The Benefit of Tandem Application in Enhancing English Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

English is a global language that people used to interact with one another in all parts of their lives, including technology. The need for English was unavoidable. As the age progresses, many technologies are being developed to meet human needs. To meet this need, many English learning applications have been developed to help humans learn English only through applications. One example is the tandem application. Tandem learning, applying English learning basics that are easy to understand. This study tries to understand how tandem applications can improve the speaking ability of English learners. This study uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive study method as the research method. Qualitative research method is research that describes social influences that cannot be explained, measured, or described through a quantitative approach. While descriptive qualitative research is a research strategy in which the researcher investigates events, phenomena in the lives of individuals and asks a person or group of individuals to tell their lives. easy to-understand explanations. In conclusion, the Tandem application proves to be a powerful tool for improving English-speaking skills, combining linguistic practice with cultural exchange. While challenges remain, its potential for facilitating meaningful and practical language learning experiences is undeniable.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is a global language that people used to interact with one another in all parts of their lives, including technology. As the ages grow, Technology influences how we communicate. The need for English was unavoidable. As the age progresses, many technologies are being developed to meet human needs. To meet this need, many English learning applications have been developed to help humans learn English only through applications (Lubis et al., 2024). One example is the tandem application. The tandem application links language learners from all over the world and with different backgrounds to learn a foreign language in one application.

Tandem learning, applying English learning basics that are easy to understand. Tandem involves many users who are ready to teach their own languages and learn the target languages from the native speakers. Thus, they will improve their pronunciation and develop a deeper understanding of culture (Nushi et al., 2020). The tandem application also makes it easier to interact with English people, such as talking to them face to face even if they are purely on the application. This makes Tandem a friendly and interesting application. Because users don't need to be afraid of making mistakes and try to learn form what happens during language exchange (Lubis et al., 2024).

The importance of preparing students to face increasingly complex challenges is becoming the center of attention in the new paradigm of 21st century education (Auld & Morris, 2019). Not just transferring knowledge, but learning must also be able to develop 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, problem solving and communication skills. In this context, digital technology is one of the main pillars to achieve this goal (Brunetti et al., 2020). One interesting innovation in the context of language learning is the tandem chat application (Ambas et al., 2023). When using the tandem we can gain much in it, many factors influence its effectiveness, such as finding a suitable partner to learn together and commit to regular training together. In addition, cultural division and style in communication are unique challenges to meet.

In understanding the effectiveness of the tandem application, the importance of using empirical research and case studies, by analyzing the experience of the student who has used the tandem application, thus we can gain insight into the best benefits, weaknesses, advantages, and practices in using the tandem.

In the previous studies, (Musa and Vida:2020) from Shahid Beheshti University, Iran in their research entitled "Tandem Language Exchange: An App to improve Speaking Skill" Explaining that they recommend the tandem app for learning English, especially for learning speaking. Learners can improve their pronunciation by conversing with the native speakers. They can use the voice call feature or voice note to talk directly with the native speakers. (Serrato & Rodriguez:2020) from Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon (Mexico) in their research entitled "Academic e-tandems as a strategy for English Language Learning in a Mexican University" also mentioning that the E-tandem session was an effective strategy for learning English as a foreign language in an accademic setting. The experience offered several advantages, such as connecting native speakers, developing oral communication skills and enhancing cultural knowledge. This research focuses on examining how effective tandem learning is in improving English language skills. Tandem learning involves collaborative interaction between two individuals with different native languages, where each participant helps the other learn their target language. The study aims to explore its impact on various aspects, such as enhancing speaking abilities, expanding vocabulary, improving listening skills, boosting learners' confidence, and increasing their motivation to learn English.

Further previous studies, (Rahimi & Fathi, 2022) the effect of e-tandem on the speaking abilities and willingness to communicate (WTC) of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, this study employs a sequential explanatory mixed methods methodology. At a language school, two classes were split into a tandem experimental group and a conventional control group. When compared to the traditional group, the e-tandem group, which used the Tandem application to communicate online with non-native speakers, demonstrated superior outcomes in terms of speaking skill growth and WTC. The positive sentiments of tandem students regarding group speaking exercises are demonstrated by thematic analysis of qualitative data. Pedagogical implications are discussed for collaborative speaking courses in EFL environments.

Third previous studies, (Ulfah & Dinda, 2024) from Medan state university in their research is to an alyze how Tandem is used as a learning tool through roomchat features. The main goal of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the application in enhancing the foreign populations ability to communicate in Indinesian and to identify any issues or problems that may arise. Their research also investigate how users experiences with roomchat and its features affect their learning proccess.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

In general, the meaning of tandem is a group of two people. However, tandem language exchange is a free learning a foreign language application. Tandem is a form of second language learning that brings along speakers with different linguistic competencies and backgrounds to share their knowledge and learn from one another, guided by the principles of learners autonomy and reciprocity (Telles, 2006). Tandem allows someone to decide individually what and how they wish to learn. In tandem, both users can find a native speaker of their target language, so they can both benefit from each other's skills.

Moreover, in a tandem language exchange, the users especially can develop and improve their skills in speaking, not only both people have to meet in person, but they can learn by text, audio messages, video, and audio calls. For students, it can make them easier to learn without having to meet the speaker in person and both of them are exchange and learning the language together, so it makes them less nervous (Ushioda, 2000). Tandem language learning is a method of language learning based on mutual language exchange between tandem partners (ideally each learner is a native speaker in the language the proponent wants to learn.

Tandem language learning happens when two learners of different native languages work along to assist each other learning they target language. tandem language learning, two people who are learning each other's language work together to help one another achieve their desired aim, such as improving their communicative ability in their partner's mother tongue. The fifth year of English department students' partners in this tandem is an American Native Speaker which Indonesian is also one of their target language that they want to learn.

2.1. Speaking skill

Speaking is one of the language skills that students must master in order to be effective communicators (Abu Bakar et al., 2013). Speaking is an instrument of language and the main purpose of speaking is for

communication. The ability to speak, which is the basic human ability to produce and convey spoken language, is essential to the learning process and must be taught well. Several important elements in learning speaking skills must be considered, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, dialogue, and monologues. Teachers can use a variety of learning activities to improve their students' speaking skills. English is an international language. It is spoken all over the world and it also has an effect on living. English is very important in our life. Not only it is used for communication with people in the world but also it is used for getting better jobs or work in the future. In the era of globalization, English is very important as means of international communication. Therefore, English is one of the main subjects in Indonesian secondary schools where learning English effectively is a must (Scoot, 2005).

2.2. Tandem

In general, the meaning of tandem is a group of two people. However, tandem language exchange is a free learning a foreign language application. Tandem is a form of second language learning that brings along speakers with different linguistic competencies and backgrounds to share their knowledge and learn from one another, guided by the principles of learners autonomy and reciprocity (Telles, 2006). Tandem allows someone to decide individually what and how they wish to learn. In tandem, both users can find a native speaker of their target language, so they can both benefit from each other's skills. Moreover, in a tandem language exchange, the users especially can develop and improve their skills in speaking, not only both people have to meet in person, but they can learn by text, audio messages, video, and audio calls. For students, it can make them easier to learn without having to meet the speaker in person and both of them are exchange and learning the language together, so it makes them less nervous.

3. METHOD

This study tries to understand how tandem applications can improve the speaking ability of English learners. This study uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive study method as the research method. Qualitative research method is research that describes social influences that cannot be explained, measured, or described through a quantitative approach. While descriptive qualitative research is a research strategy in which the researcher investigates events, phenomena in the lives of individuals and asks a person or group of individuals to tell their lives. easy-to-understand explanations (Adhi & Khoiro, 2019). The descriptive qualitative study describes in depth the implementation of the Tandem application in improving English speaking skills. In conducting the research, the author uses participant observation by being directly involved during the research. The subjects of this study are people who actively use the Tandem application as an English learning medium.

The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of an application-based English learning model, especially in improving speaking skills. In addition, the findings of this study can also be an input for application developers to make improvements and adjustments to existing features, so that this application can be more effective in helping English learners achieve their learning goals (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings underscore the effectiveness of the Tandem application in fostering improvements in English-speaking abilities, particularly for learners seeking practical and interactive ways to enhance their skills.

The participants in this study noted significant growth in their confidence when speaking English. Initially, many expressed feelings of hesitation and anxiety about making mistakes, especially in front of native speakers. However, through consistent use of the Tandem application, they gradually developed the ability to engage in conversations more freely. This shift was attributed to the supportive environment created by the app, where errors were seen as part of the learning process rather than a source of embarrassment.

Pronunciation emerged as a crucial area of improvement for users. Engaging in real-time conversations and exchanging voice messages with native speakers allowed participants to hear and mimic accurate pronunciations. Several users highlighted how the immediate feedback provided by their language partners played a pivotal role in refining their speaking accuracy. Additionally, the vocabulary acquired during these exchanges often extended beyond textbook knowledge, encompassing idiomatic expressions and colloquial terms commonly used by native speakers.

The cultural dimension of language learning was another key finding. The Tandem application provided participants with opportunities to explore cultural nuances embedded in language use. For instance, discussions about cultural traditions, societal norms, and daily life not only enriched their vocabulary but also enhanced their ability to use language contextually. This cultural exchange was described by participants as a motivating factor, as it deepened their understanding of the language and made learning more engaging.

Flexibility was a standout feature of the application. Participants appreciated the autonomy it offered, enabling them to set their own schedules, choose their preferred communication methods (e.g., text, voice, or video), and focus on areas they wished to improve. This level of personalization was especially beneficial for

learners balancing their studies with work or other responsibilities. Many remarked that the app's design allowed them to integrate language learning seamlessly into their daily routines (Karjalainen et al., 2013).

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges were identified. Some users struggled to find consistent language partners whose schedules and learning goals aligned with their own. This inconsistency sometimes led to interruptions in learning progress. Technical issues, such as poor internet connectivity, also affected the quality of real-time voice and video interactions, particularly for users in regions with less reliable networks.

The findings of this study resonate with prior research, which highlights the advantages of tandem learning in promoting language acquisition through practical and interactive methods. However, this study contributes additional insights into how the Tandem application specifically addresses the needs of English learners. The reciprocity at the core of tandem learning-where both partners benefit equally-fosters a sense of mutual commitment, encouraging regular practice and sustained engagement.

From a broader perspective, these results suggest several implications for the development and use of the Tandem application. For learners, the platform offers a unique opportunity to practice English in a real-world context, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. For educators, integrating the Tandem application into formal teaching frameworks could provide students with invaluable supplementary learning experiences. Finally, for application developers, addressing issues such as partner matching and technical stability could further enhance user satisfaction and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Tandem application proves to be a powerful tool for improving English-speaking skills, combining linguistic practice with cultural exchange. While challenges remain, its potential for facilitating meaningful and practical language learning experiences is undeniable.

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