

Exploring EFL students' perceptions and learning experiences with the British Council EnglishScore mobile app

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Abstract. This study explores EFL students' perceptions and learning experiences of using the British Council EnglishScore mobile application as a tool to support English language development. With the rapid integration of mobile technology in language education, digital assessment platforms such as EnglishScore offer new opportunities to enhance students' motivation, engagement, and self-awareness of their English proficiency. This study employed a qualitative descriptive design involving undergraduate students in an Indonesia higher education context who had used the EnglishScore app on their smartphones. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews focusing on students' perceptions and their learning experience. The findings reveal that students demonstrated highly positive attitudes toward the use of the EnglishScore app. They reported increased motivation, greater awareness of their English proficiency levels, and a sense of autonomy in monitoring their progress. The mobile-based format allowed flexible, accessible, and user-friendly English learning experiences, which contributed to higher engagement. In addition, students perceived improvements after learning through the app. The study highlights the potential of mobile-based English assessment tools as an innovative approach to support EFL learning. The findings suggest that integrating digital assessment applications can provide meaningful learning experiences in the digital era.

Keywords: digital assessment; EFL students; EnglishScore app; learning experiences; student perceptions

1 Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed language learning practices. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), technology has to be integrated effectively (Pramerta, 2025b). Mobile applications have emerged as accessible and flexible tools that support English learning beyond traditional classroom settings. Within this context, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has gained increasing attention in

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EFL classroom. MALL enables students to engage with language learning anytime and anywhere, promoting more personalized and autonomous learning experiences (Karakaya & Bozkurt, 2022). Previous studies have demonstrated that mobile learning applications can enhance student engagement, increase motivation, and facilitate independent learning (Imamyartha et al., 2021; Jeong, 2022).

Mobile applications have also increasingly integrated assessment features. Applications such as the British Council EnglishScore provide students with opportunities to evaluate their English proficiency through mobile-based testing while receiving immediate feedback. The app evaluates core skills like grammar, vocabulary, reading, and listening through a timed mobile interface. Upon completion, students receive immediate scores and performance feedback. It allows them to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This instant feedback plays an important role in fostering students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, which is closely aligned with the principles of self-regulated learning (SRL). Through such tools, students are encouraged to monitor their progress, set learning goals, and take greater responsibility for their own learning (Pérez-Álvarez et al., 2018; Pramerta, 2024).

Students' perceptions are a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of technology integration in education. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests that users' acceptance of technology is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Prasetyo et al., 2025). In the context of mobile learning, when students perceive an application as useful, easy to use, and reliable, they are more likely to engage in English learning process with it consistently.

Furthermore, learning experience plays a significant role in shaping students' interaction with digital tools. A positive learning experience is often characterized by enjoyment, engagement, interactivity, and comfort. Research in MALL highlights that user-friendly interfaces, interactive features, and meaningful tasks contribute to more engaging learning experiences (Dmitrenko & Panchenko, 2025). These positive experiences are closely related to students' motivation, as enjoyable and engaging environments encourage students to participate more actively and sustain their learning efforts over time.

In terms of learning outcomes, perceived improvement is widely used as an indicator of the effectiveness of learning tools. While objective assessments remain important, students' perceptions of their own progress provide valuable insights into their learning experiences. Studies have shown that students who perceive improvement in their language skills are more likely to develop confidence and maintain their motivation to learn (Liu et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on mobile learning and digital assessment, there is still limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the use of the EnglishScore application in higher education contexts, particularly among first-year EFL students in Indonesia. Previous studies have researched on EnglishScore mobile learning applications for exploring English proficiency levels (Kurniati et al., 2025; Sihombing & Ismahani, 2025). Unlike previous studies that focused on proficiency levels, this study investigates both students' perceptions and learning experiences of using EnglishScore among first-year Indonesian EFL students in higher education.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore EFL students' perceptions and learning experiences in using the British Council EnglishScore application. To achieve these objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do EFL students perceive the use of the British Council EnglishScore application in learning English?
2. What are students' learning experiences when using the EnglishScore application?

2 Method

2.1 Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore EFL students' perceptions and learning experiences in using the British Council EnglishScore mobile application. This design was considered appropriate as it allows for an understanding of participants' subjective experiences while also incorporating descriptive quantitative data from questionnaire responses to support the findings. The combination of closed-ended and open-ended data also enabled the researcher to capture qualitative insights.

2.2 Participant

The participants of this study were 17 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in an English-related course at a higher education institution in Indonesia. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the main criterion being that they had experience using the application. Among the participants, 14 students (82.4%) were female and 3 students (17.6%) were male. In terms of prior experience, 14 students (82.4%) had previously used the application, while 3 students (17.6%) had not. Regarding usage frequency, most students reported using the application occasionally (41.2%, $n=7$), followed by rarely (29.4%, $n=5$), frequently (23.5%, $n=4$), and very rarely not at all (5.9%, $n=1$). This variation in usage provided a diverse range of perspectives for the study.

2.3 Instrument/ Data collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items and open-ended questions, as well as semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was adapted from (Prasetyo et al., 2025) and contextualized for the use of the British Council EnglishScore application in EFL learning. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections: (1) students' perceptions of the application, (2) learning experiences, (3) motivation and learning autonomy, and (4) perceived improvement in English proficiency. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Open-ended questions were included to explore students' opinions. To further enrich the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and learning experiences. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were administered in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity and enable participants to express their perceptions and experiences comfortably.

Data collection was conducted after the students had been introduced to and had experience using the application. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms, allowing participants to respond conveniently using their own devices, and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Prior to participation, students were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent, with assurances that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The semi-structured interviews were conducted after the questionnaire phase, focusing on usability, learning experience, and challenges.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis involved both descriptive and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, to identify general trends

in students' responses. The results were then categorized into levels of agreement to interpret students' overall perceptions and experiences. Qualitative data from both the open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This process involved several steps: familiarizing with the data, coding the responses, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting the findings.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

To provide a clear overview of students' responses, the quantitative data are presented in Table 1. The table summarizes the distribution of responses across all questionnaire items based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data are organized into four main categories: perceptions of the application, learning experience, motivation and learning autonomy, and perceived improvement in English proficiency.

Table 1. Students' perception of the application.

Category	Statement	Response (%)				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
Perceptions of the Application	The EnglishScore application is easy to use.	0 n=0	0 n=0	35.3 n=6	41.2 n=7	23.5 n=4
	The app interface is clear and easy to understand.	0 n=0	0 n=0	23.5 n=4	47.1 n=8	29.4 n=5
	The instructions in the app are easy to understand.	0 n=0	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	70.6 n=12	23.5 n=4
	The feedback provided by the app is clear.	0 n=0	0 n=0	23.5 n=4	58.8 n=10	17.6 n=3
	I trust the accuracy of the test results in the app.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	17.6 n=3	41.2 n=7	35.3 n=6
	The app is useful for evaluating my English skills.	0 n=0	0 n=0	11.8 n=2	35.3 n=6	52.9 n=9
	The app helps me understand my English proficiency level.	0 n=0	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	35.3 n=6	58.8 n=10
Learning Experience	I enjoy using the EnglishScore application.	0 n=0	0 n=0	23.5 n=4	58.8 n=10	17.6 n=3
	The app makes learning English more interesting.	0 n=0	0 n=0	11.8 n=2	47.1 n=8	41.2 n=7
	The app provides an enjoyable learning experience.	0 n=0	0 n=0	17.6 n=3	52.9 n=9	29.4 n=5
	I feel comfortable using the app.	0 n=0	0 n=0	29.4 n=5	41.2 n=7	29.4 n=5
	The app helps me stay focused while learning.	0 n=0	0 n=0	17.6 n=3	52.9 n=9	29.4 n=5
	The app provides an interactive learning experience.	0 n=0	0 n=0	23.5 n=4	41.2 n=7	35.3 n=6
Motivation and Learning Autonomy	The app motivates me to learn English.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	23.5 n=4	29.4 n=5	41.2 n=7
	I am encouraged to practice English regularly.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	23.5 n=4	47.1 n=8	23.5 n=4

	I use the app independently without being told.	0 n=0	23.5 n=4	29.4 n=5	35.3 n=6	11.8 n=2
	The app helps me monitor my learning progress.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	23.5 n=4	41.2 n=7	29.4 n=5
	I feel more responsible for my learning.	0 n=0	11.8 n=2	23.5 n=4	47.1 n=8	17.6 n=3
	I feel more confident in learning English independently.	0 n=0	0 n=0	17.6 n=3	64.7 n=11	17.6 n=3
Perceived Improvement in English Proficiency	My English skills have improved after using the app.	0 n=0	11.8 n=2	29.4 n=5	41.2 n=7	17.6 n=3
	I better understand my strengths and weaknesses in English.	0 n=0	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	47.1 n=8	47.1 n=8
	My English vocabulary has improved.	0 n=0	0 n=0	35.3 n=6	41.2 n=7	23.5 n=4
	My understanding of grammar has improved.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	35.3 n=6	47.1 n=8	11.8 n=2
	My reading skills have improved.	0 n=0	11.8 n=2	17.6 n=3	52.9 n=9	17.6 n=3
	My listening skills have improved.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	41.2 n=7	23.5 n=4	29.4 n=5
	I feel more confident in using English.	0 n=0	5.9 n=1	41.2 n=7	35.3 n=6	17.6 n=3

As presented in Table 1, students demonstrated highly positive perceptions of the application in terms of usability, clarity, and usefulness. Most students agreed or strongly agreed that the application is easy to use (64.7%) and that its interface is clear and understandable (76.5%). The highest level of agreement was observed in the clarity of instructions, with 94.1% of students expressing agreement or strong agreement. Similarly, the feedback provided by the application was perceived as clear by the majority of respondents (76.4%).

In terms of usefulness, most responses were concentrated in the agreement categories. The results show that 88.2% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the application is beneficial for evaluating their English skills, while 94.1% reported that it helps them understand their English proficiency level. Additionally, a large proportion of students (76.5%) expressed trust in the accuracy of the test results. These findings indicate that students perceive the application as user-friendly, reliable, and pedagogically useful, directly addressing the first research question regarding students' perceptions.

The data also reveal that students had positive learning experiences when using the application. A majority of respondents reported enjoyment and engagement while interacting with the app. Specifically, 76.4% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed using the application, while an even higher percentage (88.3%) indicated that the app made learning English more interesting. Furthermore, 82.3% of students perceived the learning experience as enjoyable.

Students also reported a sense of comfort and focus during use. Around 70.6% agreed that they felt comfortable using the app, and 82.3% indicated that the app helped them stay focused during learning. In addition, 76.5% of respondents perceived the app as interactive, suggesting that the application provides a dynamic and engaging learning environment. These findings suggest that the application supports positive learning experiences

characterized by engagement, enjoyment, and interactivity, thereby answering the second research question.

Regarding motivation and autonomy, the findings indicate that the application contributes positively, although the degree of autonomy varies among students. More than 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the app motivates them to learn English (70.6%) and encourages regular practice (70.6%). Similarly, 70.6% reported that the app helps them monitor their learning progress, indicating the development of self-regulated learning behaviours.

However, a lower level of agreement was found in the item related to independent use, where only 47.1% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they used the app without being told, while 23.5% expressed disagreement. Despite this, a majority of students reported increased responsibility (64.7%) and confidence in independent learning (82.3%). These results indicate that while the app supports motivation and partially fosters autonomy, external factors such as instructional support may still influence students' independent use.

The findings related to perceived improvement demonstrate that students generally experienced positive learning outcomes after using the application. More than half of the students (58.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that their overall English proficiency improved. Notably, a very high percentage of students (94.2%) reported that the app helped them better understand their strengths and weaknesses. In terms of specific language skills, students reported improvements in vocabulary (64.7%), grammar (58.9%), reading (70.5%), and listening (52.9%).

The qualitative responses reveal several key aspects that students appreciated when using the application. Many students highlighted the ease of use and simplicity of the application. For example, one student (P1) stated, "It's practical, fast, and free to check English level". In addition, several students emphasized the app's role in supporting vocabulary learning and language development. One respondent (P2) noted, "I can easily learn and recognize many unfamiliar words", while another (P3) stated, "I can gain some understanding of new vocabulary".

Students also appreciated the test features and variety of questions provided in the app. As one student (P1) mentioned, "I like the tests in the app". The app was also valued for enhancing self-awareness of English proficiency. One participant (P3) explained, "The app shows my English level, which motivates me to learn". Another student (P4) stated, "In the listening section, I realized my weaknesses". These responses highlight the role of the app in promoting reflective learning. Some students expressed increased motivation and overall satisfaction. For instance, one respondent (P5) said, "It motivates me to improve my previous score and increase my interest in learning", while others simply (P1) stated, "It's very helpful".

However, one of the most frequently reported challenges relates to language proficiency, particularly in listening skills. A student (P4) stated, "I do not fully understand the listening questions". Similarly, a participant (P3) noted broader difficulties, stating, "I find it difficult in reading, speed, and listening". Another issue identified by students is related to time constraints during the test. For example, one student (P1) reported, "I often run out of time when answering questions".

Technical issues were also reported as a challenge. Some students mentioned problems such as "Poor internet connection". Students pointed out test-related difficulties, such as confusing or tricky questions. One participant (P3) noted, "Sometimes I am confused by questions that seem tricky". Interestingly, one response highlighted the importance of affective factors, such as maintaining motivation and emotional resilience. A student (P5) stated, "Maintaining mood and mental strength to avoid giving up".

In terms of their experience in the learning process, one of the most prominent themes is the enhancement of self-awareness of language proficiency. One student (P1) stated, "With

this app, I can understand my level of English”, while another (P2) noted, “It helps me evaluate myself and identify my weaknesses”. Similarly, a participant (P5) mentioned, “The app helps me recognize my weaknesses”. These responses indicate that the app plays a significant role in promoting reflective learning.

The app also appears to have a strong impact on learning motivation. Some students reported feeling encouraged to improve their English after using the app. For instance, one respondent (P1) stated, “When my score is low, I feel that I need to study again”. Students also highlighted the app’s contribution to language skill development, particularly in vocabulary, reading, and grammar. One participant (P4) noted, “It adds new vocabulary”, while another (P2) stated, “I learned about gerund usage and it trains me to think quickly”.

To further strengthen and triangulate the findings from both the survey and open-ended responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into students’ perceptions and learning experiences. The interview results consistently support the quantitative and qualitative data, showing that students perceived the application as easy to use, engaging, and beneficial for evaluating their English proficiency. This is reflected in one student’s statement (P1) that “It directly shows my English level, so I know where I stand,” highlighting the app’s role in enhancing self-awareness. The application also contributed to increased motivation, as indicated by the response (P1), “When I get a low score, I feel motivated to learn more and try again,” suggesting that feedback plays a key role in encouraging continuous learning.

In addition, the app supports language development, particularly in listening and vocabulary, as one participant (P2) noted, “The listening part is challenging, but it helps me improve because I practice more.” Despite these positive experiences, some challenges were reported, including difficulties in understanding listening tasks and technical issues such as application lag. Overall, these findings reinforce the survey and open-ended results by demonstrating that the application provides meaningful, motivating, and reflective learning experiences, while its effectiveness may be influenced by students’ proficiency levels and learning conditions.

3.2 Discussion

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of EFL students’ perceptions and learning experiences in using the British English EnglishScore mobile application by integrating findings from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Overall, the results consistently indicate that students showed positive attitudes toward the use of the application as a tool to support their English language development. These findings align with the study’s main objective and confirm that mobile-based digital assessment platforms can offer meaningful learning experiences in EFL contexts.

The positive perceptions reported by students reflect the importance of usability and usefulness in technology adoption. Students consistently described the application as easy to use, clear, and practical, which contributed to their willingness to engage with it. This supports the idea that when digital tools are user-friendly and accessible, students are more likely to accept and benefit from them (Navas, 2024; Sari, 2024). In this study, the mobile-based format of the application allowed students to access learning anytime and anywhere, making the learning process more flexible and convenient. This flexibility appears to be a key factor in enhancing students’ engagement with the application.

The findings demonstrate that the application provides engaging and enjoyable learning experiences. Students reported that the application made learning English more interesting and interactive, particularly through its test-based format and immediate feedback. Rather than perceiving the application solely as an assessment tool, students experienced it as a learning resource that actively involved them in the process. It aligns with previous studies

which state that the integration of assessment and learning within a mobile platform can transform traditional testing into a more engaging and meaningful activity (Al-Abri et al., 2025; Chulerk et al., 2025).

One of the most significant findings of this study is the role of the application in increasing students' motivation and self-awareness. Students reported that the feedback and scores provided by the application encouraged them to improve their performance and continue learning. It supports Gou (2023) and Sihombing and Ismahani (2025) who found that mobile application helped students become more aware of their English proficiency levels, including their strengths and weaknesses. This increased awareness enabled students to monitor their progress and take more responsibility for their learning.

An interesting finding is the gap between students' confidence in learning independently and their actual use of the application without external stimuli. While students expressed confidence in learning independently, this was not always reflected in their voluntary use of the application. This means that positive perceptions do not automatically translate into autonomous learning behaviour. In the Indonesian higher education context, students may still require teacher guidance and structured learning activities to sustain their engagement. Therefore, while EnglishScore can promote learner autonomy, instructional support remains essential for encouraging consistent independent learning.

Furthermore, students also perceived improvements in their English skills after using the application. These improvements were particularly evident in vocabulary development, reading, and overall understanding of their language ability as it was found by Lei et al. (2022). More importantly, the application contributed to students' metacognitive awareness by helping them reflect on their performance and identify areas that need improvement. This indicates that the impact of the application extends beyond skill development to enhance metacognitive awareness (Pramerta, 2025a).

Despite these positive outcomes, the findings also reveal several challenges that may influence the effectiveness of the application. Some students reported difficulties related to language proficiency, especially in listening and comprehension, while others experienced technical issues such as poor internet connection and application lag. In addition, not all students demonstrated consistent independent use of the application, suggesting that external support, such as guidance from teachers, remains important. These findings support that mobile application offers valuable learning opportunities, its effectiveness depends on both student readiness and technical issues (Johannsen et al., 2023; Naveed et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings suggest that the British Council EnglishScore application has strong potential as a mobile-based digital assessment tool that supports English language learning. It enhances students' motivation, engagement, and self-awareness, while also providing flexible and accessible learning experiences. However, to maximize its benefits, the integration of such applications into structured learning environments and pedagogical practices is essential. This study therefore contributes to a clearer understanding of how digital assessment tools can be effectively used to support EFL learning in the digital era.

4 Conclusion

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed language learning. This study investigated EFL students' perceptions and learning experiences in using the British Council EnglishScore mobile application as a tool to support English language development. The findings consistently show that students hold positive attitudes toward the application, particularly in terms of its ease of use, accessibility, and usefulness. The app provides flexible and engaging learning experiences that enhance students' motivation and encourage active participation in learning. In addition, students demonstrated greater awareness of their English proficiency levels and were able to monitor their progress,

indicating the development of self-directed learning. The findings also suggest that the application contributes to perceived improvements in language skills, especially in vocabulary, reading, and overall understanding of English proficiency.

Despite these positive outcomes, several limitations should be considered. The small sample size and reliance on self-reported data may limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, variations in students' frequency of use and differences in language proficiency may influence the extent of the app's impact. Some students also experienced challenges related to listening comprehension and technical issues. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, as well as to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine the actual impact of mobile-based assessment tools on language development. Overall, this study highlights the potential of digital assessment applications as innovative tools to support EFL learning, particularly when they are integrated into structured and pedagogically guided learning environments.

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