ABSTRACT

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In recent years, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in educational technology has led to the development of innovative tools designed to improve English speaking skills. These AI-powered platforms utilize advanced technologies, such as machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and speech recognition, to offer personalized, real-time feedback, adapt exercises based on learner progress, and simulate interactive dialogue. While the potential of these tools to revolutionize language learning is well recognized, little is known about the specific perceptions and attitudes of Generation Z—those born between 1997 and 2012—toward AI-powered language learning tools, particularly in the context of improving speaking skills.

This study focuses on understanding the perceptions of Generation Z toward AI-based language learning tools, specifically targeting students in ELFAST Kampung Inggris Pare, an educational center in Indonesia known for its immersive English language programs. Generation Z, often referred to as digital natives, is accustomed to the constant presence of smartphones, social media, and digital platforms, which shape their expectations of flexibility and interactivity in learning environments. The study examines how AI tools such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Rosetta Stone—platforms that utilize AI to assess pronunciation and provide adaptive feedback—are perceived by these learners. Data were collected through surveys and interviews with students, addressing key questions about motivation,

engagement, and learning outcomes, as well as the perceived benefits and limitations of these AI-powered tools compared with traditional language learning methods.

The findings of this study revealed that Generation Z students appreciated the personalized nature and immediate feedback offered by AI-based language learning tools. Engagement levels were highest when students noticed improvements in their speaking abilities, leading to increased self-efficacy and a sense of autonomy in learning. However, several challenges were identified, including a lack of human interaction, difficulties in assessing diverse pronunciations, and occasional technical issues. While the tools were effective in motivating students to practice speaking English, some expressed concerns about overreliance on technology for language acquisition and its emotional impact. Based on these findings, this study offers recommendations for enhancing the user experience of AI-powered platforms, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that integrates both technological innovation and human interaction to better meet the needs of Generation Z students.

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