



Spelling Bees for Improving Students' Pronunciation Skills

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ABSTRAK

Dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, pengucapan yang tepat merupakan aspek krusial yang seringkali menjadi tantangan bagi banyak siswa. Metode tradisional pengajaran pengucapan seringkali kurang menarik dan membosankan bagi siswa, sehingga diperlukan pendekatan yang lebih inovatif dan interaktif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas Spelling Bee dalam meningkatkan pelafalan berbicara siswa. Metode penelitian ini adalah metode kuantitatif menggunakan penelitian kuasi-eksperimen yang diterapkan pada siswa kelas sembilan Sekolah Menengah Pertama. Penelitian ini menggunakan kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Kelompok eksperimen terdiri dari 22 siswa yang terdiri dari 10 laki-laki dan 12 perempuan, sedangkan kelompok kontrol terdiri dari 22 siswa yang terdiri dari 13 laki-laki dan 9 perempuan. Dalam mengumpulkan data, menggunakan pretest dan posttest untuk mengetahui peningkatan pelafalan berbicara siswa. Teknik analisis data menggunakan analisis statistik inferensial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Spelling Bee dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif dalam membantu siswa EFL untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pelafalan mereka. Implikasi penelitian ini adalah penelitian ini tidak hanya berkontribusi pada peningkatan kualitas pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, tetapi juga pada pengembangan profesionalisme tenaga pendidik di bidang Bahasa.

ABSTRACT

Correct pronunciation is a crucial aspect of learning English that is often challenging for many students. Traditional methods of teaching pronunciation usually need to be more interesting and exciting for students, so a more innovative and interactive approach is required. This research aims to determine the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee in improving students' speaking pronunciation. This quantitative method uses quasi-experimental research applied to ninth-grade junior high school students. This research uses an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group consisted of 22 students of 10 men and 12 women, while the control group consisted of 22 students of 13 men and 9 women. In collecting data, pretest and posttest were used to determine the improvement in students' speaking pronunciation. The data analysis technique uses inferential statistical analysis. The research results show that the Spelling Bee can be an effective strategy in helping EFL students improve their pronunciation skills. This research implies that research contributes to improving the quality of English language teaching and learning and the development of professionalism of teaching staff in the language field.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is an important component of speaking skills in any language, as it influences the exchange of meaning and the communication process (Ditya Pamungkas, 2019; Quoc & Dang, 2021; Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021; Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020; Wongsuriya, 2021). The most important aspect in language training is clear pronunciation, this is also one of the basic requirements for learners to become competent. Meanwhile, the correct pronunciation of words is very important because it influences how well the listener understands what the speaker or audience wants to convey (Fitria & Al Farisi, 2023; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2020). One of the most important aspects of learning a language is correct pronunciation, as this improves the clarity and understanding of speech and helps one become as perceptive as a native speaker. Moreover, the pronunciation is important because speaking can be done successfully after having

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pronunciation skills (Kobilova, 2020; Ramli et al., 2023; Syafitri et al., 2018; Tejedor-García et al., 2020; Visoni & Marlina, 2020). For students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), the accuracy of word pronunciation becomes more important because it has a direct impact on the student's capacity to communicate effectively. Therefore, students are expected to have good English pronunciation, thereby facilitating the flow of speech so as to create mutual understanding, including segmental articulation, rhythm and intonation. The differences between the written symbol and sound sub-systems increase the need for proficiency in pronunciation. Apart from good vocabulary, good pronunciation is also a must for effective communication (Maiza, 2020; Masitha et al., 2023; Mulatsih, 2018; Purnamasari, 2018).

In Indonesia, English is studied as a foreign language. In this case, learning English as a foreign language is a challenge for many students because English and Indonesian have different language rules. Apart from that, problems include limited vocabulary, difficulty pronouncing and spelling words correctly, and difficulty remembering their meaning (Sholekhah & Fakhrurriana, 2020; Syarifuddin et al., 2023). However, pronunciation is one of the biggest obstacles faced by English language learners when learning the language. Trying to give encouragement like native people often leads to frustration. One of the main reasons why most students have difficulty pronouncing words correctly in English is because they do not have enough opportunities to practice pronouncing words correctly. In addition, most of the students' pronunciation problems are in the manner of fricatives in both initial and final positions, and the differences between the mother tongue sound system and the English sound system (Albiladi, 2019; Plailek & Essien, 2021). The influence of the mother tongue, articulation disorders include problems with the articulation process and sound patterns, as well as lack of exposure (Farrah & Halahlah, 2020; Syed & Hussein Abdelrady, 2021). Consonants, clusters, long and short vowel sounds, word stress, prominence and intonation. Due to various reasons, teaching pronunciation to EFL students is largely ignored and avoided. One explanation is that non-native EFL instructors lack proficiency in teaching students about pronunciation norms (AbdAlgane & Idris, 2020; Utami, 2021).

Based on the problems above, teachers must find the best or most effective technique for teaching English pronunciation to students. Using games is one technique to involve students in the pronunciation learning process. The use of games in education changes the conventional approach to knowledge transfer. Stated that teachers use spelling bees as a teaching tool to help students learn the English spelling system by incorporating different learning styles into the classroom to help them pronounce words more correctly (Karina Wedhanti et al., 2021; Tiing & Yunus, 2020). Spelling bees help students learn the pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, and meanings of words to help them remember the words. On the other hand, teachers must use creativity to develop and perfect lesson plans, learning strategies, or media so that students will find learning English, especially pronunciation. Spelling bees can help students know the structure of words and how to pronounce each word accurately and fluently and can raise student motivation because the teaching method is very interesting and fun. Apart from that, Spelling Bee is a modern strategy that can be utilized in developing the educational process. A good mediator is if the preparation, planning and presentation of educational programs are designed and implemented well. Therefore, Spelling Bee is recommended as an effective method for teaching pronunciation to students, especially for junior high schools (Hamarsha, 2022; Hidayati et al., 2022; Khasanah & As Sabiq, 2020).

Spelling bees are an important component of education. This often comes up in assignments and class assignments. A great method to help students improve their spelling and involve everyone in fun learning is to hold a Spelling Bee at school. Previous research findings reveal the goal of the Spelling Bee is to assist children in learning topics, expanding vocabulary, improving spelling, and developing correct pronunciation. In the Spelling Bee, students receive prompts such as definitions, pronunciations, word classes, and example sentences to answer or spell the word correctly (Pusparini & Ningrum, 2020; Rahmawati & Harahap, 2023; Silaban, 2020). Other research also states that Students can improve their vocabulary and understanding of English spelling, pronunciation and grammar through Spelling Bees. In line with (Mayasari & Mardi, 2019; Vivianti et al., 2021). Spelling Bee is one of the interesting games for teaching English. Spelling Bee helps students learn pronunciation and know it better than before. Therefore, using the Spelling Bee has several benefits. This can help students get better at spelling, vocabulary, and understanding assigned material. Students can also use it to train focus and memorize.

There are several relevant research results that have been carried out by previous studies that are related to this research. Previous research revealed that an alternative method that teachers can use to help their students with spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation is the "Spelling Bee". This makes students not bored during the English teaching and learning process so that it can increase students' motivation in learning English (Khasanah & As Sabiq, 2020; Pratiwi et al., 2021). In line with previous research which revealed that implementing the Spelling Bee Strategy can improve students' pronunciation learning outcomes. This research also reveals that learning media in the form of English textbooks, English dictionaries, giving assignments to students both individually and in groups can be used with spelling be to

improve students' pronunciation and that the use of Spelling Bee can improve students' pronunciation and their interest in pronunciation (Ismah, 2019; Khasanah & As Sabiq, 2020).

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth exploration of the effectiveness of Spelling Bees as a learning method for improving students' pronunciation skills, an area that has rarely received attention in English education research. Most previous studies have focused more on aspects such as spelling skills or vocabulary mastery, while the direct impact of the Spelling Bee on pronunciation has not been widely explored. This research offers a new perspective by highlighting how these spelling competitions can be used strategically to improve aspects of phonetics and pronunciation, providing valuable insights into more interactive and fun teaching techniques. In addition, this research also examines contextual factors such as the level of student engagement, teaching methods used by teachers, and a supportive learning environment, all of which contribute to the successful implementation of Spelling Bee. Thus, this research not only fills a gap in the English language education literature, but also paves the way for innovation in teaching methods that are more effective and adaptive to students' needs.

Through an analytical review of research on spelling bee strategies that can improve student pronunciation, there are several gaps that must be filled. First, a number of studies were mostly conducted in English-speaking countries and a limited number were applied in the context of teaching pronunciation using spelling bees. Second, this method is mostly applied in elementary schools and limited research has been conducted to examine how Spelling Bee affects students' pronunciation in secondary schools. This research addresses this gap by finding out the effectiveness of using Spelling Bees to improve students' pronunciation skills. Therefore, the aim of this study was to test the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee technique to improve the pronunciation skills of junior high school students studying English as a foreign language.

2. METHOD

This research uses quantitative methods with a Quasi Experimental approach (Cohen et al., 2019; Mackey, 2020). Quantitative research is scientific research that is methodically based on components, facts and the nature of relationships known as quantitative research. Quasi-experimental research has a control group but cannot control the intervention variable which influences the experimental process. Although there is a control class in this design, the external variables that influence the experiment are not completely under its control. Researchers used a pre-test and post-test design with the student sample divided into two groups, experimental class and control class. The data collection technique and instruments in this research are using tests to measure student learning outcomes. Before researchers took data in the field, the test instrument was validated by a team of two experts, namely in the material field and in the evaluation field.

In this study, a total of 44 students were selected to participate, with 22 students placed in the control group (class IX A) and 22 students placed in the experimental group (class IX B). This research uses a test instrument consisting of a pre-test and post-test assessment, each consisting of 10 multiple choice questions given to the experimental class and control class. The test questions were developed in line with the ninth grade syllabus and focus on understanding narrative texts. Furthermore, the data analysis technique used is comparative data analysis. Testing a comparative hypothesis means testing the population against parameters in the form of differences. In data analysis used is the N-gain method. Levene's test for equality of variances. Test the hypothesis using the Independent sample t-test.

The data analysis technique uses inferential statistical analysis. Quantitative research with a quasi-experimental approach to evaluate the effectiveness of Spelling Bee in improving students' pronunciation skills will be carried out through several stages. First, researchers will select two groups of students from the same population, namely the experimental group and the control group. Both groups will undergo a pre-test to measure their initial pronunciation skills. Next, the experimental group will be given treatment in the form of regular Spelling Bee activities for a certain period, while the control group will undergo traditional pronunciation teaching methods. After the intervention period, both groups will take the same post-test as the pre-test to measure improvements in pronunciation skills. Data obtained from the pre-test and post-test will be analyzed using statistical techniques, such as the t test, to determine significant differences between the experimental group and the control group. The results of this analysis will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee in improving students' pronunciation skills, as well as to draw conclusions and provide recommendations based on research findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Research findings show that Spelling Bee can improve students' pronunciation skills. In this study, the material description provides information about the central tendency of the material which includes mean, minimum, maximum, median, std. Deviation, range, interquartile range and kurtosis of the results of the experimental group and control group. From the data obtained through the pre-test, the distribution of data in each group is presented in the form of tables and histograms. Descriptive data based on experimental class is presented in Figure 1.

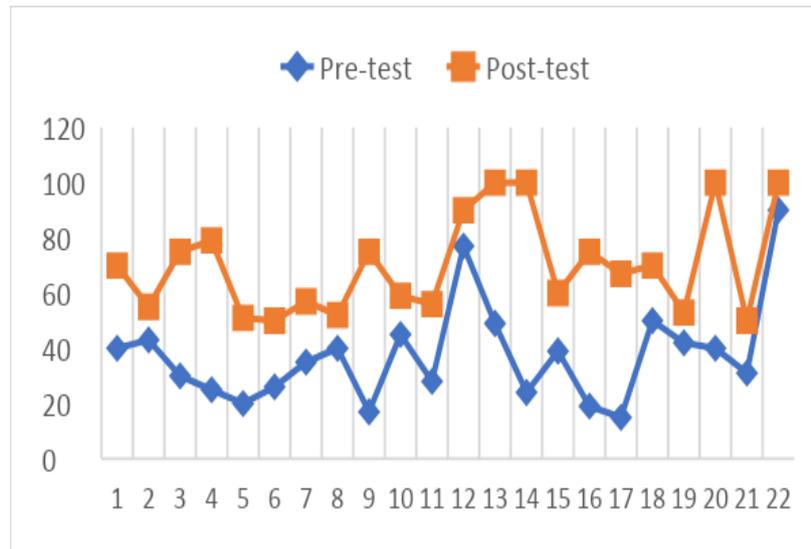


Figure 1. Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Based on Figure 1, Initially during the pre-test assessment, the range of scores was apparent, with one student achieving the lowest score ever recorded in the range of 15 to 30, while two students achieved the highest score in the range of 50 to 65, this indicates a basic level of students' pronunciation proficiency that varies. After instructional intervention using the Spelling Bee technique, significant improvements were seen in the post-test scores of the entire student group. Notably, the lowest post-test scores improved to be in the range of 70 to 79, achieved by seven students, indicating significant improvement in pronunciation. Additionally, the highest post-test scores jumped to the 90 to 100 range, achieved by 12 students, underscoring the substantial progress made by the students. Descriptive Data of the Experimental Class is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Data of Experimental Class

Statistics	Pra-Tes	Post Test
Means	37.50	70.18
Minimal	15	50
Max	90	100
Median	37.00	68.50
Std. Deviation	18.22	17.92
Reach	75	50
Interquartile range	19	27
Kurtosis	2.73	-941

Based on the data in Table 1, The results of data analysis show that the average score is based on 37.50, with a median score of 37.00, a minimum score of 15, a maximum score of 90, a standard deviation score of 18.22, a score range of 75, an interquartile range score of 19, and a kurtosis score of 2.73. Meanwhile, to find out the students' scores after being given treatment, the researcher gave a post-test, the results of which showed an average score of 70.18, a median score of 68.50, a minimum score of 50, a maximum score of 100, a standard deviation score of 17.92, a score range of 50, an interquartile range score of 27, and a kurtosis score of -941. Descriptive data based on the control group is presented in Figure 2.

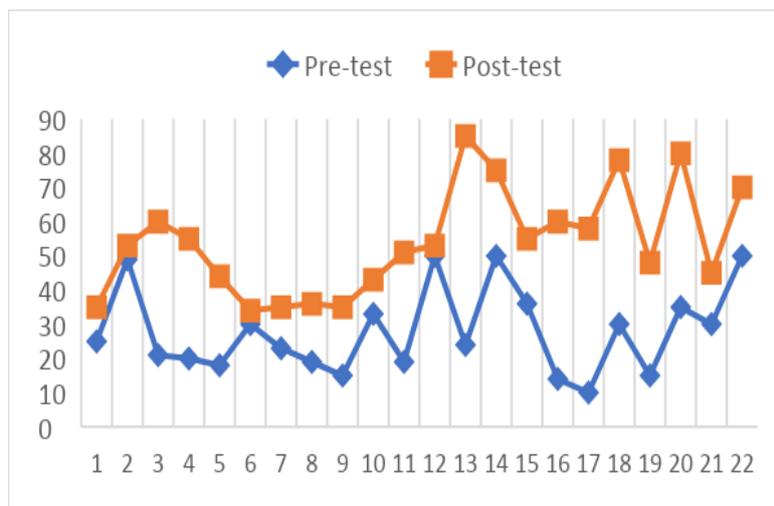


Figure 2. Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Based on Figure 2, there was a pattern between the pre-test and post-test scores, indicating a gradual increase in students' pronunciation proficiency. This shows that the scores obtained remained relatively consistent across both assessment phases, indicating significant improvement in students' pronunciation skills over time. Descriptive statistics of the control class results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Of Control Class Results

Statistics	Pra-Tes	Post Test
Means	28.00	54.00
Minimal	10	34
Max	50	51
Median	24.50	53.00
Std. Deviation	12.58	15.66
Reach	40	51
Interquartile range	16	21
Kurtosis	-611	-680

Meanwhile, the control class pre-test results using the Spelling Bee method showed an average score of 28.00, median score of 24.50, minimum score of 10, maximum score of 50, standard deviation score of 12.58, score range was 40, interquartile range score was 16, and the kurtosis score is -611. After that, the post-test results showed an average score of 54.00, a median score of 53.00, a min score of 34, a maximum score of 51, a standard deviation score of 15.66, a score range of 51, an interquartile range score of 21, and a Kurtosis score. is -680. Apart from that, the results of the N - gain analysis of the Pre-test-Posttest for the experimental class and the control class were also calculated. The results of the N - Gain analysis for both groups are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. N - Gain Results

No.	Class Criteria	Means	N-Profit
1	Pre-test experiment	37.5	0.53
	Post-test experiment	70.1	
2	Pre-test control	28.0	0.35
	Post-test control	54.0	

Furthermore, in the control class the lowest pretest result was 28.0, then the highest was 50.0. Then in the experimental class the lowest score was 37.5 and the highest was 70.1. Thus, descriptive statistics through interpretation of the N-gain score table can be stated that there is an influence of the Spelling Bee on improving students' pronunciation abilities. To test the hypothesis, researchers analyzed the t-test using SPSS. The analysis results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Independent Sample Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	signature. (2-tail)	Meaningful Differences	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Above
Equal variances are assumed	2.107	0.154	2.400	42	0.021	0.18058	0.07525	0.02871	0.33245
Equal variances are not assumed			2.400	39.553	0.021	0.18058	0.07525	0.02843	0.33273

Based on the SPSS software output, the t-test value was determined to be the same as the known significance value (Sig) of 0.154 > 0.05 in Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. Therefore, Sig. The values found in the Equal variances assumption table serve as a guide for independent sample t-tests for n-gain scores. In addition, the Sig value. (2-tailed) is known to be 0.021 < 0.05, meaning there is a significant difference in the efficacy of using the Spelling Bee to improve students' pronunciation skills. The average pre-test post-test score of the control class increased from 28.0 to 54.0, while the pre-test post-test score of the experimental class increased from 37.5 to 70.1, which is measurable evidence of this. Spelling Bee is an excellent tool for teaching English pronunciation because it helps students learn the language faster. In fact the t test (2.400) is greater than the 2-tailed sig value (0.21). This analysis highlights the potential of Spelling Bee activities as an effective pedagogical tool to facilitate accelerated learning of English pronunciation. The statistically significant difference in improvement between the control group and the experimental group suggests that integrating Spelling Bee practice into language teaching can produce real benefits, contributing to increased student proficiency. Therefore, educators may consider incorporating Spelling Bee activities into their teaching methodology to encourage more effective language acquisition and development of pronunciation skills among students.

Discussion

Research findings show improvements in students' pronunciation. This study is consistent with relevant research showing that Spelling Bees can be integrated into educational practice because they can improve pronunciation skills . In addition, these activities attract students' interest in their studies. Spelling Bee offers a variety of interesting games that appeal to children and can foster their interest. Considering its beneficial impact on pronunciation, incorporating this game into teaching and learning activities is a fun approach. This view is in line with previous research which emphasizes that learning materials that captivate students function as effective stimuli in the learning process (Muthaharah, 2020; Pardede, 2020). The use of media is very important in creating a more dynamic classroom environment and improving learning outcomes. By incorporating appropriate media into teaching activities, educators can effectively achieve the educational goals set by the school.

Pronouncing words, phrases and sentences correctly in English means making all the sounds, spelling, compressing and intoning them correctly (Hidayatullah, 2020; Nunan & Bailey, 2019) In addition, Spelling Bee represents an alternative approach that can be used by students, which serves as a cooperative learning strategy suitable for classroom application (Khasanah & As Sabiq, 2020; Lumbangaol et al., 2022). This is in line with the opinion of previous research which states that involving the Spelling Bee as a learning medium certainly has several functions for learning, namely to improve students' pronunciation (Lestari et al., 2024). Therefore, researchers apply Spelling Bee as a learning medium in junior high schools that can improve students' pronunciation. This spelling bee is very effective in improving students' pronunciation. Spelling Bee is indicated as an interesting lesson and can improve students' pronunciation. The existence of the Spelling Bee can also improve the quality of education. This is in line with the results of previous research which stated that the Spelling Bee was clear and easy to understand (Silaban, 2020; Utami, 2021). The implications of the results of this research affect junior high school teachers. This research provides information to teachers about the use of new learning environments in teaching activities. Apart from that, it also attracts students' attention when participating in learning activities. This information is passed on to the teacher so that students receive information about improving their pronunciation. In addition, Spelling Bee can improve students' pronunciation skills

The Spelling Bee Method for Improving Students' Pronunciation contributes to the validation of innovative teaching methods in language learning. It emphasizes incorporating interactive and engaging tools such as the Spelling Bee into teaching practices to enhance student learning. By showing the positive effect of Spelling Bee in improving pronunciation, this research contributes to a better understanding of how students acquire pronunciation skills. This understanding can help develop more targeted and effective teaching strategies. In addition, an English teacher must pay more attention to students' spelling when writing and speaking to prevent spelling errors (Badawi et al., 2022; Respita et al., 2020). Therefore, this research has an important meaning in efforts to improve students' reading fluency and pronunciation through the use of spelling bees as a strategy to support readers in achieving fluent text comprehension and accurate word pronunciation (Badawi et al., 2022; Ditya Pamungkas, 2019; Fikriyah, 2022; Susanti et al., 2023). The limitation of this research is the lack of research scope, especially for research subjects with students who only come from one school. Several suggestions can be made to improve the rigor and usefulness of future research in this area in light of these limitations. Initially, to ensure that the results can be applied to a variety of learner backgrounds and situations, researchers should strive to collect a more representative and diverse sample of participants. Therefore, it is hoped that future research can deepen research regarding the effectiveness of Spelling Bees in improving students' pronunciation abilities.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Spelling Bee can improve students' pronunciation abilities. Experimental class students had better progress and post-test performance than students in the control class with lower scores. The Spelling Bee method is significantly effective in improving students' English pronunciation. Data analysis showed that the experimental group who participated in Spelling Bee activities regularly experienced greater improvements in pronunciation scores on the post-test compared to the control group who used traditional teaching methods. This significant difference between the two groups confirms that Spelling Bee not only helps students master spelling, but also improves their phonetic skills and confidence in speaking English. Additionally, the study identified that factors such as active involvement of students and an interactive teaching approach play an important role in the success of this method. Thus, Spelling Bee can be integrated as an effective learning strategy to improve students' pronunciation skills, making a positive contribution to improving the quality of English education.

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