THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ELSA SPEAKING APPLICATION IN IMPROVING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract

The use of technology has become an important part of the learning language. It helps the teachers to make the effective and attractive teaching language process. Therefore, this paper investigated the effectiveness of Elsa application in improving English pronunciation of students in junior high school level and described how the students' attitudes toward the use of Elsa application in learning English pronunciation. The data were collected by using tests including pretest and post-test, and then they were analyzed quantitatively. Based on the result of tests, it was found that t-count is higher than t-table (2.92 > 1.6773) in level of sigificant 005. It indicates that Ho was refused and Ha was accepted which means Elsa application is effective in improving students' pronunciation. Furthermore, the result taken from questionnaire shows that the students shows positive attitude toward the use of Elsa app in learning English pronunciation. Therefore, it can be stated that Elsa app is not only effective to use in teaching pronunciation but also effective in maintaining students' attitude in learning English pronunciation. Thus, to enrich the literature on teaching English, the writers suggest that the English teacher to use any application to improve students' English proficiency.

Keywords: ELSA application, Teaching pronunciation, English pronunciation

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the country where English is positioned as a foreign language. Considering the importance of English, Indonesian government has decided to put English as one of the subjects which is taught at school. English is considered as important subject to learn since many fields in human life especially education uses English as the languauge to communicate and share knowledge and information. There are four skills to be mastered in learning English: speaking, listening, writing and reading. Speaking is considered important because it is used to communicate with people. According to Norbert (2002, p.167), Speaking, as one of four skills in English language learning, is considered as one of the hardest things in learning language. When a teacher taught English especially in spoken class, the teacher absolutely involved pronunciation because it is the important part of spoken cycle. As stated by Brown (2001, p. 267), the conversation class is something of an enigma in language teaching. Thus, there are many problems faced by the students in speaking, starting from feeling ashamed and afraid of speaking until wondering how to pronounce a word. Thus, this become the reason why the researchers tend to analyze students' pronunciation.

Sound or combination is causing different meanings (Dardjowidjojo, 2009). It will, thus, lead the hearers to misunderstand what is being tried to deliver. For instance, the word leave contains the sounds /ɪ/, /i:/ and /v/. When

the sounds /iː/ is pronounced /ɪ/ that finally results in /lɪv/, the meaning is changed because /lɪv/ will be interpreted as the word live. Then, the hearers will misunderstand the speech because the speaker is unintentionally misleading the speech by performing mispronunciation. In learning pronunciation, students have to listen and repeat the sounds since it is common method of teaching pronunciation in English. However, nowaday, people can learn pronunciation from technology to correct error pronunciation.

The use of technology has become an important part of the learning process in and out of the class. Every language class prefers to use some form of technology as teaching media. Technology has been used to both help and improve language learning. Technology enables teachers to adapt classroom activities through enhancing the language learning process. Technology helps the teachers to make the effective and attractive teaching language process. Teachers can use technology at class through applying a computer-based language activity. According to Harmer (2007), using computer-based language activities improve cooperative learning in learners.

In order to improve students' pronunciation skill, the teacher can use technology. One of the media is a pronunciation tool/software. In this paper, the researchers used ELSA Speaking application that can be used to help students in pronunciation practice.

ELSA Speaking application is one of the flexible programmers that features (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p.456). ELSA Speaking is virtual language teacher software, used by individuals, language schools, universities and corporations around the world.

There are some previous studies which are related to improving students' English pronunciation by using technology. The first previous study was done by Elimat and Seileek (2014) which is entitled "Automatic speech recognition technology as an effective means for teaching

pronunciation''. The second previous study was done by Alipanahi (2014) entitled "Technology and English Language Pronunciation." Then, paper of Al-Qudah (2012) entitled "Improving English Pronunciation Computer Assisted Programs in Jordanian Universities."

Considering that there are different application used and participant employed, thus, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of ELSA Speaking application in improving students' pronunciation. Furthermore, the researchers also identify the students' attitude towards the use of this application in learning English pronunciation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation is one of the most important skills in English language teaching. Pronunciation is not only as the part of English subject in the class, but it can also influence student's speaking performance. It is the act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech. In other words, it can also be said that it is a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood. In the senses, pronunciation entails the production and reception of sounds of speech and the achievement of the meaning (Kristina, Diah, et al, 2006). Thus, the words being pronounced should be understandable (intelligible). Additionally, Harmer (2007, p.248) stated that teaching pronunciation doesn't only make students aware of different sound and sound feature, but it can also improve their speaking immeasurably.

In fact, it is not easy because there are many problems faced by students when learning pronunciation. One of the main difficulties faced by EFL students in learning English pronunciation is the remarkable variety of accents. British English and American English are two varieties of the English language with their separate development according to historical, political and social changes, therefore, it is evident that there is no

superiority or inferiority as regards British English and American English (Han, 2019). However, as a language learner, it is very important to observe the characteristics and differences in language use.

Technique and activities to teach pronunciation are multifarious from highly focused techniques, such as drilling, to more broad-reaching action actions such as getting students to notice exact pronunciation features within the listening text (Kelly, 2000, p. 15). One of the main ways in which pronunciation is practiced in the classroom is through drilling. In its most basic from, drilling basically involves the teacher saying a word or structure, and getting the class to repeat it. Drilling aims to help students get the better pronunciation of language items and to help them remember new items (Kelly, 2000, p. 16).

Furthermore, not only focusing on the how technique and activities in teaching pronunciation but also the teacher should know how to assess students' pronunciation. Goodwin as cited in Celce-Murcia (2006) presents three types of pronunciation assessment: diagnostic evaluation, ongoing feedback, and classroom achievement testing. Diagnosis is a decision- making process. Teachers are constantly making decisions about individual or group of students in achieving learning objectives. Onthe other hand, ongoing Feedback can give learners a sense of their progress and indicates where they need to focus their attention for improvement. Besides, Classroom achievement tests evaluate learners' progress according to what have been taught and are more focused than diagnostic assessment. The tests should resemble the classroom teaching tasks in order to reduce the effect of an unfamiliar format on learner performance.

In teaching English the use of technology has become an important part of the learning process in and out of the class. Rodinadze and Zarbazoia (2012) add that technology helps learners and teachers in studying the course materials owing to its fast access. Advancements in technology have a key role in preparing learners to use what they learn in any subject matter to finding their place in the world labor-force. Technology facilitates learners' learning and serves as a real educational tool that allows learning to occur. One of the technology that can be used in theaching pronunciation is pronunciation software, pronunciation software is a way in which a language or a particular word or sound is spoken through software as media that combines all commands to process information and has a function as an interactive media (Levy, 2006). One of the best ways to practice and improve someone' spoken English is to use English pronunciation software.

There are some reasons why pronunciation software is a great tool that can be used to practice spoken English. First, the software program serves animated diagrams that teach the correct tongue placement for each vowel and consonant sound. Someone can see the correct mouth position for each sound, not just hear the sounds being pronounced. Second, the best software programs have speech recognition features that give someone immediate feedback him know if he is making the words sounds correct. People can pronounce word over and over and the program will tell the users when they pronounce the words perfectly. Third, English pronunciation software is convenient and cost-effective Someone does not have pronunciation class, just sit at home or office computer and practice his pronunciation using the exercise provided. The researches use software in quasi-experiment class, namely ELSA Speaking application. ELSA Speaking is one flexible programme that proviides some features, such as it is designed to exercise the learners to say the words correctly such as vowel, consonant, word stress (Samad & Aminullah, 2019, p.56). With over 750 hours of material. Major features include multimedia video, digitized sound, and state-of-the-art speech recognition. The app

currently offers three main exercise types: pronunciation, intonation and conversation training.

In Pronunciation exercise, Users speak the proposed word or phrase and get the feedback (with a color code) for each phoneme, as well as phonetic hints to fix existing errors. On the other hand, in Intonation exercise, Users practice word syllable stress as well as sentence intonation and rhythm, while in Conversation exercise,

METHOD

To achieve the research objectives, the researchers applied quantitative research method through applying quasi-experimental design. Creswell (2012, p.302) states that in an experimental design, the researcher compares scores for different interventions on an outcome. In addition, White and Sabarwal (2014, p.2) state that "Quasi experimental methods that involve the creation of a comparison group are most often used when it is not possible to randomize individual and control groups."

In choosing the sample, the researchers apply convenient random sampling. Thus, this study employed two classess of tenth grade students of Private Islamic Junior High School in Kuningan in the academic year 2019/2020 which consisted of 30 students of each class.

There are two instruments used, namely tests and questionnaires. Tests are used in order to identify the effectiveness of Elsa application, while questionnaires are used to explore students' atttitude towards the use of Elsa app in learning English pronunciation.

Tests comprise of two, namely pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is administered before the treatment, while post-test are administered after the treatment is implemented. The tests are given to both group of students, namely control class and experimental class. On the other hand, the questionnaires are given only after the participant get the treatment. Thus, questionnaires are given to the experimental class.

After the tests are administered, then the researchers calculate them by using rubric of pronunciation scoring s attached in Table 1.

In analyzing the tests, there are several steps conducted, namely tests of validity and reliability, test of normal distribution, test of homogeneity, and test of hypotheses. Therefore, in this research, the researchers posed two hypotheses to measured, namely:

H_a: Elsa application is effective in improving students' English pronunciation.

H_o: Elsa application isn't effective in improving students' English pronunciation.

Table 1. Rubric of Pronunciation Scoring

Pronunciation Assessment	Precentage score	Description
0.0-0.4	50%	Common do a mistakes in phonemic, pressure and intonation that causes the message is not transferred well
0.5-1.4	60%	Common do a mistakes in phonemic, pressure and intonation that causes the message is not transferred well sometimes
1.5-2.4	70%	There were some mistakes in phonemic, pressure and intonation but the message is transferred well
2.5-3.0	80%	Sometimes do a mistakes in pronouncing, but the message always transferred well

After those tests are applied, then the researchers come to the conclusion that:

If $t_{count} \geq t_{table}$, then there is not significant different. (Ho refused Ha accepted).

$t_{count} \leq t_{table}$, there is significant different. (Ho accepted Ha refused).

The second research objective is taken based on the result of questionnaire. The questionnaire is distributed to the participants in experimental class in order to explore the students' attitude towards the use of Elsa application in learning English pronunciation. The questionnaire was adapted from Ms. Nashriyah (2014). There were nineteen questions posed. The scores are strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). Afterwards, the scores were summed up and then were related to the range scale of attitude, as seen in Table 5.

Highest score : 50 x 5 = 250
Lowest score : 50 x 1 = 50
Interval   : (250 – 50) : 5 = 40

Table 2. Attitude Level

Range	Attitude Level
Highly Positive	204 – 244
Positive	163 – 203
Neutral	122 – 162
Negative	81 – 121
Highly Negative	40 – 80

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Effectiveness of Elsa Applicationi in Improving Students' English Pronunciation

To meet with the first research objective, the researchers used tests (pre-test and post-test) which are administered to both group of students. In scoring the test, there are three aspects assessed in pronunciation skill (phonemic, pressure and intonation). After the scores are taken, then several tests are conducted, as follow.

The first is tests of validity and reliability. Based on the result, it shows that the data are all valid and reliable. Then, the researcher might continue to the next test, which is test of normal distribution that is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Test of Normal Distribution

Statistics	Experimental Class		Comparison of Class	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	63,34	84,1	62,78	81,02
SD	4,1792	3,984	4,448	3,4672
X^2_{count}	2,24	2,31	4,36	9,47
X^2_{table}	9,49	9,49	9,49	9,49
Decision	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal

There were criteria from the data of normal distribution test is if $X2count < X^2table$ then the data was normally distributed and if $X2count > X^2table$ then the data was not normally distributed. Then, the level of significance as the result of the normal distribution test would be compared with the alpha level (0,05).

Based on Table 2, it could be seen that the score of pretest-posttest's significant level in normal distribution test (X2table) was 9.49. The score X²count of the pretest experimental and control class were 4.17 and 4.44 while the score of X²count of post-test experimental and control class were 3.98 and 3.46. It meant that X²count< X²table and pretest-posttest data in control and experimental classes were normally distributed.

Afterwards, the step is continued to the test of homogeneity. The result of homogeneity test is attached in Table 4.

Table 4. The result of Homogeneity Test

Class	Variances	F_{count}	$F_{table}0,05$	Decision
Pre Control	62.78	0.88	4.04	Homogen
Pre Experimental	63.34			
Post-Control	81.62	1.32	4.04	Homogen
Post-Experimental	84.10			

The homogeneity test criteria in this test were if Fcount<Ftable, then both classes were declared homogenous, and if Fcount>Ftable, then both classes were declared not homogenous. The level of significance as the result of the homogeneity of variances test was compared with the alpha level. The alpha level was set at 0.05.

Based on Table 3, it is found that the score of level significance pretest-posttest in experimental and control class was 4.04. The score of ^{F}count pre-test experimental and control class was 0.88. Thus, the level of significance was higher than the alpha (0.88 < 4.04). In addition, the score of Fcount post test of experimental and control classes was 1.32. Level significance was higher than alpha (1.32 < 4.04). It meant that the variances of pretest-posttest data in the experimental and control classes were homogenous.

After identifying that the test are normally distributed and homogen, then the researchers applied the t-test.

Table 5. The result of T-test

Class	Total of Students	t_{count}	t_{table}
Control	25	0.46	1,6773
Experimental	25	2.92	

Based on table 5, the results of t-test calculations of the data Experimental class and control class obtained ^{t}count = 0.46 and 2.92 in which the degree of table was at the significant level (α = 0.05) was 1,6773. It could be confirmed that ^{t}count is higher than ^{t}table (2.92 >1,6773). It indicated that Ho was refused and Ha was accepted. Therefore, the Elsa application is effective in improving students' English pronunciation.

The Students' Attitude Towards the Use of Elsa Application In Learning English Pronunciation

For the assignment aspect, there were collected the total response to the questionnaire was 176 (Positive category) for statement 13, 178 (Positive category) for statement 14, 176 (Positive category) for statement 15, 194 (Positive category) for the statement 16, and 178 (Positive category) for the statement 17 (Positive category). With the average 180.4, falling in the interval 163 – 203, it meant that the treatment given by the teacher during the classroom activity, especially in the assignment aspect was categorized as a Positive category. In other words, the students' interest in the assignments and the topics since using the Elsa application was good.

For the overall aspect, there were collected the total response of the questionnaire was 176 (Positive category) for statement 18 and 194 (Positive category) for statement 19. With the

average 185, falling in the interval 163 – 203, it meant that the treatment given by the teacher during the classroom activity, especially in the assignment aspect was categorized as a Positive category. In other words, the students' interest in the assignments and the topics since using the Elsa application was good.

All in all, it could be concluded that from the number of respondents as many as 50 students, most of the respondents assessed the ELSA application in learning pronunciation in the high category, there were 183 when categorized as falling in the interval 163 - 203. This meant that the use of ELSA application in learning pronunciation was categorized as Positive so that the implementation of ELSA application in the learning pronunciation can be carried out optimally. The ELSA app was applied to the material travel and business. In the use of the app, the class was divided into five groups. Each group chooses one of them to bring the phone to the classroom so there were five students' brought the phone which had installed the ELSA app. One of them as a Master (clue giver) and the other as Audiences in each group.

Besides, there were some difficulties during the treatment. Such as, some students were busy in the class, less attention to the explanations of the researcher. It made some students feel confused, could not follow the classroom activity at the turn. Besides that, there were only a few students who have an android phone. Also, the time spent on the treatment was lacking because of just one meeting.

However, the use of the Elsa app was proven to improve the students' pronunciation skills. It was seen from the score of post-test in experiment class, compared with the control class. The total average score of the pretest in the experiment class was 63.34 and post-test in the experimental class was 84.1, and pretest in the control class was 62.78, and the post-test in the control class was 81.02. The total average of post-test in the experimental class was higher than the control class (84.1> 81.02). It indicated that the Elsa app has significantly improved students' pronunciation skills.

CONCLUSION

The researcher can be written the conclusion that there was a significant effect on students after using ELSA app in learning pronunciation. This was evidenced by the results obtained from the statistical calculations that have been done.

Based on the statistical calculations of the t-test, there was an increase of score before and after during the treatment using the ELSA app. It could be seen in the appendix of pretest and posttest.

ELSA app also could make the students more easily to practice some words and sentences. They were more enjoyable to learn the material easy to play with this app. The students could not be stuffy, boring sleepy, and similar, because they were asked to take part during the lesson, their attention would be focused on the materials being presented without making any other negative action, and minimize the mistakes of pronouncing the words.

Also, the students' attitude in experimental class and control class during the lesson that most of the students were more dominant to have the positive indicator than the negative indicator, including the aspect of cognitive, affective, and behavioral. This indicated that most of the students have a good attitude in the classroom during the lesson. However, the result also showed a comparison between the students' attitudes in the experimental class and control class. Students' attitude in the experimental class was higher than in the control class. It was shown by the data that the total students of in the experimental class was more than in the control class.

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