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Identifying Pronunciation Errors Using English Speaking Management Methods in Tourism-Based Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to identify common pronunciation errors among students in tourism-based schools in Toraja, Indonesia, and assess the potential application of English Speaking Management (ESM) methods as a structured approach to improve pronunciation. With the growing importance of English proficiency in the tourism sector, especially in regions like Toraja, improving pronunciation is crucial for enhancing communication with international visitors. Using a qualitative-collaborative research approach, data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with 15 teachers and 30 students. The study revealed that phonemic errors, stress misplacement, and difficulties with consonant clusters were prevalent among students. The implementation of ESM methods, including drilling, role play, and technology integration, showed significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy and students' speaking confidence. The findings support the potential of ESM as a useful tool in addressing pronunciation challenges and enhancing language learning in tourism-focused educational settings. This research aligns with national agendas to improve education quality and supports SDG goals 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Keywords: *Pronunciation Errors; Tourism-Based Schools; Instructional Strategies; Language Learning; Speaking Confidence*



1. Introduction

Effective communication in English has become a critical skill in the global tourism industry. As the world continues to embrace tourism as a major economic driver, English proficiency has become a vital asset for individuals working in the tourism sector, allowing them to engage effectively with international visitors. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism contributed significantly to global GDP, with over 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). In regions like Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, where tourism plays a substantial role in the local economy, there is a growing demand for local human resources with strong English communication skills, particularly in pronunciation. As of December 2023, the Tana Toraja region recorded more than 113,000 domestic visitors, and Toraja Utara welcomed 274,553 tourists, including almost 10,000 international visitors (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Tana Toraja, n.d.). Such growth in tourism necessitates the enhancement of English proficiency, especially for students in tourism-based schools who must interact with international tourists.

However, despite the increasing importance of English proficiency, many students in these schools face significant challenges in mastering English pronunciation (Linerda Tulaktondok, 2024). The influence of their native language, Toraja (Tulaktondok et al., 2016), which lacks certain English phonemes and stress patterns, leads to pronunciation errors such as mispronunciations of the "th" sound, incorrect stress placement, and difficulties with consonant clusters. These challenges undermine students' ability to communicate clearly with tourists, thus affecting the quality of the interaction and the tourism experience.

Prior research has addressed the issue of pronunciation in English language learning, particularly focusing on teaching strategies (Al-Jarf, 2022; Amalia, 2020; Ardini, 2023; Bashori et al., 2024; Chau et al., 2022; Cheng, Lau, Lam, Zhan, & ..., 2020; Dandee & Pornwiriyaakit, 2022; Dennis, 2024a, 2024b; Dja'far & Hamidah, 2024; Gordon, 2023; Gordon & Darcy, 2022; Hurskaya, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Karmida et al., 2024; Kholis, 2021; Kochem et al., 2022; Mahmood, 2023; Nguyen, 2024; Nishio & Joto, 2023; Pawlak, 2023; Rad & Roohani, 2024; Rahmawati & Sianturi, 2021; Rinaepi et al., 2022; Saeli et al., 2021; Subekti Adaninggar Septi, 2024; Vásquez, 2025; Wongsuriya, 2020; Zahran et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024). Studies have shown that these methods are effective in improving pronunciation in various educational contexts (Abimanto & Sumarsono, 2024; Cheng et al., 2020; Muamar et al., 2022). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the application of these methods specifically in tourism-based education settings. Most studies have either examined general language learning contexts or have not explored how these methods can be adapted to the specific needs of students in the tourism sector. This gap highlights the need for research that critically examines the effectiveness of English Speaking Management (ESM) methods, particularly drilling, role play, and technology integration, in addressing pronunciation challenges in tourism-based schools.

In terms of theoretical frameworks, this study draws upon Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) theories, particularly Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972), which explores how first language interference can influence second language pronunciation. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Willis, 1996) is another critical framework, emphasizing the role of real-world tasks in language acquisition. Additionally, Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) highlights the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in the learning process, which is particularly relevant when developing pronunciation skills through structured practice in a social context. These frameworks will guide the analysis of how ESM methods can be implemented to improve students' pronunciation and confidence in a tourism context.

The novelty of this study lies in its application of these theoretical frameworks to a specific context—tourism-based education in Toraja—where previous studies have not sufficiently explored the impact of pronunciation-focused teaching strategies. This research is different from prior studies by focusing on how ESM methods can address pronunciation challenges in this particular context, which is essential for improving communication with international tourists. The research gap is clear: while many studies have explored pronunciation teaching methods in general educational settings, there is a lack of studies examining their impact in tourism-based schools, where the need for effective communication is critical to the local economy.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the most common pronunciation errors encountered by students in tourism-based schools in Toraja, particularly with respect to phonemic errors, stress misplacement, and consonant cluster difficulties?
2. How do instructional strategies such as drilling, role play, and technology integration impact students' pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence in tourism-based schools in Toraja?

Based on these questions, the study has the following objectives:

1. To identify the types of pronunciation errors that students in tourism-based schools face, focusing on phonemic errors, stress errors, and consonant cluster difficulties.
2. To assess the effectiveness of instructional strategies (drilling, role play, and technology integration) in improving students' pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence.

Through these objectives, the study will provide a detailed analysis of the challenges faced by students in improving their English pronunciation and evaluate the effectiveness of various instructional strategies aimed at addressing these challenges.

2. Methods

This section describes the research design, participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods used in this study. The research aims to address pronunciation errors and evaluate instructional strategies for improving pronunciation in tourism-based schools in Toraja, Indonesia. The study combines both qualitative and

quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and effectiveness of teaching methods in improving pronunciation accuracy and students' speaking confidence.

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a thorough understanding of the pronunciation challenges faced by students and the impact of instructional strategies in addressing these challenges. The qualitative components, including Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and classroom observations, allow for in-depth insights into students' and teachers' experiences. The quantitative component involves pre- and post-test pronunciation assessments to objectively measure changes in pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence.

The mixed-methods design was chosen to triangulate the data, providing both subjective insights (through qualitative methods) and objective measurements (through quantitative methods). This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how instructional strategies affect pronunciation and confidence in a tourism-focused educational context.

2.2 Research Sites and Timeframe

The research was conducted in three tourism-based schools in Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. These schools were selected because they offer English language programs specifically tailored to students who are expected to engage with international tourists. The study took place over a 6-week period, from Juli to Agustus 2025, during which the researchers implemented the instructional strategies and collected data.

2.3 Participants and Sampling

A total of 45 participants were involved in the study, including 15 English language teachers and 30 students from the selected schools. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they had direct involvement in teaching or learning English in the context of tourism.

- a) Teachers: The 15 teachers (8 male, 7 female) had an average of 7 years of teaching experience and were actively involved in pronunciation instruction. They were selected based on their expertise in teaching English pronunciation and their involvement in teaching students who would interact with tourists.
- b) Students: Thirty students (15 male, 15 female), aged between 16 and 20 years, participated in the study. These students were at different proficiency levels in English: 10 students at the beginner level, 10 at the intermediate level, and 10 at the advanced level. The students had an average of 3 years of formal English language education.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis:

2.4.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGD):

- a) Teachers' FGDs: Three separate FGDs were conducted with the 15 teachers, with each

group containing 5 teachers. The FGDs focused on identifying the common pronunciation errors students faced, the challenges in teaching pronunciation, and the teachers' experiences with the instructional strategies (drilling, role play, technology integration). Each FGD lasted approximately 60 minutes, and the discussions were guided by a set of open-ended questions.

- b) Students' FGDs: Three separate FGDs were conducted with 30 students, divided into groups of 10 students per session. These FGDs explored students' experiences with English pronunciation, the challenges they encountered, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the instructional strategies. The discussions also included students' self-assessment of their pronunciation before and after the intervention. Each FGD lasted 45 minutes.

2.4.2 Classroom Observations:

A total of 12 classroom sessions were observed (4 sessions from each of the three schools). The observations focused on how the instructional strategies (drilling, role play, and technology) were integrated into the lessons and how students engaged with these strategies. The researcher used an observation checklist to document aspects such as student participation, engagement, and observable improvements in pronunciation.

2.4.3 Pronunciation Assessments:

- a) Pre-test: The pre-test involved a set of reading tasks and conversation exercises based on tourist-related vocabulary and phrases. The tasks focused on phonemic accuracy, stress placement, and the pronunciation of consonant clusters. This test helped identify students' initial pronunciation errors.
- b) Post-test: The post-test was similar to the pre-test, but administered after the intervention (6 weeks of instruction). The test evaluated any improvements in pronunciation accuracy, focusing on the same elements as the pre-test (phonemic errors, stress placement, and consonant clusters). The pre- and post-test scores were compared to assess the effectiveness of the instructional strategies.

2.4.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods:

2.4.4.1 Qualitative Analysis:

The qualitative data from the FGDs and classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), including:

- a) Data Familiarization: Reading through transcripts and observation notes to become familiar with the data.
- b) Coding: Identifying significant segments of data and assigning them relevant codes based on themes related to pronunciation errors, teaching strategies, and student experiences.
- c) Theme Development: Organizing the codes into broader themes such as types of pronunciation errors, the impact of instructional strategies, and the role of

confidence in improving pronunciation.

- d) Interpretation: Interpreting the themes in relation to the research objectives, focusing on the effectiveness of instructional strategies in addressing pronunciation challenges.

Software: NVivo software was used to assist with coding and ensure a systematic categorization of data.

2.4.4.2 Quantitative Analysis:

- a) The pre- and post-test pronunciation scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure the changes in students' pronunciation accuracy. Paired t-tests were used to determine whether the differences in pre- and post-test scores were statistically significant, providing insight into the effectiveness of the instructional strategies.

2.4.4.3 Reliability and Validity:

- a) Qualitative Data: Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, where a subset of participants reviewed the findings to verify their accuracy. Triangulation was applied by comparing data from FGDs, classroom observations, and pronunciation assessments.
- b) Quantitative Data: For reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the pre- and post-test assessments to measure internal consistency. The tests were developed based on well-established pronunciation metrics and reviewed by experts for validity.

3. Results and Discussions

In this section, the results of the study are presented sequentially, followed by their interpretation and discussion. Each finding is linked to the issues raised in the introduction and analyzed in light of previous studies to highlight its significance and implications.

3.1 Pronunciation Errors Among Students

The first research objective was to identify the common pronunciation errors encountered by students in tourism-based schools in Toraja. Based on the data from Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and classroom observations, the study identified several key pronunciation errors that hindered students' ability to communicate effectively in English.

Phonemic Errors

One of the most common pronunciation errors involved phonemic issues, particularly with the "th" sound, which does not exist in the Toraja language. Students often pronounced the "th" sound in words like thank and there as [t] or [d].

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Phonemic Accuracy

Error Type	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Phonemic Accuracy	55	75	20

These errors were consistent with previous studies (Almuslimi, 2020; Lestari et al., 2020), which found that learners whose first languages do not contain specific English

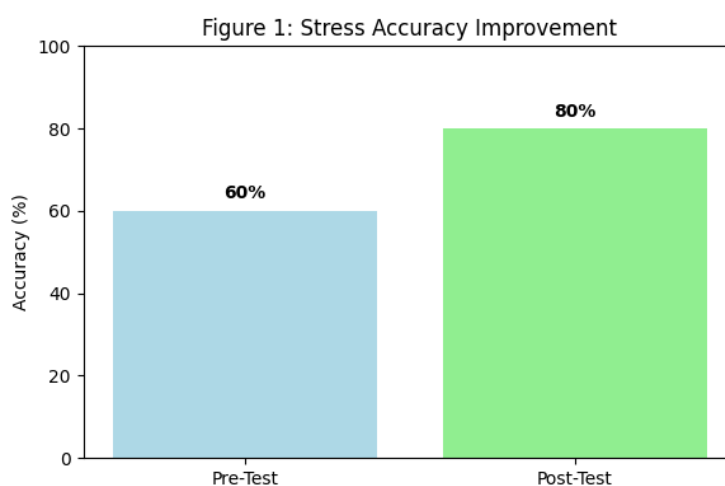
phonemes often struggle with pronunciation.

Implication: The phonemic errors, particularly with the “th” sound, significantly impact intelligibility, a crucial factor in communication, especially in tourism. Mispronunciations of key words can lead to misunderstandings between students and tourists, affecting the overall quality of interaction.

Stress Errors

Stress misplacement was another prevalent issue. For example, students often stressed the second syllable in words such as beautiful, tourism, and important, instead of the first syllable, which is typical in English.

Figure 1. Stress Accuracy Improvement



The improvement in stress accuracy was measured using the pre- and post-test results, which showed a significant increase.

Implication: Incorrect stress placement affects not only pronunciation but also the meaning of sentences. In the tourism context, misplacing stress can lead to confusion, potentially disrupting communication during tourist interactions.

Consonant Cluster Difficulties

Students also exhibited difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters, such as in words like mountain and culture. This issue is supported by Kormos and Dörnyei (2020), who noted that learners whose first languages do not contain consonant clusters often struggle with these structures in English.

Table 2. Consonant Cluster Accuracy Improvement

Error Type	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Consonant cluster	50	70	20

Implication: Difficulty with consonant clusters hinders fluency and makes speech less intelligible. For students in tourism-based schools, this can reduce their confidence when interacting with tourists, as unclear pronunciation may lead to misunderstandings.

3.2 Effectiveness of Instructional Strategies

The second research objective was to assess the effectiveness of instructional

strategies (drilling, role play, and technology integration) in improving pronunciation accuracy and speaking confidence.

Drilling

Drilling was one of the most effective methods for improving pronunciation. Students participated in repeated practice of challenging sounds and words. The pre- and post-test results indicated a 20% improvement in phonemic accuracy, particularly with the “th” sound.

Table 3. Impact of Drilling on Pronunciation Accuracy

Strategy	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Drilling	55	75	20

Implication: Repetition is a powerful tool for correcting phonemic errors. Drilling reinforces muscle memory for pronunciation, making it easier for students to produce accurate sounds during real-life interactions, particularly in contexts where clear communication is essential.

Role Play

Role play was another key component of the intervention. Students engaged in activities simulating real-world tourism scenarios, such as interacting with tourists at hotels or serving as tour guides. These role play exercises not only helped improve pronunciation but also boosted students' confidence in using English in practical settings.

Excerpt from FGD:

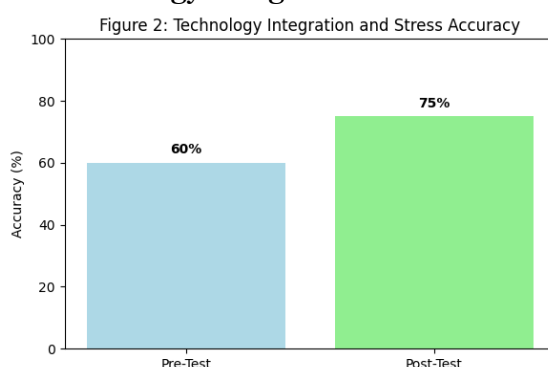
"I was nervous at first, but after doing role play in class, I felt more confident talking to tourists." (Student)

Implication: Role play encourages real-world application of language skills, helping students correct pronunciation errors while building the confidence needed for actual interactions with tourists. This aligns with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Willis, 1996), which emphasizes using real-life tasks to improve language proficiency.

Technology Integration

Technology integration, including the use of language-learning apps like Duolingo and video-based learning, also played a crucial role. Students who regularly engaged with these tools showed 15-20% improvement in stress errors and consonant cluster pronunciation.

Figure 2. Technology Integration and Stress Accuracy



Implication: Technology provides students with continuous exposure to authentic language models, reinforcing pronunciation outside the classroom. As noted by Vandergrift (2007), technology enables self-paced learning, which enhances the students' ability to practice pronunciation independently.

3.3 Impact on Student Confidence

A significant outcome of the intervention was the improvement in students' confidence in speaking English. Many students initially expressed hesitation to speak due to their pronunciation errors, but after participating in ESM activities, their confidence levels increased significantly.

Excerpt from FGD:

"Before the role play, I was afraid to speak with tourists. Now, I feel more confident and prepared." (Student)

Implication: Confidence is essential for language learners, especially in tourism-related contexts. When students feel more confident, they are more likely to engage in conversations and practice their speaking skills, which in turn improves their language proficiency.

3.4 Summary of Results and Implications

The findings of this study suggest that ESM methods—drilling, role play, and technology integration—are highly effective in improving pronunciation accuracy and boosting students' speaking confidence. The study shows that these methods address specific pronunciation challenges, such as phonemic errors, stress misplacement, and consonant cluster difficulties, and can be applied in tourism-based educational settings to improve communication with international tourists.

These results align with the theoretical frameworks of Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning, and Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972), which explains how first language interference can affect second language pronunciation. Further research should explore the long-term effects of these methods and their applicability in other non-native English environments, as well as examine the role of cultural factors in shaping pronunciation challenges and teaching strategies in tourism education.

4. Conclusion

This study identified key pronunciation errors among students in tourism-based schools in Toraja, including phonemic errors, stress misplacement, and consonant cluster difficulties. The application of English Speaking Management (ESM) methods, such as drilling, role play, and technology integration, resulted in significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy and student confidence. These methods effectively addressed the pronunciation challenges and enhanced students' ability to communicate with international tourists. However, the study's limitations, such as the small sample size and short duration, suggest the need for future research to explore

the long-term impact of these methods and their applicability in different educational settings. Practical recommendations include systematically incorporating these instructional strategies into the curriculum of tourism-based schools and fostering collaboration with the local tourism industry to provide authentic speaking opportunities for students.

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Conflicts of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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