THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION INTEGRATED WITH DEMONSTRATION METHOD ON STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of using the ELSA Speak Application integrated with the demonstration method on students' pronunciation practice. Pronunciation is an essential aspect of English language teaching that directly influences speaking ability, yet many students face challenges due to native language interference and lack of oral exposure. This research was conducted at SMP Plus Nusantara Medan involving 12 seventh-grade students selected through a purposive sampling technique. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a single group pre-test and post-test design. Data were collected from the results of students' pre-test and post-test scores, which were then analyzed using statistical tests. Before hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted, showing that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous. The result of the paired t-test showed a p-value (sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is significantly smaller than the significance level (α=0.050). It was obtained that the t-statistical value was higher than the table t-value ($43.203 > 2.201$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. The findings demonstrate that the ELSA Speak Application integrated with the demonstration method significantly improved students' pronunciation practice. This approach is recommended as an effective teaching strategy to enhance students' phonetic skills.

Keywords: ELSA Speak Application, Demonstration Method, Pronunciation Practice.

ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menentukan efektivitas penggunaan Aplikasi ELSA Speak yang terintegrasi dengan metode demonstrasi pada praktik pengucapan (pronunciation). Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas tujuh di SMP Plus Nusantara yang terdiri dari 12 siswa. Sampel dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian quasi- eksperimental dengan desain single group pre-test dan post-test.Data dikumpulkan dari hasil pre-test dan post-test. Sebelum pengujian hipotesis, dilakukan uji normalitas dan homogenitas. Hasil uji normalitas menunjukkan bahwa data pre-test dan post-test terdistribusi secara normal. Uji homogenitas juga dilakukan yang menunjukkan bahwa data bersifat homogen.Hasil uji paired t-test menunjukkan nilai p (sig. 2-tailed) = 0.000. Nilai t-statistik dari uji paired sample, kemudian dibandingkan dengan nilai t-tabel dengan df=11. Diperoleh bahwa nilai t-statistik lebih tinggi dari nilai t-tabel ($43.203 > 2.201$). Oleh karena itu, hipotesis nol (H0) ditolak dan hipotesis alternatif (HA) diterima, menunjukkan bahwa Aplikasi ELSA Speak yang terintegrasi dengan metode demonstrasi secara signifikan memengaruhi praktik pengucapan siswa.

Kata Kunci: Aplikasi ELSA Speak, Metode Demonstrasi, Praktik Pengucapan.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of mastering English as they serve as the primary means of oral communication. In practice, pronunciation is a crucial element because it is directly related to sound production and the reception of meaning in verbal interaction.

Mastering accurate pronunciation is not merely about imitating native speakers, but rather about ensuring that the message conveyed can be clearly understood by the listener without causing meaning distortion. In line with this, Aswaty & Indari (2022) emphasize that pronunciation ability includes a deep understanding of

the sound system or phonology that enables the precise production of words and sentences. A minor error in pronouncing a single phoneme can alter the entire meaning of a message; therefore, this aspect must not be neglected in language learning. The importance of accuracy is supported by Andini & Zaitun (2022), who state that pronunciation is vital when one pronounces words that have similar sounds but significantly different meanings.

In reality, however, students often face major obstacles in mastering English pronunciation. The main problems usually stem from mother-tongue interference and limited phonetic knowledge, which make it difficult for students to produce sounds that do not exist in their own language system. This condition was found among seventh-grade students at SMP Plus Nusantara, where their pronunciation skills were still not optimal and had not met the expected curriculum targets. The lack of teacher attention to systematic pronunciation practice and the use of less interactive learning media are the primary causes of students' low confidence in speaking. This is relevant to the study by Pani (2022), which shows that the use of monotonous media in language classes can hinder the development of students' productive skills. Furthermore, Stevani & Ginting (2022) underline that teachers need to pay more attention to the aspect of sound production to improve students' overall speaking ability.

To overcome these issues, the integration of digital technology in language learning has become a necessary innovative solution today. One highly recommended application for practicing pronunciation independently and interactively is ELSA (English Language Speech Assistant) Speak. This artificial intelligence-based application is capable of detecting pronunciation errors with a high degree of accuracy and providing instant feedback. Muamar et al. (2022) reveal that ELSA Speak provides thousands of lessons and diverse topics that are effective in helping students improve their pronunciation in depth. The utilization of this technology aligns with the view of Nugraha et al. (2022), who state that digital-based learning media provide flexibility for students to practice

consistently outside school hours. Support for this technology is also reinforced by Luthfianda et al. (2024) found that instant feedback from digital technology helps students correct pronunciation errors independently and accurately.

In addition to using sophisticated media, the selection of appropriate learning methods, such as the demonstration method, significantly determines the success of knowledge transfer in the classroom. The demonstration method is a teaching technique that directly demonstrates a process or procedure so that students get a concrete picture. Wisudawati & Sulistyowati (2022) explain that this method is very effective for achieving learning objectives through visual presentation aligned with the taught material. In the context of pronunciation, Samad and Ismail (2020) discovered that integrating visual instructions with app-based practice foster a more profound learning experience for students. Susanti (2023) asserts that demonstration helps teachers show how to read words correctly through proper modeling of mouth and tongue positions.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of integrating the ELSA Speak application with the demonstration method on students' pronunciation practice. Through the demonstration method, the teacher acts as a model who shows how the application works and how to produce the correct sounds, while students imitate and practice directly. This research is based on relevant previous studies showing that AI technology can significantly increase student engagement. The results of this study prove that the use of the ELSA Speak application combined with the demonstration method provides a positive impact and a real improvement in the pronunciation skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Plus Nusantara. This integration has proven effective in helping students identify their own errors and improve their articulation techniques with greater confidence

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the one-group pre-test and post-test, involving 12 seventh-grade

students as a sample selected through purposive sampling. The selection of this single-group design was based on the objective conditions at the research site, which only had one class for that grade level, thereby precluding the use of a control group as an external comparison; nonetheless, it was supported by robust data collection instruments in the form of pronunciation practice tests using the reading aloud technique, recorded in audio format and assessed using a standardized rubric covering aspects of fluency, intonation, and pronunciation accuracy.

The research procedure was conducted systematically, beginning with a pre-test to measure students' baseline abilities, followed by the implementation of a treatment involving the integration of the ELSA Speak application with the demonstration method, and concluding with a post-test to measure changes in students' proficiency, with data subsequently analyzed through prerequisite statistical test normality and homogeneity tests and hypothesis testing using a paired-sample t-test. Although the researcher acknowledges the inherent limitations of the one-group design regarding threats to internal validity, such as maturation and testing effects, the research procedures were strictly controlled to ensure that changes in student performance could be attributed to the intervention provided; meanwhile, the limited sample size (N=12) is academically justified as an exploratory small-scale study or pilot study, which emphasizes testing initial effectiveness and the feasibility of integrating digital learning media within an intensive local context rather than broad population generalization.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

The data collection process was conducted through several stages, beginning with a pre-test to identify the initial pronunciation abilities of the 7th-grade students at SMP Plus Nusantara. Based on the assessment of the pre-test, it was found that the students' pronunciation skills were relatively low, with an average score of 53.8. Most students struggled with basic English words due to the influence of their native language and a lack of systematic pronunciation training in previous lessons. Following the pre-test, a treatment phase was implemented where the ELSA Speak application was integrated with the demonstration method. During this phase, the researcher demonstrated the correct mouth, tongue, and lip movements while using the application's features to provide a clear model for the students. The students then practiced independently using the application, which provided instant feedback on their pronunciation accuracy.

After the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate the progress of the students' pronunciation practice. The results showed a significant improvement, with the average score rising to 86.1. Statistical analysis using a paired-sample t-test was conducted to verify the significance of this improvement. The results of the t-test indicated a p-value (sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is much lower than the significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, the t-statistical value was found to be 43.203, which is significantly higher than the t-table value of 2.201 with 11 degrees of freedom. These statistical findings lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), confirming that the ELSA Speak application integrated with the demonstration method is highly effective in improving students' pronunciation practice.

Discussion

The significant increase in students' scores from the pre-test to the post-test demonstrates that the integration of technology and a direct teaching method creates a more effective learning environment. The ELSA Speak application played a crucial role by acting as an interactive assistant that provides artificial intelligence-based feedback, allowing students to identify and correct their errors in real-time. This immediate feedback mechanism addresses the common issue where students often repeat mistakes because they are unaware of the correct pronunciation. Additionally, the variety of topics and interactive features in the application, such as the pronunciation score and color-coded assessments, stimulated students' curiosity and kept them engaged throughout the learning process.

Moreover, the use of the demonstration method complemented the application by providing a human model for the students to follow. While the application provides digital guidance, the teacher's live demonstration helped students understand the physical aspects of sound production, such as the specific positioning of the speech organs. This combination reduced students' anxiety and built their confidence, as they felt more supported by both the technology and the instructor. The structured approach of dividing the class into smaller groups during the demonstration also ensured that every student received adequate attention and could practice efficiently without feeling overwhelmed. Overall, the research findings suggest that this integrated approach is far more successful than traditional lecture-based methods in developing the phonetic skills of junior high school students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and data analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of the ELSA Speak application integrated with the demonstration method has proven to be highly effective in improving the pronunciation practice skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Plus Nusantara Medan. Empirical evidence shows a significant increase in the students' average scores, where the post-test score (86.1) was considerably higher than the pre-test score. The results of the hypothesis testing further reinforce these findings, with a t-statistic value (43.203) greater than the t-table (2.201), leading to the convincing acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). This integration provides a comprehensive positive impact; the ELSA Speak application serves as a sophisticated tool for accurately detecting pronunciation errors and providing instant feedback, while the demonstration method helps students understand and imitate correct mouth, tongue, and lip movements to produce precise English sounds. Therefore, the combination of artificial intelligence technology and appropriate conventional teaching techniques is capable of creating a significant positive contribution to students' phonetic proficiency.

Suggestions

In relation to the findings of this research, several strategic suggestions are proposed to enhance the quality of English language learning in the future. For teachers, it is highly recommended to adopt the ELSA Speak application integrated with the demonstration method as an innovative teaching strategy to boost students' confidence and fluency in communication. Teachers are expected to demonstrate the pronunciation of words or phrases directly as accurate models before students engage in independent practice using the application. For students, the use of this tool is strongly encouraged to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment; however, they must also remain proactive in seeking teacher guidance if they encounter technical or linguistic difficulties. Lastly, for future researchers, this study is expected to serve as a practical reference for exploring the integration of other digital learning media. It is also suggested to conduct further research regarding the long-term effects of using pronunciation technology assistance and to compare its effectiveness with other teaching techniques in more diverse educational settings.

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