



Literary Enigma

The International Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture
(Peer-reviewed and Indexed)

Vol. 1, Special Issue: 5

May 2025

Article No 20

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Page No: 120--122



Digital Tools: Aiding Spoken English

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Abstract

In this digital era, every aspect of life has been digitalised with the help of technology. Education has also been enhanced, and this research paper focuses on applications that guide learners on the path to achieving efficiency in spoken English. It discusses several practical conversational apps: PeerUp: Learn English Speaking, Sivi AI Learn English Speaking, and Elsa Speak. While English Skills Booster app does not provide practical conversation opportunities, it offers dialogues that learners can imitate to practice and improve their fluency in English by covering various grammatical topics. Additionally, Duolingo is a game-based English learning app that makes learning engaging and fun.

Keywords: Digital tools, Spoken English, Sivi AI. Duolingo

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Digital Tools: Aiding Spoken English

Today, in India, where English is commonly used as a second language, many people find it challenging to speak English fluently. Although students learn English from 1st to 12th grade and even in college, many still struggle with fluency. This is concerning in an era where medical bills, financial management, legal documents, and essential study materials are all provided in English. Furthermore, international relations are primarily conducted in English, making it a critical skill for future generations.

One of the significant obstacles in speaking English is the lack of a supportive environment. Many students do not have friends or family who speak English, resulting in a lack of confidence and reluctance to practice speaking in front of others. To achieve fluency in speaking English, it is essential to listen carefully in order to understand the grammatical structure and pronunciation of sentences. Speaking is the practical application of listening. By applying general principles of speaking English, students can practice correct pronunciation and use proper grammatical structures in their conversations. However, this absence of a familiar background can be addressed with the help of various digital tools designed to facilitate language learning.

Emerging technology has provided many digital tools that fulfil this requirement in today's learning environment. A few of these tools are listed below:

- **PeerUp: Learn English Speaking**

The app provides basic learning and introductory explanations in the user's native language. Students can converse in English based on this content. Upon logging into the app, users have the option to choose their interests, and the app customizes an avatar according to their selection. For example, if a student selects mythology as their interest, the avatar of Krishna will be displayed.

The app's response mechanism is similar to that of ChatGPT, but it is somewhat slower. It features an animated avatar and AI voices that make conversations more engaging. Additionally, it includes a role-play function where the AI engages in one-on-one dialogue with users in various contexts. The app provides a written dialogue, with the AI speaking first, after which the user is prompted to recite the given dialogue expressively.

There is also a third section dedicated to discussions on trending topics, where users can find detailed information on particular news items and engage in conversations with the AI about those topics. The app offers a monthly subscription for 199 Rs. and an annual plan for 999 Rs.

- **English Skills Booster**

It offers over 900 conversations on various topics, providing students with ample listening exercises and vocabulary recitations. Students can learn daily used words, and the IELTS section includes more than 6,000 words, assisting in vocabulary building with correct pronunciation. There are over 4,000 sentences for daily use, along with explanations for most grammar topics. The program provides English grammar tests at different levels, including random topics for elementary, intermediate, and advanced learners.

Additionally, it features more than 1,300 idioms and a collection of popular proverbs. Students can also access over 650 irregular verbs and more than 2,500 common phrasal verbs, complete with their pronunciations. The program includes English speaking practice on various topics and prompts users to repeat sentences displayed on the screen.

- **Duolingo**

Duolingo is a game based App learners learn on various topics gradually from short engaging lessons and different exercises such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciations. It also keeps an eye on learners progress report and reminds learners to study and keep practicing; learners may play it as a game make points and rewards which makes learning enjoyable. It provides a fun-loving journey of learning. Although it has a free basic version, Duolingo Plus is the premium version that offers an ad-free experience and offline access.

- **Elsa Speak**

Elsa Speak is an app designed to help learners improve their pronunciation. It provides practice options in British English, American English, and many more. It is an AI-based app that enables students to get a personalised tutor from the comfort of their own home, providing corrections on their accent. It features an advanced speech recognition system that utilises the role-play method to enhance

the speaker's fluency. The learner can practice speaking aloud with Elsa AI. It reviews the learners' pronunciation and suggests refinements. The only drawback of this app is that it offers a seven-day free trial; thus, it can only be genuinely fruitful if used in the premium version.

- **Sivi AI Learn English Speaking**

Sivi AI Learn English Speaking offers personalised lessons to its learners, providing real-time practice sessions through voice messages and voice calls. The AI chatbot, Arya AI, serves as a personal English tutor, enabling learners to engage in meaningful conversations. Students can choose whether to learn from peer learners or the AI bot.

The platform provides instant feedback on grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and content, helping learners correct sentence mistakes. It offers step-by-step guidance for effective learning. Additionally, Arya AI can translate spoken content into Gujarati, whether the AI or the learner initiates it. If a learner pauses while answering a question, the bot will suggest a clue to continue the conversation.

There is a button with three dots on the right side of the application that learners can press for hints. The platform includes grammar quizzes that enhance learners' grammar skills and provides various grammar lessons to support those who practice spoken language. The grammar lessons teach through hints, while the AI bot offers conversational clues only if prompted by the learner.

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