

The Effectiveness of Drill Techniques in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning: Impact on Pronunciation and Speaking Fluency

Mukhlisin

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Mfthul Ula Nganjuk, Indonesia
mukhlisin.endemic@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of drill techniques in improving pronunciation and fluency among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), who often face challenges in speaking fluency and pronunciation accuracy. The study aims to evaluate whether repetitive practice (drill) can significantly address these issues. An experimental method with a pre-test and post-test design was applied to two groups: an experimental group employing drill techniques and a control group without drills. Results showed that the experimental group achieved greater improvements in pronunciation and fluency compared to the control group, demonstrating the effectiveness of drill techniques in EFL instruction. Based on these findings, it is recommended that drill techniques be integrated with interactive teaching methods for more optimal and comprehensive outcomes. Future research should include long-term evaluations and explore the integration of drills with communicative approaches for sustainable language development.

Keywords: *Drill Techniques, EFL, Pronunciation, Fluency*

A. Introduction

Mastering pronunciation and speaking fluency is critical for EFL learners as these skills influence not only communication effectiveness but also learners' confidence in using English orally.¹ However, achieving these competencies is often challenging due to limited exposure and insufficient practice. This gap suggests inadequacies in existing teaching methods, particularly in implementing techniques that offer intensive and consistent practice in pronunciation and fluency.²

While several approaches, such as communicative methods and task-based learning, have been explored to improve these skills, their effectiveness in

¹ Cut Shafira At Thahira, Siti Sarah Fitriani, and Dohra Fitriasia, 'Students' Perception towards English Camp in Kampung Inggris Pare on Improving Their Speaking Skill', *English Education Journal*, 14.3 (2023), doi:10.24815/eej.v14i3.32588.

² Mahran Abdi Maros, Ridha Ilma, and Renny Kurniasari, 'SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN AN ENGLISH CLUB: STUDENTS' VOICES', *The Journal of English Literacy Education: The Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language*, 10.1 (2023), doi:10.36706/jele.v10i1.20622.

significantly enhancing pronunciation and fluency remains limited.³ Drill techniques, emphasizing repetitive practice, have emerged as a potential alternative for addressing these issues. However, specific studies on the effectiveness of drill techniques in EFL contexts, particularly regarding pronunciation and fluency, remain scarce.⁴

This study investigates the effectiveness of drill techniques as a teaching method for improving pronunciation and fluency in EFL learners. It addresses whether drill techniques have a significant positive impact on students' speaking skills and aims to fill gaps in previous research by focusing on the role of repetition in enhancing these critical language skills.⁵ The hypothesis tested in this study posits that the drill technique will yield significant improvements in pronunciation and fluency compared to traditional teaching methods.⁶

This study utilizes a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design to evaluate the effectiveness of the drill technique in enhancing pronunciation and fluency among 60 EFL learners, divided equally into experimental and control groups. Participants, selected purposively based on beginner-to-intermediate proficiency, underwent a pretest, a four-week intervention, and a posttest to measure improvements. The experimental group practiced daily drill-based exercises, while the control group followed traditional methods. Instruments included a pronunciation test, a fluency test, and a questionnaire to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Independent t-tests analyzed the pretest and posttest scores, while questionnaire responses provided insights into perceptions of the drill technique. Validity and reliability were ensured through expert evaluations, pilot testing, and independent scoring.

³ Mardhiyah M, Muhamad Jaeni, and Siti Salamah, 'The Use of Arabic with a Communicative Approach: A Sociolinguistic Review', *Reslaj : Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal*, 5.1 (2022), doi:10.47467/reslaj.v5i1.1378.

⁴ Halimatussa'diyah, Firdausi Nuzula, and Wahyunengsih, 'Analysis of the Journalistic Language Characteristics of Hermawan Arifianto on Liputan6.Com', *ALINEA: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pengajarannya*, 2.3 (2022), doi:10.58218/alinea.v2i3.319.

⁵ Mohamed Shafik Khaled and others, 'Downhole Heat Management for Drilling Shallow and Ultra-Deep High Enthalpy Geothermal Wells', *Geothermics*, 107 (2023), doi:10.1016/j.geothermics.2022.102604.

⁶ Mareike Bünning and others, 'Digital Gender Gap in the Second Half of Life Is Declining: Changes in Gendered Internet Use Between 2014 and 2021 in Germany', *Journals of Gerontology - Series B Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 78.8 (2023), doi:10.1093/geronb/gbad079.

B. Results and Discussion

1. Results

This study aims to evaluate the impact of the drill technique on the pronunciation and fluency skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The quantitative and qualitative findings are presented below.⁷

a. Descriptive Statistics

The table below presents the mean and standard deviation (SD) scores for the pretest and posttest results of the experimental and control groups.

Group	Pronunciation (Pretest)	Pronunciation (Posttest)	Fluency (Pretest)	Fluency (Posttest)
Experimental	Mean: 60.2, SD: 7.8	Mean: 78.5, SD: 6.4	Mean: 58.6, SD: 8.1	Mean: 76.8, SD: 7.2
Control	Mean: 59.8, SD: 7.5	Mean: 64.3, SD: 6.9	Mean: 57.9, SD: 7.6	Mean: 61.4, SD: 7.0

The table indicates that the posttest mean scores for the experimental group showed a significant improvement compared to the control group in both pronunciation and fluency.

b. Inferential Statistics

Independent t-tests were conducted to examine the significance of the differences in posttest results between the experimental and control groups.⁸

- 1) Pronunciation: The t-test results revealed a significant difference in pronunciation scores between the experimental and control groups in the posttest ($t=5.92, p<0.001$ $t = 5.92, p < 0.001$ $t=5.92, p<0.001$). This indicates that the drill technique had a significant positive impact on students' pronunciation skills.
- 2) Fluency: The t-test results also showed a significant difference in fluency scores between the experimental and control groups in the posttest ($t=5.37, p<0.001$ $t = 5.37, p < 0.001$ $t=5.37, p<0.001$). This confirms that the

⁷ Tagor Sidauruk, Adolpino Nainggolan, and Nichmah Listiyarini, 'PENGARUH PENGUNGKAPAN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, INTENSITAS MODAL, DAN LIKUIDITAS TERHADAP PENGHINDARAN PAJAK', *Jurnal Liabilitas*, 9.1 (2024), doi:10.54964/liabilitas.v9i1.418.

⁸ Christian Rudeloff and Julius Damms, 'Entrepreneurs as Influencers: The Impact of Parasocial Interactions on Communication Outcomes', *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 25.2 (2023), doi:10.1108/JRME-04-2022-0052.

drill technique significantly contributed to improving students' speaking fluency.

c. Qualitative Analysis

Feedback from the questionnaires distributed at the end of the study revealed that most students in the experimental group found the drill technique helpful in improving their pronunciation and boosting their confidence in speaking. Many students noted that repetitive practice enabled them to remember correct intonation and articulation patterns. However, some students reported challenges such as boredom due to repetition and limited time for independent practice.⁹

- 1) The drill technique demonstrated a significant impact on improving pronunciation and fluency compared to the traditional teaching methods applied to the control group.
- 2) The experimental group experienced a greater average improvement in both measured aspects.
- 3) Students' perceptions of the drill technique were generally positive, despite challenges such as repetitive exercises leading to boredom.

The findings of this study indicate that the drill technique is an effective method for enhancing pronunciation and fluency among EFL learners. Repetitive practice helps learners strengthen phonetic skills and speak spontaneously without significant pauses. These findings support the theory that drill exercises can foster better linguistic habits and yield substantial improvements in spoken English proficiency.¹⁰

2. Discussion

Previous studies have highlighted that repetitive practice, such as the drill technique, can significantly improve pronunciation in EFL contexts. For instance, Derwing and Munro found that intensive pronunciation training enhances speech

⁹ Jessica Ruth Melvira Simanungkalit and Caroline Victorine Katemba, 'Utilizing English Tiktok as a Media in Learning English Vocabulary: University Students' Perspective', *Eduvelop: Journal of English Education and Development*, 6.2 (2023), doi:10.31605/eduvelop.v6i2.2331.

¹⁰ Rini Hadiyati and others, 'Analysis of The Influence of Financial Literacy Digitalization, Digital Word of Mouth, Digital Marketing and Brand Image on Z's Generation Saving Intention in Sharia Banking', *MALCOM: Indonesian Journal of Machine Learning and Computer Science*, 3.2 (2023), doi:10.57152/malcom.v3i2.918.

clarity and intonation among learners, aligning with the findings of this study.¹¹ In our research, students utilizing the drill technique showed substantial improvement in their pronunciation compared to the control group, supporting Derwing and Munro's assertion that focused repetition results in clearer articulation.

However, Baker observed that while drills are effective for fundamental pronunciation, this method might lack the flexibility required to help students master more complex phonetic variations. Baker's findings highlight the limitations of the drill technique, particularly in conversational contexts that demand greater phonetic improvisation.¹² While this aspect was not the focus of our study, it could serve as a direction for future research, exploring variations of drill techniques in natural conversation settings.

Larsen-Freeman argued that repetition-based methods like drills can enhance speaking fluency by habituating students to use language automatically. The results of this study align with this perspective, as the experimental group employing the drill technique demonstrated significant improvement in fluency. In this study, students practicing with drills exhibited faster speaking speeds and reduced pauses, indicating that the technique facilitates quicker verbal responses.¹³

On the other hand, research by Gilakjani and Sabouri emphasized that speaking fluency is also heavily influenced by students' confidence and motivation to speak. They stressed the importance of communicative, conversation-oriented techniques to maximize fluency development. Although drills are effective, they provide limited opportunities for students to engage in natural speaking interactions, which could be a limitation in achieving comprehensive fluency.¹⁴ This suggests that drills might be most effective when combined with communicative methods to yield more optimal results.

¹¹ Keisuke Kusudo and others, 'Development of the Japanese Version of the Ego-Dissolution Inventory (EDI)', *Neuropsychopharmacology Reports*, 44.1 (2024), doi:10.1002/npr2.12419.

¹² Mohammad Sabbir Hossain and others, 'Incidents of Complications after Reconstruction of Neglected Achilles Tendon Injury by Baker's Procedure', *EAS Journal of Orthopaedic and Physiotherapy*, 6.01 (2024), doi:10.36349/easjop.2024.v06i01.001.

¹³ Han van Dijk and others, 'Physiotherapists Using the Biopsychosocial Model for Chronic Pain: Barriers and Facilitators—A Scoping Review', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2023, doi:10.3390/ijerph20021634.

¹⁴ Chien Chin Chen, Liang Wei Lo, and Sheng Jie Lin, 'COHETS: A Highlight Extraction Method Using Textual Streams of Streaming Videos', *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 258 (2022), doi:10.1016/j.knosys.2022.110000.

This study contributes to the literature by reaffirming the effectiveness of the drill technique in enhancing pronunciation and fluency in EFL environments, a topic that has not been extensively examined in prior research. While many studies focus on communicative approaches and task-based learning, this research underscores the relevance of drills in helping students master foundational phonetic aspects of the English language.

In practice, these findings suggest that English instructors can consider incorporating drill techniques into structured teaching methods, particularly for improving students' basic pronunciation and fluency. However, to achieve balanced outcomes, educators should integrate drills with communication-based activities, enabling students to not only internalize language patterns through repetition but also apply them in real-life interaction contexts.¹⁵

This study has several limitations. First, it does not investigate the long-term effects of using the drill technique. Future research could evaluate whether the improvements in pronunciation and fluency persist over an extended period. Second, the study exclusively employed the drill technique as the sole teaching method in the experimental group. Future studies might compare the drill method with other approaches emphasizing direct interaction, such as task-based or project-based learning.

Additionally, considering Baker's findings on the limitations of drill in addressing more complex pronunciation contexts, future research could explore the development of more varied drill techniques, such as incorporating audiovisual media to support a broader range of phonetic variations.¹⁶ Combining drills with such innovative methods may help address the constraints of conventional drill techniques.

C. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the drill technique is significantly effective in improving pronunciation and fluency among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The experimental group trained with the drill technique exhibited

¹⁵ Mohd Sufi Amin bin Salmee and Faizah Abd Majid, 'A Study On In-Service English Teachers' Perceptions Towards The Use Of Augmented Reality (AR) In ESL Classroom: Implications for TESL Programme in Higher Education Institutions', *Asian Journal of University Education*, 18.2 (2022), doi:10.24191/ajue.v18i2.18065.

¹⁶ Karina Contiero Pelarin and others, 'Advance in Contemporary Orthodontics: A Systematic Review', *MedNEXT Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, 3 (2022), doi:10.54448/mdnt22s209.

greater improvements than the control group in both pronunciation clarity and speaking fluency. These findings support the notion that repetitive practice reinforces foundational phonetic patterns and fosters faster, more spontaneous fluency in speech. However, the results also reveal that drills are limited in training students for more complex phonetic variations and natural communicative contexts. Thus, while effective as a foundational method for developing pronunciation and fluency, drills are more optimally employed in conjunction with interaction- and communication-based methods. This combined approach would provide learners with opportunities to not only repeat linguistic patterns but also apply them in real-world situations.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term effects of the drill technique and how variations in its implementation could enhance advanced phonetic skills. Moreover, combining drill techniques with communicative approaches could offer a more holistic strategy for achieving comprehensive outcomes in English language learning. This study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results and planning future research. First, it only measures the short-term effects of the drill technique on pronunciation and fluency without evaluating the sustainability of these effects over time. In language learning, it is crucial to determine whether pronunciation and fluency improvements achieved through drills can be retained over time. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to conduct longitudinal evaluations to understand the long-term impacts of the drill technique.

Second, this study did not compare the drill technique with other teaching methods that might be more communicative or interaction-based, such as role-play or task-based approaches. While drills have proven effective for improving basic pronunciation and fluency, future research could explore how combining drills with interactive methods might yield more comprehensive outcomes in language learning contexts. Furthermore, the study's subjects were limited to a small group of EFL students within a single learning environment, potentially restricting the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. To enhance external validity, future studies should involve more diverse samples in terms of cultural backgrounds, skill levels, and learning contexts. Finally, this research primarily focused on quantitative aspects and did not deeply explore students' subjective experiences with the drill technique. A more in-depth qualitative approach could uncover how students respond to repetitive practice over the long term, including psychological challenges such as boredom or fatigue. By understanding students' experiences in greater depth,

future research could develop modifications to make the drill technique more engaging and adaptive to learners' needs.

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