Students' Experience in Using Natural Reader Application to Ensure the Accuracy of Their English Pronunciation

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Article Information:	ABSTRACT
	Since 1960, speech synthesis technology has existed and its applications are now widely available, one of which is the Natural Reader application. Natural Reader is an application that can be used in knowing how to pronounce words in English. This study aims to describe students' experiences with using the Natural Reader application and examine the effect of utilizing the use of the Natural Reader application as a tool to test the accuracy of pronunciation of Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students, by using the Natural Reader application students can more easily test their English accuracy. The method used by researchers is quantitative method, quantitative research can show data containing numbers that can be obtained by utilizing google form as a means of making a questionnaire. This research shows that the Natural Reader application has the potential to ensure the accuracy of pronunciation in English. so it can be concluded that the Natural Reader device can ensure the accuracy of student pronunciation in English. ***Keywords:** Natural, Pronunciation, Recognition*

INTRODUCTION

The 20th century, sometimes known as the century of knowledge, is renowned for serving as the cornerstone for many facets of modern life (Burgarella et al., 2019). The field of education is strongly impacted by the knowledge of this century (Dziuban et al., 2018). Currently, Technologies is developing rapidly, so students can use this

opportunity to explore knowledge as well as possible. With the development of technology, human life becomes easier to get all their needs. Technology in modern times is very easy to access anywhere and anytime as long as it has internet access (Lubis et al., 2021). Technology as a useful tool to simplify a job so that it can create something better (Donahue et al., 2019). The development of science at this time has greatly influenced the innovation of human life (Agustian & Salsabila, 2021; Bers et al., 2019). Technology must be viewed as an attempt to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and it cannot be separated from problems because technology was created and developed to address them. The world of education cannot be separated from the development of communication technology, so it can be said that between educational innovation and educational technology is a unity that cannot be separated. Technology advancements have an influence on education, especially English education, by making it simpler to improve communication and explore language skills. English is a worldwide language that is utilized in the age of globalization to engage internationally in a variety of areas, including education. (Andriani & Utaminingsih, 2022).

Introduction of technologies has created new and great opportunities for language learners and teachers in the aspect of language education (Mavridi, 2018). Integrating technology in language teaching provides opportunities for learners to use language directly such as learning new vocabulary, knowing its meaning and learning how to pronounce it (Aflah & Yanti, 2019). Technology has changed the perspective of learning English and improved English language teaching. The purpose of learning English is to produce graduates who are competent, professional and have the ability to communicate well in a foreign language. Learning English will undoubtedly encompass a variety of language abilities, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These four skills must be possessed by someone who wants to speak English fluently (Wibowo, 2018). Mastering English well is a must and a person's need in communicating, especially foreign languages (Gunantar & Rosaria, 2020). In communicating, the pronunciation aspect will be emphasized because it has a close relationship with vocabulary development. This encourages sensitive awareness of one's spoken words. If someone is accustomed to pronouncing a word incorrectly, there will be a tendency not to be able to provide clear information.

One of the most important components of language to teach and acquire is pronunciation (Widagdo, 2021). Being able to discern between sounds that combine to create a string of words with meaning is crucial for vocabulary growth. Speaking fluency in the language might reveal a person's level of linguistic knowledge. Given the importance of speaking skills, ideally Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students are able to master speaking skills in English in various conditions using precise and accurate pronunciation. One of the most crucial elements of English is pronunciation since a word's pronunciation may alter its meaning from what it actually means. The act of pronouncing a word correctly or saying it aloud is known as pronunciation (Çakmak, 2019). However, most students still make mistakes that

result in the incorrect pronunciation of an English word. However, these mistakes are part of the learning process, especially language learning (Munandar et al., 2021). If their pronunciation cannot be understood, then their communication will automatically fail. Learning pronunciation can use media that is in accordance with technological developments to help analyze, correct and test the accuracy of a word (Riyani & Istiana Sari, 2020).

Different people tend to produce different sounds when pronouncing a word, so students should practice pronunciation more in English. Through practicing pronunciation, one's ability to pronounce language will be helped, especially in terms of communication (Wangi & Lestari, 2020). In addition, students can also use the right media and containers in learning English, especially in pronunciation. One of the tools that students may use to help their learning process and deepen their knowledge and comprehension is learning media (Wolraich et al., 2019). Innovation in educational technology has provided many changes with the emergence of the term mobile learning which refers to learning with the support of mobile phones and internet access (Hidayati & Rosyid, 2020). One of the android applications that can be used to support mobile learning-based learning is Natural Reader which can be downloaded on android-based smartphone devices. An application called Natural Reader may be used to learn how to pronounce words in English. Of course, the convenience of the Natural Reader application that can be accessed via a smartphone is an additional value because students today cannot seem to be separated from their smartphones so that students can learn without having to be separated from their smartphones..

Text-to-Speech is a quick-growing and well-liked invention in the world of technology and communication today. In the text-to-speech (TTS) process, a computer system produces speech that sounds natural (Arrizqi et al., 2021; Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Speech synthesis technology has been around since the 1960s, and it is currently commonly used in apps like Natural Reader. Text written in the form of text may be converted into speech using text-to-speech software like Natural Reader, which will produce a voice that sounds pretty natural like human speech in general. Students can learn automation skills by using Natural Reader. Additionally, it aids in language comprehension for pupils. This program can turn written text into audio files for CD players or the iPad, such as MP3 or WAV. Numerous more features, including an audio editor, are also included. One of the media that can aid users in developing their writing abilities and learning a second language is Natural Reader. Users may listen to any content from the program at any pace as Natural Reader reads it.

A number of earlier research on media in English pronunciation have been done. First, it was noted by (Effat Sufi & Shalmani, 2018) that EFL teachers who are interested in enhancing and imparting pronunciation abilities to their students should utilize TFlat. Second, according to (Sarmita Samad & Aminullah, 2019) students think that participating in ELSA dialogues is a great way to practice pronouncing words. They think that this program's design is excellent in terms of its content, versatility,

multimedia, and automated voice recognition. Third, (Roslaini & Komara, 2020) the usage of Text Aloud Software as one of the technological tools that can aid English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in mastering English pronunciation in the classroom where learning is taking place. Fourth, The English Pronunciation Application (EPA) can significantly enhance students' pronunciation, according to (Ardini & Prabowo, 2020). Because of this, it is advised that teachers utilize the EPA program to teach pronunciation. However, they must be inventive in fusing the application with their students' interest in media. Fifth, (Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021) reported that the majority of students concurred that the JOOX app's features, such as the lyrics function, assisted them in improving their pronunciation. Sixth, it was reported that students had a favorable attitude about using the TikTok application to study English in order to aid them with their reading and pronunciation abilities (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

There are parallels and variations between this research and the aforementioned investigations. The first research focuses on the application of a program named TFlat. The second study focuses on pronunciation instruction using ELSA. The third research focuses on the use of Android Software Text Aloud. The fourth research concentrated on utilizing the English Pronunciation Application (EPA) for Android. The sixth research concentrated on the JOOX app to aid students' pronunciation. The sixth research, in particular, focuses on using TikTok for video editing. The use of Text-to-Speech in designing or creating English learning materials hasn't, however, been the subject of any studies. Therefore, the focus of this research is on the use of Text-to-Speech in developing, generating, and assessing the correctness of English pronunciation, particularly the Natural Reader application. Natural Reader is a TTS program that was previously discussed.

The goal of this study is to reevaluate the impact of using the Natural Reader application to gauge the Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students' pronounciation correctness, by using the Natural Reader application students can more easily test their English accuracy. The utilization of the use of Natural Reader has many meaningful benefits so it should be considered to be used by students as a medium for learning English. The purpose of the Natural Reader application is to make it easier for students to test their pronunciation accurately. According to the preceding statement, action must be taken to address issues with learning media, especially the problem of inaccurate pronunciation, therefore researchers developed a Natural Reader application as a pronunciation accuracy tool to help the learning process of Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative strategy using a survey research design. Quantitative research is a scientific study of a phenomenon by collecting data and then calculating or measuring it with computational statistical techniques that use numbers

in analyzing data and are systematic and accurate to parts, phenomena and causal relationships (Hartmann et al., 2019). The numbers referred to in this study are not only in the form of mathematics but this research examines a problem that can be measured using accurate and systematic numbers. The design or model of quantitative research is to develop theory, obtain security, social complexity and describe reality. The most fundamental type of quantitative research is survey research. Survey research involves questioning participants about their ideas, opinions, traits, and behavior at the moment (Adiyanta, 2019).

Table 1. Population and sample of quantitative research
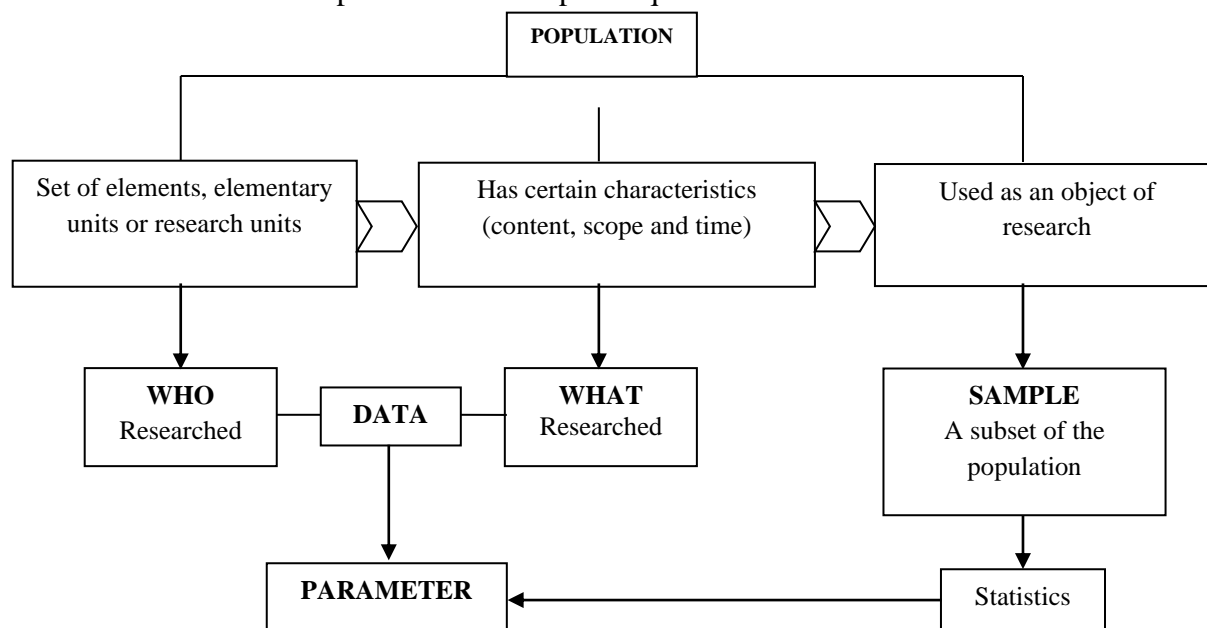
The study was carried out at the Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar in March and April 2023. The object of this research is the feasibility of the Natural Reader application as a tool in testing the accuracy of English pronunciation and pronunciation. The place of research will usually be carried out at a school or college institution. The population of this research is Tadris English students at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar. The sample for this study was chosen using a random sampling approach. With random sampling, every person in the population has an equal chance of being chosen as a sample for a research (Arieska & Herdiani, 2018). There are thirty Tadris English students who have used the Natural Reader application in testing the accuracy of pronunciation at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar as research samples.

The English students at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar were given questionnaires as part of the data gathering process for this study, which aimed to determine what proportion of students found the media to be feasible. If the researcher is aware of the variables to measure and the anticipated responses from respondents, the questionnaire is an effective method for gathering data (Prawiyogi et al., 2021). Giving a list of questions or written statements to respondents who will be

put to the test is the data collecting method known as a questionnaire (Shabrina et al., 2020). Researchers take this action to collect data. The following is the data collection process for the questionnaire: 1. Adopt and modify questionnaires from previous studies, 2. Distribute questionnaires to participants who are the sample of the study, 3. Manage questionnaires that have been filled out by respondents. In quantitative research, there are usually statistical tests, namely inferential statistics (very suitable for use when the data collection technique is random and when the population sample data is clear) and descriptive (used to evaluate data by describing and summarizing the data acquired without altering the data source).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to ascertain how the Natural Reader application may be used to assess the students at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University's proficiency in English and pronunciation. This study uses a quantitative methodology and a survey research design. In research that researchers are currently doing is research that uses computational statistical techniques that use numbers in analyzing data and is systematic and accurate to the parts, phenomena and causal relationships. In order to determine what percentage of students found the media to be feasible, researchers performed a questionnaire interview with English students at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar. Researchers took this action to collect data. The following is the data collection process for the questionnaire: 1. Adopting and modifying questionnaires from previous studies, 2. Distributing questionnaires to participants who are the sample of the study, 3. Managing questionnaires that have been filled out by respondents. Then the data or information is analyzed so that it will produce a solution to the problem discussed in the study.

Respondents were taken using the random sampling method. This random sampling method is easy to understand and has results that can be projected (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022). Because random sampling is used to sample the whole population, strata in the population are not taken into consideration (Halawa et al., 2021). Respondents in this study were Tadris English students at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar who had and were using the Natural Reader application. Respondents in this study are the source of data used by researchers to obtain information related to the use of the Natural Reader application. The study was carried out in March and April 2023 at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar. The object of this research is the feasibility of the Natural Reader application as a tool in testing the accuracy of English pronunciation.

Table 2. Respondent Data

Gender		Class		
L	P	TBI A	TBI B	TBI C
8	22	8	11	11

27%	73%	27%	36,5%	36,5%
TOTAL: 30		30		

The data indicates that there are more female respondents than male respondents. Eight men and 22 women participated in the survey, with the female respondents making up 73% of the total and the male respondents making up 27%. The number of responders from the TBI B and TBI C classes has the same number, namely 11 persons, with a percentage of 36.5%, according to the analysis of the table above, which contains findings from 3 courses in the English Tadris department of UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. With just 8 replies, or a 27% proportion, the TBI A class had fewer responders than TBI B and TBI C. The accuracy of pronunciation at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University was tested using the Natural Reader application on thirty Tadris English students who participated as samples in this study.

Table 3. Statements about the Natural Reader App

No	Statements	Answer			
		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1.	I use the Natural Reader app to improve my Pronunciation	6,6%	83,4%	10%	
2.	I feel that the Natural Reader app helps improve my Pronunciation	13,4%	80%	6,6%	
3.	The Natural Reader application has many features that can make it easier to choose the audio you want to hear	10%	86,7%	3,3%	
4.	The Natural Reader app is very easy to use because it has various features that are easy to understand.	13,4%	83,4%	3,3%	
5.	The Natural Reader application is easy to use to practice English pronunciation.	13,4%	83,4%	3,3%	
6.	The Natural Reader application can adjust the speed in playing audio so that it is easier to practice pronunciation.	10%	86,7%	3,3%	
7.	Natural Reader app can read from image and document formats to text	13,4%	83,4%	3,3%	

	and audio				
8.	Regular use of Natural Reader can significantly improve my pronunciation skills	6,6%	90,1%	3,3%	
9.	Natural Reader app can help me understand how to pronounce words correctly.	10%	86,7%	3,3%	
10.	Natural Reader app can allow me to practice English pronunciation anytime and anywhere.	10%	83,4%	6,6%	
11.	I don't use the Natural Reader app to improve my Pronunciation		6,6%	86,7%	6,6%
12.	I feel that the Natural Reader app does not help improve my Pronunciation		3,3%	80,1%	16,6%
13.	The Natural Reader app does not have many features that can make it easier to choose the audio you want to hear		6,6%	83,4%	10%
14.	Because it lacks several functions that are simple to comprehend, the Natural Reader program is difficult to operate.		6,6%	83,4%	10%
15.	The Natural Reader app is not easy to use to practice English pronunciation.		6,6%	73,4%	20%
16.	Natural Reader application cannot adjust the speed in playing audio so that it is easier to practice pronunciation		6,6%	80%	13,4%
17.	The Natural Reader app cannot read from image and document formats to text and audio		6,6%	80%	13,4%
18.	Regular use of Natural Reader cannot significantly improve my pronunciation skills		6,6%	83,4%	10%
19.	Natural Reader app cannot help me understand how to pronounce words correctly.		6,6%	83,4%	10%
20.	Natural Reader app cannot allow me to practice English pronunciation		10%	73,4%	16,6%

	anytime and anywhere.					

The results of the survey are shown in the table above, and it is clear that respondents approve of using the Natural Reader app as a tool and medium to assure the accuracy of English pronunciation. In the table above, the data presented in the implementation of this research are the results of questionnaire interviews from 30 respondents who use the Natural Reader application. Researchers were greatly assisted in determining how students at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University used the Natural Reader program by the remarks resulting from a number of questionnaire questions. The questions tested in this study were 20 statements containing the benefits of the Natural Reader application feature for students at Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University. From the analysis of the table above, 83.4% of respondents stated that they used the Natural Reader application to improve pronunciation, 90.1 respondents stated that regular use of Natural Reader could significantly improve their pronunciation skills, 86.7% of respondents stated that the Natural Reader application could help them understand how to pronounce words correctly and 86.7% of respondents stated that the Natural Reader application has many features that can make it easier to choose the audio they want to hear.
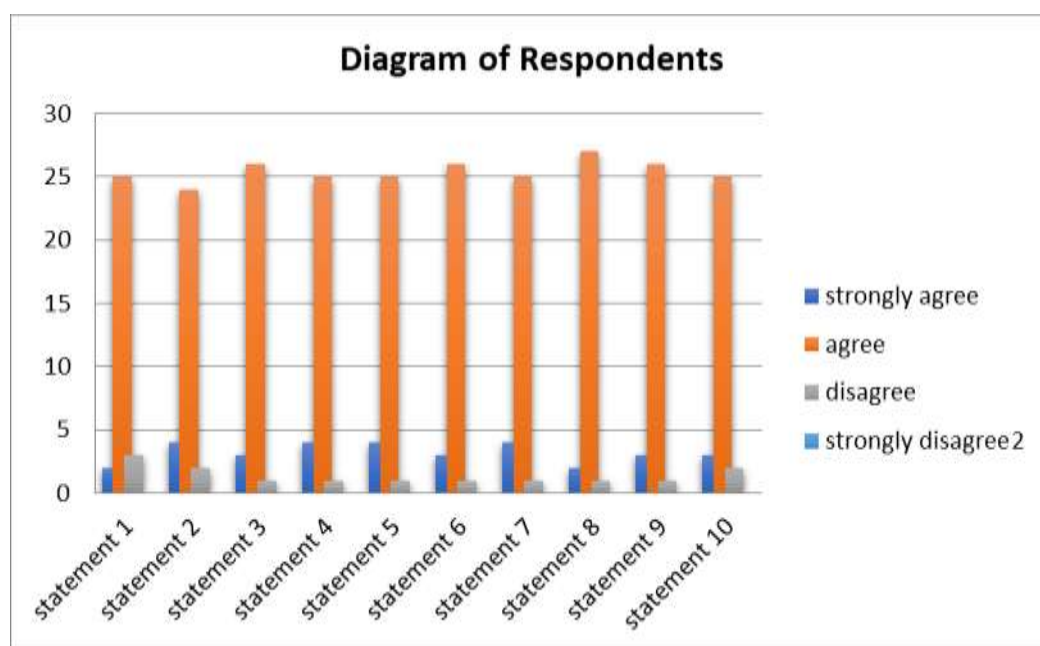

The illustration shown above demonstrates that respondents have a positive response to the use of the Natural Reader application as a tool and media to ensure the accuracy of English pronunciation. From the analysis of the diagram above, there are very significant results between the responses of respondents who strongly agree in dark blue, agree in red, disagree in green and strongly disagree in light blue. In terms of advantages, the results of statement number 1 show that 25 students agree that using the Natural Reader app can help students pronounce words more clearly, while 3

students disagree. Two students strongly agree that using the app can help students pronounce words more clearly. The figure above indicates that using the Natural Reader program can enhance English pronunciation.

Regarding features, the findings of statement number 3 show that 26 students agree that the Natural Reader application has many features that can make it easier to choose the audio you want to hear, while 3 students strongly disagree that the Natural Reader application has many features that can make it easier to choose the audio you want to hear. The graphic above indicates that the Natural Reader program contains a number of options that can make it simpler for you to select the audio you wish to listen to, such as the Voice and Language Settings tool. Learners can adjust the noises that are accessible for sound in this function. Additionally, students have the option of selecting or setting their preferred language.

According to statement number 10, 25 students agree that the Natural Reader application can let users practice their English pronunciation whenever and wherever they want, while 2 students disagree. Three students strongly agree that the Natural Reader application can let users practice their English pronunciation whenever and wherever they want. It can be concluded from the diagram above that the Natural Reader application can enable learners to practice English pronunciation anytime and anywhere. This is because the Natural Reader application can be used using Android so that it can be used anytime and anywhere. Where learners today who cannot be away from android because through android learners can access anything.
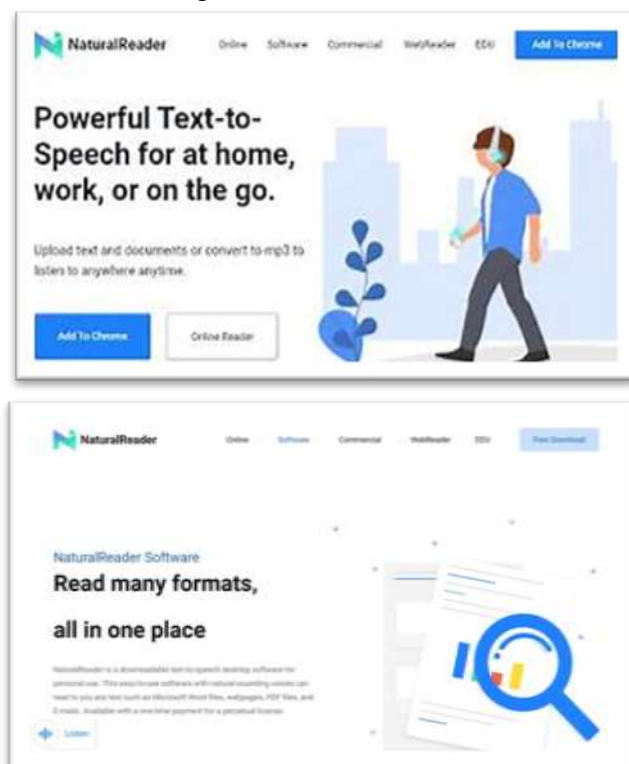
Picture 1. Homepage of Natural Reader Application

An application called Natural Reader is seen in the image above. An app called Natural Reader may be used to learn how to pronounce words in English. Android and Windows users can utilize the text-to-speech program called Natural Reader. This program can turn written text into audio files for CD players or the iPad, such as MP3 or WAV. Numerous more features, including an audio editor, are also included. One medium that can aid users in developing their writing abilities and acquiring a second language is Natural Reader. Users may listen to text from the program at any pace and Natural Reader will read the content aloud. Due to the ease with which learners may obtain the pronunciation accuracy and ability using the Natural Reader program. This application is simple for learners to combine with Google Docs, Microsoft Word, email delivery services, and other programs. Text-to-speech from Natural Reader sounds like a real person, which is useful and handy. The text-to-speech software from Natural Reader is frequently regarded as a useful tool that can convert text to speech into something that sounds like a human. It features several voice filters, 61 voices, and 18 different languages. Natural Reader is a useful tool for helping people who are blind access materials that they are unable to read. Natural Reader's OCR technology is frequently recognized as its strongest suit.
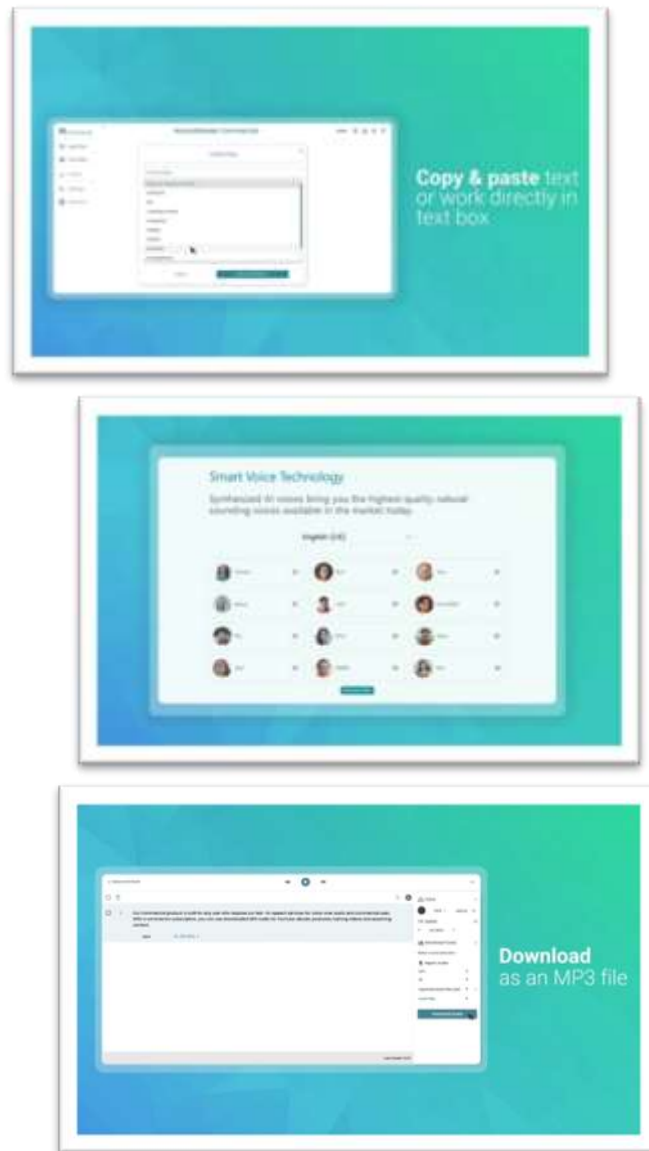
Picture 2. Natural Reader App Features

The Natural Reader app's functionality may be seen in the image above. Many elements of the Natural Reader app may be used by students to improve their pronounciation. The Natural Reader App has a number of functions, including the Voice and Language Settings Feature. With this function, students may adjust the voice settings for the voice's various sounds. Additionally, students have the option of selecting or setting their preferred language. Setting the speed is the second feature. Of course, in addition to the ability to convert text to speech, additional capabilities are required to accomplish this, such as the speed setting option. Students may control this function by customizing the Google voice's speaking pace. New File Input is the third feature. Different modes are used to show this functionality. One of them is the OCR capability, which is required to read from documents and picture files that have been scanned, as well as OCR that cannot be accessed or recorded on the screen.

The Convert Text to Voice function is the fourth feature. This function can turn text into a robotic voice that sounds professional and natural. To learn more about the text-to-speech technology that powers this artificially realistic voice, students may read the article on Google Voice. OCR with Printed Documents makes up the sixth feature. Print characters may be converted into digital text with this OCR capability. As a result, this function enables students to read printed documents aloud or change them using the included word editing tool. Text to Audio File is the sixth option. Other functions exist as well, such as the text to video file capability. Students may convert text into mp3 files for Windows and Mac using this capability. The Mini Board is the eighth feature. If students utilize the Natural Reader App to turn text into sound, this feature will be displayed. The ability to read text directly off the page is therefore made possible by this tiny board. The Pronunciation Editor is the ninth feature. Students may use this software to study pronunciation as well as to practice speaking English.

Open the Natural Reader program, then click the Add icon to enter the word or sentence that you wish to hear the pronunciation of. From there, you may use the Natural Reader application to practice pronunciation and check the correctness of pronunciation in just a few simple steps. Prior to playing or listening to the native speaker voice's pronunciation results in the Natural Reader application, adjust the native speaker voice type, volume, and pronunciation speed in the app. Once all the options have been chosen, click the play button to hear how the difficult word will sound when spoken by a native speaker. As many times as you like, pay attention to how the word is spoken. Following the native speaker's pronunciation will help pupils pronounce words in English confidently and fluently. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the Natural Reader application may assist students in learning pronunciation so they can perform confidently while speaking since it offers a number of characteristics that can help students get familiar with the English language's sounds.

The study's output is the use of the Natural Reader application as a tool and medium to evaluate the precision of English pronunciation. Students should utilize the Natural Reader program, especially if they are learning English. The benefit of this Natural Reader program is that it features a Commercial Voice that can be created quickly utilizing converted text to voice. The audio may be readily downloaded by students and used for redistribution on YouTube and e-learning sites. With e-books and OCR. OCR may be used to transform screenshots from programs for designing eBooks. A feature for OCR is available for printed documents. As a result, it enables us to modify the printed files in the specified word processing application or listen to them. as was briefly described in the point before. As a result, the free and premium versions of Natural Reader App both provide two poor alternatives. When something is free, of course, certain features are restricted or cannot be accessed until we pay to subscribe. The Natural Reader app's disadvantage is that it lacks some of the educational features that other text readers provide. Natural Reader enables users to

change and alter text. For instance, it enables readers to highlight a text's core concept and supporting elements, while Natural Reader lacks resident scanning capabilities, a feature that is helpful.

The results of analyzing all tables and diagrams of research data obtained from questionnaires given to respondents in the study show the use of the Natural Reader application which supports the ease of learning of Tadris English students at Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar. The percentage of respondents who stated that the use of the Natural Reader application could help students to test the accuracy of their pronunciation in English. The use of the Natural Reader application as a tool and media in learning also introduces students to the fact that technology is not only for entertainment and fun, but also as a source of knowledge that is appropriate for the times. The researcher therefore believes that subsequent researchers will advance technology as a source of information, such as the usage of the Natural Reader application, particularly in the field of language teaching.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are drawn on the usage of the Natural Reader application to examine the precision of the pronunciation of Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students based on the findings of the research and the outcomes of the discussion above. The use of the Natural Reader application is said to be successfully applied among students of Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar as a tool or media to test their pronunciation in English. The study's findings, which involved 30 students, are presented in a table with the questions that Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar State Islamic University students were asked to answer as part of this study, along with a graph showing the percentage of students who agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the Natural Reader application. According to the study's findings, the Natural Reader application's success falls within the category of media and educational tools that can aid students in assuring and assessing the correctness of their English pronunciation.

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