

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ICT-BASED DIGITAL MEDIA USE FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT UNISMA

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Abstract: The increasing integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English language learning has provided EFL students with various opportunities to develop their speaking skills through digital media. While previous studies have primarily examined the effectiveness of ICT in improving speaking performance, limited attention has been given to students' perceptions of how ICT-based digital media support their speaking development, particularly in the Indonesian higher education context. This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of the use of ICT-based digital media for developing English-speaking skills among English Education students at Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA). A qualitative research design was employed involving three seventh-semester students selected through purposive sampling based on their experience in using ICT-based digital media for speaking practice. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students frequently used YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Duolingo, ChatGPT Voice, Google Translate, and ELSA Speak to support their speaking practice. These digital media were perceived as flexible, accessible, and beneficial for improving pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and speaking confidence through activities such as listening to authentic English content, imitating native speakers, repeating expressions, and receiving pronunciation feedback from AI-based applications. Nevertheless, participants also reported challenges, including distractions from social media, unstable internet connections, limited feedback, and restricted premium features. This study highlights the important role of ICT-based digital media in promoting autonomous and learner-centered speaking practice and provides insights for educators seeking to integrate digital technologies into English-speaking instruction.

Keywords: ICT-based digital media, students' perceptions, speaking skills, English learning, qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language that plays a significant role in education, technology, business, and international communication. Consequently, developing English communicative competence has become one of the primary goals of English language education. Among the four language skills, speaking is widely regarded as the most challenging skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners because it requires the integration of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence during real-time communication (Bueno et al., 2006). Despite years of formal English instruction, many Indonesian EFL students still experience difficulties in speaking English confidently due to limited opportunities to practice in authentic communicative situations (Crisianita & Mandasari, 2022).

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed language learning by providing flexible learning opportunities beyond classroom instruction. Various ICT-based digital media, such as YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, podcasts, Duolingo, ChatGPT Voice, Google Translate, and ELSA Speak, allow learners to access authentic English materials, practice pronunciation, develop vocabulary, and improve speaking skills independently. These technologies also encourage learner autonomy because students can select learning resources according to their needs, interests, and learning preferences (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2011; Ahmadi, 2018). Furthermore, ICT-supported learning environments provide authentic exposure to English and create more interactive, learner-centered learning experiences (Yaqoob et al., 2025).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive impact of ICT on English language learning. ICT-based digital media improve students' motivation, engagement, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, fluency, and speaking performance by providing authentic language input and interactive learning experiences (Anggraini

et al., 2022; Madhavi et al., 2023). AI-assisted applications further support speaking development by offering immediate pronunciation feedback and personalized speaking practice (Madhavi et al., 2023). In addition, exposure to authentic spoken English through digital media enhances learners' listening comprehension, which positively contributes to speaking development because students are able to imitate pronunciation, expressions, and communication patterns used by proficient speakers (Hasan, 2022).

Despite these benefits, previous studies have mainly focused on examining the effectiveness of ICT-based digital media in improving speaking performance through quantitative approaches (Himmah et al., 2021; Madhavi et al., 2023). Comparatively few studies have explored students' perceptions of using ICT-based digital media to support their speaking development, particularly within the Indonesian higher education context. Moreover, limited research has investigated the reasons students choose particular digital media, how they integrate these technologies into their speaking practice, and how they perceive the benefits and challenges of ICT-supported learning. Understanding students' perceptions is essential because positive learning experiences influence learners' motivation, technology acceptance, and willingness to engage in autonomous language learning (Fatnalaila & Ciptaningrum, 2024; Husnah et al., 2023).

To address these gaps, this study employs a qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions of ICT-based digital media use for developing English-speaking skills among English Education students at Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA). Unlike previous studies that primarily evaluated the effectiveness of technology, this study focuses on students' lived experiences in selecting digital media, the reasons underlying their choices, and how they utilize these media to support speaking practice. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on ICT-assisted language learning while providing practical insights for English lecturers in

integrating ICT-based digital media into speaking instruction that promotes learner autonomy and meaningful language practice.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What ICT-based digital media are used by students to support English-speaking learning?
2. How do students use ICT-based digital media in developing their English-speaking skills?

LITERATURE REVIEW

ICT-Based Digital Media for English Speaking Development

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has significantly transformed English language learning by providing learners with greater access to authentic materials and flexible learning environments. ICT-based digital media, including social media platforms, video-sharing applications, online learning platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered applications, enable learners to practice English beyond the classroom while promoting learner autonomy and self-directed learning (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2011). These technologies provide authentic language input, interactive learning experiences, and immediate access to various learning resources that support speaking development.

Recent studies have demonstrated that ICT-based digital media positively influence students' speaking performance. Digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and podcasts expose learners to authentic pronunciation, vocabulary, and everyday expressions, allowing them to improve speaking through observation and imitation (Hasan, 2022). Meanwhile, AI-based applications, including ChatGPT Voice, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak, facilitate interactive speaking practice by providing immediate pronunciation feedback and personalized learning experiences (Madhavi et

al., 2023). In addition, ICT-supported learning environments encourage students to practice speaking independently, increase learning motivation, and create learner-centered learning experiences that are not limited by classroom time or location (Yaqoob et al., 2025).

Although ICT-based digital media offer numerous educational benefits, their implementation is not without challenges. Students may experience distractions from social media, unstable internet connections, limited access to premium features, and insufficient corrective feedback from certain applications. These challenges indicate that the effectiveness of ICT depends not only on technological availability but also on learners' ability to select appropriate digital media that support their learning goals (Yaqoob et al., 2025).

Students' Perceptions of ICT-Based Digital Media

Students' perceptions play an important role in determining how effectively ICT-based digital media support language learning. Perception refers to learners' evaluations, beliefs, and experiences regarding the usefulness, convenience, and effectiveness of digital technologies in achieving learning objectives. Positive perceptions toward ICT often increase students' motivation, engagement, confidence, and willingness to practice English independently (Fatnalaila & Ciptaningrum, 2024).

Previous research has consistently shown that students generally perceive ICT-based digital media as practical, flexible, and motivating learning tools. Digital platforms allow learners to access English learning materials anytime and anywhere while providing opportunities to personalize learning according to their individual needs and preferences (Husnah et al., 2023). Moreover, AI-supported applications contribute to greater speaking confidence because learners receive immediate feedback and can repeatedly practice pronunciation without fear of making mistakes (Madhavi et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, students' perceptions are influenced by various contextual factors, including previous learning experiences, digital literacy, internet accessibility, and the availability of technological resources (Majid et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding students' perceptions is essential because it helps explain not only whether ICT-based digital media are useful but also why students choose particular digital platforms and how these technologies shape their speaking-learning experiences. This perspective provides a stronger foundation for exploring students' experiences in ICT-assisted speaking learning, which constitutes the primary focus of the present study.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of using ICT-based digital media for developing English-speaking skills. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, opinions, and perceptions regarding the use of digital technologies in speaking practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA). The participants were three seventh-semester students selected through purposive sampling. The participants were chosen based on three criteria: (1) they actively used ICT-based digital media to support English-speaking practice, (2) they had experience using more than one digital platform for learning English, and (3) they were willing to participate in an in-depth interview. To ensure confidentiality, the participants are identified as P1, P2, and P3 throughout this study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews because this method allowed participants to describe their experiences while enabling the researchers to explore emerging issues through follow-up questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The

interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions focusing on the types of ICT-based digital media used, the ways students utilized these media during speaking practice, the perceived benefits, and the challenges encountered. All interviews were conducted individually, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This analytical approach enabled the researchers to identify recurring patterns related to students' perceptions and experiences in using ICT-based digital media for English-speaking development.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was enhanced through member checking by allowing participants to verify the interview transcripts and interpretations. Dependability was supported by maintaining a clear documentation of the research procedures, while confirmability was established through systematic coding and interpretation based on the interview data. Transferability was achieved by providing sufficient descriptions of the research context and participants to enable readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts.

FINDINGS

ICT-Based Digital Media Used by Students

The interview findings revealed that the participants employed various ICT-based digital media to support the development of their English-speaking skills. The platforms identified included YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Duolingo, ChatGPT Voice, Google Translate, ELSA Speak, and several other AI-powered speaking applications.

Among these, YouTube, TikTok, Duolingo, and AI-based applications were the most frequently used because they provided accessible learning materials, authentic language input, and opportunities for independent speaking practice.

The findings further indicate that students selected different digital media according to their learning objectives. Video-based platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix, were primarily used to observe authentic pronunciation, learn everyday expressions, and imitate native speakers' speech. In contrast, applications such as ChatGPT Voice and ELSA Speak were preferred because they enabled students to engage in interactive speaking practice while receiving immediate pronunciation feedback. Duolingo was mainly used to reinforce vocabulary and pronunciation through structured speaking exercises, whereas Google Translate served as a supplementary tool for checking word meanings and pronunciation.

Among the available platforms, YouTube and TikTok emerged as the most preferred learning media. Participants perceived these platforms as practical because they presented pronunciation models in a clear and straightforward manner. One participant explained:

"Biasanya langsung diajarin cara pengucapannya. Jadi langsung ke inti."

("Usually, they teach you how to pronounce it right away. So, they get straight to the point.") (P1)

The replay and playback-speed features available on these platforms also enabled participants to repeatedly observe pronunciation and practice independently. Likewise, another participant reported using YouTube to imitate authentic English conversations and improve pronunciation accuracy. These findings suggest that students value digital media that provide authentic language exposure while allowing them to learn at their own pace.

Interactive applications were selected for different reasons. Participants highlighted that applications such as Duolingo, ChatGPT Voice, and ELSA Speak allowed them to practice speaking actively and receive immediate feedback on their pronunciation. As one participant stated:

"Kalau di Duolingo kan ada fitur menirukan ucapan. Jadi aku tahu salah atau enggak."

("Duolingo has a voice feature, so I know whether my pronunciation is correct or not.") (P2)

Similarly, another participant emphasized that AI-powered applications were particularly useful because they immediately identified pronunciation errors and suggested corrections.

"Pronunciation-nya yang salah itu langsung dibenerin."

("The incorrect pronunciation is corrected immediately.") (P3)

Another important finding concerns the influence of students' learning preferences on media selection. Although all participants used multiple digital platforms, each preferred different applications according to their individual learning needs. P1 favored short and practical learning content on TikTok and YouTube, whereas P2 preferred independent learning through digital media because he felt more comfortable practicing alone than speaking in front of many people. Meanwhile, P3 preferred AI-based applications because immediate feedback enabled her to identify and correct pronunciation errors more efficiently.

Overall, the findings indicate that students intentionally selected ICT-based digital media according to their speaking goals, learning preferences, and desired learning experiences. Accessibility, authentic language input, flexibility, and the

availability of pronunciation feedback emerged as the primary factors influencing students' choices of digital learning media.

Students' Use of ICT-Based Digital Media for Speaking Development

The interview findings revealed that participants used ICT-based digital media through a variety of learning activities to improve their English-speaking skills. Rather than relying on a single platform, they combined different digital media according to specific learning purposes. Five major learning strategies emerged from the data: listening to authentic English content, imitating native speakers' pronunciation, repeating spoken expressions, practicing speaking independently, and receiving immediate feedback from AI-based applications. These strategies demonstrate that students actively integrated digital technologies into their autonomous speaking-learning process.

One of the most frequently reported learning activities was listening to authentic English content and imitating native speakers' pronunciation. Participants explained that they regularly watched videos on YouTube and TikTok or listened to conversations in movies and Netflix before repeating the pronunciation and expressions they heard. This approach enabled them to become familiar with authentic pronunciation patterns while improving their speaking accuracy. P1 stated:

"Yang paling buat bikin aku minder itu di pronunciation."

("What makes me most insecure is pronunciation.") (P1)

This statement indicates that pronunciation was the primary aspect participants sought to improve through digital media. Consequently, video-based platforms became valuable resources for observing authentic pronunciation models and practicing independently.

Similarly, P2 described learning through repeated exposure to authentic English conversations. After listening to conversations on YouTube or watching English-language movies, the participant attempted to imitate the dialogues repeatedly until becoming more confident in producing similar expressions.

"Saya mendengarkan percakapan mereka, terus saya nyoba lagi untuk menirukan percakapan mereka tadi."

("I listened to their conversation, and then I tried to imitate it.") (P2)

These findings suggest that listening, imitation, and repetition constitute complementary learning strategies that help students internalize pronunciation, vocabulary, and commonly used expressions in spoken English.

Unlike the other participants, P3 emphasized the importance of interactive speaking practice through AI-powered applications such as ChatGPT Voice, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak. Instead of merely listening to English input, the participant actively engaged in spoken interactions and relied on immediate corrective feedback to evaluate pronunciation accuracy.

"Kalau aku belajar karena pengen dapetin feedback."

("I study because I want to get feedback.") (P3)

The participant explained that receiving instant feedback enabled her to identify pronunciation errors immediately and make continuous improvements. This finding indicates that AI-based applications function not only as speaking practice tools but also as personalized learning assistants that support self-evaluation throughout the learning process.

The participants also perceived considerable improvements in several aspects of speaking ability after regularly using ICT-based digital media. Pronunciation was consistently identified as the most noticeable improvement, followed by vocabulary development, speaking fluency, and confidence. One participant commented:

"Yang paling nambah itu pronunciation."

("The thing that improved the most was my pronunciation.") (P3)

In addition to pronunciation, participants believed that continuous exposure to authentic English content enriched their vocabulary and enabled them to communicate more fluently and confidently. These findings indicate that ICT-based digital media contribute simultaneously to multiple dimensions of speaking development rather than improving only a single language component.

Despite these positive experiences, participants also encountered several challenges when using ICT-based digital media for speaking practice. The most common difficulties included the lack of immediate feedback on video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, distractions caused by social media notifications, unstable internet connections, and limited access to premium features in several AI-based applications. Nevertheless, participants reported adapting their learning strategies by combining multiple digital platforms according to their learning objectives and available technological resources.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that ICT-based digital media support students' speaking development through authentic language exposure, repeated practice, interactive speaking activities, and immediate feedback. Although several technological limitations remain, participants perceived digital media as effective learning resources that facilitated autonomous learning while improving pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and speaking confidence.

DISCUSSIONS

The present study explored students' perceptions of using ICT-based digital media to develop English-speaking skills. The findings demonstrate that ICT-based digital media function not only as learning resources but also as learning environments that facilitate autonomous speaking practice, authentic language exposure, and personalized feedback. The participants intentionally selected different digital platforms according to their learning objectives, indicating that students actively regulated their own learning rather than relying solely on classroom instruction.

The first important finding concerns students' preference for video-based digital platforms, particularly YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix, as primary sources of authentic language input. Participants reported using these platforms to observe native speakers' pronunciation, learn commonly used expressions, and imitate natural speech patterns. This finding supports Hasan (2022), who argues that authentic audiovisual materials help learners develop pronunciation and speaking fluency by exposing them to real-life language use. Similarly, Yaqoob et al. (2025) emphasize that ICT-based learning environments provide authentic language exposure that encourages meaningful communication beyond the traditional classroom. The findings suggest that students perceive authentic English input as an essential component of speaking development because it enables them to acquire pronunciation, vocabulary, and communicative expressions simultaneously.

Another significant finding is that students used ICT-based digital media to support autonomous learning. Rather than depending exclusively on lecturers, participants independently selected digital platforms that matched their learning preferences and speaking goals. Some preferred short educational videos on TikTok because they provided concise explanations, while others chose YouTube for more detailed learning materials or AI-based applications for interactive speaking practice.

These findings reflect the concept of learner autonomy, in which students assume responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning process (Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2011). The flexibility offered by ICT-based digital media allows learners to practice speaking anytime and anywhere, thereby extending learning opportunities beyond classroom instruction. This finding also aligns with Fatnalaila and Ciptaningrum (2024), who found that positive perceptions of educational technology encourage greater learner engagement and independent language learning.

The findings further highlight the important role of artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications in supporting speaking development. Participants perceived applications such as ChatGPT Voice, Duolingo, and ELSA Speak as particularly beneficial because these tools provided immediate pronunciation feedback and opportunities for repeated speaking practice. Unlike conventional video platforms that primarily provide language input, AI-supported applications enabled students to interact actively with the technology and evaluate their own pronunciation performance. This finding is consistent with Madhavi et al. (2023), who reported that AI-assisted applications improve pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence by offering instant corrective feedback. The availability of immediate feedback appears to increase students' awareness of pronunciation errors while promoting continuous self-improvement throughout the learning process.

Although participants expressed overwhelmingly positive perceptions of ICT-based digital media, they also identified several challenges that influenced their learning experiences. These challenges included distractions from social media content, unstable internet connections, limited access to premium application features, and the absence of detailed corrective feedback on certain platforms. These findings indicate that the successful integration of ICT into language learning depends not only on the availability of digital technologies but also on students' digital literacy, self-regulation, and the quality of technological resources. Therefore, educators should

consider combining various ICT-based digital media to maximize their respective strengths while minimizing their limitations.

Overall, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that students' use of ICT-based digital media is influenced not only by technological accessibility but also by individual learning preferences and specific speaking-learning objectives. Rather than relying on a single application, students strategically combined multiple digital platforms to create personalized learning experiences that supported pronunciation improvement, vocabulary development, speaking fluency, and confidence. These findings contribute to the growing literature on ICT-assisted language learning by providing qualitative evidence of how students integrate digital technologies into their everyday speaking practice. They also suggest that English lecturers should encourage the purposeful integration of ICT-based digital media into speaking instruction to foster greater learner autonomy and create more authentic opportunities for English communication.

CONCLUSION

This study explored students' perceptions of using ICT-based digital media to develop English-speaking skills among English Education students at Universitas Islam Malang. The findings indicate that students utilize a variety of ICT-based digital media, including YouTube, TikTok, Netflix, Duolingo, ChatGPT Voice, Google Translate, and ELSA Speak, to support their speaking practice. Rather than relying on a single platform, students intentionally selected different digital media according to their learning objectives and personal learning preferences.

The study also revealed that ICT-based digital media facilitate speaking development through authentic language exposure, pronunciation practice, repeated imitation, independent learning, and AI-assisted feedback. These learning experiences were perceived to improve students' pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and

confidence in speaking English. Although participants encountered challenges such as internet connectivity issues, distractions from social media, and limited premium features, they generally viewed ICT-based digital media as valuable tools that support flexible and autonomous English-speaking practice.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on ICT-assisted language learning by providing qualitative insights into how students integrate multiple digital platforms into their speaking-learning process. The findings highlight that the effectiveness of ICT-based digital media is influenced not only by technological accessibility but also by students' learning preferences, learning objectives, and their ability to regulate independent learning. These findings provide practical implications for English language educators, suggesting that ICT-based digital media should be meaningfully integrated into speaking instruction to promote learner autonomy, authentic language exposure, and continuous speaking practice beyond the classroom.

SUGGESTIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study involved only three participants from a single university, which limits the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the data were collected solely through semi-structured interviews; therefore, the findings relied on participants' self-reported experiences without classroom observations or analysis of actual learning activities. Finally, this study focused on students' perceptions rather than measuring the effectiveness of specific ICT-based digital media in improving speaking performance.

Future studies are encouraged to involve a larger number of participants from different universities and educational backgrounds to obtain more diverse perspectives. Researchers may also employ multiple data collection methods, such as classroom observations, learning diaries, or document analysis, to strengthen the credibility of the

findings through data triangulation. In addition, future research could investigate the effectiveness of specific AI-powered applications, such as ChatGPT Voice or ELSA Speak, in improving particular aspects of speaking performance, including pronunciation accuracy, fluency, interactional competence, and speaking confidence. Comparative studies across different proficiency levels or learning contexts would also provide a broader understanding of how ICT-based digital media can best support English-speaking development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Muhammad Yunus, S.Pd., M.Pd and Prof. Dr. Dwi Fita Heriyawati, S.Pd., M.Pd for their guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the completion of this study.

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Malang, July 06, 2026

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