

## An analysis of students' mispronunciation on regular past simple verbs using ELSA speak

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### Abstract

One of common errors in pronunciation is pronouncing regular past simple verbs. However, there is one of technology-based teaching media that can be used by the teachers for improving students' pronunciation, especially in regular past simple verbs pronunciation, which is ELSA Speak. This research aimed to identify dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that is mispronounced by the students using ELSA Speak and to discover the factors that influence students mispronounce regular past simple verbs using ELSA Speak. Research design used was qualitative design with error analysis steps. The data of the research were taken from test and interview which involved 14 students of eighth-grade. Moreover, the findings were analyzed by using percentage formula by Sudijono. The result claimed that the most dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that was mispronounced by the students using ELSA Speak is /t/ sound reaching out 72,1% of errors, and it was caused by the native language, amount of exposure and phonetic ability.

**Keyword** : *pronunciation error; regular past simple verbs; ELSA Speak*

### Abstrak

Salah satu kesalahan umum dalam pengucapan adalah pengucapan kata kerja beraturan bentuk lampau (*regular past simple verbs*). Namun, terdapat salah satu media pengajaran berbasis teknologi yang dapat digunakan oleh para guru untuk meningkatkan pengucapan siswa, khususnya pengucapan kata kerja beraturan bentuk lampau, yaitu ELSA Speak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi aturan pengucapan kata kerja beraturan bentuk lampau yang paling sering salah diucapkan oleh siswa dengan menggunakan ELSA Speak, serta untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kesalahan pengucapan dalam mengucapkan kata kerja beraturan bentuk lampau dengan menggunakan ELSA Speak. Desain penelitian yang digunakan adalah desain kualitatif dengan langkah-langkah analisis kesalahan. Data dari penelitian ini diperoleh dari tes dan wawancara dengan melibatkan 14 orang siswa kelas 8. Selain itu, Temuan dianalisis menggunakan rumus persentase dari Sudijono. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aturan pengucapan /t/ adalah yang paling banyak salah diucapkan oleh siswa dengan menggunakan ELSA Speak, dengan persentase kesalahan mencapai 72,1%, serta kesalahan tersebut disebabkan oleh bahasa ibu (*native language*), tingkat paparan (*exposure*) dan kemampuan fonetik (*phonetic ability*) siswa.

**Kata kunci** : *kesalahan pengucapan, kata kerja beraturan bentuk lampau, ELSA Speak*

## INTRODUCTION

English's status in Indonesia is as a foreign language, not as a second language, like in Malaysia or Philippines. Its people are non-native English speaker and they use Indonesian or local language to communicate. However, English is taught at schools in Indonesia. The EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students learn English spoken and written aspect. In



spite of that, in English spoken aspect, specifically in pronunciation, the students still find difficulties since their mother language and dialect still affect their English pronunciation ability and it will sound unnatural when they speak English (Sholeh & Muhaji, 2015). The students tend to be afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation since the students are lack of pronunciation knowledge. Misperception and misunderstanding in communication also may be happened if the students pronounce English words incorrectly (Silalahi, 2016). The meaning of English words itself will be different and the others may be confused with what the students actually say.

In addition, the students have less pronunciation knowledge than vocabulary or grammar because most of English teachers in Indonesia focus on those, and it causes errors in pronunciation. One of common errors in pronunciation is pronouncing regular past simple verbs. Some researchers explained that the students make errors in pronouncing regular past simple verbs. Regular past simple verbs itself have pronunciation rules, which are /d/, /t/ and /id/ sound. The students cannot distinguish pronunciation rules of regular past simple verbs.

However, as time goes by, the need of technology is increasingly needed. It cannot be separated from daily life, one of them is in teaching and learning English process (Roy, 2019). Nowadays, it is found many applications or websites of learning English on the internet. Technology-based media in teaching, generally is easy, interesting and affordable to use. Moreover, it can assist the students to improve their pronunciation ability and it will be easily engaged the students in learning process.

One of technology-based teaching media that can be used by the teachers for improving students' pronunciation is ELSA Speak. ELSA Speak is a pronunciation application designed to help users, especially English learners, who have difficulties on how to pronounce. The students can practice pronunciation by recording their voice while speaking English and after that, the students can derive a feedback. This application is suitable for EFL students because it is beneficial media allowing students learn how to pronounce English words correctly (Samad & Aminullah, 2019). It also might assist teachers to improve students' pronunciation ability on regular past simple verbs.

This research is a development of previous research conducted by Lusiyanti, Harputra and Harahap (2019) which investigated about students' errors in pronouncing -ed ending. The difference resides in the use of a media in research. Their research did not use a media. Meanwhile, this research used ELSA Speak as a media to record and correct students' pronunciation on regular past simple verbs.

## **METHOD**

This study used qualitative research with error analysis steps (collecting data, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors and evaluation of errors) in Ellis (1994). Participants of this research were eighth-grade students in one of Junior High Schools in Tasikmalaya involving 8E students in academic of 2021/2022 as population of this research, which consists of 33 students. The technique to decide participants or sample used purposive sampling. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) claimed that purposive sampling is a sampling technique where the participants are decided based on the researcher's knowledge or personal judgement. The participants or samples of this study took 14 students from population which had highest grade point averages on English subject.

In collecting data, this study used test and interview. For test, the students were asked to record their voice while pronouncing thirty regular past simple verbs. The test was conducted through Zoom meeting and it was conducted only one trial for each student.

Every regular past simple verb that had been pronounced by the students, they took screenshots of their pronunciation score on ELSA Speak. After the data were collected, these were analyzed by using some error analysis steps, such as identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors and evaluation of errors. Meanwhile, interview was used to know more deeply about the factors. The students were asked about what factors that influence them mispronounced regular past simple verbs were.

After collecting data, data of students' pronunciation score were categorized based on ELSA Speak rubric to discover which rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that had lowest score, middle score and highest score and to discover how many lowest score, middle score and highest score that students obtain in pronouncing regular past simple verbs were.

In addition to, in assessing or giving feedback towards users' pronunciation, ELSA Speak has three pronunciation score status or rubric, those are:

- a. 0-39 = Try Again
- b. 40-79 = Almost Correct
- c. 80-100 = Excellent

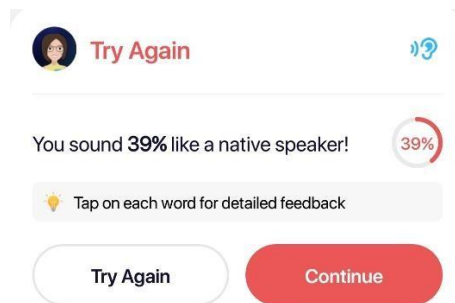


Figure 1. The lowest pronunciation score status

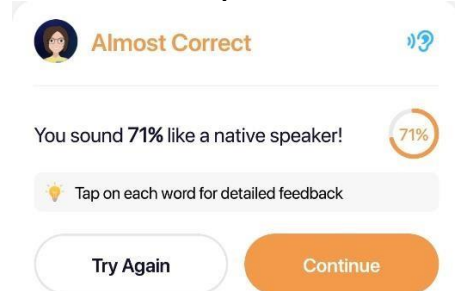


Figure 2. The lowest pronunciation score status

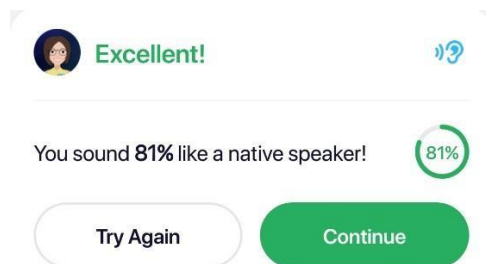


Figure 3. The lowest pronunciation score status

Moreover, it was made into percentage of rules of regular past simple verbs pronunciation which were mispronounced. The percentage was grouped from total of rules of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that were often mispronounced by the students until rules of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that was infrequently mispronounced. Then, interview results were analyzed to discover the factors influencing students mispronounced regular past simple verbs.

To count the percentage, the researcher used formula by Sudijono (2001). The formula are as follow:

$$P = \frac{E}{N} \times 100$$

Notes:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency that are searched for its percentage

N = Total of frequency

100% = Round of number

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Result of Test

This result of test tried to answer the first aim that had been formulated, which is about the most dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that is mispronounced by the students.

Result of /d/ sound	“Try Again” Score	“Almost Correct” Score	“Excellent” Score
Total	27	58	55
Percentage of Total	19,3%	41,4%	39,3%
Percentage of Total Errors	60,7%		

Table 1. Summary and Percentage of Mispronunciation on /d/ sound

<b>Result of /t/ sound</b>	<b>“Try Again” Score</b>	<b>“Almost Correct Score</b>	<b>“Excellent” Score</b>
Total	30	71	39
Percentage of Total	21,4%	50,7%	27,9%
Percentage of Total Errors	72,1%		

Table 2. Summary and Percentage of Mispronunciation on /t/ sound

<b>Result of /d/ sound</b>	<b>“Try Again” Score</b>	<b>“Almost Correct Score</b>	<b>“Excellent” Score</b>
Total	16	72	52
Percentage of Total	11,4%	51,4%	37,2%
Percentage of Total Errors	62,8%		

Table 3. Summary and Percentage of Mispronunciation on /d/ sound

Based on the result above, the percentage of total errors happened in pronouncing the first rule of regular past simple verbs, /d/ sound, reached out 60,7%. The percentage of total errors in pronouncing the second rule of regular past simple verbs, /t/ sound/, reached out 72,1%. In addition to, the percentage of total errors in pronouncing the third rule of regular past simple verbs, /id/ sound, reached out 62,8%. Those percentage of total errors were accumulation from “Try Again” and “Almost Correct” score in ELSA Speak.

In the first rule /d/ of regular past simple verbs pronunciation, the researcher found that the students’ errors in pronouncing the first rule of regular past simple verbs were the students did not pronounce /d/ sound after ending sound of word. There were also students who pronounce /d/ sound became /t/ sound. These errors happened because the students could not pronounce it and they stated that those were not easy to pronounce. Furthermore, the correct pronunciation of first rule was the students had to pronounce /d/ sound after pronouncing consonant sound. Because according to Guarin (2019), the consonant sound at the end of words in first rule is voiced and it should be pronounced into /d/ sound.

In the second rule /t/ of regular past simple verbs pronunciation, the researcher found that the students’ error in pronouncing second rule of regular past simple verbs were the students pronounce ending -ed into /d/ and /id/ sound. These errors happened because the students could not pronounce /t/ sound and the other consonant sounds at the same time, because in their native language, there was rarely consonant cluster at the end of word. Also, the students stated that the second rule of regular past simple verbs had same pronunciation, like the first rule and the third rule. Furthermore, the correct pronunciation of second rule was the students had to pronounce ending -ed into /t/ sound. Since according to Guarin (2019), the consonant sound at the end of words is voiceless, it should be pronounced into /t/ sound.

Meanwhile, in the third rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation, the researcher discovered that the students' error in pronouncing third rule of regular past simple verbs were the students did not pronounce /id/ sound and they pronounced /id/ sound into /ed/ sound. These errors happened because the students found it hard to pronounce it and they were not accustomed to pronouncing English words, especially on regular past simple verbs. Furthermore, the correct pronunciation of third rule was the students have to pronounce /id/ sound after pronouncing consonant sound. Since according to Guarin (2019), the consonant sound at the end of words is /t/ and /d/, it should be pronounced into /id/ sound.

## 2. Result of Interview

This section tried to answer the second question that had been formulated, which was about factors influencing students' mispronunciation on regular past simple verbs. It represented theory of Kenworthy (1987) about factors that affect pronunciation learning.

### a. The Native Language

Based on the interview question "Does your native language influence when you pronounce regular past simple verbs? Why?", most of students answered that their native language completely influenced them when pronouncing regular past simple verbs. Also, there was a students answered that native language did not influence his pronunciation.

### b. Amount of Exposure

From the questions "Do you read the lyrics while listening to English songs? If yes, have you found regular past simple verbs on the lyrics?", most of the students answered that they had read the lyrics while listening to English songs and they had found regular past simple verbs on the lyrics, and also there were a few students who only listen to English songs without reading the lyrics and there were a few students who were only interested in Indonesian songs.

On the other hand, interview question about "Has your teacher introduced or taught regular past simple verbs pronunciation before? If yes, how did they teach?", almost all the students answered that their teacher had not introduced or taught regular past simple verbs pronunciation, but there was a student whom his teacher has introduced it.

### c. Phonetic Ability

From interview question, "Do you know how to pronounce regular past simple verbs?", the students answered that they did not know rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation. There were also a few students who know how to pronounce regular past simple verbs.

Furthermore, according to question "Do you pronounce regular past simple verbs in the way those are written?", some of them pronounced regular past simple verbs in the correct way and some of them pronounced regular past simple verbs in the way those were written.

Then, for question "Have you checked the correct regular past simple verbs pronunciation in dictionary?", almost all the students answered that they had not checked the correct regular past simple verbs pronunciation in dictionary.

### d. Attitude and Identity

According to the interview question, "Do you like learning regular past simple verb pronunciation or not? Why?", almost all the students answered that they liked learning

regular past simple verb pronunciation. Meanwhile, a few students informed that they did not like learning it.

e. Motivation

For interview question, “Do you have motivation to learn regular past simple verbs pronunciation?”, “If no, why?”, and “If yes, what does make you feel motivated to learn regular past simple verbs pronunciation and how do you do to improve your pronunciation in pronouncing regular past simple verbs?”, 8 students answered that they had motivation to learn regular past simple verbs pronunciation. Meanwhile, 6 students answered that they did not have motivation to learn it.

### 3. Discussion of Test

This section tried to discuss more deeply about the most dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation as the first research aim that has been formulated and it was based on the research’s findings above.

To discover the first research aim, based on the table 1, the errors happened reached out 60,7% in the first rule. Based on the table 2, the errors happened reached out 72,1% in the second rule, and based on the table 3, the errors happened reached out 62,8% in the third rule. Thus, the most dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation that was mispronounced by the students using ELSA Speak was the second rule, which is /t/ sound.

These errors of the second rule occurred because the students were not able to pronounce /t/ sound and the other consonant sounds together, since in their native language, there was rarely consonant cluster at the end of word. Rohmah, Nurkamto and Martono (2016, p. 106) stated some learners feel confused when they have to pronounce consonant cluster in English as there are some sounds seemed disappear and also Ramelan (1999, p. 5) stated that due to dissimilarity between Indonesian and English, it will be happened errors in pronouncing English words. That is why the students tended to pronounce ending -ed in the second rule into /d/ and /id/ sound. Also, they stated that the second rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation had same pronunciation, like the first rule and the third rule. Therefore, rules of regular past simple verbs pronunciation were not able to be distinguished by them.

### 4. Discussion of Interview

Since the students made errors in pronouncing regular past simple verbs, it certainly had factors that affect the students mispronounce regular past simple verbs using ELSA Speak. This section tried to discuss more deeply about the second research aim. According to Kenworthy (1987), these factors are divided into 5 factors. These are the native language, amount of exposure, phonetic ability, attitude and identity, and motivation. However, based on the results or findings of interview, the factors that provided much influence on students’ mispronunciation on regular past simple verbs, as follows are:

The first factor was the native language because the students speak Indonesian and Sundanese as their daily language. The students infrequently used English since English is only as a foreign language in Indonesia and they used English when only they study English subject at their school. According to Carruthers (1987, p. 191), there is also a difference of sound systems between Indonesian and English since Indonesian only has 21 consonant sounds and 5 vowels sounds, while English has 24 consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds. Furthermore, Ramelan (1999) said that it is quite difficult for them to change their speech

organs' movement when producing foreign sounds, so it might cause their tongue found it difficult to pronounce regular past simple verbs.

The second factor was amount of exposure. Almost all the students had not been introduced or taught regular past simple verbs pronunciation because regular past simple verbs are eighth-grade material in second semester and the students had just started first semester. Kenworthy (1987) stated that to derive good pronunciation, students have to have good exposure of English environment as well. That is why they did not know how to pronounce regular past simple verbs correctly although they had read the lyrics while listening to English songs and they had found regular past simple verbs on the lyrics, because the amount of exposure of regular past simple verbs pronunciation is still not sufficient for them.

The third factor was The students did not know how to pronounce regular past because there was none who explains about it. They also rarely opened dictionary to check the phonetic of regular past simple verbs pronunciation because they did not have dictionary and also they were not interested in. It showed that the students did not know English sounds. Even Kenworthy (1987) stated that to have good phonetic ability, learners have to learn it, and also practice it over and over again. Istiqomah, Lintang Sari and Perdhani (2021) stated that knowing phonetics could help students to pronounce correctly and it can avoid misunderstanding. Because they did not know and learn phonetic about regular past simple verbs, it could affect them pronounce regular past simple verbs in the way those are written. For instance; in the word "diamond" /'daɪəmənd/, they might pronounce /'dramon/. Moreover, they pronounce those in the way those are written is because of the way Indonesian language pronunciation is the same as the way word is written, since this is supported by Silalahi (2016) which said that Indonesian native speaker would use Indonesian phonetic and phonology to pronounce English words.

Thus, from all of discussion about factors, it can be summed up that the factors which could influence students' mispronounce on regular past simple verbs were the native language, amount of exposure and phonetic ability. Meanwhile attitude and identity, and motivation did not provide much effect.

## CONCLUSION

From the result of this research can be drawn conclusions that (1) the most dominant rule of regular past simple verbs pronunciation was the second rule, /t/ sound. When the students using ELSA Speak to pronounce words with the second rule, the percentage of errors reached out 72,1%. Meanwhile, other rules only reached out 60,7% for the first rule and 62,1% for the third rule. The errors of the second rule of regular past simple verbs occurred because the students pronounce ending -ed into /d/ and /id/ sound.

Furthermore, (2) the factors that influenced students mispronounced regular past simple verbs using ELSA Speak were the native language, phonetic ability and amount of exposure providing impact towards students' pronunciation ability in pronouncing regular past simple verbs since the students rarely used or spoke English, they did not know how to pronounce regular past simple verbs correctly and also they had not been taught or explained about regular past simple verbs pronunciation. However, there were 2 factors that were not quite influential, those were attitude and identity, and motivation. The data claimed that the most of students liked learning regular past simple verbs pronunciation and they had

motivation to improve their pronunciation ability in pronouncing regular past simple verbs. Even Kenworthy (1987) stated that attitude and identity, and motivation can influence pronunciation learning.

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