THE USE OF DIGITAL FEEDBACK ON ELSA SPEAK IN LEARNING PRONUNCITAION FOR SEVENTH GRADE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

In learning English, students must be equipped with knowledge of good and correct pronunciation so that they can be a support for students in English pronunciation. One application that can be used to practice pronunciation by Artificial Intelligence is ELSA Speak. In ELSA Speak, students can learn the correct pronunciation generated from native speakers, and can practice their pronunciation and get digital feedback from ELSA Speak, and correct their pronunciation. Two main discussions were the implementation of digital feedback on Elsa Speak for students and the benefits of digital feedback on ELSA Speak in learning English. This research uses qualitative case studies, in which observation and semi-structured interviews were used as instruments in collecting the data. The result of the research shown that ELSA Speak can help students to learn how to pronounce some words, and this application can make the students be more confident when want to talk with English language.
Keywords : Pronunciation, Digital Feedback, ELSA Speak

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Abstrak

Dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris, siswa harus dibekali dengan pengetahuan pengucapan yang baik dan benar sehingga dapat menjadi penunjang bagi siswa dalam berbahasa Inggris. Salah satu aplikasi yang dapat digunakan untuk melatih pengucapan dengan *Artificial Intelligence* adalah *ELSA Speak*. Di *ELSA Speak*, siswa dapat mempelajari

pengucapan yang benar yang dihasilkan dari penutur asli. Aplikasi ini juga dapat memediasi siswa dalam melatih pengucapan kemudian mendapatkan umpan balik secara digital dari *ELSA Speak*, dan mengoreksi pengucapan mereka. Dua pembahasan utama dari penelitan ini adalah mencari tahu bagaimana implementasi *digital feedback* pada *Elsa Speak* bagi siswa dan juga manfaat apa saja yang didapatkan dari *digital feedback* pada *ELSA Speak* dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif, di mana observasi dan wawancara semi terstruktur digunakan sebagai instrumen dalam pengumpulan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *ELSA Speak* dapat membantu siswa untuk belajar mengucapkan beberapa kata, dan aplikasi ini dapat membuat siswa lebih percaya diri ketika ingin berbicara dengan bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Pengucapan, Umpan Balik Digital, ELSA Speak

Introduction

As ideal citizens of the world, global citizens understand the flow of world life, uphold human rights, contribute to the community (even on a local scale), and oppose injustice around the world (Oxfam, 2006). People who are members of global citizens are defined as people who realize that the world is wider and have their own role as global citizens, where they must respect and value diversity, oppose social injustice and participate in communities at various levels from local to global. In the field of education, students need to play a role in realizing global citizens, one of which is to gain access to wider knowledge.

In learning English, to be able to become part of global citizens, students must be equipped with knowledge of good and correct pronunciation so that they can be a support for students in English pronunciation. As Shack (Shak, P., Lee, CS and Stephen, J., 2016) researched that pronunciation plays an important role in employability, graduates are often judged to be incompetent if they fail to convince others of their English proficiency because of pronunciation. Who are bad and can't communicate in English to express themselves well. In order to display the confidence to impress potential employers, and contribute to the global community, it is important to increase students' knowledge of good and

correct pronunciation of the language, especially those with low levels of oral proficiency.

Since most Indonesians are not native English speakers, or do not have access to native speakers, they have low proficiency in English pronunciation. Sholeh and Muhaji (Sholeh and Muhaji, 2015) stated that most students' pronunciation in Indonesia is still influenced by their mother tongue. As a result, students find it difficult to speak English naturally. Their speech sounds like English with Indonesian pronunciation characters. Moreover, Indonesian varies in terms of dialect or accent. Then, most students will be influenced by their own dialect or accent according to their area when speaking English. Thus, students do not have access to practice their pronunciation with native speakers to improve their English pronunciation.

To be able to interact with global citizens, today's students who are very familiar with technology, their learning does not stop after their learning is finished, and they can also refer to native speakers' pronunciation for free. To equip students with adequate knowledge and practice of their pronunciation in English, teachers may use technology to enable students to study anytime, anywhere. One application that can be used to practice pronunciation by Artificial Intelligence is ELSA Speak. In ELSA Speak, students can learn the correct pronunciation generated from native speakers, and can practice their pronunciation and get digital feedback from ELSA Speak, and correct their pronunciation. With special learning styles and the help of this application, students can learn independently, and organize their own learning to be able to keep up with the rapidly changing world and support them to survive in a global society. The research focuses on some issues, to find out how is the implementation of digital feedback on Elsa Speak for students, and to know the benefits of using digital feedback on "ELSA Speak".

Theoretical Framework

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way people pronounce a word, especially in a way that is generally accepted or understood. Celce-Murcia (Celce-Murcia, 1996) defines pronunciation as the production of sounds used to create meaning. Pronunciation involves intonation, phrases, stress, timing, rhythm, and sound production. Teaching pronunciation is an important aspect of teaching and learning certain languages. By teaching pronunciation, it is hoped that it can help students gain knowledge in terms of English pronunciation. Ellis (Ellis, 2006) states that teaching pronunciation has an important role in oral communication. It is an important part of communicative competence. In line with Ellis, Yuzawa (Yuzawa, 2007) also states that mastery of pronunciation is needed so that someone can use English as a means of oral communication. In short, to succeed in oral communication, we need an intelligent voice. Pronunciation refers to the way we pronounce words. Speakers who are good at speaking tend to be easily understood by their listeners. Yuzawa (Yuzawa, 2007) defines that pronunciation is the way in which a language or word or sound is spoken. Pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, 1996) is defined as the production of sounds used to create meaning. Therefore, we must be able to convey acceptable speech to the listener so that the listener understands what we are saying so that they can give the correct response. Elmaksoud (Elmaksoud, 2013: 295) states that pronunciation refers to the production of sounds used to create meaning. Pronunciation is a micro speaking skill. Without clear pronunciation, we cannot convey an acceptable message to the listener or recipient. However, although pronunciation is important, we don't need to teach the pronunciation of one subject but we can teach it in the form of communicative activities such as in speaking class and we have to give corrective feedback if we find mistakes that occur.

Digital Feedback

Digital feedback aims to identify and correct errors made by students in EFL digitally. Ellis (Ellis, 2006) defines digital feedback as information provided to learners that they can use to revise their language digitally. From this definition it is implied that digital feedback is believed to be important to be applied to achieve the target language taught to students. In the context of teaching oral or speaking skills to students, every teacher needs to provide corrective feedback to avoid systematic or continued errors made by students in using the target language they are learning.

ELSA Speak

In simple terms, ELSA provides navigation between topics and skills, levels, reports, and other features. Users can set the display language (English, Vietnamese, or Japanese - a good indicator of the target audience for this application). Depending on the user's proficiency level, the skills include exercises such as start and end sounds, minimal pairs, schwa, th sounds, and consonant clusters, etc. Applied linguists usually refer to these as segmental phonemes — individual sounds in a word. Topics contained in the app include food, entertainment, technology, culture, everyday conversation, and relationships, among many others. It shows the default-based page, which appears after the user selects their proficiency level. After selecting a skill (for example, "/S//SH/"), they can choose a topic on which they can choose from several lessons. Each lesson is labeled for a proficiency level and includes a variety of speaking and listening opportunities. ELSA SPEAK illustrates practice at a regular level with the target sound underlined and also getting feedback from this app by correcting the wrong word. This is where the role of feedback is used in this application.

Picture 1: ELSA Speak Application
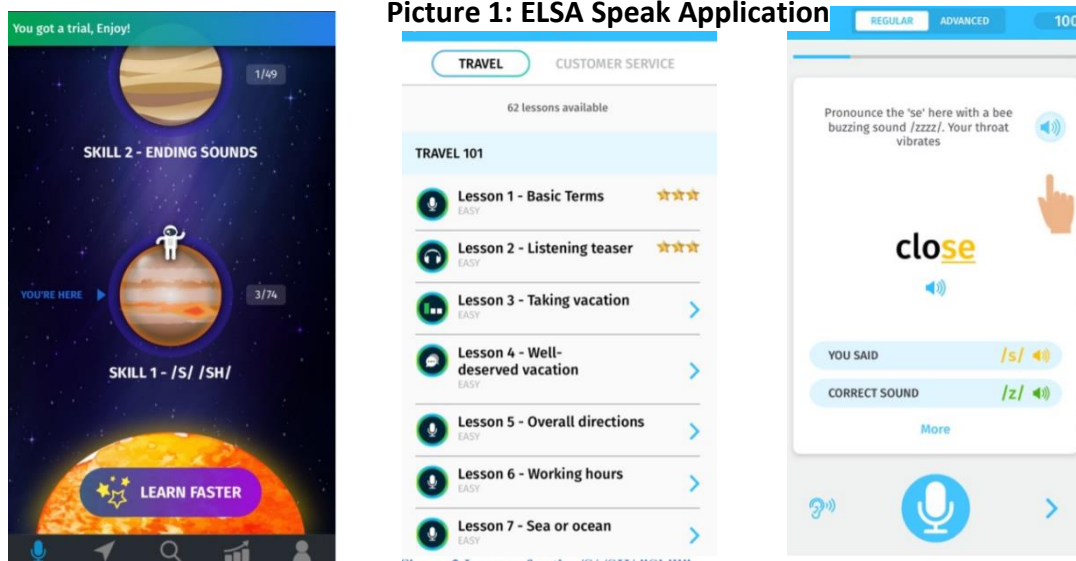
Research Methods

This research uses qualitative case studies and is non-empirical research and uses the concept of data collection and implementation of virtual or online-based research. Qualitative research is methods to explore and understand the meaning which is considered by a number of individuals or groups of people to come from social or humanitarian problems (Creswell, 2013:4). Sugiyono (Sugiyono, 2012) states that qualitative research methods are research methods based on the philosophy of postpositivism where in qualitative methods, researchers act as key instruments. This research method is a case study with research instruments are observation and semi-structured interviews. Hancock and Algozzine (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006) explain that case study research is research that, although sometimes it focuses on individual representatives of a group, but more often discusses a particular phenomenon, event, situation, program or activity. The participants of the research were seventh grade students of Junior High School.

Data Collection

Data collection in this research was carried out with several instruments including observation and interviews. Observation is a complex research method because it often requires researchers to play a number of roles and use a number of techniques, including the five senses to collect data (Barker, M. L., 2006). Observation was used to collect data information that is related to the how the implementation of ELSA Speak. The platforms for the online observation by using Zoom Meeting. The researcher did a presentation to show how to use the application first, and the students practiced according to directions. After that the researcher took a note to notice the students whether they feel difficult or not when using the application.

The semi-interview delivered after do a observation. Cook (Cook, 2008) and Kvale (Kvale, 1996) state that a semi-structured interview is not a structured "questionnaire" with preconceived questions or an unstructured conversation without a defined topic. A semi-structured interview is a conversation in which the interviewee is responsible for his/her subjective experience related to the theme introduced by the researcher, and the interviewer tries to explore the experience for a more detailed analysis. The researcher do the interview by using Whatsapp Video Call.

Result and Discussion

Observation Result

Before carrying out activities, the researcher did a pre-observation and had a data that many of students still felt difficult when they wanted to said a word. *First problem* is they did not know how to pronounced some vowels, consonants, diphthongs, /th/ sounds, /s/ and /z/ sounds, etc. *second problem* is some of students still get wrong about the intonation and stress of the words. As it is known all of the element must be mastered in order to pronounce a word correctly. After known the problems, the researcher gave the explanation about

the ELSA Speak application through Zoom Meeting. The students must download the application first on *Google PlayStore.* After that the researcher shown how to use the application and the students must followed the instruction that have the researcher given. For the first exampled, students practiced about "Linking Sounds" , " Stress The Word" and "Intonation". Before that, students must watched a video about the material where the video could be directly accessed on the ELSA Speak application. After that, before saying the words listed in the exercise, students must listen to the correct pronunciation from the speakers in the application first and then students try to follow it. After doing the exercises, the results showed that students were able to pronounce all the words listed. Then the students will be directed to the next exercise.

Picture 2: Student's Skill Level in ELSA Speak
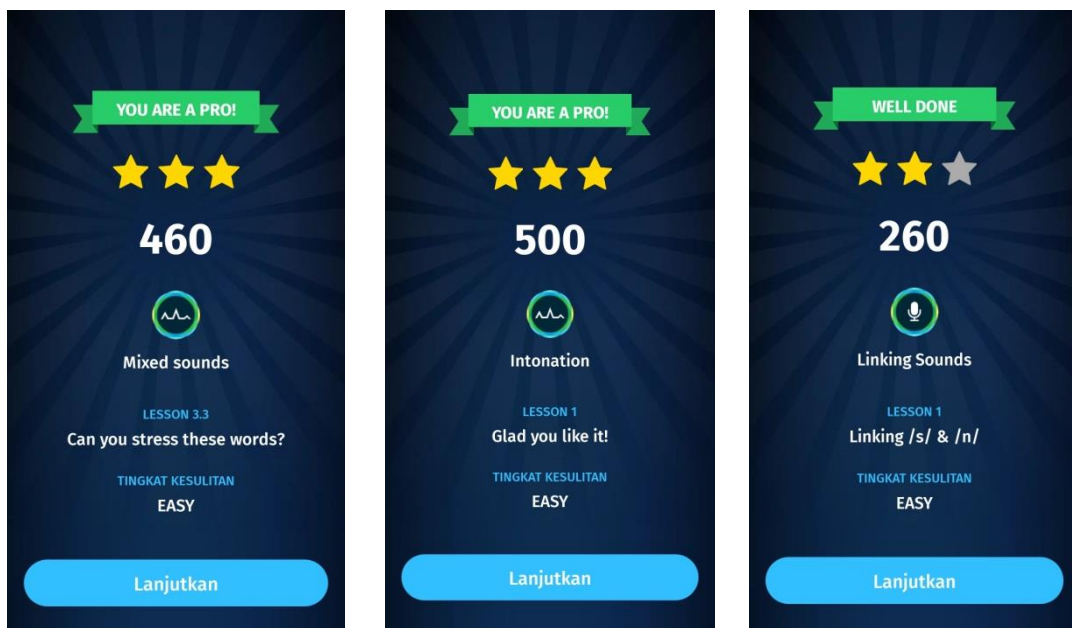
After students are able to complete all the exercises, students will be directed to the next stage where they will conducted daily conversations with the speaker in the ELSA Speak application. It can be seen from the results bellow that students are able to pronounce very well. Students are able to practice what they have learned before.

Picture 3: Student's Activities
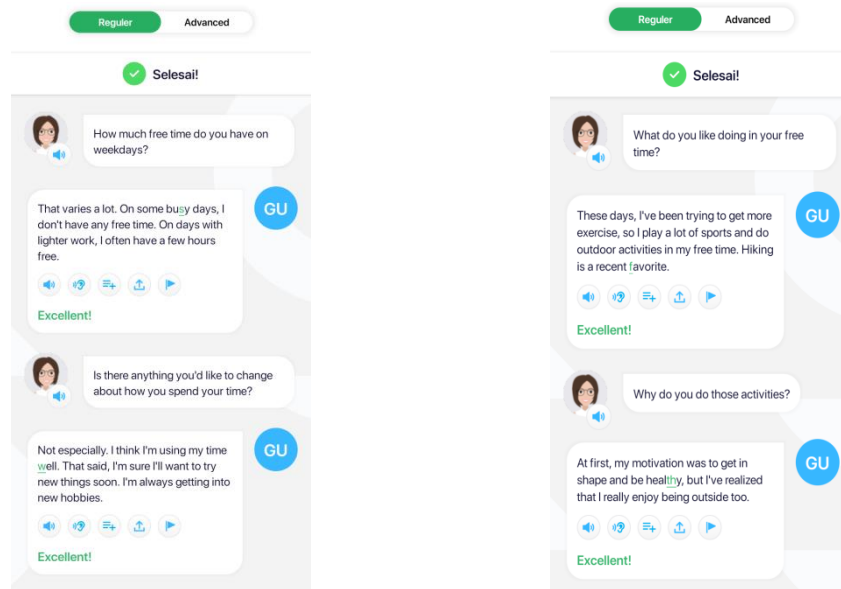
In summary, can be seen from the table below:

Table 1. Steps and Activities

Steps	Activities
Planning	• Develop materials and exercises that are appropriate to the problems faced by students.
Implementing	• Explain the use of the application through Zoom Meeting and do an interview through WhatsApp Video Call.
Observing	• Seeing student progress through the scores obtained by each student to make a conclusion.
Evaluating	• Helping students to understand more deeply about the material being studied.

Interview Result

The interview was in a semi-structured interview, where students can answer the questions given by the researcher according to what they think and feel. This

interview was conducted through the WhatsApp Video Call Application. Most of students said that ELSA Speak is very interesting and they felt excited when using ELSA Speak they said that the application provided many benefits for them in learning pronunciation, through the ELSA Speak application they knew how to pronounce a word, how to stres each word, and they also learn about intonation. And also it can makes their confidence increase, they don't feel afraid when they will speak or tell stories in English. They said that the ELSA Speak application is very suitable for use for all ages who want to improve their pronunciation.

"My first impression when using this application is very interesting, and it's so easy to use that application" (Student 2)

"ELSA Speak makes me be more confident when want to talk with English Language, because in that application I learn many things about how to pronounce some words" (Student 3)

But the other students said otherwise. They felt excited but sometimes they feel difficult and confused when using the application. Sometimes when they have said the word according to what was instructed, the system from ELSA Speak cannot process what they say. But the rest of them said that ELSA Speak is very suitable to be used as a platform for learning pronunciation.

"Even this application is very useful to help us learn pronunciation, but it needs enough understanding to explore this application more deeply" (Student 1)

"Sometimes, the system from ELSA Speak doesn't catch the spoken words. But for all this application can help people that wants to learn pronunciation" (Student 4)

So it can be concluded that ELSA Speak is very useful for everyone who wants to learn how to pronounce words correctly. ELSA Speak provides many benefits for anyone who uses it, in addition to providing lessons on the pronunciation of a word in the ELSA Speak application there are various kinds of material that can be learned such as conversation simulations when taking the IELTS exam and so on.

Conclusion

After explaining the results above, there are two important points that must be discussed based on the questions. *The first* implementation of the digital feedback in the ELSA Speak application is to provide feedback such as when students manage to pronounce the word correctly, the system from ELSA Speak will respond with the sentence "Great! You look like a native speaker" and so on. So it makes students more motivated to do more exercises in the application. And another role of digital feedback is when conducting daily conversations. The role of digital feedback is to answer all the questions that students given

Second, the benefits in ELSA Speak, as explained in the results above, is the application through the ELSA Speak application students are able to know how to pronounce a word (vowels, diphthongs, consonants), how to stress each word, and also they learn about intonation And also it can makes their confidence increase, they don't feel afraid and anxious when they talk or tell stories in English. And Elsa Speak is very suitable for use by anyone from any circle.

In the current pandemic which forces students to study from home (online learning) it makes students less able to know the material they are studying. And also sometimes students feel bored when learning takes place, so the role of this application is very much needed. One of them is ELSA Speak which is able to help students in pronouncing various words. The reserachers hope that as a millennial generation who was born when technology is developing quite rapidly, it can help students in positions like this. By utilizing all existing technology, and being able to take advantage of all applications that can help students understand the existing material. So that students feel that they do not need to be afraid because they do not understand the material presented.

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