



Investigating the Use of Google Translate to Improve Speaking Proficiency in Third Semester Students at STKIP BUDIDAYA Binjai

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Technology integration in education is becoming increasingly prevalent, heralding a new era of innovative and streamlined teaching methodologies. This study assesses the efficacy of the Google Translate internet application in enhancing the oral proficiency of third-semester students at STKIP Budidaya Binjai. Through a classroom action research approach, the study comprises a single phase encompassing four sequential stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection, aligning with the framework proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. Each phase is meticulously organized and executed to ensure methodical progression. The study cohort comprises twenty-one students, eighteen female and three male participants, all enrolled in the third semester. Findings from the investigation reveal a notable enhancement in students' speaking abilities following the implementation of Google Translate. Notably, the application's comprehensive features, encompassing audio, images, and written explanations for English words, contribute significantly to this improvement. Moreover, the accessibility and offline functionality of Google Translate streamline the learning process, rendering it more effective and efficient compared to traditional dictionary usage.

Keywords: classroom action research, google translate application, oral proficiency enhancement, student speaking abilities, technology integration

INTRODUCTION

In English language acquisition, proficiency in speaking constitutes one of the fundamental skills alongside reading, writing, and listening. Brown and Yule (1983) posited that speaking proficiency involves articulating linguistic sounds to convey thoughts or ideas effectively. This skill encompasses several components: fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It is a complex and challenging facet of language learning. Pronunciation accuracy and vocabulary retention are paramount, underscoring the difficulty of mastering speaking skills. Speaking proficiency can be defined as the capacity to articulate sounds or symbols to express ideas verbally to facilitate mutual comprehension. Speaking is a pivotal tool for self-expression and interpersonal communication, fostering effective dialogue and understanding.

According to Supriyadi (2005), speaking proficiency confers social and professional advantages upon individuals. Socially, proficient speakers are better equipped to engage in meaningful interactions, enhancing interpersonal relationships. Professionally, effective oral communication facilitates the dissemination of information and knowledge, thereby bolstering professional efficacy. Consequently, honing oral communication skills augments students' ability to articulate ideas cogently and engage in practical discourse.

Technology has become increasingly intertwined with pedagogical practices in contemporary education, ushering in a new era of digitized learning methodologies. Traditional educational paradigms are giving way to innovative approaches that harness the

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potential of modern technology. Educators are leveraging digital platforms like the Internet and YouTube to deliver targeted instructional content tailored to students' needs and preferences. Among the myriad educational applications available, Google Translate emerges as a ubiquitous and highly regarded tool for language learning. Boasting over 500 million downloads and a commendable rating on the Play Store, Google Translate is lauded for its multilingual translation capabilities and user-friendly interface. Equipped with audio pronunciation features and a comprehensive database of words, Google Translate facilitates language comprehension and pronunciation mastery, making it a favored resource among English language learners.

Google Translate offers a diverse array of functions, including text translation, website translation, document translation, and image translation, among others. Its innovative features extend to image recognition and speech translation, enabling seamless communication across linguistic barriers. From the findings of this research, it is evident that pronunciation constitutes a pivotal aspect of speaking proficiency, with students often grappling with pronunciation errors and unfamiliar word articulation. Moreover, the study underscores students' pervasive reliance on Google Translate as a ubiquitous and indispensable learning aid. Despite its ubiquity, the research aims to critically evaluate the efficacy of Google Translate as a pedagogical tool for enhancing speaking skills, delineating its strengths and limitations in facilitating language acquisition.

METHOD

This research employed classroom action research methodology adapted from the theory proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2013). Classroom action research is characterized by its focus on tangible improvements in student performance and its collective approach, with the entire class serving as the subject of inquiry rather than individual students. The primary objective of classroom action research is to enhance the quality of learning by addressing classroom challenges and supporting teachers in refining their instructional practices based on research findings. According to Kemmis and McTaggart, action research follows a cyclical process comprising planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection, which may iterate through multiple cycles to achieve research objectives.

The third-semester students enrolled in the English study program at STKIP BUDIDAYA BINJAI, with a sample size of 21 students comprising eighteen females and three males. The research instrument utilized was the assessment of students' English-speaking proficiency before and after the implementation of Google Translate. The research commenced with the planning phase, during which the researcher developed a tailored instructional plan and materials aligned with using mobile phones in classroom instruction. In formulating the plan, the researcher evaluated existing classroom teaching practices and integrated similar pedagogical approaches into the research design, ensuring alignment with the curriculum objectives. Subsequently, the action phase involved administering a pre-test comprising verbal questions and facilitating student dialogue in English to gauge their initial proficiency levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the previously mentioned methodology, researchers were allowed to assess students' performance before using Google Translate. Then, the researcher instructed students to use Google Translate, prompting them to translate several words or sentences and listen to the audio pronunciations provided by the application, aiming to improve pronunciation skills. Subsequently, researchers administered a post-test to evaluate students' fluency and pronunciation without assistance from Google Translate. The third phase involves observation, wherein researchers meticulously documented classroom activities, including student engagement, comprehension of the material, and utilization of Google Translate as a learning tool. This observation facilitated the identification of weaknesses in implementing the method and informed subsequent improvements in teaching strategies.

Lastly, the reflection phase entailed providing students with assessments, such as scores or grades, following the intervention using Google Translate. Researchers collected and analyzed data from observations, pre-tests, and post-tests to inform future iterations of the action research cycle. This reflective process not only aids researchers in refining their instructional practices but also benefits subject teachers by promoting effective teaching methods and enhancing student enthusiasm

for learning.

Based on the research, notable improvements were observed in students who were taught using Google Translate. For instance, one student identified as M exhibited a significant increase in scores, rising from 60 before instruction to 90 afterward. Additionally, students preferred Google Translate, citing its ease of use, effectiveness, accuracy, and time-saving attributes compared to traditional dictionaries. This sentiment was echoed by students who appreciated the application's diverse features and multilingual translation capabilities.

During the planning phase, the researcher conducted observations of the classroom environment and identified frequently encountered vocabulary to serve as experimental material for students, augmenting their vocabulary mastery. In the action phase, a pre-test was administered to assess students' English pronunciation independently. Subsequently, students engaged in question-and-answer sessions and dialogues in English. The integration of Google Translate introduced advanced features, notably the audio pronunciation tool, prompting students to translate words from Indonesian to English and practice pronunciation following Google's audio cues, resulting in noticeable improvements in pronunciation accuracy.

In the observation phase, researchers noted students' strong preference for modern technological tools over conventional methods, attributing this to increased engagement and enthusiasm during learning sessions. One student, MF, exemplified this sentiment, who expressed that Google Translate was more efficient and faster than traditional dictionaries, facilitating quicker comprehension and learning. Moreover, students exhibited sustained enthusiasm and engagement when utilizing online resources.

In the reflection phase, researchers concluded that using Google Translate significantly enhanced students' speaking skills and indirectly contributed to vocabulary expansion. Moreover, Google Translate's seamless accessibility, both online and offline, minimized obstacles to learning. At the same time, pre-test and post-test results demonstrated overall improvement, affirming the success and efficacy of the research intervention.

CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTION

The application of technology in the teaching and learning process facilitated the evolution and rapid advancement of educational practices. Employing Google Translate emerged as an effective instructional strategy, readily adopted by educators as a targeted approach for teaching English. Beyond cultivating speaking skills, the indirect utilization of Google Translate also augmented students' proficiency in vocabulary comprehension, listening, and reading. Moreover, the seamless accessibility of Google Translate as a learning medium could minimize impediments, as it could easily be accessed offline. Consequently, students exhibited heightened enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. This research garnered acclaim for its substantive contributions, yielding significant student developmental outcomes. Central to the research findings is the targeted nature of the Google Translate method, which enhanced students' speaking abilities and facilitated the acquisition of new vocabulary, facilitating a more seamless learning experience.

Drawing from these conclusions, researchers advocate for pedagogical enhancements, integrating conventional and modern teaching methodologies to cultivate an engaging and stimulating classroom environment. Furthermore, educators are encouraged to exercise discernment in selecting appropriate instructional tools and applications, ensuring alignment with instructional objectives and student preferences. Addressing common student weaknesses, such as pronunciation and vocabulary deficits, educators can leverage Google Translate as a supportive learning medium, thereby fostering tangible improvements in language proficiency.

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