

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF USING WHATSAPP VOICE NOTE IN ENGLISH SPEAKING LEARNING

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Abstract: *The government has implemented hybrid or blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online learning. IAIN Langsa has adopted this hybrid learning approach by utilizing various media tools in the learning process. One widely used media tool in hybrid learning is the WhatsApp Voice Note application. In this perspective, online learning media becomes an important aspect to be evaluated, as WhatsApp Voice Note is the focal media for online learning which the students are not familiar of using it yet because of the immediately switch from offline to online learning mode as an impact of COVID-19. This study aims to explore students' experiences in using WhatsApp Voice Note for English speaking learning. The subjects of this study consisted of 12 English education students. A qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach is employed to achieve the research objectives. Three data collection instruments are utilized: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire employs an 8-item Likert scale, while the semi-structured interviews comprise 14 questions. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that almost all eighth-semester English education students at IAIN Langsa have provided positive feedback regarding WhatsApp Voice Note as an online learning medium that helps improve their English-speaking skills and supports their learning process both on and off-campus.*

Keywords: *Students' experience, WhatsApp voice note, Learning speaking*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important skills in language learning and plays a crucial role in conveying information. According to Alonso (2014), speaking is one of the four language skills, along with writing, listening, and reading. Cameron (2001) explains that speaking skills involve mastery of several key components, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension. For English language learners, having good speaking abilities is vital for expressing ideas, arguments, and viewpoints orally (Tarigan, 2008). However, in practice, many English language learners face



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difficulties in learning to speak. According to Namaziandost (2019), this is due to various factors, including insufficient classroom learning time and inadequate use of technology or supplementary media for speaking instruction. Fortunately, the government, especially in Indonesia, has implemented collaborative learning methods outside the classroom using technology (Bramasta, 2020; Zainuddin & Keumala, 2018). This method is known as blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online learning (Thompson, 2016). This demonstrates the adaptation of education to the modern era, particularly in speaking instruction.

The current situation offers great chances for teachers and students to explore different technologies in order to improve the quality of learning. According to Hamad (2017), using technology in the classroom can help teachers and students create a better learning environment. With the use of technology like mobile devices and computers, Ainun (2018) explains that teaching speaking skills becomes easier. In today's learning process, social media platforms play an important role in facilitating interaction and collaboration between teachers and students. Namyssova (2020) mention popular social media platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Among these, WhatsApp has become the most popular (Jasrial, 2018). Sulisworo (2018) defines WhatsApp as a messaging app that can be used on smartphones or web versions. It allows users to exchange information using text, images, videos, and audio messages. One useful feature in WhatsApp is the voice note, which is a recorded audio message that can be shared. This feature is valuable for improving students' speaking skills (Dunlap, 2006). Using voice notes in WhatsApp gives students the opportunity to enhance their language proficiency through various online activities (Riyanto, 2013). In distance learning, students can utilize the voice note feature to practice speaking sentences in the target language, participate in group discussions, or give verbal presentations.

This study aims to explore how students perceive and experience using voice notes on WhatsApp as a tool for learning to speak. The goal is to determine the effectiveness of using voice notes on WhatsApp in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the study aims to identify the advantages students derive from using voice notes on WhatsApp, such as increased confidence and expanded vocabulary. Furthermore, the research will investigate students' preferences for using voice notes on WhatsApp compared to other methods of learning to speak. Throughout the study, an analysis will be conducted on potential challenges or difficulties that students may encounter when utilizing voice notes on WhatsApp for speaking instruction. The expected outcome of this research is to provide practical recommendations for further development in utilizing voice notes on WhatsApp as a tool for learning to speak.

The use of WhatsApp voice notes by students in speaking instruction has a significant impact on their learning experience. Through WhatsApp voice messages, students can practice speaking in the target language comfortably and flexibly. Recording and listening back to personal conversations enables them to identify errors in pronunciation and intonation, as well as enhance their confidence in speaking. Based on research by Nurazizah (2019), the use of WhatsApp voice messages as a speaking learning tool has been proven to improve students' speaking abilities and learning motivation. The advantages of WhatsApp lie in its accessibility, allowing its usage anytime and anywhere, both inside and outside the classroom, as well as supporting collaborative learning (Jasrial, 2017). Through voice conversations on WhatsApp, students feel more confident, enthusiastic, take initiative, and demonstrate a positive attitude as part of collaborative learning. This indicates that WhatsApp voice notes can be an effective tool in enhancing students' speaking skills in language learning.

Using WhatsApp voice notes for learning speaking provides students with a range of experiences, including their perceptions, perspectives, evaluations, and reflections Kolb (2015). This approach encompasses qualitative aspects like emotional responses, personal perceptions, knowledge, and feelings that arise during the use of WhatsApp voice messages (Lee & Kim, 2019). By utilizing WhatsApp voice messages, students can improve their speaking abilities and actively respond to the learning material (Garcia & Lopez, 2022). To gain a better understanding of students' viewpoints, researchers can collect data through interviews, observations, or questionnaires (Chen & Wang, 2020). The aim of this study is to explore valuable information about the benefits, effectiveness, challenges, and obstacles students face when adopting this technology to enhance their speaking skills (Kim & Park, 2021). Factors such as comfort level, motivation, self-confidence, participation, and student satisfaction with the use of WhatsApp voice messages can also influence oral language learning (Rodriguez & Sanchez, 2022). Ultimately, the primary goal of this research is to investigate how this technology impacts students' learning experiences and improves their speaking skills and interaction in the target language (Torres, 2023).

According to Huang & Liaw (2020), students' experience in using WhatsApp voice notes to enhance speaking skills involves various characteristics. Firstly, there are emotional responses such as enthusiasm, excitement, frustration, or anxiety towards the use of technology. Secondly, students evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, and usefulness of the technology in improving speaking skills (Bista, 2019). Additionally, engagement and active participation play a crucial role, including the level of involvement in using the voice notes feature, interacting with classmates or instructors in the language, and actively participating in learning activities (Yildiz & Yalcin-

Tilfarlioglu, 2018). Constraints and challenges that may arise include technical difficulties, limited accessibility, language barriers, or difficulties in adapting to the technology (Liu et al., 2021). The development of speaking skills is also an important aspect, as WhatsApp voice messages can impact pronunciation, fluency, flexibility, and understanding of the target language (Tian & Zhou'sheng, 2019). Lastly, user satisfaction is evaluated by considering the level of satisfaction with WhatsApp voice messages and the resulting increase in confidence and engagement in speaking learning (Basuki & Putri, 2021).

According to Minhas (2016), WhatsApp is the most popular social media platform used for communication and interaction through the internet network. In the context of speaking skills learning, WhatsApp provides various features, including the WhatsApp Voice Note feature (Dunlap, 2006). Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) explain that WhatsApp Voice Notes are one of the features provided by the application, which allows users to record and send voice messages in audio format. With this feature, users can record their own voice message using a mobile device's microphone, then send it to recipients through the WhatsApp application (Sukrillah 2017). WhatsApp Voice Notes can contain conversations, speeches, explanations or other forms of verbal communication (Mistar & Embi, 2016). This feature provides users with an alternative way to communicate using their own voice, which in certain situations can be more comfortable or effective than typing text messages (Belinda et al., 2018).

According to Mike (2019), the typical process of using WhatsApp voice notes in learning speaking is as follows: During face-to-face classes, the lecturer explains the material and forms groups with all participating students. Assignments and instructions are given through WhatsApp, where students receive speaking tasks and discussion topics in text messages. Students then record their responses using the Voice Note feature in WhatsApp, edit if necessary, and send them to the lecturer or share with group members. The lecturer evaluates these voice messages and provides feedback for improvement. WhatsApp Voice Note also facilitates discussion, collaboration, consultation, and guidance among students within a group or with the lecturer. After practicing using voice notes within the WhatsApp group, a meeting is arranged to assess speaking progress directly in front of the class. This practice helps build confidence for students when speaking in front of others during class sessions.

According to Thonburry (2005), stated that speaking or oral communication is a complex and interactive process that occurs between two or more individuals. In this process, the listener and the speaker respond to what they hear quickly, creating dynamic and mutually influential interactions. Furthermore, Thonburry also highlights that communication is not only about exchanging information but also involves complex social aspects

within it. This indicates that communication has a broad dimension and involves various factors such as culture, context, and the desired communication goals. Moreover, according to Qomar (2016), speaking is one of the important skills that students need to master. However, many students still face difficulties in speaking English. They struggle with correct intonation, the use of grammar, choosing the right words, and expressing their ideas clearly in communication. Speaking is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in building effective communication within society (Anggani, Donough, & Shaw, 2015). Christopher (2003) asserts that speaking functions as a means of direct communication between individuals, often used when asking questions or providing explanations. Therefore, through speaking, we not only acquire new information but also have the opportunity to share ideas with others.

In speaking learning, there are several important aspects that need to be considered. First, pronunciation is the ability to articulate sounds, intonation, and accents correctly for effective understanding by listeners (Hornby 2006). While it doesn't have to be perfect for every sound, effective communication can still occur. Second, vocabulary requires adequate mastery to accurately convey messages with good variation, including words, fixed phrases, variable phrases, phrasal verbs, and idioms (Keith, 2004). Third, grammar involves understanding and applying the correct rules in constructing sentences that align with the communication context, with guidelines and principles governing word modifications and arrangements to create coherent and meaningful sentences in the target language. Fourth, fluency is the ability to speak smoothly without excessive pauses or difficulty finding the right words (Gower, 2006). Despite grammar errors or resource limitations, students are expected to effectively deliver their messages. Fifth, thinking on your feet involves the ability to think quickly and respond accurately in communication situations (Ridlle 2001). Lastly, listening skills encompass the ability to listen well, understand, and effectively respond to conversations and instructions from the speaker.

METHOD

This study employs a phenomenological approach and qualitative data to gain a profound understanding of the shared experiences among participants regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Bungin, 2008). Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Those data analyzed to understand the students' experiences on using WhatsApp voice notes for speaking learning. This study consisted of a total of 12 participants who were enrolled in the English education department. Data analysis is the process of collecting, cleansing, analyzing, and interpreting data to obtain valuable information, draw conclusions, and make decisions based on facts and evidence. To analyze data, researchers conduct a systematic search for and arrangement of diverse materials, such

as field notes and interview transcripts. The analysis process involves scrutinizing and organizing the data, as well as presenting the results. The qualitative analysis technique used in this research is based on the method developed by Miles and Huberman, which comprises three activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In data reduction, researchers sort relevant data and eliminate irrelevant information. Data display involves visually presenting the sorted data. Conclusion drawing is carried out by examining the data and reaching agreements based on the analysis conducted. Researchers analyze data in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied in this research, as well as to validate findings based on evidence.

RESULTS

In the first finding of the study, students feel happy and motivated to learn using WhatsApp because WhatsApp is easy to use and provides greater flexibility for students in the English learning process. This shows that the use of voice notes on WhatsApp can be an effective and enjoyable alternative in English language learning. The findings from the interviews indicated that the use of WhatsApp voice notes in speaking learning is very enjoyable. This can be seen from the statements of some participants who expressed that they felt greatly assisted by the use of voice notes on WhatsApp in speaking learning. Participant 1 said "learning to use voice notes on WhatsApp has been very helpful for me in learning speaking because this application is very easy to use and is familiar to students as it is often used in daily life". Furthermore, the above statement also supported by participant 3 "the use of WhatsApp in speaking learning is very enjoyable, as this application can be accessed easily anytime and anywhere".

Table 4.1

Students experience of using WhatsApp voice note in learning speaking

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Statement 5	7 (58,3%)	5 (41,7%)	-	-

Based on the questionnaire and interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the majority of students feel happy when using voice notes on WhatsApp as a learning tool. The factor that influences this is the flexibility of time and place provided by WhatsApp to the students. By using voice notes on WhatsApp, students can record their voices repeatedly to improve accuracy in speaking English, without being bound by specific times and places. Additionally, the use of voice notes on WhatsApp also motivates students to learn, as they can see their progress over time. In this case, students feel comfortable and happy using voice notes on WhatsApp because the feature is very user-friendly, even for students who are less skilled in technology.

In the second finding, researchers found that students are interested in using WhatsApp voice notes for speaking lessons because, besides being frequently used in daily life, this feature also facilitates communication between teachers and students in speaking lessons. By allowing the exchange of voice messages to practice students' speaking skills, the voice note feature becomes more attractive and helpful in improving their English speaking proficiency. The interview results conducted by the researchers showed similarities in the opinion that the use of voice note applications on WhatsApp is more interesting and preferred by students compared to other learning applications. This is based on the statements of several participants who were interviewed. One of them, Participant 2 stated that "many people feel more comfortable and familiar using WhatsApp as a communication application, besides the fact that almost everyone uses it, WhatsApp also provides easier and faster access to information, as well as cheap internet quotas". This statement indicates that the factors of usage habits, ease of use, and affordability are the main reasons why WhatsApp is preferred over other applications.

Table 4.2
Students experience of using whatsapp voice note in learning speaking

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Statement 1	10 (83,3%)	2 (16,7%)	-	-
2.	Statement 4	7 (58,3)	5 (41,7)	-	-

The findings of a questionnaire and interviews on the use of voice notes in WhatsApp for speaking lessons have resulted in interesting findings that deserve attention. The majority of students express their interest and satisfaction with the use of voice note feature in WhatsApp for speaking lessons. One of the factors influencing this is the ability of voice notes to facilitate better interaction between students and teachers. This allows students to ask questions directly when they do not understand something, while teachers can provide quick answers through voice notes. Thus, the use of voice notes feature makes communication easier between teachers and students, especially in speaking lessons.

In the third finding, researchers found that the researcher found that the use of voice notes on WhatsApp is very helpful in learning speaking. This fact is based on the questionnaire results showing that "students tend to find it easier to learn speaking when using the voice note feature". Of the 12 respondents, 4 strongly agreed and 8 agreed with this statement. This research result is also supported by another questionnaire statement revealing that "using voice notes on WhatsApp facilitates interaction between students and lecturers". 4 strongly agreed, 6 agreed, and 2 disagreed with this statement. In addition, this finding is also supported by a questionnaire statement from several respondents that "the voice note

feature in WhatsApp groups is comfortable to use, especially in explaining material". 7 strongly agreed and 5 agreed with this statement.

Table 4.3

Students experience of using whatsApp voice note in learning speaking

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Statement 6	4 (33,3%)	8 (66,7%)	-	-
2.	Statement 7	4 (33,3%)	6 (50%)	2 (16,7%)	-
3.	Statement 2	7 (58,3%)	5 (41,7%)	-	-

From the findings of the questionnaire and interviews on this finding, it can be concluded that the use of the voice note feature on WhatsApp facilitates students in learning to speak. This is due to the ease of use of the feature and the ability of students to practice speaking anywhere and anytime. Thus, the use of the voice note feature on WhatsApp can help students improve their speaking skills effectively and efficiently.

In the fourth finding, the researcher discovered an interesting fact about the effectiveness of learning among students. The fact is that the use of the voice note feature in WhatsApp can improve the effectiveness of learning, especially in speaking. This is based on the results of a questionnaire conducted on a number of students, in which 4 participants strongly agreed and 8 participants agreed with the statement. Factors that may explain this include the ease and speed of using the voice note feature in WhatsApp, which allows students to practice speaking directly with their peers or even with their lecturers in real-time. This is certainly helpful in significantly improving students' speaking skills, as there is direct feedback from their conversation partner.

Table 4.4

Students experience of using whatsApp voice note in learning speaking

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Statement 3	4 (33,3%)	8 (66,7%)	-	-

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the use of the voice note feature on WhatsApp as a medium for speaking learning by students is considered better and more effective when learning is done online. This is because the voice note feature on WhatsApp allows students to learn speaking outside of class before they speak in front of the class, thereby increasing their confidence in speaking and reducing any embarrassment or anxiety that may arise when speaking in front of the class. In addition, the use of the voice note feature on WhatsApp also benefits students by allowing them to continue practicing and improving their speaking skills outside of class hours.

In the fifth finding, the researchers found that although students did not have difficulty using WhatsApp, they sometimes experienced network issues when using the voice note feature for speaking learning. This is evident from the questionnaire results where some students found it difficult to use the voice note feature on WhatsApp as a speaking learning medium. More specifically, there were 3 participants who agreed, 5 participants who disagreed, and 4 participants who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.5

Students experience of using whatsApp voice note in learning speaking

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Statement 8	-	3 (25%)	5 (41,7%)	4 (33,3%)

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews in the study, the researchers found that although students did not have difficulty using WhatsApp in general, some students experienced network issues when using the voice note feature for speaking learning. However, in the interview results, most students expressed that the use of WhatsApp voice note for learning is very helpful and not too difficult. Some students experienced network issues when sending voice notes to their friends, but overall, the application is considered easy to use and helpful in speaking learning.

DISCUSSION

This study found that the use of voice notes on WhatsApp for speaking practice is enjoyable and satisfying for students. The results of questionnaires and interviews indicate that students appreciate this innovative method and find it easy to use. The flexibility of WhatsApp is also valued as it allows students to practice speaking anytime and anywhere. Previous research has shown positive experiences with the use of technology-based tools for language proficiency. Ainun (2020) study involved 30 EFL students in grade 11 of high school and showed a positive perception of WhatsApp voice conversations, particularly in fostering interest and reducing stress. Putri (2021) research indicated that students consider the use of WhatsApp voice notes effective in enhancing their understanding of English, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills. In conclusion, the use of voice conversations through WhatsApp has a positive impact on English language learning.

The second significant finding emphasizes the high student interest in using WhatsApp voice notes for learning speaking skills, surpassing other available applications. This interest is attributed to WhatsApp's integration into their daily lives, user-friendly features, and unmatched convenience. Awada (2016) previous research highlights the importance of integrating

familiar and easily accessible technological tools like WhatsApp to enhance student engagement and motivation in language learning. Overall, this finding underscores the strong student interest in using WhatsApp voice notes for speaking practice and the benefits it brings in terms of convenience and engagement.

The third important finding demonstrates that the integration of voice notes on WhatsApp effectively facilitates students in the learning process and enhances their speaking abilities. The key advantages of this innovative approach are its ease of use, unparalleled accessibility, and the opportunity for students to practice speaking anytime and anywhere. These findings are consistent with previous research by Nurazizah (2019), which highlights the importance of learner comfort, flexibility, and autonomy in language acquisition. Additionally, the use of WhatsApp voice notes significantly enhances interaction between students and teachers, resulting in a rich and impactful learning experience. It can be concluded that the seamless integration of voice notes on WhatsApp provides significant benefits for students in the learning process and the development of speaking skills.

The fourth finding highlights the effectiveness of WhatsApp voice notes in improving speaking skills. Participants appreciate the direct feedback, ease of recording and replaying messages, and real-time practice opportunities. However, concerns have been raised about potential weaknesses, such as hindering spontaneous speaking skills and focusing too much on accuracy rather than fluency. Therefore, integrating supplementary activities that promote spontaneous speaking is necessary for comprehensive development of speaking skills alongside the use of WhatsApp voice notes. Despite the overall positive experiences of students using WhatsApp voice notes for speaking learning, the fifth finding identifies poor network connectivity as a significant challenge. Some participants reported difficulties in sending voice notes due to network issues. This limitation can hinder the effectiveness and convenience of using WhatsApp for speaking practice. Previous research by Purba (2020) notes that one of the challenges of using WhatsApp for mobile learning is the issue of internet connectivity on mobile devices. This is considered one of the negative aspects of utilizing WhatsApp in blended learning.

CONCLUSION

WhatsApp voice notes in English speaking learning are found to be enjoyable, effective, and easily accessible, providing a positive experience for most students. The blended learning approach using WhatsApp voice notes enables communication and collaboration between students and teachers in both face-to-face and online settings. Its flexibility in terms of time and location allows students to practice speaking skills at their

convenience. WhatsApp voice notes are engaging, user-friendly, and familiar to many students, offering features that enhance interaction with teachers. They effectively improve speaking abilities, including pronunciation and confidence, through recording and playback features for repeated practice and self-assessment. Despite network connectivity challenges for some students, WhatsApp voice notes remain effective in English speaking learning. Overall, they serve as an enjoyable and impactful alternative in English speaking learning.

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