

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ELSA APPLICATION TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS AT THE TENTH GRADE AT MAN PALOPO

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the ELSA application in improving students' speaking skills. The research employed a pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test model. The participants were 22 tenth-grade students at MAN Palopo. An individual speaking test in the form of a dialog was used as the research instrument. Students' speaking performance was assessed based on four aspects: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The collected data were analyzed using a paired samples t-test. The results showed that students' speaking skills improved after the implementation of the ELSA application. The mean score increased from 38.63 in the pre-test to 55.54 in the post-test. Furthermore, the statistical analysis revealed a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant improvement. These findings suggest that the ELSA application is effective in improving students' speaking skills and can be used as an alternative learning medium in English language teaching.

Keywords: ELSA application, experimental research, pronunciation, speaking skills, vocabulary.

1) INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in English language learning, as it reflects students' ability to communicate ideas orally in real-life situations. However, speaking is often considered the most difficult skill for EFL learners due to limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, grammatical errors, and lack of confidence. Many students feel anxious and hesitant when asked to speak English, particularly in classroom settings where they fear making mistakes.

Based on preliminary observation at MAN Palopo, tenth-grade students experienced difficulties in speaking English. Most students showed low confidence, limited vocabulary mastery, and poor pronunciation, which affected their fluency when speaking. In addition, students' concentration during speaking activities was often low, and they tended to be passive participants

in class. These conditions indicate the need for an effective learning medium that can support students in practicing speaking independently and consistently.

With the rapid development of technology, mobile-assisted language learning applications have become an alternative solution to support speaking instruction. One of the applications is ELSA Speak, an AI-based application designed to improve English speaking skills through pronunciation drills, sentence repetition, vocabulary practice, and instant feedback. By providing immediate correction and individualized practice, ELSA allows students to practice speaking more actively without fear of making mistakes.

Therefore, this study focused on investigating the effectiveness of the ELSA application in improving the speaking skills of tenth-grade students at MAN Palopo. The results of this study are expected to contribute to English language teaching by providing empirical evidence on the use of AI-based applications in speaking instruction.

2) METHODS

This study employed a pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test model. This design was chosen to determine the effectiveness of the ELSA application in improving students' speaking skills. The research was conducted at MAN Palopo. The participants of this study were 22 students of the tenth grade. The sample was selected using purposive sampling because the students had relatively low speaking ability and needed additional support in improving their speaking skills. The instrument used in this study was an individual speaking test in the form of dialogue. The test was administered twice, namely pre-test and post-test. Students' speaking performance was assessed based on four aspects: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The procedures of collecting data consisted of three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was conducted to measure students' initial speaking ability. Then, the treatment was carried out in four meetings using the ELSA application. After that, the post-test was administered to determine students' improvement after the treatment.

3) RESULTS

This Research aims to determine the effect of the intensity of using ELSA Application on students to improve their speaking skills. Based on the results of the students' pre-test and post-test speaking assessments, the following data were obtained:

Pre-test Results

The pre-test was administered to measure students' initial speaking ability before the implementation of the ELSA application. The results of the pre-test indicated that students' speaking performance was relatively low. The mean score obtained in the pre-test was 38.63.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Students' Speaking Skills in Pre-test

Classification	Score Range		Pre-test	
			Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	81-100	1	4.55%
Good	4	66-80	0	0.00%
Fair	3	56-65	1	4.55%
Poor	2	41-55	8	36.36%
Very Poor	1	<40	12	54.55%
Total				100%

In terms of achievement levels, the majority of students were categorized into the Poor and Very Poor categories. Specifically, 36.36% of students were classified as Poor, while 54.55% were in the Very Poor category. Only 4.55% of students reached the Fair level, and 4.55% were categorized as Very Good. No students were classified into the good category. These findings indicate that most students experienced difficulties in speaking English prior to the treatment.

Post-test Results

The post-test was conducted after the implementation of the ELSA application to measure students' speaking performance following the treatment. The results of the post-test showed an improvement in students' speaking skills compared to the pre-test. The mean score obtained in the post-test was 55.54.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Students' Speaking Skills in Post-test

Classification	Score Range		Pre-test	
			Frequency	Percentage
Very good	5	81-100	4	18.18%
Good	4	66-80	4	18.18%
Fair	3	56-65	3	13.64%
Poor	2	41-55	4	18.18%

Very Poor	1	<40	7	31.82%
Total				100%

Regarding achievement levels, the distribution of students' speaking performance improved in the post-test. A total of 18.18% of students were classified into the Very Good category, while 18.18% reached the good level. Furthermore, 13.64% of students were categorized as Fair. Meanwhile, the percentages of students in the Poor and Very Poor categories decreased to 18.18% and 31.82%, respectively. These results indicate a positive change in students' speaking performance after the treatment.

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Results

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results shows a clear improvement in students' speaking skills after the implementation of the ELSA application. The mean score increased from 38.63 in the pre-test to 55.54 in the post-test, indicating a substantial improvement in students' overall speaking performance.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pre-test and Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	22	38.63	15.70	25	94
Post-test	22	55.54	20.10	31	100
Valid N (listwise)					

In terms of achievement levels, significant changes were observed in the distribution of students' speaking categories. In the pre-test, most students were classified into the Poor (36.36%) and Very Poor (54.55%) categories. However, in the post-test, the percentages of students in these categories decreased to 18.18% and 31.82%, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentages of students in the Good and Very Good categories increased from 0.00% and 4.55% in the pre-test to 18.18% in both categories in the post-test.

These results indicate a positive shift in students' speaking achievement levels after the treatment. The overall comparison demonstrates that students' speaking performance improved following the use of the ELSA application.

Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' speaking scores in the pre-test and post-test. A paired samples t-test was employed because the same group of students was tested before and after the treatment. The level of significance used in this study was 0.05.

The result of the paired samples t-test showed that the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test speaking scores. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of the ELSA application significantly improved the speaking skills of tenth-grade students at MAN Palopo

4) DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the ELSA application effectively improved students' speaking skills. The improvement was evidenced by the increase in the mean score from the pre-test to the post-test, as well as the shift in students' achievement levels from the Poor and Very Poor categories to the Good and Very Good categories. The inferential analysis further confirmed that the improvement was statistically significant, as shown by the significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05.

The improvement in students' speaking skills can be attributed to the features provided by the ELSA application. Through pronunciation drills, sentence repetition, and instant feedback, students were able to practice speaking independently and repeatedly. Immediate feedback helped students recognize and correct their pronunciation errors, which contributed to better accuracy and fluency. This finding supports the idea that technology-assisted learning can facilitate students' speaking development by providing individualized practice opportunities.

In addition, the use of ELSA encouraged students to become more confident in speaking English. During the treatment sessions, students were able to practice without fear of making mistakes in front of their peers. This learning environment helped reduce anxiety and increased students' willingness to speak. As a result, students showed better performance in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

The results of this research are consistent with previous studies which reported that mobile-assisted language learning applications have a positive effect on students' speaking skills. These applications allow learners to practice speaking anytime and receive instant feedback, which is difficult to achieve through conventional classroom instruction alone. Therefore, integrating applications such as ELSA into English speaking instruction can be considered an effective alternative to support students' learning.

5) CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the use of the ELSA application is effective in improving the speaking skills of tenth-grade students at MAN Palopo. The improvement was indicated by the increase in students' speaking scores from the pre-test to the post-test and supported by the results of the inferential analysis, which showed a statistically significant difference between the two tests.

The findings suggest that ELSA provides meaningful learning support through its interactive features, such as pronunciation practice, sentence repetition, and instant feedback, which help students develop better accuracy, fluency, and confidence in speaking English. Therefore, the ELSA application can be considered a useful learning medium for supporting speaking instruction in English language classrooms.

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