

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research question, objective of the research, significance of the study, and definition of the Key Terms

A. Background of the Study

Language mastery is a complex ability comprising several components, one of which is pronunciation. Pronunciation is defined as the production of significant sounds used as part of a code of a particular language and to achieve meaning in context (Dalton, as cited in Hassan, 2014). In the context of storytelling, pronunciation plays a crucial role because fluency, intonation, and clarity of sounds determine how listeners understand the plot and emotions of the story. Rogerson-Revel (2019) explains that pronunciation encompasses both includes micro (sound segments) and macro (intonation, rhythm, stress) competencies that shape meaning in oral communication. Without the clarity of narrative prosody, the message in the story is easily lost or misinterpreted by the listener. Pronunciation refers to the way a person produces sounds in a language to convey meaning accurately. It is a key component of speaking and is learned through repetition and correction of mispronounced sounds (Gilakjani, 2016). Given that English is a foreign language in Indonesia, students often have difficulty applying these suprasegmental features when telling stories.

In learning English pronunciation, there are several important aspects that must be considered, such as intonation, dialect, rhyme/rhythm, and stress.

(Nugraha et al., 2022). Good pronunciation greatly affects the understanding of the interlocutor. Even if there are errors in stress or rhythm, clear pronunciation makes the speaker easier to understand. On the other hand, bad pronunciation makes others unable to understand, even if the grammar is correct.

Mustadi (as cited in Cahyani, 2021), the aspects of pronunciation that are evaluated include fluency, accuracy, stress, and intonation. Furthermore, when learning pronunciation, it is important to learn the correct pronunciation of the alphabet, vowels, consonants, and diphthongs with proper stress and intonation.

In the case of the teaching of pronunciation in storytelling texts at junior high school, pronunciation needs an approach that has the right level of accuracy and engagement to match their learning stages and style. Methods such as phonetic drills, minimal pair exercises, and tongue twisters can make the process of learning pronunciation more productive and beneficial. In particular, drills are useful for reinforcing correct sound patterns through repetition. (Basuki, 2018, p. 56) Emphasizes that “drilling is fundamental to the teaching of word stress, sentence stress, and intonation,” and it also helps students to remember new items, especially when they are more reliant on the teacher. Multimedia tools can also be integrated to make these practices more engaging.

Drilling can take the form of chaining and eliciting. Teachers can implement chaining for the words with challenging pronunciation, either because they are long or involve difficult words or sounds. On the other hand,

eliciting encourages students to recall previously studied words, phrases, or structures (Dandee & Pornwiriyaakit, 2022). A relic of oral tradition, the tongue twister method has been used for a number of reasons throughout history, from purely educational to more unconventional. With tongue twister chains, students are motivated to learn to speak English skillfully.

In the context of learning English, pronunciation is not typically taught as a separate, dedicated subject with specific hours. Instead, it is incorporated into other language activities like speaking or story-telling. Students are able to use this approach to practice pronunciation while holding a conversation or narration as natural repetition of correct pronunciation during work with different topics. In an EFL setting, the teaching of pronunciation is to be integrated into meaningful yet communicative activities such as dialogues, role-plays and discussions to let students understand how stress, rhythm and intonation contribute to meaning (Levis & Wu, 2018). Both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental features (intonation, stress) must be addressed for better intelligibility (Rachmawati & Cahyani, 2021). Effective strategies include listening and imitation exercises, visual aids (like charts or gestures), and the use of technology and AI tools for real-time feedback (Gusti Bagus et al., 2024). Teachers should provide constructive feedback and encourage self- monitoring through recorded practice to build learner autonomy (Levkina, 2017). The combination of pronunciation with vocabulary and grammar classes guarantees a comprehensive approach,

Which entails students applying the English language naturally and confidently. Artificial intelligence (AI) in English language teaching (ELT) is

possible to view as both the benefit and a risk depending on the use of technology. Through provision of practice exercises and the use of personal input on every student depending on his / her needs and learning preferences, artificial intelligence (AI) technology can add efficiency and productivity to language acquisition.

The numerous applications developed by AI to aid in pronunciation improvement are one example of the AI technologies that we can observe in English language learning, especially in the topic of pronunciation.

Many junior high school students face difficulties in pronouncing or reading narrative texts in English well. This problem often arises due to their limited understanding of correct English pronunciation, lack of purposeful practice, and lack of effective feedback during the learning process. As a result, students tend to feel less confident when they have to read or narrate narrative texts orally. This problem not only leads to the inability to master the skills of speech, but it also slows down the extent of the perception of the structure and content of the narrative text itself. That is why this study was conducted to help students overcome these obstacles, by using artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications, which are aimed at mastering pronunciation skills, so that narrative text learning becomes more effective and interesting, especially using the ELSA speak application because there is no ELSA study specifically for storytelling in junior high school.

Many English teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on teaching pronunciation during lessons nor do they actively improve their own pronunciation skills (Karakas,2019). This results in teachers' local accents affecting students' pronunciation skills, which is reflected in classroom

teaching. Such local accents often lead to errors in the pronunciation of certain sounds that do not exist in Indonesian, thus pronunciation problems become one of the main obstacles in learning English in the school environment.

A solution for the problem of poor pronunciation skills among students in the English language is the incorporation of AI technology into the learning machines. AI-powered applications and platforms i.e. ELSA Speak, Duo lingo, or EPA could be used by both students and teachers for independent practice in pronunciation. These technologies give instant correction of errors of intonation, word stress, pronunciation, which makes students learn more effectively. Additionally, AI supports teachers who may feel insecure about their own pronunciation by offering accurate models and materials. With the use of AI, students can practice interactively outside the classroom, increasing their confidence in speaking English. This implementation also encourages teachers to focus more on pronunciation without being burdened by their limitations.

Some previous studies relevant were conducted (Adawiah & Muliati, 2024) entitled “*The Effect of ELSA Speak on Pronunciation of English Speaking at Vocational High School*”. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the ELSA Speak application in improving students' pronunciation skills at the vocational high school level. Using a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental design, the researcher involved 13 students from the XI Fashion class of SMK Sritanjung as samples. The results showed that there was a significant increase in students' average scores from 43.31 in the pretest to 85.23 in the posttest, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05).

In addition, correlation analysis showed a moderately strong relationship ($r = 0.651$) between the pretest and posttest results, indicating that the improvement was closely related to the intervention using ELSA Speak. This study indicates that the ELSA Speak app is effective in helping students improve English pronunciation independently through features such as phoneme training, intonation, syllable stress, and real-time feedback. This study strengthens the argument that AI-based technology can be an effective learning tool to improve students' speaking skills, particularly in terms of pronunciation.

The second previous research finding comes from (Kholis, 2021) in his research entitled “*ELSA Speak App: Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) for Supplementing English Pronunciation Skills*” he research discussed about improving English language pronunciation skills to higher education learners where English Department Students by using the ELSA Speak App, he said that In speaking, the most concern people must know is also how to pronounce words well. Pronunciation is one of the English skills regarding the mastery of phonetics and phonology how words are articulated and produced into sound systems. It is necessary to make the message clear and to be understood by the listener. This research conducted to know the effect of using the ELSA Speak app in supplementing the students’ pronunciation skills. The researcher used this app in learning to pronounce for the reason that it was the one automatic speech recognition used by most and the contributed in enhancing pronunciation skills.

And the last Previous studies have demonstrated that digital

applications can significantly enhance students' pronunciation skills. The study conducted by (Lestari et al., 2024). “*The impact of using the English Pronunciation Digital application on students' pronunciation proficiency at MAN Labuhanbatu, North Sumatra*”. The findings revealed that the use of this application had a highly positive influence on students' learning outcomes.

Moreover, although various studies have examined the use of the ELSA Speak application in improving students' pronunciation, very few have explored its integration within narrative storytelling activities, particularly at the junior high school level. Most prior studies focused solely on technical pronunciation improvement, without embedding it into communicative or performance-based contexts such as storytelling. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how AI-based pronunciation feedback through ELSA Speak can support students not only in improving segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation aspects, but also in enhancing their oral storytelling performance.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher decided to conduct a study entitled “*The Effectiveness of ELSA Speak Application in Facilitating Students' English Pronunciation in Storytelling*.”

B. Research Questions

Based on the above background, the research question to be discussed is as follows:

1. Is ELSA Speak Application effective in facilitating Junior High School students' English pronunciation in storytelling?

C. The Objective of the Research

To find out the effectiveness of ELSA Speak Application in improving the pronunciation skills of junior high school students, particularly in the context of storytelling.

D. Hypothesis

1. Alternative Hypothesis (H1): The ELSA Speak app is effective in facilitating students' English pronunciation in storytelling.
2. Null Hypothesis (H0): The ELSA Speak app is not effective in facilitating students' English pronunciation in storytelling.

E. Significance of the Study

This study provides practical contributions to the field of English language education, particularly in improving pronunciation through innovative teaching methods. The findings will benefit the following stakeholders:

1. Students: The use of the Elsa Speak App offers students an engaging and interactive way to improve their pronunciation skills. Through storytelling exercises, students can work on their fluency, intonation, and stress patterns, fostering more natural and confident English communication. This tool enables students to practice pronunciation independently, helping them build skills that can boost their participation in oral activities.
2. Teachers: The study provides teachers with insights into integrating pronunciation applications into storytelling exercises, complementing traditional methods. By using the application, teachers can deliver immediate feedback, making it easier to address pronunciation issues in

real-time. Additionally, the app can serve as a tool for tracking students' progress, allowing educators to monitor improvements and adjust instruction based on individual needs.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way sounds are produced and spoken in a language, including segmental features (such as vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (such as stress, intonation, and rhythm). It plays a vital role in oral communication and affects intelligibility and meaning (Gilakjani, 2016)

2. ELSA Speak Application

ELSA Speak Application stands for English Language Speech Assistant. You may get the English Language Speech Assistant (ELSA) for free from Google Play or the Application Store. The importance of using media for teaching is that it can be used to help the students in their studies and to make the teaching-learning process more effective and efficient. In the ELSA application itself, there are several categories, namely daily lesson exercises, improved pronunciation, and topic-based learning (there are 14 topics here, and we can choose according to our abilities). In ELSA Speak, there are also phonetic symbols for each word, and we can also listen to how the word is pronounced.

3. Storytelling

Storytelling is defined as the method or approach used to convey a story, often closely connected with the story itself. Buckler and Zion (1996)

suggest that storytelling serves as "an act of creating future opportunities," highlighting its potential for influence. In a knowledge management context, Sole and Wilson (2002) define storytelling as the sharing of knowledge and experiences through narratives and anecdotes. This approach helps communicate lessons, complex ideas, and causal connections in an accessible and meaningful way.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems or applications that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, giving feedback, and personalizing learning. In English language learning, AI is used to support pronunciation practice through interactive tools that provide real-time correction and individualized guidance.