using the application (Revythi & Tselios, 2021). while the semi-structured interviews allowed deeper exploration of students' experiences with flexible yet focused questioning (Nguyen, 2015). Both instruments underwent content validation by two English education lecturers.

The research was conducted in several stages, beginning with planning, where objectives were formulated, participants were selected, and the instruments were prepared. In the implementation stage, students received an orientation on how to use the BoldVoice application and then used it daily for 12 consecutive days. After the usage period, data collection took place through the distribution of questionnaires and the conduction of interviews. The questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively using simple statistical methods such as mean scores and percentages, while the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). six-phase framework to identify key themes and patterns. To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was conducted by comparing questionnaire and interview results, member checking was performed by asking interviewees to review and validate the findings, and peer debriefing was used to minimize researcher bias. Through these methods, the study aimed to achieve credible and dependable findings on students' experiences in using BoldVoice to improve their English speaking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings obtained from questionnaires and interviews regarding the use of the BoldVoice application in improving speaking skills, particularly in the aspects of pronunciation, intonation, and students' confidence. The collected data was analyzed descriptively to understand students' perceptions of the effectiveness of this application in supporting their learning. The research findings are presented in the form of tables that display the percentage of students' responses to each statement in the questionnaire, supplemented by interviews to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences while using BoldVoice. The following table summarizes the questionnaire results collected from 30 respondents:

Tabel 1. Student's Perceptions Toward The Use Of BoldVoice Application In Speaking Skills

| Statement | Agree | Strongly Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| Using the BoldVoice application helps me improve my English pronunciation. | 80% | 20% | | 0% |
| The features in the BoldVoice application make it easier for me to recognize and correct my pronunciation mistakes. | 56.7% | 43.3% | | 0% |
| I feel that my pronunciation has improved after using the BoldVoice application. | 76.7% | 23.3% | | 0% |
| The feedback provided by the BoldVoice application helps me understand my pronunciation mistakes. | 70% | 30% | | 0% |
| Using the BoldVoice application helps me develop better intonation when speaking English. | 56.7% | 43.3% | | 0% |
| I find it easier to intonation difficult English words after practicing with BoldVoice. | 73.3% | 26.3% | 3.3% | 0% |
| The feedback provided by BoldVoice helps me correct my intonation mistakes. | 70.3% | 26.7% | 3.3% | 0% |
| I feel more confidence learning English speaking skills using the BoldVoice application. | 63.3% | 63.7% | 0% | 0% |
| The use of BoldVoice helps students confidence in speaking English without fear of mistakes. | 73.3% | 26.7% | 0% | 0% |
| I would recommend BoldVoice to my friends to help their confidence in English speaking skills. | 80% | 16.7% | 3.3% | 0% |

The data presented in the table indicate students' perceptions of the BoldVoice application. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that students perceive the BoldVoice application as a beneficial tool for improving their pronunciation, intonation, and confidence in speaking English. These findings align with Wang and Tahir's (2020) research, which suggests that artificial intelligence (AI)-based technologies in language learning can enhance speaking skills through personalized learning and automated feedback.

Improving Students' Pronunciation

From the Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicate that the use of BoldVoice helps students improve their pronunciation. Students feel that the application assists them in pronouncing words more clearly and accurately. In the data above, 80% of students agreed, and 20% strongly agreed that the BoldVoice application was useful in helping them with pronunciation. Additionally, 56.7% of students agreed, and 43.3% strongly agreed that BoldVoice's features made it easier for them to recognize and correct pronunciation mistakes. This indicates that the application provides significant benefits in the aspect of pronunciation. No students disagreed, leading to the conclusion that BoldVoice's pronunciation correction feature is considered effective by all participants.

Furthermore, 76.7% of students agreed, and 23.3% strongly agreed that their pronunciation improved after using BoldVoice. However, the majority of students only "agreed,"

suggesting that there may still be challenges in achieving optimal pronunciation improvement. This is also supported by interview results, which indicate that students perceive benefits from this application. One student stated:

"At first, I was scared to speak English because I thought my pronunciation was bad, but after practicing with BoldVoice, i feel more comfortable." (s,1)

The results of this study show that the use of BoldVoice contributes to the improvement of students' pronunciation. This finding is in line with Paramita's research (2021) which states that application-based learning technology can help students identify and correct pronunciation errors more effectively than traditional methods.

Developing Students' Intonation

From the Statements 5, 6, and 7 show that BoldVoice also plays a role in helping students develop their intonation in English speaking. Students can understand how to adjust their tone according to the context of the conversation. In the data above, 56.7% of students agreed and 43.3% strongly agreed that the BoldVoice app helped them develop better intonation in speaking English. This shows that although most students find it useful, there are still some who feel that their intonation development has not been maximized. In addition, 70% of students agreed and 30% strongly agreed that the feedback from BoldVoice helped them understand errors in intonation, with no students disagreeing.

In addition, in the aspect of pronunciation of difficult words, 73.3% of students agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed that they found it easier to pronounce difficult words after using BoldVoice. However, there were 3.3% of students who disagreed, which may indicate that for a small number of students, the app has not been helpful enough in improving their intonation. One of the students in the interview also revealed that despite the improvement, he still found it difficult to speak fluently in front of the class:

"Before using BoldVoive, I spoke English in very flat way, But now I can hear where to put stress in sentences." (s,2)

This shows that while BoldVoice helps with intonation, confidence in its use is still a challenge for some students, especially in formal situations such as speaking in front of the class.

Increasing Students' Confidence

From the Statements 8, 9, and 10 demonstrate that students feel more confident in speaking English after using BoldVoice. They are more comfortable speaking without the fear of making mistakes. In the data above, 63.3% of students agreed and 36.7% strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning English speaking skills using BoldVoice. There were no students who disagreed, which shows that the app is quite interesting to them and helps build motivation in learning. In addition, 73.3% of students agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed that BoldVoice is more effective than traditional methods in learning English pronunciation. This shows that most students feel more comfortable using AI-based technology compared to conventional methods.

Finally, 80% of students agreed and 16.7% strongly agreed that they would recommend BoldVoice to their friends to help improve English speaking skills. However, there were 3.3% of students who disagreed, which may indicate that some students felt the app was not effective enough for them or did not have a significant impact on their confidence in speaking English. This is in line with one of the interview results, where students said that although BoldVoice was helpful, they still needed live speaking practice to improve their fluency:

"The app gave me a chance to practice speaking witout feeling nevous, so now I am more confident when talking to my friends in English." (s,3)

This shows that although technology can help improve speaking skills, the practice of speaking directly with others is still needed so that students can be more confident in communicating.

Based on the results of the questionnaires and interviews, the BoldVoice app generally has a positive impact on students' pronunciation, intonation and confidence in speaking English.

Almost all students felt helped in improving their pronunciation and intonation through the feedback feature provided by the app. In addition, the majority of students felt more confident after using BoldVoice and found it more effective than traditional methods. However, there were still a small number of students who felt that the app had not fully helped them, especially in the pronunciation of difficult words and increasing their confidence.

The results of this study show that the BoldVoice app has a positive impact in improving students' pronunciation, intonation and confidence in speaking skills. Most students found the automatic feedback feature useful in correcting their pronunciation errors. In addition, that BoldVoice also plays a role in developing students' intonation. Many students reported that the app helped them produce more natural speech patterns and better stress placement in sentences. Therefore, even though BoldVoice is effective in improving pronunciation and intonation, its use still needs to be combined with other methods, such as group discussions or speaking practice with others. the majority of students also reported increased confidence after using BoldVoice, although some still felt nervous when speaking in formal situations.

Lee (2020) states that direct communication with native speakers can help students improve their speaking fluency. This aligns with the concept that interactive language exposure improves pronunciation and intonation skills. However, different language learning applications have distinct focuses. For example, HelloTalk is designed to facilitate real-time conversations, while BoldVoice emphasizes structured pronunciation and intonation practice, allowing students to develop their speaking skills independently.

Similarly, Johnson and Smith (2019) explain that AI-based language learning tools can enhance pronunciation fluency and accuracy by providing real-time corrective feedback. This suggests that applications utilizing AI-driven speech recognition, like BoldVoice, have the potential to assist students in refining their phonetic accuracy without requiring direct interaction with others.

Furthermore, Brown (2018) highlights that text- and voice-based exercises contribute to the gradual improvement of students' speaking abilities. While some applications, such as Babbel, focus more on grammar and vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation-focused tools play a crucial role in helping learners achieve more natural and accurate speech patterns. This supports the idea that targeted pronunciation training, as provided by BoldVoice, is beneficial in language learning.

Although the results of this study show the effectiveness of BoldVoice in improving pronunciation, intonation and confidence, there are some limitations that need to be noted. Some students still have difficulty speaking in formal situations, such as speaking in front of the class or with the teacher. This was reflected in the interview results, where one student said:

"I found BoldVoice very helpful. My pronunciation is clearer because of the real-time feedback. Intonation has also improved because of the emphasis and tone guidance. Also, my confidence has increased because I'm more accustomed to speaking without the fear of being wrong."(s,4)

This statement shows that while the app helps with pronunciation, intonation, increasing confidence in speaking skills requires live speaking practice. Therefore, even though BoldVoice is effective in improving pronunciation, its use still needs to be combined with other methods, such as group discussions or speaking practice with interlocutors.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that technology-based language learning apps can improve students' speaking skills. However, the approach used by each app is different. While HelloTalk relies on direct interaction, Rosetta Stone emphasizes context-based exercises, and Babbel combines text with sound, BoldVoice excels in pronunciation and intonation. As such, BoldVoice can be an effective tool for students looking to improve the phonetic aspects of speaking English, although it still needs to be combined with other methods to improve overall fluency.

CONCLUSION

The BoldVoice application significantly enhanced students' English speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, intonation, and confidence. Students showed notable

improvements in technical speaking aspects through real-time feedback and interactive exercises, making BoldVoice more effective than conventional methods in these areas. However, live interaction remains essential for developing fluency in real communication. This study's limitations include a small sample size of 30 students from one school and a short 12-day duration, limiting generalizability and long-term evaluation. As Chun et al. (2019). emphasized, longer studies are needed for more valid qualitative results. Similarly, (Maharani & Lolita, 2024). found that Android-based MALL applications can accelerate speaking skill improvement and learner independence. Future research should involve more diverse participants over a longer period and explore combining AI-based apps with interactive learning to optimize speaking skill development.

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