



THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE SPEAKER FOR STUDENTS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AT SMA PGRI 1 PALEMBANG

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Accepted :
16 July 2026

Published :
17 July 2026

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how eleventh-grade students at SMA PGRI 1 Palembang use the Google Translate Speaker feature to improve their English pronunciation and explores the benefits and challenges they encounter. Adopting a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through three classroom observations, a Likert-scale questionnaire completed by 27 students, and semi-structured interviews with nine purposively selected participants. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings indicate that students used the feature by typing words, listening to the audio model, imitating the pronunciation, replaying the recording, and comparing it with their own speech. The tool provided accessible pronunciation models, promoted independent learning, increased motivation, and enhanced students' confidence in speaking English. However, participants also reported several challenges, including the absence of immediate corrective feedback, technical issues, inconsistent audio quality, and confusion over different English accents. The findings highlight the pedagogical value of Google Translate Speaker as a supplementary pronunciation tool for EFL learning while emphasizing the importance of teacher guidance and complementary instructional strategies. By documenting students' authentic experiences in a natural classroom setting, this study contributes to research on technology-assisted pronunciation learning and offers practical implications for digital language instruction and classroom speaking practice.

Keywords: *EFL Students, English Pronunciation, Google Translate Speaker, Pronunciation Practice, Text-to-Speech*

1. INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role in education, technological advancement, and global communication. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, students are expected to develop speaking skills that enable them to communicate clearly and effectively (Alberth, 2023; Mustamir, 2024; Amin, 2023). A fundamental component of this competence is pronunciation, as accurate pronunciation directly influences speech intelligibility and successful oral interaction. Pronunciation extends beyond the correct articulation of

individual sounds; it also encompasses suprasegmental features such as word stress, rhythm, and intonation, all of which contribute to conveying meaning and facilitating listener comprehension (Royani, 2023; Salim et al., 2020; Ilham et al., 2024).

Pronunciation is important because students may have enough vocabulary and grammar but still experience communication problems when their pronunciation is unclear. Brown and Yule (2017) explains that pronunciation learning should focus on intelligibility, not on copying native speakers.

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Harmer (2017) also states that unclear pronunciation can disturb communication even when other language components are correct. In an international communication context, intelligible pronunciation helps speakers from different language backgrounds understand each other (Jenkins, 2014; Salomone & Salomone, 2022; Adli & Guy, 2022).

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, pronunciation often receives less attention than grammar, vocabulary, and written exercises. Teachers may have limited time to give pronunciation feedback to every student, especially in large classes. Celce-Murcia et al. (2017) state that pronunciation teaching needs auditory training, regular practice, and clear correction. Recent Indonesian studies also show that learners still face pronunciation problems because of limited exposure, first language influence, and lack of focused oral practice (Ristati et al., 2025; Sayogie & Adbaka, 2022; Wibowo & Nasrullah, 2024).

Students need tools that can provide pronunciation input outside direct teacher explanation. Digital technology can support this need because it gives students more chances to listen, repeat, and practice independently. Google Translate is one of the most familiar tools among students. Although many students use it for translation, its speaker feature can also support pronunciation practice because it converts written text into spoken sound. This feature works through Text-to-Speech technology and provides audio that students can listen to repeatedly (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017; Al-Jarf, 2021; Fitria, 2022).

The use of Google Translate Speaker is relevant to pronunciation learning because it supports two important learning processes. First, it provides input that students can understand and imitate. This condition is related to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the role of comprehensible input in language learning (Krashen, 2018). Second, it supports repetition and imitation, which are central in behaviorist learning theory (Skinner, 2017). When students listen to the audio and repeat it several times, they can build pronunciation habits through practice.

Previous studies have reported that Text-to-Speech and mobile pronunciation tools can support pronunciation accuracy, learner autonomy, and motivation. Al-Jarf (2022), Phuong (2021), and Lieshout and Cardoso (2022) found that digital pronunciation input

helps learners practice independently. Recent studies on computer-assisted and mobile-assisted pronunciation also show that repeated exposure to audio models can improve learners' pronunciation awareness and speech production (Ángeles et al., 2024; Metruk, 2024; Stoughton & Kang, 2024).

However, Google Translate Speaker also has limitations. It can provide a pronunciation model, but it cannot directly tell students whether their own pronunciation is correct. Synthesized speech can also sound less natural than human speech and may create confusion when learners face different accents or intonation patterns (Chen et al., 2020; Phon & Huang, 2022; Zhong, 2025). For this reason, the tool should not replace teacher guidance. It should support pronunciation learning with clear classroom direction.

Most previous studies focused on students' perceptions, effectiveness, or higher education contexts. Limited attention has been given to how senior high school students actually use Google Translate Speaker during pronunciation practice in a natural classroom setting. Therefore, this study aims to describe students' experiences in using Google Translate Speaker for English pronunciation at SMA PGRI 1 Palembang. The study focuses on two questions: how students use the feature and what benefits and challenges they experience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation is a basic component of spoken language. Jin (2023) defines pronunciation as the way a language or word is spoken, while Roach (2009) explains that pronunciation consists of segmental and suprasegmental features. Segmental features include vowels and consonants. Suprasegmental features include stress, rhythm, and intonation. These features work together to make speech clear and meaningful.

In EFL learning, pronunciation should support communication. Brown and Yule (2017) and Harmer (2017) argue that the main goal of pronunciation learning is intelligibility. Learners do not have to sound like native speakers, but they need to speak clearly enough so listeners can understand them. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2016) add that good pronunciation can increase students' confidence and support listening

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comprehension because students become more aware of English sounds.

Indonesian learners often face pronunciation difficulties because English and Bahasa Indonesia have different sound systems. Ristati et al. (2025) explain that contextual learning factors influence pronunciation accuracy among Indonesian EFL learners. Sayogie and Adbaka (2022) also show that interlingual errors affect learners' pronunciation. These problems can become stronger when students have little exposure to English speech and limited feedback during speaking activities (Wibowo & Nasrullah, 2024).

Technology can help students receive more pronunciation input. Chapelle and Shannon (2017) describes Computer-Assisted Language Learning as the use of digital technology to support interactive and individualized language learning. In this framework, Google Translate Speaker functions as a simple learning aid because it gives students access to pronunciation models through a device they already use. This supports self-directed and autonomous learning, where students take responsibility for their own progress (Benson, 2013).

Google Translate Speaker uses Text-to-Speech technology. Al-Jarf (2021) states that Text-to-Speech applications can help EFL learners hear how words are pronounced. Chen et al. (2020) explain that neural Text-to-Speech systems can produce clearer synthesized speech by modeling human articulation and prosody. Fitria (2022) also reports that Text-to-Speech technology can support pronunciation learning because it gives students repeated and accessible audio input.

From a learning theory perspective, this tool supports input and repetition. Smith et al. (2021) emphasizes that learners need comprehensible input to acquire language. In pronunciation learning, this input can appear as clear audio models. Skinner (2017) explains that learning can occur through imitation and repeated practice. Google Translate Speaker supports both processes because students can listen to the model, repeat it, and replay the audio as often as needed.

Several studies have examined Google Translate and Text-to-Speech in pronunciation learning. Jannah and Rafiqah (2023) found that students viewed the speaker feature positively because it helped them practice pronunciation

and feel more confident. Jannah (2024) reported that EFL students considered Google Translate audio helpful for pronunciation, although the tool did not provide corrective feedback. Nurhayati and Lahete (2024) also found that students perceived Google Translate as useful in English learning.

Other studies show the wider value of technology-assisted pronunciation learning. Ángeles et al. (2024) reported that Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training supported segmental and suprasegmental accuracy. Metruk (2024) found that mobile-assisted pronunciation tools improve autonomy, motivation, and access to pronunciation input. Stoughton and Kang (2024) also emphasized the relationship between pronunciation perception and production in mobile-assisted pronunciation learning.

Recent AI-based studies provide similar insights. Chen (2025) showed that AI-supported speaking practice can improve pronunciation awareness, while Zhong (2025) highlighted learners' positive attitudes toward AI-generated feedback in pronunciation learning. However, these studies also suggest that technology still needs feedback quality and pedagogical control. Therefore, teachers should guide students when they use digital pronunciation tools.

Based on these studies, Google Translate Speaker can support pronunciation learning because it is familiar, flexible, and easy to repeat. At the same time, its limitations are important. The tool gives pronunciation input but does not evaluate students' production. It may also sound unnatural or cause accent confusion (Phon & Huang, 2022). This research fills the gap by describing students' real classroom experiences when using Google Translate Speaker for pronunciation practice at the senior high school level.

3. METHODS

Research Design

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The method was selected because the research focused on describing students' experiences, behaviors, and perceptions rather than measuring pronunciation improvement statistically. Descriptive qualitative research is suitable for understanding a phenomenon in its natural setting and presenting participants' perspectives clearly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Tisdell et al., 2025; Patton, 2020).

The research was conducted at SMA PGRI 1 Palembang, South Sumatra. The participants were 27 eleventh-grade students of class XI.6 who were taking English as a compulsory subject. All 27 students completed the questionnaire. Nine students were selected for interviews through purposive sampling. The selected students represented three response categories: highly helped by the feature, neutral responses, and less helped or less frequent users.

Data were collected through observation, questionnaire, and interview. Observation was conducted in three meetings on April 16, April 21, and April 23, 2026. The observation focused on students' familiarity with the feature, listening activity, imitation, replaying audio, independent practice, peer practice, teacher support, and possible challenges. The questionnaire was distributed to 27 students on April 28, 2026. It used a five-point Likert scale to identify students' habits, perceived benefits, and challenges. The interviews were conducted with nine selected students on April 30, 2026 to obtain deeper explanations.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis model. The analysis included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification (Miles & Huberman, 2019). First, the researcher selected data related to students' ways of using Google Translate Speaker and their experienced benefits and challenges. Second, the data were displayed in narrative descriptions, tables, and thematic summaries. Third, the researcher drew conclusions by comparing patterns across observation, questionnaire, and interview data.

Data validity was maintained through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. The researcher compared findings from observation, questionnaire, and interview to identify consistent themes. The researcher also checked summarized interview results with participants and discussed the interpretation with academic peers and advisors. These procedures follow the idea of trustworthiness in qualitative research, which includes credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Amin et al., 2020).

Table 1. Research Data Sources

Instrument	Data Source and Purpose
Observation	Class XI.6 at SMA PGRI 1 Palembang; three meetings on April 16, April 21, and April 23, 2026; used to observe real behavior during pronunciation practice.
Questionnaire	Twenty-seven students of class XI.6; distributed on April 28, 2026; used to identify general response patterns about use, benefits, and challenges.
Interview	Nine purposively selected students; conducted on April 30, 2026; used to explore deeper experiences, opinions, and difficulties.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the research and discusses the findings obtained from observation, questionnaire, and interview data. The results section describes how students used Google Translate Speaker for English pronunciation practice and explains the benefits and challenges they experienced during the learning process. Meanwhile, the discussion section interprets the findings by relating them to relevant theories and previous studies on pronunciation learning, Text-to-Speech technology, and digital learning in EFL classrooms.

Results

The results of this study were obtained from classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview. The findings showed that the eleventh-grade students of SMA PGRI 1 Palembang were already familiar with Google Translate and its speaker feature. During the three observation meetings, most students could operate the feature without long teacher explanation. They opened Google Translate, typed English words or sentences, pressed the speaker icon, listened to the sound, repeated the pronunciation, and replayed the audio when they needed to hear it again.

The observation also showed that students used Google Translate Speaker as a pronunciation model. They did not only use the application to translate words. They used it to hear how English words were pronounced and to compare their own pronunciation with the audio model. Some students practiced individually, while others practiced with their

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friends. This pattern appeared consistently during pronunciation practice in the classroom.

The questionnaire results supported the observation findings. In the item about repeating or imitating pronunciation, 14 students, or 51.9%, chose Agree, and 8 students, or 29.6%, chose Strongly Agree. In the item about replaying the speaker sound, 9 students, or 33.3%, chose Agree, and 7 students, or 25.9%, chose Strongly Agree. These results indicate that listening, imitation, repetition, and replaying audio became the main ways students used Google Translate Speaker for pronunciation practice.

The interview findings also showed similar results. Students explained that they usually listened to the pronunciation first before repeating it. Several students stated that they repeated the sound two or three times until they felt more certain about how to pronounce the word. This means that Google Translate Speaker helped students build a simple pronunciation practice process through listening and imitation.

The students experienced several benefits when using Google Translate Speaker. The first benefit was clear pronunciation input. In the questionnaire item about audio clarity, 10 students, or 37.0%, chose Agree, and 8 students, or 29.6%, chose Strongly Agree. The interview results also showed that students felt helped because they could know how English words should be pronounced. This finding indicates that the speaker feature gave students a pronunciation model that they could access easily.

The second benefit was independent practice. In the questionnaire item about independent pronunciation practice, 11 students, or 40.7%, chose Agree, and 9 students, or 33.3%, chose Strongly Agree. Students stated that they could use the feature by themselves when they found unfamiliar English words. They did not always need to wait for the teacher to pronounce the words first. This finding shows that Google Translate Speaker helped students practice pronunciation outside direct teacher explanation.

The third benefit was motivation and confidence. In the motivation item, 15 students, or 55.6%, chose Agree. In the confidence item, 6 students, or 22.2%, chose Agree, and 7 students, or 25.9%, chose Strongly Agree. Although the responses were varied, several students felt more prepared to

pronounce English words after listening to the speaker feature. They also felt more confident because they could practice privately before saying the words in front of others.

However, the students also faced several challenges. The most dominant challenge was the lack of direct corrective feedback. In the item stating that Google Translate Speaker does not tell students whether their pronunciation is correct, 9 students, or 33.3%, chose Agree, and 7 students, or 25.9%, chose Strongly Agree. This means that the tool could provide a model, but it could not evaluate students' actual pronunciation.

Other challenges were technical problems, unclear sound, and accent confusion. In the item about technical problems, 8 students, or 29.6%, chose Agree, and 6 students, or 22.2%, chose Strongly Agree. Some students also stated in the interview that the tool needed a stable internet connection. In the item about accent confusion, 6 students, or 22.2%, chose Agree, and 6 students, or 22.2%, chose Strongly Agree. These findings show that students still needed teacher guidance to understand pronunciation differences, especially in accent, rhythm, and intonation.

Table 2. Summary of Main Research Findings

Research Focus	Key Evidence	Conclusion
Ways of using Google Translate Speaker	Observation showed listening, repeating, replaying, comparing, and independent practice. Questionnaire responses were strongest for repeating and imitating pronunciation.	Students used the tool as a pronunciation model through listening, imitation, repetition, and self-practice.
Benefits experienced by students	Students reported clear audio, easier understanding, independent practice, motivation, and confidence. The overall helpfulness item received 13 Strongly Agree responses.	The tool supported pronunciation input, autonomous practice, motivation, and confidence.
Challenges experienced by students	The strongest challenge was lack of corrective feedback. Some students also	The tool still needs teacher guidance, correction, and classroom

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Research Focus	Key Evidence	Conclusion
	reported problems, sound, and confusion.	internet unclear and accent activities.

Discussion

The findings show that Google Translate Speaker helped students practice pronunciation through listening, imitation, and repetition. This pattern is relevant to pronunciation learning because students need clear input before they produce English sounds. The feature gave students access to pronunciation models that could be played repeatedly. This supports Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which explains that language learning requires understandable input before learners can produce language more confidently (Krashen, 2017).

The use of repetition also supports Skinner's Behaviorist Learning Theory. Students listened to the speaker feature, imitated the sound, and repeated it several times. This process helped them form pronunciation habits through repeated practice. Although repetition alone does not guarantee perfect pronunciation, it can help students become more familiar with English sounds, especially when they rarely hear native or near-native pronunciation models in the classroom.

The findings also indicate that Google Translate Speaker supported independent learning. Students could practice pronunciation without depending fully on the teacher. This is in line with Benson's concept of learner autonomy, which explains that students can take responsibility for their own learning when they have access to suitable learning tools (Benson, 2013). In this study, the speaker feature helped students practice at their own pace, especially when they found unfamiliar words.

The benefit of clear pronunciation input is also consistent with previous studies on Text-to-Speech technology. Al-Jarf (2021) explains that Text-to-Speech tools can help EFL learners listen to pronunciation models. Phuong (2021) also states that repeated listening through Text-to-Speech can improve learners' awareness of pronunciation features. In this study, students used Google Translate Speaker in the same way. They listened to the

audio and used it as a guide before pronouncing the words.

The findings about motivation and confidence also support previous research. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2016) explain that pronunciation awareness can influence students' confidence in speaking. Jannah and Rafiqah (2023) also found that students viewed the Google Translate speaker feature positively because it helped them practice pronunciation and feel more confident. In this study, several students felt more ready to speak after using the feature because they had already listened to the correct pronunciation model.

However, the findings also show that Google Translate Speaker has limitations. The most important limitation is the absence of direct corrective feedback. The feature can show how a word is pronounced, but it cannot judge whether students pronounce the word correctly. This finding supports Jannah (2024) and Zhong (2025), who explain that digital pronunciation tools still need feedback support to help learners identify and correct their mistakes.

The students' difficulties with unclear sound and accent confusion also show that technology cannot fully replace human instruction. Synthesized speech may provide useful input, but it may not always represent natural pronunciation, emotion, rhythm, or classroom communication. This is in line with Chen et al. (2020) and Phon and Huang (2022), who state that digital voices can still have limitations in naturalness and pronunciation variation.

Based on these findings, Google Translate Speaker can be seen as a supporting tool for pronunciation learning, not as the main source of pronunciation instruction. The tool helps students listen, repeat, and practice independently. However, teachers still need to guide students, correct their pronunciation, explain pronunciation differences, and provide speaking activities. When the tool is combined with teacher feedback and classroom practice, it can support more meaningful pronunciation learning in EFL classrooms.

Overall, the findings confirm that Google Translate Speaker has practical value for senior high school students. It is familiar, easy to use, and helpful for repeated listening practice. At the same time, its limitations show the need for balanced use. Students should use the feature as a pronunciation aid, while teachers should

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remain responsible for correction, explanation, and classroom speaking practice.

5. CONCLUSION

This study described students' experiences in using Google Translate Speaker for English pronunciation practice at SMA PGRI 1 Palembang. The objectives were achieved because the findings explained how students used the feature and what benefits and challenges they experienced. Students used Google Translate Speaker by typing words or sentences, pressing the speaker icon, listening to the audio, imitating the sound, replaying it, and comparing their pronunciation with the model.

The main benefits were clear pronunciation input, ease of use, independent practice, repeated listening, motivation, and confidence. The feature helped students access pronunciation models anytime, especially when they found unfamiliar English words. However, the study also found several challenges, including lack of direct corrective feedback, technical problems, unclear or artificial voice quality, and confusion with accent differences.

In conclusion, Google Translate Speaker can support English pronunciation practice as a supplementary digital tool. It is useful for listening, imitation, and independent practice, but it should not become the only pronunciation source. Teachers still need to provide correction, explanation, and speaking activities so students can practice pronunciation more accurately and naturally.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the supervisors, lecturers, and academic staff of the English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Palembang, for their guidance and support. Appreciation is also extended to the principal, English teacher, and students of SMA PGRI 1 Palembang who participated in this study.

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