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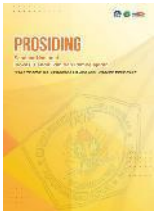

Improving Students' Pronunciation Using the Elsa Speak App at Mts 3 Muhammadiyah Sumberrejo

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abstrak-Penelitian ini dilakukan sebagai respons terhadap rendahnya kemampuan pengucapan (pronunciation) siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam melafalkan bunyi vokal dan konsonan, menerapkan intonasi yang tepat, serta memberikan penekanan kata (word stress) secara akurat. Keterbatasan media pembelajaran yang menarik serta kurangnya kesempatan berlatih selama proses pembelajaran di kelas menjadi faktor yang menyebabkan siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam mengembangkan kemampuan pengucapan mereka. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan aplikasi ELSA Speak dan mengkaji perannya dalam meningkatkan kemampuan pengucapan siswa di MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, di mana setiap siklus meliputi tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui tes pengucapan, observasi kelas, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan aplikasi ELSA Speak dalam proses pembelajaran memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap peningkatan kemampuan pengucapan siswa, terutama dalam mengucapkan bunyi vokal dan konsonan secara benar. Selain itu, aplikasi ini juga mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar, mendorong keterlibatan aktif siswa dalam kegiatan pembelajaran, serta memperkuat rasa percaya diri mereka dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, ELSA Speak dapat dianggap sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis teknologi yang efektif untuk mendukung pengembangan kemampuan pengucapan siswa.
Kata Kunci: ELSA Speak, Pengucapan (Pronunciation), Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Teknologi Pembelajaran, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

Abstract-This study was conducted in response to the inadequate pronunciation proficiency demonstrated by students in learning English, particularly in producing vowel and consonant sounds, applying appropriate intonation, and stressing words accurately. The limited availability of engaging instructional media, coupled with insufficient opportunities for practice during classroom instruction, has contributed to the challenges students face in developing their pronunciation competence. Therefore, this research seeks to describe the implementation of the ELSA Speak application and examine its role in enhancing the pronunciation abilities of students at MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo. This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach consisting of two cycles, each encompassing the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The data were collected through pronunciation tests, classroom observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that integrating the ELSA Speak application into the learning process contributes positively to the improvement of students' pronunciation

skills, particularly in articulating vowel and consonant sounds correctly. Furthermore, the application promotes greater learning motivation, encourages active classroom engagement, and strengthens students' confidence in speaking English. Based on these results, ELSA Speak can be considered an effective technology-assisted learning medium for supporting the development of students' pronunciation skills.

Keywords: ELSA Speak, Pronunciation, Classroom Action Research, Learning Technology, English Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation constitutes a fundamental component of English language learning because it plays a crucial role in supporting students' spoken communication abilities. Accurate pronunciation enables learners to express ideas and information more effectively, allowing interlocutors to comprehend messages with greater clarity. Conversely, inaccurate pronunciation may result in misunderstandings during communication, even when learners possess adequate grammatical knowledge and a broad vocabulary range.

Within the framework of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, pronunciation is widely recognized as one of the most challenging language skills to acquire. This challenge largely stems from the differences between the phonological systems of Indonesian and English, which often create difficulties for students when producing particular English sounds, including /θ/, /ð/, /v/, and /f/. Furthermore, learners frequently encounter obstacles in mastering suprasegmental features of pronunciation, such as intonation patterns, word stress, and speech rhythm.

Based on the results of initial observations at MTs 3 Muhammadiyah Sumberrejo, it was found that students' pronunciation skills are still relatively low. Most students feel less confident when speaking in English for fear of making a mispronunciation. In addition, pronunciation learning in the classroom is still conventional and has not made optimal use of technology-based media.

The development of educational technology provides new opportunities in English learning through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based applications. One of the applications that can be used to help improve students' pronunciation is ELSA Speak (English Language Speech Assistant). The app utilizes speech recognition technology and an AI-based scoring system to automatically detect user pronunciation errors and provide feedback directly.

The integration of technology into the learning process offers students greater opportunities to access educational materials in a more flexible and autonomous manner. Hasanudin and Fitrianingsih (2018) stated that "The videos created with Screencast-O-Matic can be viewed at any time and anywhere by anyone who has a browser and internet connection. Students can play video tutorials many times, so they can be used whether online, offline, or in hybrid study". This statement indicates that technological tools in education enable learners to revisit learning content repeatedly according to their individual needs, thereby supporting a more efficient learning experience. This principle is consistent with the implementation of the ELSA Speak application, which provides students with opportunities to practice pronunciation independently on multiple occasions while receiving immediate feedback through Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

ELSA Speak also provides personalized learning, instant feedback, progress tracking, and various interactive pronunciation exercises. With this feature, students can learn pronunciation independently, flexibly, and iteratively according to their needs.

Rahmawati, Nurdianingsih, and Andri (2023) explained that "it can increase self-study skill, motivation, and also students' responsibility." This statement indicates that the implementation of digital learning media has the potential to foster autonomous learning habits while enhancing students' motivation to engage in the learning process. Such a perspective aligns with the application of ELSA Speak, which enables learners to practice pronunciation independently, receive immediate corrective feedback, and track the progress of their English-speaking performance over time.

Considering these issues, the present study is intended to investigate the effectiveness of the ELSA Speak application in enhancing the pronunciation skills of students at MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. Classroom Action Research refers to a systematic form of classroom-based inquiry conducted with the purpose of enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning process as well as improving students' learning achievement.

The study was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo. The research participants consisted of students from a selected class, chosen based on preliminary observations indicating that they continued to encounter difficulties in English pronunciation.

The research was implemented through two cycles. Each cycle involved four sequential stages, namely:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Observing
4. Reflecting

The instruments utilized in this study consisted of:

1. Pronunciation tests
2. Observation sheets
3. Learning documentation

Quantitative data were collected from the results of students' pronunciation pre-tests and post-tests. In contrast, qualitative data were gathered through observations of students' participation and activities throughout the learning process.

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis was conducted by calculating the mean scores and the percentage of score improvement achieved by the students. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed descriptively based on the findings obtained from classroom observations during the implementation of the learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the ELSA Speak application contributes positively to the enhancement of students' pronunciation abilities at MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo.

Prior to the implementation of the treatment, the majority of students experienced difficulties in pronouncing English words accurately. The most frequently observed pronunciation problems involved errors in producing consonant and vowel sounds, as well as inaccuracies in applying appropriate word stress. Furthermore, many students demonstrated a lack of confidence when required to speak English in front of their classmates.

1. Pre-test Results

The pre-test is carried out to determine students' initial pronunciation skills before using the ELSA Speak application.

Table 1. Results of Student Pre-test Pronunciation

Yes	Student Initials	Pronunciation Score	Categories
1	AA	55	Poor
2	AR	60	Fair
3	DA	58	Fair
4	FE	62	Fair
5	AH	50	Poor
6	DN	65	Fair
7	AP	57	Poor
8	CH	61	Fair
9	ED	49	Poor
10	EN	63	Fair

Based on the results of the pre-test, it is known that students' pronunciation skills are still in the low category. Most students are in the poor and fair categories. Students still have difficulty in distinguishing some English sounds that are not found in Indonesian.

Table 2. Pre-test Descriptive Statistics

Number of Students	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Mean Score
32	75	49	59.59

These results show that students' pronunciation skills before treatment are still relatively low, so learning media that can help students practice pronunciation more effectively and interactively.

2. Implementation of Treatment Using ELSA Speak

The treatment was carried out for two cycles using the ELSA Speak application as a technology-based pronunciation learning medium.

In the treatment stage, students perform various pronunciation exercises using the speech recognition feature available on the ELSA Speak application. Students were asked to listen to the pronunciation model of the native speaker, then imitate the pronunciation repeatedly.

The ELSA Speak application automatically provides feedback on students' pronunciation errors through color indicators and explanations of the position of sound errors.

During the learning process, students look more active and enthusiastic than previous learning. The use of smartphones and AI-based media makes students feel more interested in learning pronunciation.

In addition, students can also learn independently without fear of making mistakes because the application provides personalized feedback and does not make students feel embarrassed when they say the wrong word.

3. Post-test results

The post-test is carried out after all treatments are completed to determine the improvement of students' pronunciation skills after using the ELSA Speak application.

Table 3. Results of Post-test Pronunciation for Students

Yes	Student Initials	Pronunciation Score	Categories
1	AA	82	Good
2	AR	85	Good
3	DA	80	Good
4	FE	86	Very Good
5	AH	79	Good
6	DN	88	Very Good
7	AP	81	Good
8	CH	84	Good
9	ED	78	Good
10	EN	87	Very Good

Post-test results showed a significant improvement in students' pronunciation skills after using the ELSA Speak application.

Table 4. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Results

Remarks	Pre-test	Post-test
Highest Score	75	92
Lowest Score	49	70
Mean Score	59.59	82.34
Categories	Fair	Good

Based on the table, it is known that the average score of students increased from 59.59 to 82.34. The improvement shows that the use of the ELSA Speak application is effective in improving students' pronunciation skills.

4. Discussion

The improvement of students' pronunciation skills occurs because the ELSA Speak application provides interactive and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based pronunciation exercises. Through the speech recognition feature, students can find out their pronunciation errors directly and correct them independently.

The results show that the use of ELSA Speak helps students improve their abilities in the following aspects:

1. vowel sounds
2. consonant sounds
3. Become stressed
4. intonation
5. fluency in pronunciation

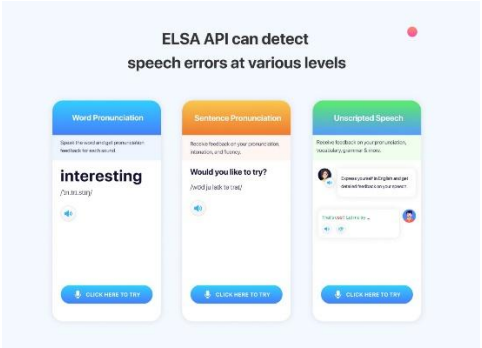
Apart from enhancing students' pronunciation competence, the implementation of the ELSA Speak application also contributes positively to their learning motivation. Throughout the instructional process, students demonstrated greater participation, enthusiasm, and self-confidence when communicating in English.

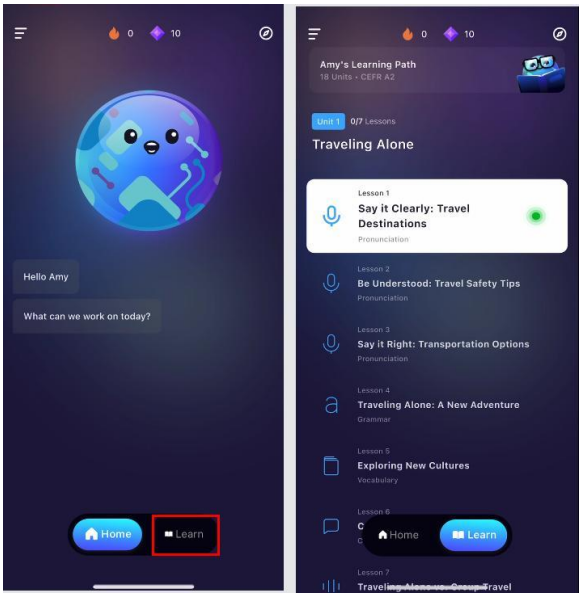
The results of this study are consistent with those reported in previous research, which found that ELSA Speak effectively supports the development of pronunciation skills through the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and automatic speech recognition features.

Furthermore, the use of the ELSA Speak application aligns with the principles of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), a language learning approach that utilizes mobile devices to facilitate flexible and autonomous learning experiences for students.

Therefore, the ELSA Speak application may serve as an effective and innovative alternative medium for pronunciation instruction in English language learning at the Islamic junior secondary school (madrasah tsanawiyah) level.

Figure 1. ELSA Speak App View





CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the ELSA Speak application is effective in enhancing the pronunciation abilities of students at MTs Muhammadiyah 3 Sumberrejo.

The improvement is reflected in the post-test results, which demonstrate a higher average score achieved by students following the use of the ELSA Speak application. Furthermore, the application contributes positively to increasing students' learning motivation, encouraging more active participation during classroom activities, and strengthening their confidence in speaking English.

Therefore, the ELSA Speak application can be regarded as an innovative and effective technology-based medium for pronunciation instruction that aligns with the demands and characteristics of English language learning in the digital era.

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