

The Effectiveness of Oral Reading Practices on Students' Pronunciation of Vocational High School

Nadilatul Jannah¹, Hanafi², Fitrotul Mufaridah³

¹Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, Indonesia

²Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, Indonesia

³Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, Indonesia

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Abstract

Pronunciation is a major obstacle for many vocational high school students in learning English. Distinguishing mistakes are often caused by lack of practice, the habit of reading silently, and minimal direct correction from teachers. This hinders the development of students' speaking skills and reduces their confidence when communicating. This study aims to determine the effect of oral reading techniques on the pronunciation skills of vocational high school students. This technique was chosen because it can train the pronunciation of phonemes, articulation, intonation and rhythm directly through oral reading activities. This study used a quantitative approach with a true experiment design, with a pre-test and post-test control group involving 50 grade XI students who were divided into two groups, namely the experimental group (implementing oral reading) and the control group (using silent reading). The experimental group received treatment in the form of oral reading activities guided directly by the teacher, including reading text exercises with a focus on phoneme pronunciation, articulation, and correct intonation and rhythm. Students received direct correction and repeated practice, so that pronunciation errors could be gradually corrected. The post-test results showed that this technique was effective, with an average score increase of 28.2 points, compared to the control group which only increased by 11.1 points after regular learning (silent reading). This proves that oral reading improves students' pronunciation performance more effectively. The statistical test results show that the oral reading technique is proven effective in improving the English pronunciation of vocational high school students.

Introduction

Pronunciation is one of the important aspects of mastering English, especially in speaking skills. Proper pronunciation allows students to convey messages clearly and effectively to their interlocutors (Omar et al., 2022) (Rupley et al., 2020) and helps build confidence when oral reading in English or other situations, such as public speaking (Nurhasanah, 2023). On the other hand, improper pronunciation can cause misunderstandings and hinder the communication process (Purwanto, 2019). In the context of education, especially at the Vocational High School (SMK) level, good pronunciation skills are very important, because students not only learn for academic purposes but also to face the world of work that demands good communication skills.

However, based on my experience pronunciation is still the main obstacle experienced by vocational high school students. Many of them have not been able to pronounce English words correctly, mainly due to lack of practice, lack of habituation, and lack of direct guidance from teachers (Ahmad, 2023), which can hinder students' overall language development, especially in terms of pronunciation. Given these conditions, one alternative solution that can be applied to overcome pronunciation problems is to use the technique of oral reading. This technique allows students to practice pronunciation directly through the activity of reading texts out loud. Not only does it help improve pronunciation accuracy, oral reading also trains students in terms of articulation and speaking expression. In addition, this activity can help teachers in providing direct correction to students' pronunciation errors (Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020).

Oral reading is the process of reading a text out loud with the aim of conveying meaning to an audience (Yoursay.id, 2022). Oral reading involves the reader sounding out the words in the text, which can improve comprehension and fluency. Oral reading activities are carried out to model fluent reading, improve students' reading skills, and motivate students to love reading by making the text more accessible and enjoyable (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020). According to (Adrián, 2014) oral reading is effective in improving pronunciation which is a basic language skill because the activity involves attention-awareness techniques that help students realize differences and compare the way they pronounce texts with the model (reading) given by the teacher.

From the description above, this study aims to determine whether the oral reading technique has a significant influence on the pronunciation performance of vocational high school students. The focus of this study is on improving phoneme accuracy, clarity of

articulation, and the use of appropriate intonation and rhythm in reading English texts. It is hoped that the results of this study can contribute to developing more effective and applicable English learning methods in vocational high school environments.

Two main concepts are, namely the technique of oral reading and pronunciation. Oral reading is a technique of reading aloud, which not only aims to understand the contents of the reading but also trains students' phonological skills (Kluster & Kelantan, 2014). According to (Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020), Oral reading is the ability to read texts aloud and clearly, with accurate pronunciation and reasonable speed. Oral reading is more than just saying the words in the text aloud to improve students' understanding. Oral reading also involves conveying meaning through good expression and intonation (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020).

Oral reading consists of several important aspects including prosody (intonation, pauses, and expressions), accuracy, comprehension, and fluency (Wise et al., 2007)(Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020)(Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020). Each of these aspects is interconnected in creating good reading skills. According to (Ceyhan & Yıldız, 2020) stated that oral reading not only trains pronunciation but also encourages understanding of the meaning of the text. By getting students used to oral reading, they can practice oral expression and recognize sentence structures in English contextually.

Meanwhile, pronunciation is the skill of pronouncing language sounds correctly. Pronunciation plays a role in communication that can affect understanding between speakers and listeners, unclear pronunciation can obscure meaning (Purwanto, 2019). According to (Isaacs & Harding, 2017) pronunciation includes two main aspects, namely segmental features (such as phonemes) and suprasegmental (such as intonation and rhythm). In addition, pronunciation consists of several elements, namely phonemes, intonation, emphasis, articulation, rhythm, and pace (Omar et al., 2022)(Shak et al., 2016). In the context of language learning, good pronunciation will support clarity of communication and increase student confidence (Nurhasanah, 2023).

Regarding the effect of reading aloud on pronunciation, several studies have shown a positive relationship between the two, namely research by (Omar et al., 2022) proved that through the practice of reading aloud in a directed and consistent manner, students can correct their phonetic errors and improve the clarity of articulation. This is reinforced by the findings of (Kluster & Kelantan, 2014) which states that reading aloud techniques can build students' phonological awareness and strengthen their mastery of suprasegmental elements

in pronunciation. From another theory (Edi & Bibyana, 2023) it is also said that there is a significant effect between Oral reading and improving students' pronunciation by practicing it consistently.

Thus, the theories that have been described provide a strong foundation for this study. Reading aloud is not just a reading strategy, but can also be an effective method in learning English pronunciation.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a true experimental design (Ary et al., 2014), namely pre-test and post-test with a control group (Ary et al., 2014). The study population consisted of 130 students, with a research sample consisting of 50 grade XI students at SMK Negeri 1 Wringin, which were divided into two groups: the experimental group (XI-TKJ2, 27 students) who received treatment with the oral reading technique, and the control group (XI-TAV, 23 students) who followed regular learning (silent reading). The data collection instrument was an oral reading test, which assessed three aspects of pronunciation, namely: phoneme accuracy, clarity of articulation, and intonation and rhythm.

This instrument was declared valid and tested with Content Validity, namely by the Merdeka curriculum, and had high reliability based on Cronbach's Alpha calculations (0.90 for text 1 and 0.87 for text 2).

Findings and Discussion

The researcher in this section presents the findings of the research implementation that has been conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Wringin, to describe the differences between the experimental group that was given treatment using the oral reading technique and the control group that was not given special treatment. The analysis was carried out by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test of the two groups to determine the improvement scores, as well as testing the significance using the Independent Two Sample For Means T-test.

The experimental group was given treatment using oral reading techniques with a focus on the accuracy of phoneme pronunciation, clarity of articulation, and the use of appropriate intonation and rhythm. Meanwhile, the control group was not given any treatment, in other words, they followed the learning as usual (silent reading). Data were collected through an oral reading test and analyzed using the Independent Two Sample for Means T-test statistical test.

The results showed that there was a significant increase in the pronunciation score of the experimental group, from 37.1 (pre-test) to 65.4 (post-test), with an average score increase of 28.2 points, compared to the control group from 27 (pre-test) to 38.1 (post-test) with an average score of only 11.1. The t-test results (sig. 0.001 <0.05) were significantly smaller than the general significance level of 0.05. This shows that the oral reading technique has a statistically significant positive effect.

The t-test results showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups. In addition, Cohen's d value of 1.79 indicates that the influence of the oral reading technique has a significant effect on improving students' pronunciation. These results strengthen the findings of previous studies (Omar et al., 2022)(Kluster & Kelantan, 2014), that structured reading aloud can help students recognize pronunciation errors and correct them directly. In addition, students also become more confident in speaking English because they are used to oral reading and getting feedback from teachers.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the oral reading technique has a significant effect on the pronunciation ability of vocational high school students. This technique has been proven effective in improving the accuracy of phoneme pronunciation, clarity of articulation, and the use of appropriate intonation and rhythm. In addition, reading aloud also helps students build self-confidence when speaking English. Therefore, it is recommended for English teachers to integrate this technique into pronunciation learning process routinely. Further research can be done using variations in text types, different age groups, or the use of technology such as speech recognition devices for pronunciation feedback.

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