

The Use of Elsa Speak as the Pronunciation Learning of Students English Education Study Program at the UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the use of Elsa Speak as a pronunciation learning tool for English Education Study Program students at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The research method used is qualitative method with data obtained from interviews and questionnaires with participants totalling 20 students. Data was collected through pronunciation tests before and after using Elsa Speak and questionnaires to evaluate students' perceptions of using this application. The results showed that using Elsa Speak significantly improved the students' English pronunciation skills. In addition, most students responded positively to using this application in their learning. The implication of this study is the importance of utilizing technology in learning English pronunciation and the need to integrate Elsa Speak into the English Education Study Program.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Elsa Speak; Mobile Assisted Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication that involves the use of sounds, words, and grammar. Language is a complex and multifaceted system that allows individuals to express their thoughts and emotions, and to interact with others in a variety of ways. It is a uniquely human ability that is shaped by culture and experience and plays a critical role in cognitive development, social interaction, and cultural identity (Astina et al., 2020). In conclusion, language is a fundamental aspect of human communication and cognition, for social interaction, cultural identity, and intellectual development.

English is one of the most important languages in the world. In English, four important skills must be mastered. The four skills that must be mastered in English are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to research (Sadiku, 2015), these four skills are important components of comprehensive English language skills. Listening comprehension allows individuals to interact with native speakers and understand diverse speaking contexts. Speaking skills help in communicating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively. Mastery of reading skills allows access to a wide range of information in English while writing skills enable individuals to express themselves in writing appropriately.

In communication, one important part that should not be missed is pronunciation. Because pronunciation is no less important than the four skills above that students must master in English. Pronunciation is related to certain sounds in a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of individual sounds, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), and how the sound is projected (sound quality) (Kholis, 2021). Therefore, the pronunciation teaching must appear effective so that it could encourage students to improve their pronunciation.

According to (Plailek, T. & Essien, A. M., 2021), English pronunciation problems in first-year English major students always occur in class and affect their performance in class activities. This pronunciation problem affects their communicative abilities more because speaking English is not just about saying words or sentences. They usually cannot pronounce English, which makes them less confident in pronunciation. There are several phonological difficulties faced by Indonesian students in sound, stress, rhythm, and intonation which increase their interest and competence in improving English pronunciation.

Previous researchers who researched Elsa Speak which was relevant to this research are conducted by (Kholis, 2021). This research states that Elsa Speak is an English pronunciation application that could improve students' pronunciation skills well and effectively. According to (Anggraini, 2022), believes that the Elsa Speak application has provided convenience and benefits for students in improving their English pronunciation skills by using the Elsa Speak application. Another researcher who has researched Elsa Speak is Belinda Lesmana, the results show that the Elsa Speak application could improve the speaking skills of grade 8 students at UPT SPF SMPN 17 Makassar.

To help students become better at pronunciation, the researchers conducted using an application platform called ELSA Speak. ELSA Speak is a pronunciation learning program, one of the software and digital platforms that has developed into a tool for learning languages today (Kissova, 2019). Elsa Speak is an application that functions for learning English, especially for learning to speak and pronounce, which was founded in 2015 by Vu Van. The ELSA Speak app offers several options based on the user's level of English proficiency. With Elsa Speak, students could improve their speaking and pronunciation skills outside of class by using Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) (Loewen et al., 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation

The students of EFL have gone to school for more than ten years and during that time they always have difficulties expressing their ideas (Plailek, T. & Essien, A. M. 2021). These problems are caused by students' inadequate pronunciation. Students need to have good pronunciation because pronunciation is important. According to Astina, Nurhamdah, & Amzah. (2020), pronunciation is a very important part of mastering a foreign language, especially English. It is related to speaking, listening, and reading. A bad pronunciation could have a bad impact on those skills. However, with good pronunciation, people can communicate well with others and can convey their intentions to others, so they can understand what they want to say.

MALL

According to (Loewen et al., 2019), Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) is an approach that assists and enhances language learning through the use of mobile devices.

MALL has evolved from Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and m-learning. It differs from CALL for its personal use and portability across different contexts. However, it mirrors m-learning as they both focus on contextualized learning, flexibility, and active community participation of the learner. Additionally, MALL exploits key mobile technologies for language learning such as pocket electronic dictionaries, personal digital assistants (PDAs), mobile phones, MP3 players, and tablet PC (Çakmak, 2019)

Elsa Speak

According to Astina, Nurhamdah, & Amzah. (2020), ELSA is an English Language Speech Assistant. ELSA is an app that could help people, to pronounce English words clearly and confidently. Elsa is an app that uses cutting-edge speech recognition technology to teach people how to speak English with a neutral and international American accent, using advanced speech recognition technology. The most reliable and useful test for determining a person's level of English ability. Elsa Speak users will get lots of lessons and more topics to practice pronunciation, starting from practicing English words, phrases, and sentences. An interactive dictionary is another feature provided by Elsa Speak, which will help users pronounce the words or phrases they are looking for.

METHOD

The study of the research uses qualitative research. In this research, the researchers more focus on the pronunciation of the students English Education Study Program at the UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The purpose of this study is to know the effect of the students' use of Elsa Speak on students' pronunciation like saying alphabet, words, or sentences in English (Kahilo & et al., 2016). From this research, the researchers hope to provide useful information about the effectiveness of the use of Elsa Speak applications in increasing the pronunciation of students English Education Study Program at the UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto.

The first data collection in this research is an interview to get data from students about their experience using the Elsa Speak application and how the application helps them to improve their pronunciation (Ricci et al., 2019). In addition, the questionnaires were also used in this research to get data on their opinions from students using the Elsa Speak application to see if there is an increase in their pronunciation. From this research, the researchers hope to provide useful information about the effectiveness of the use of Elsa Speak applications in increasing the pronunciation of students of the English Education Study Program at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto.

Techniques of Collecting Data

The data collection of this research is the interview method. In this research, the interview used is a semi-structured interview. The researchers have a list of pre-arranged questions, but the researchers also add additional questions or change the order of the questions. The subject of the interview are student English Education Study Program at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. These researchers also use questionnaires to obtain data from students English Education Study Program at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. In this research, the questionnaire closed questions from both. The purpose of using a questionnaire in this research is to collect systematic and structured data from students English Education Study Program at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto representing the population under study. The questionnaire could also help

researchers understand the perceptions, views, and experiences of respondents on the topic under study.

The Analyzing Data

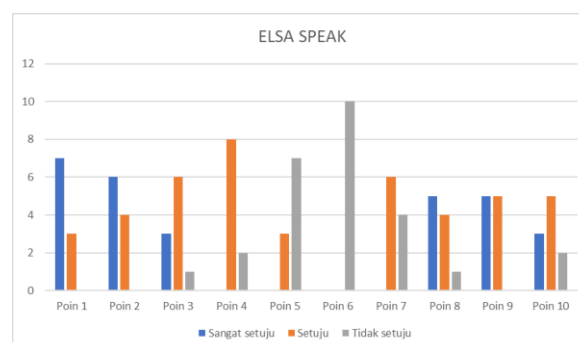
In this research, data description is used to describe and summarize data that has been collected in the study. The aim is to provide a better understanding of the data that has been collected and assist researchers in understanding the patterns or trends that arise from the data. The researchers also read the students' perceptions and opinions about learning pronunciation with Elsa Speak in interview and questionnaire data and became familiar with their perceptions and opinions. On another hand, the researchers would relate data analysis from data that has been obtained through interviews and questionnaires from students English Education Study Program at UIN Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. This data analysis is carried out to process data processing and data interpretations that have been collected in research to obtain relevant and useful information. The purpose of data analysis is to test hypotheses, find patterns or relationships between variables, and conclude research results objectively. Last, researchers would use clarification data in this research to clarify and ensure the accuracy of the data collected in the study. The purpose of clarification data in this research is to ensure that the data used in the analysis is valid, accurate, and reliable.

FINDINGS

The Effectiveness of Using Elsa Speak in Pronunciation Practice

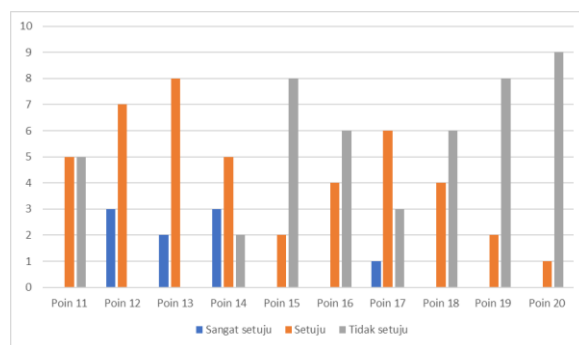
Based on the results of students of the English Education Study Program at UIN K. H. Prof. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto regarding the use of the Elsa Speak application for pronunciation, the results showed that 70% of students found Elsa Speak helpful in improving their pronunciation and finding it interesting. The application provides feedback in the form of grades or stars, helping students feel more prepared for academic challenges. Elsa Speak is considered a complete tool for English learning, with fast feedback and a variety of useful exercises. It is often recommended for beginners and those with a learning style. The majority of respondents agreed with the positive statements, while some disagreed. The result data are shown in Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 below:

Diagram 1



Picture 1.1 Students' responses to the use of Elsa Speak in pronunciation practice

Diagram 2



Picture 1.2 Students' responses to the use of Elsa Speak in pronunciation practice

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Elsa Speak in Pronunciation Practice

- a. The Advantages of Using Elsa Speak in Pronunciation Practice
 - 1) The Elsa Speak app can be used by anyone, anytime, and anywhere, making it easier for users to learn and practice pronunciation whenever necessary.
 - 2) The use of the Elsa Speak application can save time and effort in improving pronunciation because users can practice alone without having to rely on the help of others so this can be said to be more efficient.
 - 3) The Elsa Speak application allows users to adjust pronunciation exercises according to their needs and ability levels, because of this application we can choose something with what we need or custom so that learning becomes more effective and personalized.
 - 4) The app can provide immediate feedback, without waiting for a long time users can immediately find out the mistakes in their pronunciation and correct them instantly, so the learning process becomes more effective.
 - 5) The Elsa Speak app can be integrated with other learning methods, such as online English courses or foreign language lessons at school so that users can get better results in learning pronunciation.
- b. The advantages of Using Elsa Speak in Pronunciation Practice
 - 1) Elsa Speak provides fast feedback, but many people think the feedback given is not varied enough. Using the Elsa Speak application to practice correct English pronunciation is very helpful in how to pronounce it, but Elsa Speak does not always provide feedback quickly and what is available on the application is less varied, and only examples of pronunciation of words that are less varied or more are available.
 - 2) To use Elsa Speak you must have a good internet connection. Using the Elsa Speak application in learning helps each user's learning process, but there are obstacles to using the application, where the application can be used if it has a good internet connection, but if the connection is bad it will be hampered and cannot be used. This is always an obstacle for users in using the application and many users, especially students, hope that the Elsa Speak application will provide new features to make things easier for users.
 - 3) No direct feedback. The Elsa Speak application does not provide immediate feedback such as errors in pronunciation. Because using the application is not a direct interaction and allows no feedback which will be a barrier to learning in correcting errors in the learning process.

- 4) Limitations in intonation and accent correction. The Elsa Speak application in learning pronunciation is very helpful in improving pronunciation skills but has limitations in providing corrections for correct intonation and accent in English.

DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's discussion about the effect of the use Elsa Speak application for pronunciation in students English Education Study Program at UIN K. H. Prof. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. Elsa Speak helped the respondents improve their pronunciation and is also an effective and interesting application. The respondents could practice pronunciation and intonation in English, where respondents also get feedback from the Elsa Speak application. This finding same as the study by (Sholekhah & Fakhurririana, 2023). Elsa Speak the application known as ELSA (English Language Speech Assistant) had a substantial impact on the pronunciation of the students. This finding is also the same as the study with the title "The Use Elsa Speak Toward Students' Pronunciation". Elsa Speak is an application that could be used to acquire and enhance pronunciation and also provides some captivating and useful features. One of the features of this app is automatic speech recognition. This feature allows users to get instant feedback when they are practicing.

In the study conducted by (Stevani et al., 2023), the results found in her study were also similar to the study conducted by the researcher. It shows that the use of Elsa Speak in teaching English pronunciation could improve students' performance in pronouncing English words, both phonemic sounds and phonetic sounds. The students agreed that ELSA Speak could increase students' independence in learning anytime and anywhere by utilizing technology in education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research, Elsa Speak is a very useful application for beginner, intermediate, or advanced levels so they can be more confident when speaking. Elsa Speak could help to practice pronunciation and intonation in English and also get feedback from the Elsa Speak application. The feedback is in the form of grades or stars given by Elsa Speak when respondents practice their pronunciation directly so that respondents can find out their pronunciation abilities. Using Elsa Speak could be more prepared when facing academic challenges which of course require English language skills, especially good pronunciation. Therefore, the advantages of using Elsa Speak are Elsa Speak makes it easy to learn pronunciation, Elsa Speak could improve students' skills in pronouncing a word correctly, Elsa Speak is easy to use for beginners in learning English, and Elsa Speak has various exercises that are useful in language learning. Meanwhile, using Elsa Speak also has disadvantages, the disadvantages are Elsa Speak provides fast feedback, but many people think that the feedback provided is not varied enough, using Elsa Speak must have a good internet connection, and using Elsa Speak doesn't take long.

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