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Student's Perception on the Effectiveness of Using Voki as a Learning Media to Improving Speaking Ability

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Abstrak:
This study aims to explore and describe students' perceptions of the use of the VOKI application in English speaking activities. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method to gain a comprehensive understanding of learners' experiences. The participants consisted of 33 students from grade XII at SMKN 1 Bandar Masilam, North Sumatra. Data collection involved two instruments: a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and semi-structured interviews with 10 selected students for in-depth insights. These instruments were designed to measure various dimensions, including students' opinions on the usefulness, ease of use, and impact of VOKI on their speaking skills. The collected data were analyzed using the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as suggested by Miles and Huberman. Findings revealed that students showed a generally positive perception toward the use of VOKI in their learning process. Most students highlighted four key benefits: the application's effectiveness in improving pronunciation, its engaging nature, accessibility across devices, and its support for collaboration in speaking activities. Furthermore, the use of avatars and animated characters in VOKI made the learning process more enjoyable, reduced anxiety during speaking practice, and increased students' confidence to speak English. These results suggest that integrating digital tools like VOKI can significantly enhance students' motivation and participation in speaking activities, making it a valuable alternative to conventional classroom strategies. Overall, VOKI proved to be an interactive, accessible, and student-centered medium that supports the development of speaking proficiency in a creative and engaging manner.

Kata kunci: Students' Perception; Speaking Learning; Voki.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology in the 21st century has transformed teaching and learning strategies, including language education. The integration of digital tools in the classroom has introduced interactive methods that foster student engagement, creativity, and critical thinking. In English language learning, speaking is a core skill essential for communication. However, in Indonesia—where English is not the primary language—students often face difficulties, particularly in mastering vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Hammer, 2010; Oflaz, 2019).

Web 2.0-based technologies, such as *VOKI*, offer new opportunities to address these challenges. *VOKI* allows students to create customizable speaking avatars, providing a more engaging learning experience, reducing speaking anxiety, and increasing motivation. Previous studies (Aikina & Zubkova, 2015; Ramdani, 2018) have shown that *VOKI* can enhance speaking fluency and student collaboration. However,

other findings (Yeşilbağ & Korkmaz, 2021) indicate that while speaking skills improved, students' attitudes toward the course did not necessarily change significantly.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of students' perceptions of *VOKI*, particularly in vocational high schools where pronunciation issues, grammar difficulties, and low confidence are common due to monotonous, non-interactive teaching methods. This research also examines how students' perceptions, motivation, and engagement develop over time through the use of *VOKI* in various contexts.

Based on this background, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of using *VOKI* as a learning medium to improve their speaking skills?
2. How does the use of *VOKI* affect students' engagement in learning English?
3. How do students assess the effectiveness of *VOKI* in enriching their English pronunciation?

The aim of this study is to analyze the use of the *VOKI* application in speaking activities, evaluate students' responses to this learning medium, and assess its effectiveness in enhancing English-speaking skills. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective speaking instruction strategies for educators, policymakers, and learning media developers.

Studi Literatur

Related Previous Studies

Several studies have examined the integration of digital media in language learning, particularly the use of *VOKI* to enhance speaking skills. Aikina and Zubkova (2015) found that *VOKI* improved both speaking and writing abilities by engaging students in script creation and avatar voice recording, which deepened their understanding of language structure and increased speaking confidence. Similarly, Ramdani (2018) reported that *VOKI* expanded students' exposure to spoken English beyond the classroom and fostered peer collaboration, enriching the learning experience. However, findings have not been entirely consistent; Yeşilbağ and Korkmaz (2021) observed that although students' speaking proficiency improved, their attitudes toward English lessons did not change significantly, suggesting that technological tools may not consistently enhance motivation.

In contrast, research by Khairisya and Daulay (2022) on Kahoot! indicated that gamified learning media can be engaging, interactive, and effective in increasing participation, motivation, and retention of vocabulary and grammar, highlighting the potential of similar tools like *VOKI*. Other studies have addressed the broader context of language learning: Oflaz (2019) emphasized that mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation is crucial for effective speaking—components supported by *VOKI*—while Mohammed (2018) identified persistent challenges in foreign language education, such as limited resources, teaching methods, and learning environments, particularly in non-native English settings.

Naila and Indah (2024) further underlined the benefits of digital technologies in providing interactive learning opportunities, yet also pointed out ongoing issues like digital literacy gaps and unequal access between urban and rural areas. Collectively, these studies suggest that *VOKI* and similar digital tools can improve speaking fluency, pronunciation, and learner engagement, but research has largely focused on short-term outcomes in general classroom contexts. There remains a lack of evidence on how students' perceptions, motivation, and engagement with *VOKI* evolve over time, especially in vocational high schools

where challenges such as low confidence, pronunciation difficulties, and limited grammar mastery are more pronounced. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates vocational high school students' perceptions of *VOKI* as a medium for developing English-speaking skills, with particular attention to its effects on motivation, engagement, and confidence.

Research method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to gather rich, detailed data from participants. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), qualitative research is a process that produces descriptive data from individuals' spoken or written words as well as their observable behavior. In line with Saryono (2024), qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating and explaining social phenomena that cannot be adequately addressed through quantitative approaches. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of students' perceptions, motivation, and engagement when using *VOKI*, which are best understood through descriptive narratives rather than numerical measures.

The research was conducted in the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at SMKN 1 Bandar Masilam, North Sumatra. Participants were 33 twelfth-grade students enrolled in the English language study program, all of whom had prior experience using *VOKI* in English learning activities. The selection of participants followed a purposive sampling strategy with the following criteria: (1) currently enrolled in the English study program at SMKN 1 Bandar Masilam; (2) had used *VOKI* for at least one English-speaking or writing activity in class; and (3) willing to voluntarily participate in both the questionnaire and interview phases. This ensured that participants had relevant experience and could provide meaningful insights into the research topic.

Two primary data collection instruments were used: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and consisted of two sections: (a) demographic and background information, and (b) perceptions of *VOKI* use, measured using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, items were reviewed by two experts in English language teaching and educational technology to confirm content relevance and clarity. A pilot test was conducted with five students from a different class, and feedback was used to refine the wording of items. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected participants from the same pool, following purposive sampling to ensure representation of varying performance levels and gender balance. The interviews focused on personal experiences with *VOKI*, challenges encountered, perceived benefits, and suggestions for improvement. This combination of questionnaire and interview data allowed for triangulation, enhancing the credibility and depth of findings.

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data, as it enables researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) across datasets. This method was chosen over other qualitative analysis techniques such as grounded theory or discourse analysis because the goal of this study was not to develop new theory but to explore recurring patterns in students' perceptions of *VOKI* in a specific educational context.

Data analysis followed the three steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994):

1. Data Reduction – selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data to address the research objectives;

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2. Data Display – organizing and presenting data in a structured format (e.g., thematic maps, coded matrices) to facilitate interpretation;
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – developing interpretations from the displayed data and validating them through cross-checking with both questionnaire and interview results.

The analyzed data consisted of students' responses regarding engagement, enjoyment, and perceived improvement in speaking abilities. Interview data were transcribed verbatim, coded, and grouped into themes, while questionnaire responses were tabulated and compared to identify consistencies and differences. Through this process, a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, motivations, and challenges in using *VOKI* for English-speaking practice was achieved.

Results

Before the researcher employed a questionnaire to gather data. The questionnaire consisted of the statements aimed at assessing students' perceptions regarding the use of Voki to exchange their speaking skills. Below is a table presenting the results of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Survey Result on Using Voki to Enhance Speaking Skills

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	VOKI helped me improve my English-speaking skills.	78,8%	21,2%	0%	0%	0%
2	The avatars and features in VOKI make it easier for me to focus on learning rather than worrying about mistakes.	33,3%	39,4%	21,2%	0%	0%
3	Using VOKI makes learning English speaking skills more interactive and fun.	33,3%	45,5%	21,2%	0%	0%
4	I feel more engaged in learning when using VOKI compared to traditional methods.	39,4%	42,4%	18,2%	0%	0%
5	I feel comfortable to access and use VOKI to learn anytime and anywhere.	33,3%	42,4%	21,2%	3%	0%

6	Using VOKI increases my confidence in speaking English.	39,4%	45,5%	15,2%	0%	0%
7	VOKI helped reduce my anxiety when speaking in English.	27,3%	45,5%	21,2%	6%	0%
8	I have difficulty in operating the VOKI application to practice speaking.	6,1%	9,1%	12,1%	24,2%	48,5%
9	I had difficulty understanding the instructions or guidelines for using VOKI.	3%	3%	24,2%	21,2%	48,5%
10	Sometimes, I feel that I don't get enough support from my teacher when using VOKI to learn to speak	0%	9,1%	24,2%	24,2%	42,4%

Based on the questionnaire results presented in the table above, the researcher identified four key aspects of students' perceptions of the Voki application: Effectiveness, Engagement, Availability, and Collaboration.

The questionnaire results revealed that students generally had a positive perception of using VOKI to enhance their English-speaking skills. In terms of effectiveness, a significant majority strongly agreed or agreed that VOKI helped improve their speaking ability (100%) and increased their confidence (84.9%), while also reducing anxiety when speaking English (72.8%). Regarding engagement, most respondents felt that VOKI's avatars and interactive features made learning more enjoyable and engaging, with over 78% agreeing it was more interactive than traditional methods. For availability, more than three-quarters of the students found it easy to access and use VOKI anytime and anywhere, though a small proportion (27.3%) reported difficulty operating the application or understanding its instructions. In terms of collaboration and support, some students (around 66.6%) felt they received adequate guidance from teachers, yet a notable portion still indicated insufficient support. These findings suggest that while VOKI is generally effective, engaging, and accessible, additional technical guidance and teacher support could further enhance its impact on students' speaking skill development.

Discussion

Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the ability of a learning method or technology to achieve optimal results with minimal use of resources. In the context of education, it relates to the achievement of desired results or

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goals. A job is said to be effective if it succeeds in achieving satisfactory targets or results as well as saving time and energy during the learning process. Effectiveness was found in questionnaires number 1, 6 and number 7. Based on the first questionnaire, students agreed that the Voki application was able to improve their English-speaking skills, 78.8% of students strongly agreed with the statement, and 21.2% of students agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, no students chose neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. In the sixth questionnaire, 39.4% of students strongly agreed, 45.5% of students agreed, and 15.2% of students chose neutral, then no students chose disagree and strongly disagree. Furthermore, in the seventh questionnaire, 27.3% of students chose strongly agree, 45.5% of students chose agree, 21.2 students chose neutral, then there were 6% of students chose disagree and no students chose strongly disagree. The data above is supported by interviews conducted by students. The results of the interview are as follows:

> *"I think VOKI is very effective in helping me enrich my English pronunciation. I feel more confident when speaking." (S.1)*
> *"This application is quite effective because the results can be played at any time for memorization and more fun." (S.2)*
> *"I think VOKI is very effective in helping me improve my English pronunciation." (S.4)*

Based on the results of student interviews, it can be concluded that the VOKI application is considered effective in helping to enrich English pronunciation. Students 1 and 3 stated that VOKI not only facilitates speaking practice, but also increases confidence in using English in real situations. This was supported by student 2 who considered the app effective in enriching pronunciation through the voice produced by the avatar. These findings suggest that the use of interactive technology such as VOKI can provide dual benefits, namely improving pronunciation skills while building students' confidence in communicating using a foreign language.

Engagement

Engagement is the level of participation, attention, and active involvement of students in the learning process. In the context of educational technology, interactivity and engaging features such as avatars, fun exercises and social support can increase students' motivation and passion for learning. High engagement makes students feel more connected to the learning material and more encouraged to practice outside the classroom, making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. Engagement is found in questionnaire number 2, 3 and number 4. Based on the second questionnaire, 33.3% of students strongly agreed that Avatars and features in Voki make students more focused on learning, 39.4% of students chose to agree, then 27.2% of students chose Neutral, and no students chose disagree and strongly disagree. Furthermore, in the third questionnaire, 33.3% of students chose strongly agree, 45.5% of students chose agree, 21.2% of students chose Neutral, and no students chose disagree and strongly disagree. Then in the fourth questionnaire, 39.4% of students chose strongly agree with Voki because it makes students more involved in learning than traditional methods, 42.4% of students chose agree 18.2% of students chose Neutral, and no students chose disagree and strongly disagree. The data above is supported by interviews that have been conducted by students. The results of these interviews are as follows:

> *"The avatars in VOKI are very interesting and make me more focused on completing assignments immediately." (S.5)*
> *"Learning with VOKI feels different and fun. I can directly create various animations, so learning is not as boring as usual." (S.8)*

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"Traditional methods often make me bored, but with VOKI I feel more active and involved because I have to speak directly and hear the avatar's response." (S.2)

Based on the opinions of the three students, it can be concluded that the use of VOKI application is considered more effective than traditional methods in language learning. Students 5 and 8 stated that VOKI provides a more interactive and fun speaking experience because it provides avatars and animation features, thus allowing speaking practice that is not monotonous like just reading from a book. This is in line with the opinion of Student 2 who feels that traditional methods with books are often boring, so the use of VOKI is a more interesting and effective alternative to improve speaking skills. This finding supports the view that learning methods that emphasize interactivity and active student involvement, such as the use of voice-based avatar technology, can improve motivation and learning outcomes compared to conventional approaches that tend to be passive. Therefore, the approach of using technology for teaching and learning activities or the MALL approach, namely Mobile Assisted Language Learning (Lindaman & Nolan, 2015), is expected to be adapted into learning methods for all generations of students. Many schools in various countries have begun to implement this approach in the classroom such as one school in Turkey that uses MALL by adapting the 'bring your own device' approach where students are given a project that must be completed alone or with a group using mobile device features such as cameras, voice recorders, and applications on mobile phones such as VOKI (Stanley, 2013).

Availability

Availability refers to a resource, system or technology being ready to use at any time without interruption. In education and e-learning, availability means that digital learning platforms, devices or materials should always be accessible to students and teachers smoothly, without experiencing technical glitches. This availability also includes easy access at flexible times and places, so that the teaching and learning process can continue. Accessibility is in questionnaires number 5, 8 and number 9. Based on the fifth questionnaire, 33.3% of students strongly agreed that they could comfortably use Voki anywhere and anytime, 42.4% of students chose to agree, 21.2% of students chose Neutral, 3% of students chose to disagree, and no students chose to strongly disagree. Furthermore, in the eighth questionnaire regarding students' difficulties in operating Voki, 6.1% of students chose strongly agree, 9.1% of students chose agree, 12.2% of students chose Neutral, then 24.2% of students chose disagree, and 48.5% of students chose strongly disagree. This means that students think Voki is easy to operate and use to improve their English speaking skills.Furthermore, in the ninth questionnaire, 3% of students chose strongly agree, 3% of students chose agree, 24.2% of students chose neutral, 21.2% of students chose disagree, 48.5% of students strongly disagreed that the instructions or blend when using Voki were difficult, which means that all students can run Voki very smoothly and easily understood. The data above is supported by interviews that have been conducted by students. The results of these interviews are as follows:

"I like it because VOKI can be accessed via my cellphone at any time. So I can practice speaking outside of class." (S.6)
"I have no difficulties, but sometimes my internet connection is unstable." (S.2)
"There were no difficult parts for me." (S.4)

Based on the interviews with these students, it can be concluded that VOKI can be accessed through cell phones, laptops, and various other types of electronic devices. This is supported by the results of research (Muhammad Arief Budiman, Ari Widyaningrum, and Mira Azizah, 2022) that the use of web-based learning media can facilitate access and increase student participation in learning. In addition, the students

also stated that this platform is very simple and does not need to download the application because it can be accessed, because it can be accessed through the website. So students only need a stable internet connection to access it.

Collaboration

Collaboration includes the support and feedback that teachers provide through VOKI to help students identify areas for improvement. In English language learning, the use of VOKI allows teachers to provide personalized and interactive feedback, especially in speaking skills. This encourages students to self-reflect and improve aspects such as pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable. Collaboration is in questionnaire number 10. Based on the tenth questionnaire, no students chose strongly agree that students did not get support from the teacher when learning to use Voki. Then 9.1% of students chose agree, 24.2% of students chose neutral, 24.2% of students chose disagree, and 42.4% of students chose strongly disagree. In this case, it means that some students may feel less supported by the teacher when using VOKI, because the teacher is too focused on other students' results or time constraints. This can make the teacher's attention uneven so that some students are less motivated. To overcome this, teachers need to manage time and utilize VOKI features so that feedback can be given more effectively and evenly to all students. The data above is supported by interviews conducted by students. The results of these interviews are as follows:

"My teacher gives good feedback on the results of my VOKI assignments". (S.1)
"I feel that the teacher always tries to provide enough support and motivation." (S.2)

Based on interviews from both students, it can be concluded that the teacher is a very important role in facilitating student learning. Teachers play a role in introducing positive learning media for students. In line with the opinion (Fadilla, Emzir, and Yumna Rasyid, 2020) that the teacher acts as a facilitator, motivator, supervisor, evaluator, learning partner, and especially as a creator/programmer who must be able to create and operate ICT-based learning. Teachers also play an important role in this, because they must be selective and continue to develop learning media that will be given to their students, one of which is by using media other than books. As a result of research (Enci Zarkasih, 2024) that the use of images, real objects, word games, word matching, crossword puzzles, interactive vocabulary learning applications, as well as online learning platforms and digital comics are interesting ways of learning English in children. One example is using the VOKI application or other platforms.

Based on the information provided here, Every student concurred that VOKI is a user-friendly platform for activities including English speaking in the classroom. This can be seen from their reflections on the interview questions that were previously given to the students. The application of VOKI as a learning media has successfully improved the students' speaking learning process. Therefore, VOKI is very helpful for the construction of meaningful learning for both speaking class students and for creating content for student learning, as can be observed from the results of student perceptions in this study. As a digital tool, VOKI has helped students and other learners organize their ideas for learning media in a more structured and organized way, which has made their job easier (Toti & Abahhussain, 2018). Additionally, this is one of the reasons why students would rather use VOKI than work without the aid of digital tools. According to Vasques (2020), this condition is consistent with other studies that also use digital applications, such as padlets, which have demonstrated that students have very good perceptions of padlets as learning media. This indicates that students are satisfied when padlets are used in the online learning process. Additionally, a quasi-experimental study conducted on class XI students at SMA Negeri 2 Trenggalek (Sri Utami Dewi

and Sayida Rahma, 2022) demonstrated that Quizlet usage greatly enhanced students' vocabulary comprehension. The experimental group that used Quizlet showed better learning outcomes than the control group, so Quizlet is effective as a vocabulary learning media that also contributes to improving English speaking skills. In addition, in the speaking activity in the study (Biyan Aji Kurniawan, Dias Andris Susanto, and Laily Nur Affini, 2024) the students thought that learning English through D&D was interesting and fun. Responses such as the use of new vocabulary and very interesting shows how well the game creates an immersive learning environment.

The findings from the questionnaires and interviews indicate that students perceived VOKI as an effective, engaging, accessible, and collaborative tool for improving English speaking skills, with each aspect reinforcing the others in the learning process. In terms of **effectiveness**, the majority of respondents agreed that VOKI improved their pronunciation, boosted their confidence, and reduced anxiety, a sentiment echoed in interviews where students described it as a helpful and enjoyable tool for repeated practice and self-correction. This sense of effectiveness appears closely linked to **engagement**, as VOKI's avatars, animations, and interactive features encouraged active participation and made learning more enjoyable compared to traditional methods, motivating students to speak more and feel less constrained by the fear of mistakes. These two aspects are supported by **availability**, as most students reported being able to access and use VOKI easily via mobile devices or laptops without the need for installation, enabling practice anytime and anywhere. However, this strength was somewhat offset by minor technical barriers such as unstable internet connections and varying levels of digital literacy, which could reduce the tool's potential in certain contexts. Finally, **collaboration** played a pivotal role, with many students acknowledging that timely and constructive teacher feedback through VOKI helped them identify areas for improvement and stay motivated, although a minority felt that support was uneven due to time constraints or the teacher's focus on other students. The interplay between these aspects suggests that VOKI's effectiveness in the vocational high school (SMK) context depends not only on its engaging and accessible design but also on sustained teacher involvement and the availability of stable internet access. By integrating interactive features, flexible access, and consistent feedback, VOKI aligns well with Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approaches already implemented in other countries. Nevertheless, to maximize its impact in SMK settings, schools must address infrastructural limitations and provide basic digital literacy training so that all students can fully benefit from its features. In this way, VOKI not only supports speaking skill development but also fosters learner autonomy, digital competence, and meaningful interaction—critical components for preparing vocational students for real-world communication demands.

Conclusion

VOKI, as a Web 2.0 tool in foreign language learning, offers a valuable opportunity to improve students' speaking skills while making the learning process more engaging and interactive. The results of this study show that 78.8% of students strongly agreed that VOKI improved their speaking skills, 81.8% felt it increased their motivation to learn, and 75.7% believed it enhanced their creativity. Students reported that VOKI's avatars, animations, and unique features transformed traditional learning into a more enjoyable and interactive experience, helping to reduce anxiety and encourage active participation. Furthermore, its ease of access from any device without installation requirements supports flexible learning opportunities. However, the study's scope—limited to 33 students from one vocational high school—restricts the generalizability of the findings. Technical challenges, particularly unstable internet access, also affected the consistency of VOKI use.

Recommendations

Future research should involve a larger and more diverse sample across multiple schools and regions to

enhance the validity and applicability of the findings. Longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the sustained impact of VOKI on speaking skills over time. Researchers could also compare VOKI's effectiveness with other digital learning media to determine its relative strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, addressing infrastructural challenges such as internet stability and providing basic digital literacy training would help maximize the benefits of VOKI in language learning.

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