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ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION AND SPEAKING THROUGH GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND STORYTELLING

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation and speaking remain challenging skills for EFL learners in Indonesian junior high schools due to the influence of L1 phonology and limited access to authentic English exposure. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) aimed to improve the pronunciation and speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Majasari, Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia, through the integration of Google Translate and storytelling. The study was conducted in two cycles over eight meetings, involving 32 students as participants. Data were collected through speaking tests, classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The results showed significant improvement in students' speaking performance across five key aspects: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, and comprehensibility. In the pre-test, all students were categorized as “Poor” based on Brown’s speaking performance criteria. After Cycle I, some improvements were noted, but further intervention was needed. By the end of Cycle II, 75% of the students achieved the “Good” category, indicating substantial progress. The use of Google Translate provided accessible pronunciation models that supported self-correction and phonetic awareness, while storytelling encouraged student engagement, fluency, and confidence in speaking. The study concludes that combining digital tools with communicative activities effectively enhances EFL students’ speaking abilities. Future studies are recommended to explore these strategies in broader contexts and over longer periods to assess sustained impact.

Keywords: ***Pronunciation; Speaking Skills; Google Translate; Storytelling; EFL***

INTRODUCTION

Speaking and pronunciation are essential components of communicative competence in English language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts where students have limited exposure to native speakers. For Indonesian EFL learners, especially those at the junior high school level, mastering these skills remains a persistent challenge. Pronunciation errors are not only linguistic issues but also psychological barriers that significantly impact students’ speaking confidence and willingness to communicate in English. These problems often stem from first-language interference, insufficient listening input, and minimal opportunities for authentic speaking practice (Gilakjani, 2016).

In many Indonesian classrooms, English language instruction still relies heavily on traditional teaching methods such as rote memorization, mechanical drills, and grammar-focused exercises (Rahmah, 2018). While these approaches may develop

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students' theoretical knowledge, they often fail to effectively improve oral communication skills. As a result, many students struggle with phoneme articulation, word stress, intonation, rhythm, and fluency. According to Yanti (2019), Indonesian students frequently mispronounce English words due to phonological differences between Bahasa Indonesia and English, which negatively affects comprehensibility and overall speaking performance. Additionally, the lack of corrective feedback and engaging speaking activities contributes to students' speaking anxiety and reluctance to participate in oral tasks (Tutyandari, 2005).

Given these challenges, there is a growing need for innovative teaching strategies that address both the linguistic and psychological aspects of speaking. The integration of digital tools into the language classroom has emerged as a promising solution. One such tool is Google Translate, which offers text-to-speech functionality, enabling students to instantly access correct pronunciation models (Khoshsima & Mozakka, 2017). The audio feature of Google Translate allows learners to repeatedly listen to and imitate native-like pronunciation, fostering phonetic awareness and self-correction. Previous research by Sania (2023) demonstrated that the use of Google Translate in pronunciation practice helped students recognize and correct their articulation errors, improving their phoneme accuracy and word stress control.

In addition to digital technology, communicative and creative activities like storytelling have been widely recognized as effective methods for enhancing speaking proficiency. Storytelling is not only a tool for developing fluency but also a platform for meaningful communication, where students can express their ideas, emotions, and experiences in an engaging context (Abdullah & Ismail, 2019). According to Ibrahim (2022), storytelling activities encourage students to use English in a natural, spontaneous manner, helping them to develop greater fluency, intonation control, and expressive speaking abilities. Moreover, storytelling integrates multiple language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and even writing—thereby promoting holistic language development. Despite the well-documented benefits of Google Translate and storytelling when used independently, limited research has explored the combined implementation of these two methods in an EFL setting, particularly among junior high school students in Indonesia. The few existing studies have generally focused on university or adult learners, leaving a significant gap in understanding the impact of these strategies on younger students who are at a critical stage of language acquisition. Integrating Google Translate with storytelling could offer a comprehensive solution by providing accurate pronunciation input and immediate listening support while simultaneously encouraging students to speak more confidently and creatively.

This study aims to investigate the process and outcomes of using Google Translate and storytelling to improve the pronunciation and speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Majasari. The selection of this school is based on the results of a preliminary study conducted from February 10 to February 28, 2025, which revealed that 85% of students in the class struggled with various pronunciation aspects, including the articulation of regular and irregular verbs, nouns, and pronouns. Many students displayed difficulties in pronouncing common narrative sentences such as "Once upon a time, in a village, a couple was working on their farm when they saw a golden cucumber." Errors in phoneme accuracy, word stress, and intonation were frequent, often leading to unclear or incomprehensible sentences.

In addition to linguistic challenges, the preliminary study also indicated that students showed low levels of speaking confidence and active participation, particularly

during pronunciation-focused activities. These findings support the need for an engaging, technology-supported teaching strategy that can address pronunciation difficulties while simultaneously reducing speaking anxiety.

Google Translate and storytelling were selected for this intervention based on several considerations. First, Google Translate offers students an accessible and immediate pronunciation model that can be used both in and outside the classroom. According to Khoshsima and Mozakka (2017), repeated listening to native pronunciation through speech technology helps students develop phonetic awareness and supports self-directed correction. Sania's (2023) study further confirms that the integration of Google Translate significantly improves pronunciation accuracy and helps students distinguish between commonly confused sounds.

Second, storytelling provides a low-pressure environment for students to practice speaking while focusing on content rather than form. Ibrahim (2022) emphasizes that storytelling is particularly effective in promoting fluency and rhythm in speech, as students naturally adopt appropriate intonation and stress patterns when narrating stories. Furthermore, storytelling encourages active learning and student engagement, both of which are critical for overcoming speaking reluctance in EFL settings (Isbell et al., 2004). The novelty of this research lies in its combination of Google Translate and storytelling within a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework, allowing the researcher to continuously monitor, assess, and refine the teaching process over multiple cycles. This study not only evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies in improving students' pronunciation and speaking skills but also examines how students interact with Google Translate and storytelling in real-time classroom situations.

In addition, this study contributes to the growing body of research that emphasizes the importance of integrating digital tools in language learning. While previous studies such as those by Abdullah and Ismail (2019) and Ibrahim (2022) have established the benefits of storytelling, this research provides a fresh perspective by combining it with modern technological support, making it highly relevant to today's digital learning environment.

In summary, this study addresses a critical gap in EFL pedagogy by:

1. Investigating the process of implementing Google Translate and storytelling in a junior high school English classroom.
2. Examining the extent to which these methods can improve students' pronunciation and speaking performance.
3. Providing practical recommendations for integrating technology and communicative activities to enhance English speaking skills in EFL contexts.

It is expected that the findings from this research will offer valuable insights for English teachers, curriculum designers, and future researchers seeking to develop more effective and engaging approaches to teaching speaking and pronunciation in EFL classrooms.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design aimed at improving students' pronunciation and speaking skills through the integration of Google Translate and storytelling in the EFL classroom. Classroom Action Research was selected because it is a practical approach that allows teachers and researchers to identify problems, implement solutions, and systematically monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies in real classroom settings (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The CAR design

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provides a cyclical process consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which is particularly suitable for continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices.

The research was conducted in two cycles, where each cycle involved detailed planning, the implementation of teaching strategies, observation of the learning process, and reflection on the outcomes. The reflections from Cycle I informed the adjustments and improvements implemented in Cycle II to address remaining weaknesses.

Research Site and Participants

The study was carried out at SMPN 1 Majasari, Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia, specifically involving eighth-grade students in the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of 32 students participated in the research. Based on the preliminary study conducted in February 2025, the selected class demonstrated low pronunciation and speaking abilities, with 85% of students scoring in the "poor" category on a pre-test that assessed phoneme articulation, word stress, intonation, rhythm, fluency, and overall comprehensibility.

The participants were chosen based on their accessibility, the observed learning challenges, and the support provided by the English teacher at the school. The participants represented typical EFL learners in Indonesia who have limited exposure to native English pronunciation and experience speaking anxiety due to frequent mispronunciations and lack of speaking practice (Yanti, 2019).

Data Collection Methods

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research process and outcomes, the study utilized multiple data collection methods, including:

1. **Observation**
   Classroom observations were conducted to monitor student engagement, the use of Google Translate, participation in storytelling activities, and the overall implementation of the lesson. Observational field notes were taken to document students' behavior, responses, and challenges encountered during the learning process. This method aligns with the recommendations of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) for tracking process-based changes in classroom research.
2. **Speaking Tests**
   Three speaking assessments were administered: a pre-test, a post-test after Cycle I, and a post-test after Cycle II. The tests evaluated five aspects of speaking performance: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, and overall comprehensibility. The scoring was based on Brown's (2004) speaking performance criteria to ensure objectivity and reliability in assessing student improvement across cycles.
3. **Interviews and Field Notes**
   Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and the English teacher to gather qualitative insights regarding students' perceptions of using Google Translate and storytelling. The interviews provided additional data about students' attitudes, challenges, and experiences that could not be fully captured through observation and tests.
4. **Documentation**
   Supporting materials such as student worksheets, storytelling texts, Google Translate activities, and lesson plans were collected to support the analysis and to document the research process.

Research Instruments

The primary instruments used in this study included: Observation sheets to record classroom activities. Speaking assessment rubrics based on Brown's (2004) criteria. Interview guidelines for students and teachers. Field notes and documentation templates.

The inter-rater reliability of the speaking assessments was ensured by involving the English teacher as a second assessor. A pilot assessment was conducted to calibrate scoring and minimize subjective bias.

Research Procedure

The study followed the typical Classroom Action Research procedure as outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988): Planning: Lesson plans were developed to integrate Google Translate and storytelling, supported by relevant materials. The researcher prepared observation sheets and assessment rubrics. Action: The planned lessons were implemented over a total of eight meetings divided into two cycles. Students were guided to use Google Translate to listen to correct pronunciation, followed by storytelling sessions where they practiced speaking based on narrative texts. Observation: The researcher and the English teacher observed students' participation, pronunciation practice, and engagement during storytelling activities. Reflection: The outcomes of each cycle were analysed. The weaknesses identified in Cycle I (e.g., inconsistent pronunciation, misplaced word stress, lack of fluency) were addressed through targeted adjustments in Cycle II.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the speaking assessments were analysed by calculating the average scores and performance categories across the pre-test, post-test Cycle I, and post-test Cycle II. Improvements were measured using comparative analysis to track student progress over time. Performance levels were categorized based on Brown's (2004) scoring range: Poor (1-5), Fair (6-10), Satisfactory (11-15), Good (16-20), and Excellent (21-25).

The qualitative data from interviews, observations, and field notes were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to students' engagement, challenges, and attitudes toward the integration of Google Translate and storytelling. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis provided a robust and triangulated understanding of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings of the study in a systematic manner, starting with the students' performance in the pre-test, followed by improvements observed in Cycle I and Cycle II. The findings are supported by data collected through speaking tests, classroom observations, and interviews.

Pre-Test Results

Before the intervention, the researcher conducted two classroom observations and a pre-cycle speaking test to assess students' initial pronunciation and speaking abilities. These observations aimed to identify real classroom problems that hindered students' speaking performance.

The first observation, conducted on February 11, 2025, during a regular English lesson on "Self-Introduction," revealed that most students showed reluctance, low confidence, and limited oral participation. Many hesitated to speak, frequently refused

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when asked to pronounce English sentences, and preferred to respond in Indonesian. The few who attempted to speak struggled with phoneme pronunciation, particularly vowel clarity and consonant endings, and their speech lacked rhythm, intonation, and fluency.

The second observation, conducted on February 12, 2025, during a lesson on "Telling Daily Activities," confirmed similar issues. Students appeared disengaged during speaking tasks and often defaulted to Indonesian. Pronunciation problems were prominent, including omissions of consonant endings like the /s/ or /t/ sounds in words such as "wakes" and "washed." Their speech was generally hesitant, flat, and disconnected, indicating severe difficulty in producing oral English even for simple sentences.

Following these observations, a pre-cycle speaking test was conducted on February 18, 2025, where students were asked to read and retell a short narrative text individually. The speaking performances were video-recorded and evaluated based on five key aspects: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, and comprehensibility.

The most frequent errors included mispronunciation of phonemes such as /θ/, /ʃ/, and /tʃ/, incorrect word stress placement, flat intonation, excessive pausing, and fragmented speech. Many students produced short, disconnected phrases with long hesitations, resulting in low fluency and poor comprehensibility.

The pre-test results and classroom observations confirmed that students had serious pronunciation and speaking difficulties, limited exposure to correct pronunciation models, and low speaking confidence. These baseline findings highlighted the urgent need for an intervention that combined focused pronunciation practice, repeated listening, and expressive speaking tasks.

To ensure the objectivity and reliability of the speaking assessment, the researcher collaborated with a colleague to independently score the students' performances. An inter-rater reliability test using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Formula was conducted, confirming a high level of scoring consistency between the two raters.

The results of the pre-test revealed substantial deficiencies in all aspects of speaking. According to Brown's (2004) performance criteria, 100% of the students were categorized as "Poor.".

Table 1. Pre-Test Score on Each Speaking Aspect

Speaking Aspect	Average Score
Phoneme Accuracy	1.09
Word Stress	1.00
Intonation and Rhythm	1.00
Fluency	1.00
Comprehensibility	1.00
Average total score	**5.09**

The speaking prformance Result in the pre-test. Table 2 summarizes the pre-test results were as follows:

Table 2. Pre-Test Speaking Performance Results

Performance Category	Score Range	Pre-Test (%)
Poor	1 - 5	100%
Fair	6 - 10	0%
Satisfactory	11 - 15	0%
Good	16 - 20	0%
Excellent	21 - 25	0%

Based on the table above 100% of the students were categorized as "Poor". These results confirmed that the students had serious difficulties in pronouncing English words, using correct stress patterns, maintaining natural intonation and rhythm, and speaking fluently. These difficulties are consistent with Yanti's (2019) findings that EFL students in Indonesia commonly mispronounce English words due to first-language interference and lack of phonetic exposure.

The pre-test also revealed that students often avoided speaking tasks due to fear of making mistakes and were highly dependent on written texts. During the initial classroom observation, students frequently hesitated, paused, and demonstrated low participation in oral activities, which supports the argument made by Tutyandari (2005) regarding the prevalence of speaking anxiety in Indonesian EFL contexts.

Cycle I Results

After the first cycle of intervention using Google Translate and storytelling, there were noticeable improvements in students' speaking performance. Table 3 presents the average scores achieved in Cycle I.

Table 3. Speaking Performance in Cycle I

Speaking Aspect	Cycle I Average Score	Improvement in Cycle I
Phoneme Accuracy	1.47	Students began to articulate words more correctly
Word Stress	1.47	Improved placement of word stress
Intonation & Rhythm	1.47	Students showed early control of intonation
Fluency	1.47	Students spoke more frequently and with less hesitation
Comprehensibility	1.47	Improved clarity in speaking attempts
Average total score	7.35	29.4%

From the table above, it can be seen that each aspect of Pronunciation and speaking average score across all five aspects from 7.35 out of 25, or 29.4%. The aspect-by-aspect average scores were as follows; Phoneme Accuracy: 1.47 (29.4%), Word Stress: 1.47 (29.4%), Intonation and Rhythm: 1.47 (29.4%), Fluency: 1.47 (29.4%) and Comprehensibility: 1.47 (29.4%)

Despite these improvements, some weaknesses remained. Students still mispronounced certain words, had inconsistent word stress on longer words, displayed broken intonation patterns, paused too often, and produced some unclear sentences. These weaknesses mirror the challenges documented in the study by Gilakjani (2016), who noted that pronunciation development is a gradual process requiring consistent exposure and practice.

Post-Test Cycle I Results

The post-test after Cycle I demonstrated that 50% of students had moved to the "Fair" category, while the other 50% remained in the "Poor" category. Table 4 summarizes these results.

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Table 4. Performance Categories in Post-Test Cycle I

Performance Category	Score Range	Post-Test Cycle I (%)
Poor	1 - 5	50%
Fair	6 - 10	50%
Satisfactory	11 - 15	0%
Good	16 - 20	0%
Excellent	21 - 25	0%

Classroom observations indicated that students used Google Translate regularly, often replaying the pronunciation of challenging words, supporting the findings of Khoshsima and Mozakka (2017) that speech technology enhances phonetic awareness. Interviews with students revealed that while they appreciated the support from Google Translate, they still lacked confidence in their fluency and natural speech delivery.

Cycle II Results

Based on the reflection from Cycle I, targeted improvements were made in Cycle II. The focus was placed on:

- Continued pronunciation practice using Google Translate.
- Emphasizing stress patterns in storytelling.
- Reinforcing natural intonation and rhythm.
- Encouraging spontaneous speech for improved fluency.

Table 5 presents the results achieved in Cycle II.

Table 5. Speaking Performance in Cycle II

Speaking Aspect	Cycle II Average Score	Improvement in Cycle II
Phoneme Accuracy	3,47	Students consistently produced correct sounds
Word Stress	3,41	More accurate word stress in isolated and connected speech
Intonation & Rhythm	3,34	Noticeable improvement in natural intonation and rhythm
Fluency	3,34	Fewer pauses and smoother delivery
Comprehensibility	2,69	Improved clarity and ease of understanding
Average total score	16.25	65.02%

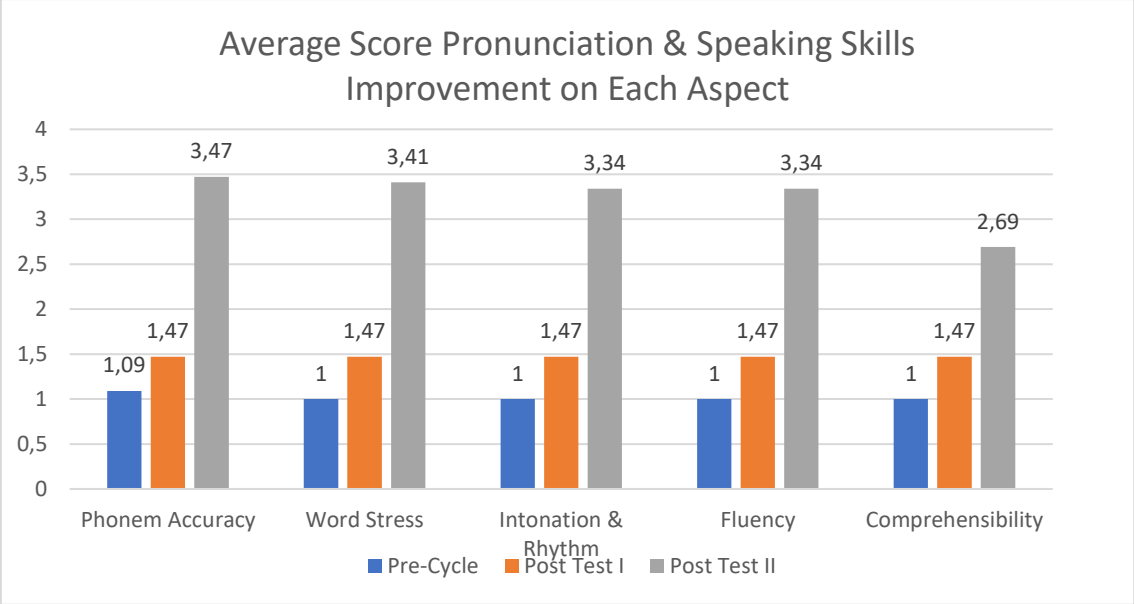
The post-test after Cycle II revealed a significant improvement in performance categories. Table 6 shows the distribution of students' speaking performance.

Table 6. Performance Categories in Post-Test Cycle II

Performance Category	Score Range	Post-Test Cycle II (%)
Poor	1 - 5	6%
Fair	6 - 10	15%
Satisfactory	11 - 15	4%
Good	16 - 20	75%
Excellent	21 - 25	0%

Based on the table, the majority of students (75%) reached the "Good" category by the end of Cycle II, indicating the success of the intervention. Compared to the pre-test, where all students were in the "Poor" category, this represents a substantial learning gain.
Figure 1 illustrates the overall improvement across each speaking aspect from the pre-test to the post-test in Cycle II.

Figure 1. Average Score Improvement in Speaking Aspects (Pre-Cycle to Cycle II)



The most significant gains were observed in phoneme accuracy and word stress, where average scores improved from approximately 1.00 (scale 1-5) or (5.09 average total score) to over 3.25 or (16.25). Students' pronunciation of vowels, consonants, and complex word structures improved remarkably, supported by frequent listening through Google Translate and consistent oral practice via storytelling.

Observation field notes from Cycle II revealed a noticeable increase in student participation and willingness to engage in speaking activities without being prompted. During interviews, several students expressed that the combination of using Google Translate for pronunciation support and storytelling as a speaking task helped reduce their fear of speaking in public.

Discussion

A. Cycle I

At the end of the cycle I, students' speaking skills were assessed across five dimensions: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, They were assessed by Rater 1 and Rater 2. The correlation score between Raters (r = 0.9), indicating a very high level of agreement between Rater 1 and Rater 2 in scoring students' performance. From the figure above, it can be seen that there is improvement in students' average score from pre-cycle to cycle 1. The students' average score increased from 5.09 (Pre-Test) to 7.35 (Post-Test Cycle I). Based on the post-test rubric: 16 students (50.0%) were categorized as "Fair" (score 6–10), 16 students (50.0%) remained at the "Poor" level

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(score 1–5). Here is the Comparison of Performance Category Percentages in Pre-Test and Post-Test Cycle I based on Brown's Criteria. shows that in the pre-test, 100% of students were in the Poor category (1–5). After the actions in Cycle I, 50% of students remained in the Poor category, while 50% of students improved to the Fair category (6–10).

Based on the result above, it can be seen that in Cycle I, students showed improvement in several aspects of speaking performance. The average score in phoneme accuracy reached 7.45, word stress improved to 7.25, intonation and rhythm reached 7.30, fluency was 7.25, and overall comprehensibility was 7.25. These improvements indicated that the students began to pronounce words more accurately and applied word stress more correctly after practicing with Google Translate and participating in storytelling activities.

However, although there was progress, the scores in Cycle I remained in the lower performance range. Most students were still categorized in the "Poor" and "Fair" levels, with frequent pauses, limited fluency, and unnatural intonation when delivering stories. Observation notes also showed that many students still relied on reading text directly and had not yet spoken spontaneously with natural expression.

These weaknesses, especially in suprasegmental features such as intonation, rhythm, storytelling expression, and speech fluency, became the focus of improvement in Cycle II. Therefore, the actions in the next cycle were designed to emphasize suprasegmental elements, provide more corrective feedback, and encourage students to reflect on their speaking performances to achieve better fluency and confidence.

These results indicate that all aspect were still emerging skills, phoneme articulation, word stress, and willingness to speak not much improved. The use of Google Translate fostered independent practice, and students expressed greater comfort in engaging with spoken English by the end of the cycle. Align with the result of pos-test 1, the need for more strategy improvement prepared for the cycle 2

B. Cycle II

Prior to the evaluation from the posttest in cycle I that emphasized reinforcement of pronunciation, intonation control, rhythm, and expressive storytelling., the post-test in Cycle II assessed students' speaking performance across the same five key areas as in the previous cycle: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, and comprehensibility. Each component was scored using Brown's criteria on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing full mastery.

The results of the students' speaking performance after the implementation of pronunciation and speaking instruction using Google Translate and storytelling in Cycle II show notable improvements across all assessed aspects. The highest improvement was observed in phoneme accuracy, with an average score of 3.47, which translates to 69.4% mastery. This indicates that most students were able to articulate vowel and consonant sounds more clearly and accurately compared to Cycle I. Word stress followed closely, with an average score of 3.41 (68.1%), suggesting that students had developed a better understanding of syllabic emphasis in words.

Improvements were also noted in intonation and rhythm and fluency, each with an average score of 3.34, or 66.9% mastery. These scores reflect enhanced ability in producing speech with more natural rise and fall, smoother flow, and more expressive delivery. However, comprehensibility, though improved, remained the lowest among the five areas, with an average score of 2.69 (53.8%). This suggests that while pronunciation and prosodic features had improved, some students still struggled with being fully understood by listeners, particularly in extended or spontaneous speech.

The use of Google Translate in this study provided students with immediate access to correct pronunciation models. This finding is consistent with the results of Khoshsima and Mozakka (2017), who found that students improved their pronunciation accuracy through repeated listening and imitation using Google Translate's text-to-speech feature. Sania (2023) also reported similar improvements in phoneme articulation and word stress when Google Translate was integrated into pronunciation practice. In the present study, students in both cycles frequently used Google Translate to listen to word and sentence pronunciations, which facilitated self-correction and independent practice. This finding supports the assertion by Yanti (2019) that exposure to accurate pronunciation models is crucial in overcoming first-language interference. Interviews revealed that students found Google Translate easy to use and highly beneficial in supporting their self-paced learning. This supports the work of Gilakjani (2016), who emphasized that speech technology enhances the learning experience when integrated with meaningful tasks.

The use of storytelling in this study also played a key role in improving students' speaking fluency, intonation, and rhythm. Storytelling activities created meaningful communication opportunities that required students to use English in a natural context. Ibrahim (2022) highlighted that storytelling activities help learners develop greater control of suprasegmental features such as intonation, stress, and rhythm. In the current study, students demonstrated improved intonation and smoother delivery of sentences during storytelling sessions in Cycle II. These results are also in line with Abdullah and Ismail (2019), who found that storytelling can increase students' motivation, confidence, and fluency in speaking English. Students reported that they enjoyed the storytelling sessions, which allowed them to express themselves creatively while practicing pronunciation. This enjoyment contributed to their increased speaking confidence, supporting Tutyandari's (2005) emphasis on the importance of a low-anxiety classroom environment.

The combination of Google Translate and storytelling appeared to have a synergistic effect. While Google Translate addressed accuracy at the phoneme and word level, storytelling encouraged spontaneous and fluent speech at the sentence and discourse levels. This dual-focus approach is rarely explored in previous studies, especially in junior high school EFL contexts in Indonesia.

Previous research, such as Gilakjani (2016), typically focused on isolated use of speech technology or communicative tasks. However, the present study demonstrated that combining these strategies can lead to more holistic improvements in speaking performance.

The results also highlight the significance of student autonomy and technological literacy. By independently using Google Translate, students gained confidence and control over their learning process. This finding aligns with Widiastuti and Setianingsih (2022), who emphasized the role of learner autonomy in technology-supported language learning environments.

The qualitative data from observations and interviews revealed that students became more engaged and confident in speaking as they progressed through the cycles. Initially, many students were reluctant to speak due to pronunciation anxiety and fear of making mistakes. However, the integration of Google Translate and storytelling gradually reduced their anxiety by providing reliable pronunciation support and a supportive speaking environment. This result supports the findings of Tutyandari (2005), who emphasized the importance of creating a low-anxiety classroom to encourage EFL

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learners to speak. The reduction in anxiety and the increase in speaking confidence were further supported by the fun and creative nature of the storytelling tasks, which provided students with opportunities to use English in a less formal, more enjoyable setting.

Students reported that Google Translate made them feel more confident because they could listen to correct pronunciations repeatedly without fear of judgment. Storytelling allowed them to practice speaking in a fun and creative way, which motivated them to participate more actively.

The positive results of this study are consistent with those reported by Gilakjani (2016), who found that technology-assisted pronunciation tools can enhance learners' speaking performance when integrated with communicative tasks. Additionally, the present study adds to the evidence base by demonstrating that the combination of digital and narrative-based strategies can yield substantial improvements in both accuracy and fluency.

While prior studies (e.g., Sania, 2023; Khoshsima & Mozakka, 2017) focused on university students, this research highlights the effectiveness of these methods for younger learners at the junior high school level, thus expanding the application of these strategies to a wider age group.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the findings are promising, this study was limited to one class in a single school setting. Future research should consider involving multiple schools with diverse student populations to enhance the generalizability of the results. Additionally, comparative studies using other pronunciation tools, or online speech recognition software, may provide valuable insights into the relative effectiveness of different digital resources.

Exploring variations of storytelling, such as digital storytelling or peer storytelling, may also uncover more effective approaches for improving speaking skills. Longitudinal studies that track students' progress over a longer period are recommended to assess the sustainability of pronunciation and fluency improvements. Overall, the results of this study support the growing body of evidence that integrating technology with communicative strategies can significantly enhance EFL learners' speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall speaking confidence.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the integration of Google Translate and storytelling as innovative strategies to improve students' pronunciation and speaking skills in an EFL junior high school context. The research was conducted through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving two cycles at SMPN 1 Majasari, Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia with thirty-two-eighth-grade students as participants.

The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in students' speaking performance across five key aspects: phoneme accuracy, word stress, intonation and rhythm, fluency, and overall comprehensibility. The pre-test results showed that 100% of the students were initially in the "Poor" category, indicating a serious challenge in speaking English. After the intervention in Cycle I, improvements were observed, but some weaknesses remained, necessitating a second cycle. By the end of Cycle II, 75% of students had progressed to the "Good" category, and average scores across all speaking aspects had substantially increased.

The combination of Google Translate and storytelling was found to be highly effective. Google Translate provided reliable pronunciation input and supported phonetic

awareness through its text-to-speech feature, which helped students self-correct and build confidence. Storytelling, on the other hand, encouraged students to practice speaking in meaningful contexts, promoting fluency and natural use of suprasegmental features such as intonation, rhythm, and stress.

The results of this study align with previous research by Khoshsima and Mozakka (2017), Sania (2023), and Ibrahim (2022), who emphasized the importance of integrating digital tools and communicative activities to improve pronunciation and speaking skills. Furthermore, this study confirms that combining pronunciation-focused technology with communicative storytelling activities can effectively address common speaking challenges faced by Indonesian EFL students, such as mispronunciation, word stress errors, and speaking anxiety.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that English teachers, especially in EFL contexts, consider integrating Google Translate and storytelling into their instructional practices to enhance pronunciation and speaking proficiency. The study also suggests that digital tools should not be used in isolation but should be combined with interactive, communicative strategies to maximize their impact.

Suggestions for future research include expanding the sample size to multiple schools, comparing different digital pronunciation tools, exploring digital storytelling variations, and conducting longitudinal studies to assess long-term effects on speaking proficiency.

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