

IMPROVING STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION SKILL USING ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION

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SUBMISSION TRACK	A B S T R A C T
Submitted : 03 March 2022 Accepted : 25 March 2022 Published : 31 March 2022	The purpose of this research is to introduce the ELSA Speak Application as media to improve students' pronunciation skills. English Language Speech Assistant is an acronym for ELSA. English Language Speech Assistant can be downloaded for free from AppStore or Google Play, complete with various features to improve the pronunciation and speaking of students with American accents by training them with various exercises to pronounce words/phrases/sentences correctly. Corresponding to the microphone icon that the learner can use directly to speak as the audio has been listened to. This research is an Action Research that aims to improve students' pronunciation skills using ELSA Speak Application. This research discusses how ELSA Speak Application as learning media can improve students' pronunciation skills. The data were collected through a test of pronunciation and interviews in Classroom action research. The researcher made three cycles and gave a score for each cycle. In the first cycle, the students' Average score is 70 points, the second cycle is 75 points and the last cycle is 80 points. ELSA Speak application helps students pronounce a variety of words more easily and comprehensively. The results showed that the use of the ELSA Speak Application has provided convenience and benefits for students in improving their English Pronunciation skills by using the ELSA Speak application.
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Introduction

English Pronunciation is a basic skill that is very important in developing speaking, listening, and speaking English skills. By learning pronunciation, you will know how to pronounce a word correctly (Cakmak, 2019). This is so that learners understand how to pronounce words in English to avoid speaking or reading errors. The importance of pronunciation in English because mispronouncing words in English can be fatal. Mispronunciation of consonants or vowels in a word can cause word differences which will result in incorrect meanings. To be able to understand the difference in pronunciation.

The scope of teaching pronunciation consists of three main topics, namely, sound. A language learner needs to be able to identify and define the sound of a language by writing it using phonetic symbols. In English, this symbol is used differently depending on the British, or American accent. The components of this sound are Vowels and consonants which are segmental features.

The rhythm of English speech is determined or depends on the unity of the tone, word or group of words containing one stressed syllable. next Intonation (intonation: rising and falling) Intonation is the rising and falling of the tone. This intonation will greatly affect the meaning. The ability to identify and distinguish sounds is a basic skill in English that every learner must possess, especially in speaking and listening material. This is because the ability to distinguish phonemes in English will help them (learners) to help them understand more quickly what they hear/hear (Arashnia, 2016). The

purpose of learning pronunciation is so that English learners are able to pronounce a word like the accent of a native, but in a simple way so that language learners can pronounce the word accurately enough so that it can be more easily understood by the other person. This is because perfect accents are very difficult for non-native language learners (Begum, 2016).

There are bound to be problems arising from teaching pronunciation in the classroom from either the teacher or the students. In contrast to writing that focuses on signs on paper that are silent. It concentrates on receiving sound in the ear and direct contact in face-to-face activities (O'Connor., 1998). First, they tend to be less interested in the subject. Second, teachers' knowledge of pronunciation contrasts with practice (Gerald, 2001). Many sayings have been possessed by the teacher, however; there is no time to practice and produce words in daily activities that allow the teacher not to have difficulty pronouncing words. The average teacher's English habits can be seen when the teacher teaches in the classroom. Since English is not the main language in Indonesia, English teachers have limited time to consume it regularly. This may be due to the teacher's mastery of many vocabularies. Teachers need to learn to speak in class fully so that students enthusiastic about joining the class. Sometimes, the teacher still makes mistakes in giving examples of sound words. Indeed, students have the teacher as a model for correcting pronunciation learning and sound still dominates (McCrocklin, 2015), while teaching in pronunciation classes is lacking (Baker, 2016). This leaves students with less space to express words freely. For the most part, students may accept pronunciation habits from different places and people (Tlazalo Tejada, 2017) making them stray from the distraction of knowledge.

There are two accents in English, British and American. Both have their style and characteristics in spelling words, making it difficult for students to predict each word. Another, the basic problem in English pronunciation is to construct the appropriate set of squares with English sounds (O'Connor., 1998).

Advances in technology have brought many opportunities to the world of education. New trends in educational technology have provided many innovations with the emergence of the term mobile learning which refers to the implementation of learning with the support of mobile phones and internet access. One type of mobile learning is Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) which is related to the use of mobile technology in the language learning process (all languages) (El-Hussein, 2010). MALL has several advantages, including multimedia capabilities, internet access, social networking, and fast feedback. But in addition to the potential benefits, MALL may also have hidden obstacles or obstacles. This research aims to improve students' pronunciation skills by using the Learning Speech Assistant (ELSA) English Speak Application. The English Learning Speech Assistant (ELSA) application was designed by Vu Van in 2015 and is based in San Francisco, United States. it utilizes Artificial Intelligence (AI) and speech recognition to help improve and perfect English pronunciation (Pilar, 2013). ELSA Speak Application uses speech recognition technology that can help users to help improve their English pronunciation. ELSA Speak application provides more lessons and more topics for users to practice pronunciation, starting from practicing English words, phrases, and sentences. Another feature that ELSA Speak application offers is an interactive dictionary, which will help users how to pronounce the word or phrase they are looking for.

In every learning process in the classroom, every student and teacher experience some difficulties or situations that do not support the learning process, including the

teaching techniques used to make students bored, which is only glued to the reading text and this happens to the students of the Easy English Course. Therefore, we need interesting learning media so that students and teachers can carry out maximum learning and can motivate student learning, especially in pronunciation and speaking skills. The learning process can use online learning educational must not only be achieved in class (Ismail, 2019). Thus, students can easily learn through interesting media around them because almost all of them are active internet users. This research focuses on implementing the ELSA Speak application to support students' pronunciation skills. This was done to determine the effect of using the ELSA Speak application in increasing students' pronunciation skills.

Research Method

This study uses classroom action research (CAR) as the research design. Qualitative and quantitative are also used to obtain data regarding the use of the ELSA Speak Application to improve students' pronunciation skills. In this study, there are several learning cycles which include planning, action and observation, as well as the process of reflection. First, the researcher plans to use ELSA Speak in designing and managing lesson plans and teaching methods. Then the researchers began to apply the Elsa Speak Application in the teaching and learning process. To find out the response and development of students while using it, observations were carried out in stages. Finally, reflection is done to find out whether the overall learning is clear or lacking. In this case, the subject is students of Easy English Course (EEC) at Basic class level which consists of 30 students. This research was conducted during a pronunciation teaching course. For data collection, researchers used several instruments such as a list of observations and questionnaires. Test and non-test techniques were also used. To determine the students' pronunciation ability, a test technique was applied by giving a word spelling test. As for the non-test, interviewed several students about 10 Easy English Courses (EEC) according to their perceptions and responses to the use of the ELSA Speech Application. To determine the students' pronunciation ability, the researcher gave a pre-test and post-test as well. The same test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores. To analyze the data and check the truth and information obtained in this research. The researcher used triangulation analysis to compare the data.

Result and Discussion

This section discusses the research results and discussion. The findings are taken from the cycle of learning activities in the classroom and the final score towards the post-test. This is also supported by the results of interviews and questionnaires. Presented in the score table displayed in the T-Test table. To find out and understand the use of the ELSA Speak application by students, students' answers in interviews were used. This research was conducted on students of the Easy English Course (EEC) Elementary Class, in 9 meetings. In classroom action research is divided into three cycles, each of which consists of 3 meetings. each cycle is the same, namely planning for change, acting and observing, and the learning process.

There were three meetings in the teaching and learning process in the first cycle. To learn to pronounce using ELSA Speak, there are several plans used by researchers, namely, designing, and organizing lesson plans. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the teaching method used. In the preliminary stage, the activity begins with greetings, explaining the teaching material and learning objectives. before starting

teaching and learning activities previously always preceded by brainstorming involving students in the learning process. After that, the topic is explained by giving examples. Since this is a study class, learn about how students hear words incorrect speech. Word repetition and training are the main activities. The researcher gives the text to be read periodically before the students pronounce it. Then the researcher showed the ELSA Speak Application downloaded from the Smartphone and explained the benefits of the features available in the application for learning pronunciation. then the students were asked to start downloading the application on android. For the core activity, the researcher asked students to read the entire text aloud one by one to determine students' pronunciation skills before using the ELSA Speak application. While learning, take advantage of the app. Researchers provide training and operating instructions for ELSA Speak. Students can also choose a skill level and customize their pronunciation skills. Here, the researcher observes all student activities when students use ELSA Speak in the classroom. Students are very enthusiastic and interested in learning. get the opportunity to find out the mistakes and errors in pronouncing words.

Corrections and feedback are provided immediately. To reflect on the learning process, the researcher assessed word spelling and reading text. Aspects that are following the assessment include grammatical accuracy, word accuracy, accuracy, and understanding. Each has a different estimation score. Also, to know more about the application, application, and answers such as oral test. Performance tests are set at the end of the cycle. The results of the study said that the students' pronunciation scores were significant and increased. In the initial study before the post-test, the average score of the students' pronunciation test was 60 out of 20 students, while the maximum score was 65. In Cycle 1 after using the ELSA Speak application, the students' scores increased by an average of 70 from 20 students. the maximum score was 75. It is shown in the following table:

	Preliminary	Cycle 1
Fluency	1	2
Accuracy In Grammar	2	3
Accuracy In Vocabulary	2	3
Appropriacy	1	2
Comprehensibility	2	3

Table 1. The students' Pronunciation performance in Cycle 1

From the table above. This shows that the performance of students in cycle one increased in the preliminary study. Second, in Cycle two, the teaching and learning process is similar to the first cycle where the researcher uses CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) in teaching. Here, the main difference is the learning activities while using the ELSA Speak Application. Students are asked to try to choose the next more difficult stage in vocabulary and exercises such as keywords, words, and linking each word to another word. This is done repeatedly to get the better pronunciation. For the results, students get a better score than cycle one. The average score of the students' pronunciation test is 75 out of 20 students while the highest score is 80. The students' pronunciation scores in cycle two are presented in the following table:

	Preliminary	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Fluency	1	2	3

Accuracy In Grammar	2	3	3
Accuracy In Vocabulary	2	3	3
Appropriacy	1	2	3
Comprehensibility	2	3	3

Table 2. The students' Pronunciation performance in Cycle 2

The above table has shown that the students' pronunciation achievement got significant. This can be seen from the score in cycle two. Third cycle or last cycle, the learning activities were still the same as the previous cycle. Learning begins with a greeting, changing ideas, and directing learning objectives. Some drills and more practice are given to determine student progress in learning. In addition, many assignments and materials are given to trigger students in learning to recite. Inevitably, the rate of increase. Students get more complex exercises in m words in the form of sentences. Researchers also provide feedback and evaluation of learning by asking about difficulties and developments. Questions and answers were also conducted to determine the extent to which students could pronounce words well and clearly in practice. In Cycle Three, the student's score was very good where the score was 80 out of 20 students. The highest score is 85. The table below represents the students' pronunciation progress.

	Preliminary	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Fluency	1	2	3	4
Accuracy In Grammar	2	3	3	4
Accuracy In Vocabulary	2	3	3	4
Appropriacy	1	2	3	4
Comprehensibility	2	3	3	4

Table 3. The students' Pronunciation performance in Cycle 3

As has been shown above, students' achievement in hiding words is greatly improved. That is, the ELSA Speak application can support students in improving pronunciation. These facilities were obtained by the students. There must be a difference between instructions such as what teachers have done so far and modern methods such as the use of Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) in learning to pronounce. These results are following research (Elimat, 2014).

Findings were also obtained from interviews according to students' perceptions of the use of the ELSA Speak Application in the pronunciation class. Student explanations are shown in the following transcript below: Researcher : "What do you get by using the ELSA Speak Application in learning pronunciation?" First Student: "I am interested in using this application to learn to pronounce. The ELSA Speak application gives me simplicity and more facilities in learning. My speech can be corrected and immediately revised as a native speaker says. I have a lot of vocabulary and practice ". Second Student: "I enjoy using the ELSA Speak application in learning. This application can help me improve my speaking. I can learn more English words even long sentences. Also, I can learn phonetic and phonological aspects. I can learn words -said anytime and I was". Third Student : "This is a good app to learn to speak and pronounce. I am again going abroad to meet tourists to speak and not speak English, but with this App I feel I am speaking with English. My speaking is corrected by native .I see in using it". Forth Student : "The ELSA Speak application has supported me in improving my pronunciation skills. I can pronounce many words correctly. This app

allowed me to learn more about words, phrases, and even sentences well. I am very excited to join the class" .

It can be seen from the result of interview above, that English Language Speech Assistant or ELSA Speak application allows students to learn pronunciation more easily and quickly. This is especially useful in providing instant correction and feedback. The students show that in learning to pronounce words, this is following research (Sarmita Samad, 2019) which states that the ELSA Speak application is suitable for learning pronunciation. There are many categories of content available which are good such as courses related to English proficiency level. Indeed, features such as vowel and consonant sounds, diphthongs, syllables, and word stress can be references for studying. From the students' participation to the use of the ELSA Speak Application in pronunciation, the students' excitement was quite high. Attitudes in learning can be formed and controlled. They can learn on their own. This statement is supported by research (Haryadi, 2020) which reveals that pronunciation applications can provide several advantages and positive effects for independent learning and participation in class. Further findings were taken from student questionnaires. 80% of students said that they liked using ELSA Speak to learn to pronounce, and 85% of students felt that they felt and improved while using it. The evidence mentioned that the ELSA Speak Application can provide more stimulus and input to students in learning to pronounce and even speak. Very nice and convenient for students to use in the classroom. Apart from that, it is a new app which provides many features like student grades in English from beginner to advanced. Teachers can use it at any time to support in pedagogical design as well.

Conclusion

Based on the data and discussion above, this research concludes as follows: ELSA Speak application can support and improve students' pronunciation skills and motivation. This is evidenced by student achievement and the value obtained. Students can hear and imitate sounds similar to their mother tongue. Student voice recordings can be directly accepted in the system to be corrected for the best. Indeed, students can improve their English vocabulary. This app is successful in getting students involved in language learning. Indeed, in practice, students can be effectively involved in the learning process and get more motivated to take advantage of the ELSA Speak Application in the pronunciation class. the features available on the ELSA Speak application allow students to have the independence to know a lot of English vocabulary and phrases in their original form. In addition, in learning English Pronunciation helps students improve their abilities significantly. Students also benefit from the features available in ELSA Speak to support language learning flexibly, effectively, efficiently, and get learning materials easily.

This learning using the ELSA Speak application has the potential to help to learn English Pronunciation. Finally, regarding the use of technology in language teaching, there must be some considerations according to the readiness of the students and the application used. The right choice of application of language skills must be used before being used in learning and learning so that learning is effective and efficient. Technology is only a complement in language teaching. English teachers cannot easily access their own English. The key to successful language teaching also comes from the teacher's pedagogy of how teachers can manage and handle classroom activities. In addition, teachers must know the needs and desires of students. Lastly, English teachers

should consider the ELSA SPEAK Application as the right technology to teach pronunciation skills.

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