ABSTRACT

Irham, Muhammad Fachru Al-Razi (2025): Enhancing Students' Listening Micro Skills Through the Use of Elsa Speak Application: A Pre-Experimental Study in the First Grade of Junior High School

Listening is a crucial skill for learning English as it enables students to comprehend what speakers communicate in actual contexts. Nonetheless, numerous junior high school students struggle to identify English sounds, word emphasis, and intonation, particularly when words have a similar pronunciation (recognizing sound) like "ship" and "sheep." Numerous students find it challenging to master these minor listening skills, which can impact their comprehension of spoken English. Challenges like these hinder students from comprehending conversations and replying accurately. This study investigates the ways in which the ELSA Speak app can enhance the listening micro skills of middle school students.

This research employed a pre-experimental design featuring a single group with pre-test and post-test. The study involved 21 first-grade students from SMP Nurul Islam Cibitung, Bekasi, during the 2025–2026 academic year. The tool was a listening assessment with 20 questions featuring multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank formats. The therapy took place over three sessions (each lasting 80 minutes), wherein students engaged in listening to and repeating typical English phrases such as greetings, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and farewells. Throughout the treatment, the ELSA Speak app assisted students in concentrating on minimal pairs (e.g., thank–tank, ship–sheep) and enhancing their sound recognition. Data analysis utilized a Wilcoxon test and N-Gain test with SPSS 27 to determine the level of improvement.

The findings indicate that students' listening micro skills enhanced considerably following the use of the ELSA Speak app. The mean score on the pre-test was 57.05, rising to 80.57 on the post-test, resulting in an improvement of 23.52 points. The outcome of the Wilcoxon test (Sig. < 0.001) shows that this enhancement is statistically significant. The N-Gain score stood at 0.54, categorizing it as moderate improvement. Students improved their ability to identify similar sounds, grasp word stress, and detect accurate pronunciation in spoken English.

To conclude, the ELSA Speak app is successful in enhancing listening micro skills. It also enhances students' motivation and self-assurance in studying English. This research indicates that employing AI-driven tools can effectively enhance language education in educational institutions.

Keywords: Micro skills of listening, ELSA Speak, pre-experimental study, junior high school, English learning.