

The Effectiveness of Using Busuu Application to Improve Students' Pronunciation Ability at Grade VIII of SMP Negeri 10 Tapung

Balqis Athiyya¹ Prih Febtiningsih² Bazilah Raihan Mat Shawal³

Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Email: balqisathiyya02@gmail.com¹ prihfebtiningsih@umri.ac.id² bazilah@umk.edu.my³

Abstract

This study aims to improve the English pronunciation skills of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 10 Tapung by utilizing the Busuu application. The research specifically focuses on addressing pronunciation difficulties faced by students, particularly in terms of sounds, stress, intonation, and constructive feedback, through the use of digital media. The research used a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental group using the Busuu application and a control group receiving conventional teaching methods. The study involved 60 students from two classes at SMP Negeri 10 Tapung. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, which assessed students' pronunciation abilities. The experimental group received treatment via the Busuu app, which offers interactive features such as native speaker audio and pronunciation feedback. Statistical analyses, including normality testing, homogeneity testing, and hypothesis testing (paired sample t-test), were performed to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The study found a significant improvement in the experimental group's pronunciation skills. The average score of the experimental group increased from 47.7 in the pre-test to 80.2 in the post-test, marking a 32.5-point increase. In comparison, the control group's score increased from 45.9 to 74.3, a 28.4-point increase. Statistical analysis confirmed the significant effect of the Busuu application on students' pronunciation (p-value = 0.000), supporting the hypothesis that the application enhances pronunciation abilities more effectively than conventional methods. The findings suggest that the Busuu application is an effective tool for improving English pronunciation skills, highlighting the potential of digital media in language learning. The study encourages the integration of interactive and technological solutions in teaching, particularly for overcoming challenges in pronunciation and providing immediate, constructive feedback. However, limitations of the study include the small sample size and the potential influence of external factors not controlled during the experiment. Future research could explore long-term impacts and compare different digital tools for language learning. Additionally, expanding the sample size could provide more generalized results.

Keywords: Pronunciation ability, Grade VIII, Effectiveness



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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the languages taught in Indonesia. It is taught at every educational level, from elementary school to university. English is a foreign language that has become an international language and is used almost worldwide. There are general skills that must be mastered when studying English. These encompass speaking, writing, reading, and listening abilities. It is certainly difficult for a foreign language learner to practice pronouncing English words correctly (Setyowati et al., 2017). Thus, learning the proper pronunciation of the vocabulary should be connected to speaking practice. It seeks to determine whether or not a word is pronounced correctly. For a foreign language learner to effectively communicate and prevent pronunciation mistakes that might lead to miscommunication, pronunciation is also crucial. According to Kissova (2019), pronunciation is one of the most crucial foundational abilities that students need to acquire to communicate clearly and fluently. Pupils who can pronounce words correctly enhance the listener's comprehension of communication. According to Prashant (2018), Pronunciation plays a significant part in communication and

influences the listener. The meaning of the spoken word will also change if it is altered or mispronounced. Correct word pronunciation can improve our ability to communicate with others, including native speakers. Since many people use English as an international language, being able to communicate in it is crucial for us. Schools, colleges, and universities provide language learning courses in English in academic settings.

Pronunciation issues can have an impact on foreign language proficiency. English language learners frequently struggle with word pronunciation when speaking, according to Tambunsaribu & Simatupang (2021). This is due to the significant differences between the sounds in English and Indonesian. Speaking in English involves more than just correctly pronouncing words and sentences, according to Plailek & Essien (2021), who also asserts that effective pronunciation is a crucial aspect of communication. Pronunciation issues will impact their communication skills. One of the fundamental elements of speaking that is crucial, particularly in oral communication, is pronunciation. The fact that many English words have many meanings in one form makes pronunciation extremely difficult. A word's meaning will change if it is mispronounced, and this frequently leads to misunderstandings between the speaker and listener. Mispronounced words are one of the reasons we have difficulties to understand what the speaker said. Using instructional material such as audiovisuals to teach English will make learning easier and more engaging for students. Busuu is an application that is utilized as a medium for learning other languages, according to Khoirul Huda (2017), because it has an interactive and proficient command of such languages.

Teachers need to be more creative and imaginative in their teaching if they want to see improvements in their students' pronunciation skills. Teachers can make use of engaging digital media. With the rapid advancements of today's technology, students can enhance their pronunciation skills through the use of gadgets. There are numerous applications available these days for learning English. Therefore, it makes learning easier for us because each program has a variety of elements that can help with learning, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and more. Every application has benefits and drawbacks. Two different types of applications exist. These Busuu applications are both offline and online. They both have benefits and drawbacks as well. The Busuu application is among the media that might help with pronunciation. In addition to being assisted by native speakers, Busuu is an application that allows users to communicate with people worldwide while learning foreign languages. The Busuu application has foreign language learning materials with four skills, including speaking, writing, reading, and listening. According Rosell (2018) stated that the Busuu application was useful for gathering data for an online questionnaire. He subsequently discovered that the majority of respondents thought the Busuu application was a trustworthy resource for language learning and that it improved their understanding of the language they were learning.

Based on observations and interviews with English teachers at SMP NEGERI 10 Tapung, the researcher found several problems with class VIII students. The first problem is that the learning media used is less varied and interesting. The use of media is very important in learning so that students are interested in focusing on learning. Choosing the right media can present more varied and interesting learning so that it can increase student involvement in the learning process. Through media such as images, audio, video, and other technologies, we can present more interesting learning materials. The second problem, students have difficulty in pronouncing words, starting from sounds that do not exist in the original language, multiple consonants, silent letters, word and phrase emphasis, intonation, accent, and dialect variations, in this case, the researcher uses the Busuu application to teach pronunciation to students who focus on suprasegmental aspects namely pronunciation, stress, and intonation. The Busuu application allows students to practice and enhance their pronunciation by playing audio or

video that has been played with the assistance of native speakers. The third problem is the lack of constructive feedback related to student pronunciation. In this problem, the researcher used the Busuu application to help. Busuu provides an automatic pronunciation assessment feature that provides immediate feedback after students pronounce a word or sentence. This feature allows students to hear and compare their pronunciation with a native speaker model. In addition, the learning community in this application also allows students to get feedback from native speakers who can provide suggestions or improvements so that their pronunciation can be more precise. This integration helps students learn from their mistakes and improve pronunciation more interactively and constructively.

This study aims to improve students' English language skills, especially in the pronunciation ability of grade VIII students by using the Busuu application. The Busuu application is a free online language learning tool available for download on the Web, iOS, and Android. It was founded in 2008 by Bernhard Niesner and Adrian Hilti. The endangered Busuu language spoken in Cameroon is the source of the term Busuu (Winans, 2020). Busuu makes language learning accessible to everybody by integrating the communication skills component of social learning into a useful, self-paced feature that enables users to study languages via their devices at any time or anywhere. Using applications can be one of the practical solutions that students can use to improve their pronunciation, the researcher took into consideration the issues that students faced and attempted to offer a solution that could be used by students to improve their pronunciation, which is by using the Busuu application. Busuu is a language e-learning service founded in 2008. Students can practice and improve their pronunciation by playing audio or video supported by native speakers through the Busuu application. As most students find pronunciation difficult, teachers need to come up with strategies to help them feel comfortable and not bored while learning pronunciation. There are several advantages of learning by using the Busuu application, namely materials equipped with audio, self-recording features, feedback from the global community (fellow language users/native speakers), flexibility, and accessibility. Moreover, the app emphasizes learning styles that concentrate on the interaction between the active involvement of competitive students and the participation of their peers in the learning process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used quantitative research. Quantitative research methods are those that are grounded in the positivist ideology and are employed to investigate certain populations or samples, (Sugiyono, 2009:14). To test the established hypothesis, sampling techniques are usually carried out at random, data collection is carried out using research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative or statistical. The purpose of quantitative research methods: Create and apply theories, models, or hypotheses based on mathematics that describe natural occurrences. Because it establishes a basic connection between actual data and mathematical representations of quantitative relationships and establishes the relationship between variables in a population, the measuring process is a key component of quantitative research. Descriptive and experimental are the two categories of quantitative research designs. To determine the causal relationship of the phenomenon under study, experimental studies compare variables before and after (Abdullah, et al., 2021). This research used an approach using an experimental research method in the form of quasi-experimental research. According to Sugiyono (2019:77) explains "The Quasi-experimental research method involves a control group, but it cannot completely control external variables that influence the execution of the experiment". This study involved two classes, namely the experimental class and the control class. The first stage is the identification of the two classes. The experimental class will receive treatment in the form of an introduction and teaching students how to use the Busuu

application to practice pronunciation, while the control class will be taught using conventional methods.

This study was conducted in SMP NEGERI 10 TAPUNG, located on Garuda Sakti km 7, Desa Karya Indah, Kec. Tapung, Kab. Kampar. The population refers to a general group of objects or subjects that possess specific qualities and characteristics, which are identified by researchers to study and draw conclusions. In this research, the population was all 210 students of class VIII at SMP NEGERI 10 Tapung in the 2025 academic year consisting of 7 Grade VIII. The researcher used a sample of 60 students in grade VIII taken from two classes, namely class VIII A and class VIII B. The instrument given to students is a test, In this test, the researcher gave instructions to the subjects individually. Then the researcher gave a pronunciation ability test in the form of vocabulary and sentences. The topic is basic English vocabulary and sentences. The students took a pre-test at the first meeting to measure their pronunciation ability. To measure the student's ability to pronounce English, the researcher gave them a pronunciation test that they had to complete to find out their ability to pronounce English. After the pre-test was conducted, it was continued with the provision of treatment. In this case, the experimental class received treatment from the researcher using the Busuu application method, while the control class conventionally received treatment. After giving treatment, the researcher administered a post-test to the students at the most recent meeting to determine whether the students' pronunciation skills had improved. Once more, the researcher asked the students to pronounce the words and sentences. The researcher compared the results to see if there had been any notable changes after and before giving the treatment.

Normality Testing

The purpose of the normality test is to determine whether or not the distribution of data in a set of variables is regularly distributed. According to Ghozali (2018), the aim of the normality test is to assess whether the regression model, the influencing variables, or the residuals follow a normal distribution. In this study, the normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test.

1. If $\text{asympt.sig KS test} \geq 0.05$, then the data is normally distributed.
2. If $\text{asympt.sig KS test} < 0.05$, then the data is not normally distributed (Sugiyono, 2013:257)

Homogeneity Testing

The purpose of the homogeneity test is to demonstrate that the variance of two or more sets of sample data from a population is the same. The basis for making decisions on the homogeneity test are:

1. If the possible sig. value is < 0.05 , then the variance of two or more population groups or data samples is not homogeneous.
2. If the possible sig. value is > 0.05 , then the variance of two or more population groups or data samples is homogeneous.

Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of hypothesis testing, according to Kurniawan & Puspitaningtyas (2016:106), is to enable the researcher to decide whether to accept or reject the presented hypothesis.

1. If the possible sig. value. < 0.05 H_a was accepted.
2. If the possible sig. value. > 0.05 H_a was rejected.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To find out the improvement in students' pronunciation ability using the Busuu application, the researcher compared the average results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test from the experimental class and the control class. The average scores of students from the Experimental Class and the Control Class can be observed in the following chart:

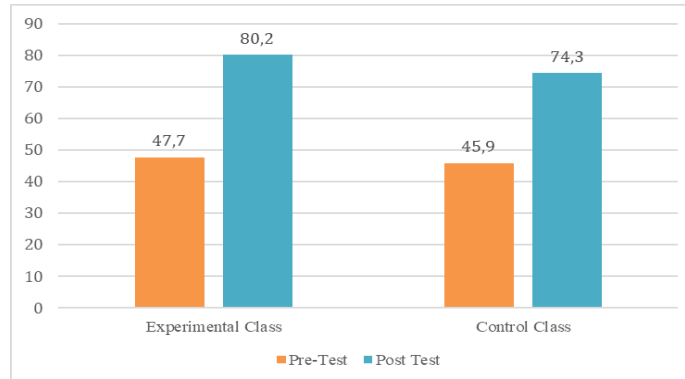


Figure 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Score

The chart shows a significant increase in test scores for both classes after the test. The experimental class, which used the Busuu application, experienced a significant increase in mean scores from 47.7 in the pre-test to 80.2 in the post-test, marking a difference of 32.5 points. In contrast, the control class, which relied on the conventional method increased from a pre-test mean score of 45.9 to 74.3 in the post-test, resulting in a difference of 28.4 points. This comparison shows that the experiment using the Busuu application resulted in a greater increase in scores compared to the conventional method used in the control class.

Table 1. The Result of Normality Test by Using SPSS

	Test of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental Pre test	.105	30	.200	.971	30	.564
Control Pre-Test	.110	30	.200	.952	30	.193
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.						
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test obtained through SPSS 25, it can be seen that the significance value for the pre-test of the experimental class was 0.200, and for the pre-test of the control class was 0.200. Since all significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the pre-test and post-test data in the experimental and control classes are normally distributed. Thus, all data tested meets the assumption of normality.

Table 2. The Result of Homogeneity Test by Using SPSS

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Busuu Application Results	Based on Mean	.115	1	58	.736
	Based on Median	.020	1	58	.888
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.020	1	57.922	.888
	Based on trimmed mean	.110	1	58	.741

Based on the data results above, it shows that the results of the homogeneity test based on the mean show the number 0,736 the data produced is greater than 0.05, which means that the data is homogeneous.

Table 3. The Result of Paired Sample Test by Using SPSS

		Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Lower	Upper								
Pair 1	Experimental pre-test Experimental Post-test	-32.500	7.754	1.416	-35.395	-29.605	-22.958	29	.000
Pair 2	Control Pre-test Control Post-test	-28.400	8.811	1.609	-31.690	-25.110	-17.655	29	.000

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the t-test value (2-tailed) shows 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05, which means that the H_a data is accepted. It can be concluded that there is a significant influence on students' pronunciation ability using the Busuu application.

Discussion

The researcher discusses the findings of the study on the use of the Busuu application in improving the pronunciation skills of class VIII students of SMP Negeri 10 Tapung. Based on data analysis, the researcher concluded that the use of the Busuu application can help students improve their pronunciation ability. This is supported by the results of the hypothesis test, which shows a sig (2-tailed) probability of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and it can be accepted to conclude that the use of the Busuu application has a significant effect on students' pronunciation ability. In addition, the test results obtained by students when taking the test are also displayed. Based on the pre-test results, it shows that the experimental group has a higher average score (47.70) than the control group (45.90) which shows that the basic abilities of the experimental group are higher. The post-test results show an increase in the experimental group, where the average score increased to 80.20 which indicates an increase of 32.5 points. This increase can be seen in the frequency distribution, with most students getting scores in the "Good" and "Very Good" categories. In contrast, the control group showed an increase to a mean score of 74.30, indicating an increase of 28.4 points, with most students scoring in the "Good" category. This comparison shows that the experimental group using the Busuu application produced a greater increase in scores compared to the conventional method used in the control class.

English pronunciation plays an important role in communicating clearly and effectively. Correct pronunciation can prevent misunderstandings and maintain good relationships with others. Shah et al. (2017) stated that the ability to articulate words is essential for effective communication and understanding because, without good pronunciation skills, a person's communication skills can be disrupted. Mastering pronunciation is very important for second language learners because it significantly improves their ability to receive and understand information well. In this case, one of the tools that can be utilized is an application, and the Busuu application is effective in helping students learn pronunciation. This application not only helps in developing students' abilities in English, especially in pronunciation but can also help develop other skills. Shibata (2020) stated that the language learning course from the Busuu application helps users to become fluent in all aspects of the target language, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading. In addition, this application also aims to support students in developing grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Supported by the results of research conducted by Samara (2021) showing that the busuu application is effective in improving students' listening skills at SMP Negeri 2 Galesong Selatan Takalar from the pre-test results of 60.70 increasing to 83.54 from the post-test results. this application provides video

features with subtitles, and features for listening to text content, from basic to advanced levels, which help interactively in improving listening skills. In addition, the results of research by Mulyadi & Maesaroh (2021) show that this application significantly improves students' speaking skills. This application provides conversation practice features, interactive dialogues, speaking using voice recordings that are assessed directly by native speakers, which helps improve speaking skills. Overall, this study highlights the effectiveness of digital media in improving language skills, especially in pronunciation. In general, previous research and this study emphasize that digital media applications can play an important role in developing skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that this application is very helpful for students in improving their language skills, especially their pronunciation in a variety of and interesting ways.

CONCLUSION

The results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group using the Busuu application compared to the control group that did not use the application. Initially, the experimental group had higher initial speaking ability, as indicated by their initial test scores. After the treatment, their mean score increased substantially from 47.70 to 80.20, reflecting a significant improvement in their pronunciation ability, with many students moving to a higher ability category. In contrast, the control group's improvement was more modest, with their mean score increasing from 45.90 to 74.30. Statistical analysis confirmed the significance of this improvement, with a paired sample t-test yielding a p-value of 0.000, thus concluding that the alternative hypothesis analysis (H_a) was accepted. During the research and data collection on students, the researcher faced several significant challenges and difficulties. One of the main challenges is the lack of variety and attractiveness of the learning media used, which hinders students from being actively involved in the learning process. Monotonous and less interactive media often make students feel bored or less enthusiastic in learning, so they cannot reach their full potential in understanding and mastering English. The researcher realized that the limitations of the learning media used can affect the entire learning process, and this is one of the main challenges in this study. In addition, many students have difficulty in pronouncing English, especially those related to intonation and proper pronunciation. These pronunciation problems usually arise due to the lack of practical practice and opportunities to interact directly with native English speakers or an environment that supports real-time language use. Students often feel insecure in pronouncing words correctly, so they tend to avoid speaking or just follow the wrong pronunciation method. The lack of constructive feedback on pronunciation is also a major obstacle in the learning process. Without clear and precise feedback, students have difficulty knowing where they are making mistakes in pronunciation and how to fix them. This makes them unable to improve their pronunciation skills effectively. Inadequate feedback can also cause students to feel frustrated, which ultimately hurts their motivation and self-confidence. However, researchers also face difficulties in evaluating pronunciation skills comprehensively and objectively, especially when comparing results between students with different backgrounds and abilities. In addition, researchers face difficulties in finding direct references for the applications studied. To overcome this, researchers use studies, theories, and related information from the application's official website and Google Play Store to understand and evaluate how well the application works.

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