



Improving Students' Skill Pronunciation Through the Drilling Method at Catholic Saint Francis Xavier Junior High School, Tarakan

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Abstract

Indonesia is a multilingual country with over 700 regional languages, reflecting its high linguistic diversity and influencing the learning process in schools, including English learning in Tarakan, North Kalimantan. Students generally have a strong local dialect background, so first language transfer often affects speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, word stress, fluency, and confidence. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the drill method in reducing local dialect interference on students' English pronunciation. The study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving 22 students from Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Junior High School in Tarakan as participants. Data were obtained through pronunciation tests conducted before (pretest) and after (posttest) the implementation of the drill method, which focused on repeated pronunciation practice to improve the accuracy of English sound articulation. The results showed that the implementation of the drill method had a positive impact on students' pronunciation skills. Before the implementation, most students still had difficulty pronouncing English words correctly due to their tendency to use the phonological patterns of the local dialect. After participating in a series of exercises, students' pronunciation skills significantly improved, as indicated by an increase in the average score from 66.59 in the pretest to 82.32 in the posttest. Furthermore, the highest score in the posttest was 85, while the lowest was 71, indicating a uniform increase in ability among participants. Repeated exercises also helped students become more familiar with English sounds and pronunciation patterns and increased their confidence when speaking. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the drill method is effective in reducing local dialect interference on students' English pronunciation, thus it can be one of the learning strategies that supports improving pronunciation accuracy in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: local dialects, English speaking ability, pronunciation, Drilling Method, Phonological Interference

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Article History	Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
	2025-10-28	2026-04-02	2026-06-18	2026-09-15

INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

English serves as the primary language for global communication and academic exchange. Nevertheless, Indonesian learners face particular challenges in acquiring English because it is taught as a foreign language (EFL). One of the most common obstacles is the influence of local dialects on pronunciation. As noted by Hardwythanty et al. (2023), learners frequently transfer the phonological characteristics of their first language when speaking English, which often leads to pronunciation inaccuracies. Similarly, Puspadari and Basthomi (2022) reported that local dialects significantly affect learners' ability to produce appropriate English pronunciation, especially with regard to stress placement and sound production. But according to Zuhairi and

Mistar (2023), they further emphasize that suitable learning strategies, especially in speaking instruction, are important for improving students' language abilities effectively.

At Catholic Saint Francis Xavier Junior High School, Tarakan, Banjar and Tidung are the dialects most commonly spoken by students in their everyday interactions. Laily and Fikri (2023) argue that the phonological system established through learners' mother tongue has a substantial impact on the pronunciation of a foreign language. This influence is particularly evident in the production of English phonemes such as /θ/, /ð/, and /v/, which are absent from the Banjar and Tidung sound systems. Consequently, students often replace these unfamiliar sounds with similar sounds from their native dialects, resulting in lower pronunciation accuracy and reduced speech intelligibility. Moreover, classroom instruction has generally focused on vocabulary and grammar, while pronunciation receives relatively limited attention, making these difficulties more persistent.

To address this challenge, the drilling method offers a practical instructional approach by providing structured repetition, imitation, and immediate corrective feedback. Continuous pronunciation practice enables students to develop more accurate articulation of English sounds, stress patterns, and intonation while minimizing the transfer of local dialect features. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of implementing the drilling method in reducing the influence of local dialect interference on students' English pronunciation at Catholic Saint Francis Xavier Junior High School, Tarakan.

METHOD

منهج

Research design

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used in this study. CAR is a methodical strategy that employs preparation, action, observation, and reflection to enhance teaching and learning procedures, according to Mettetal (2001). The spiral model of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four cyclical stages planning, acting, observing, and reflecting was used in this study.

Place and time of research

From March 21 to April 26, 2025, eighth-grade students from Catholic Saint Francis Xavier Junior High School in Tarakan participated in this Classroom Action Research (CAR). To guarantee the successful use of the CAR cycles during the teaching and learning process, the study was planned in accordance with the academic calendar of the school.

Research Subject

The participants of this study were 22 eighth-grade students from one class at Catholic Saint Francis Xavier Junior High School, Tarakan.

The Procedure of the Study

Kurt Lewin's Classroom Action Research (CAR) paradigm, which consists of two cycles with four stages planning, acting, observing, and reflecting was used in this study. Prior to Cycle 1, a preliminary investigation was carried out to see whether local dialect influence was the cause of students' pronunciation issues. The researcher visited the eighth-grade classroom on March 21, 2025, and tested the pupils' pronunciation of English using a pretest.

The researcher and collaborator created lesson plans, teaching resources, drilling-method pronunciation exercises, learning media, and assessment tools during the preparation phase. The minimum passing grade (KKM) and less local dialect intrusion in English pronunciation were the success criteria.

While the collaborator watched the teaching and learning process, the researcher used the drilling method to carry out the prepared lessons during the acting stage. There were four classroom meetings in each cycle.

Observation sheets and field notes were used to methodically document classroom activities, student participation, and pronunciation performance during the observation stage.

In order to ascertain the action's efficacy, the researcher and collaborator assessed the action's execution and learning results during the reflecting stage. Until the study goals were met, the results from each cycle were utilized to modify the next cycle.

Research Instruments

Pronunciation tests, interviews, and observations served as the study's instruments. Students' engagement and the impact of regional dialects on learning English were investigated through classroom observations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Nine students participated in semi-structured interviews to discuss their perspectives and experiences (Sugiyono, 2019). Additionally, a pre-test and post-test on pronunciation were given to gauge how well the drilling method reduced interference from local dialects.

Data collection technique

Pronunciation pre-tests and post-tests provided quantitative data, while interviews, classroom observations, and documentation provided qualitative data. Teachers' tactics and students' experiences with local dialect interference were examined through interviews (Creswell, 2018). Learning activities were documented and verified through classroom observations and documentation (Bowen, 2009). Before and after the drilling method was used, students' pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension were evaluated by oral exams (Brown, 2004).

RESULT | نتائج

Interviews with nine students revealed that the Tarakan local dialect substantially influenced their English pronunciation before the drilling activities were implemented. This interference was reflected in several aspects of pronunciation, including fluency, cognitive processing, self-confidence, and suprasegmental features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm. Most participants explained that they spoke English at a slower pace, relied on mentally translating words from their first language, lacked confidence when communicating, and unconsciously applied the pronunciation patterns of their native dialect while speaking English. These findings correspond with the studies of Horwitz et al. (1986) which suggest that first-language interference influences not only learners' pronunciation but also the cognitive and psychological processes involved in speaking a foreign language. Following four cycles of drilling activities, students demonstrated clear progress in their pronunciation ability. The combination of systematic repetition, exposure to accurate pronunciation models, and immediate corrective feedback helped them articulate English sounds more accurately while gradually decreasing the influence of their local dialect. The interview data also indicated improvements in producing

appropriate stress, intonation, and rhythm, as well as greater pronunciation automaticity, less dependence on mental translation, and increased confidence during speaking tasks. These outcomes are consistent with the findings of Gilakjani (2012), Derwing and Munro (2005) who emphasizes that regular pronunciation practice supported by timely feedback contributes to reducing first-language interference and strengthening learners' pronunciation skills. The quantitative findings reinforced the qualitative evidence. Before the drilling method was introduced, students obtained a mean pre-test score of 66.59, indicating that their pronunciation was still strongly affected by local dialect interference. After the intervention, the mean post-test score increased to 82.32, with 95.65% of the students reaching the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM = 75). This improvement supports the arguments of Larsen-Freeman (2000), Brown (2007), and Roach (2009), who maintain that repeated pronunciation practice, appropriate pronunciation modeling, and immediate corrective feedback are essential for improving pronunciation accuracy while minimizing the influence of learners' first language.

Score	category	Pretest		keterangan	posttest		keterangan
		frequency	percentage		frequency	percentage	
75-85	High	3	13,04%	Completed	22	95,65%	Completed
60-74	Medium	20	86,69%	Not completed	1	4,35%	Not completed
Total		23	100%		23	100%	
Maximum score			80			85	
Minimum score			60			71	
Mean			66,59			82,32	
KKM			75			75	

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

The findings revealed that students' local dialects interfered with several aspects of English pronunciation, including sound production, word stress, sentence stress and rhythm, intonation, and speaking fluency. This interference occurred because students tended to transfer pronunciation patterns from their first language when producing English sounds. These findings support Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which explains that differences between the first and target languages often lead to pronunciation difficulties, Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage Theory, which describes learners' tendency to rely on their first-language system during second-language acquisition, and the phonetic principles proposed by Ladefoged and Johnson (2011). Similar findings have also been reported by Hardwythanty et al. (2023), who found that Indonesian EFL learners frequently transferred features of their local dialects into English pronunciation, Puspandari and Basthomi (2022), who identified the influence of Javanese phonological patterns on English pronunciation, and Laily and Fikri (2023), who reported comparable first-language interference among Sundanese learners.

Following the implementation of the drilling method, students demonstrated substantial improvement in their English pronunciation. Repeated pronunciation practice, imitation of accurate pronunciation models, and immediate corrective feedback enabled them to gradually replace first-language pronunciation habits with more accurate English sound patterns. As a result, students improved not only their pronunciation accuracy but also their stress placement, intonation, rhythm, fluency, and speaking confidence while becoming less dependent on

pronunciation patterns from their local dialect. These findings are consistent with Larsen-Freeman (2000), Brown (2007), and Roach (2009), who argue that systematic drilling, repeated practice, and corrective feedback promote the development of accurate pronunciation habits and reduce first-language interference.

The qualitative findings were supported by the quantitative results. Students' mean pronunciation score increased from 66.59 in the pre-test to 82.32 in the post-test, indicating a significant reduction in local dialect interference after the implementation of the drilling method. Overall, the findings suggest that the drilling method is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing English pronunciation by improving learners' pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and confidence while minimizing the influence of their first language.

CONCLUSION | خاتمة

This study concludes that students' local dialects had a significant influence on their English pronunciation, particularly in terms of sound accuracy, word stress, sentence stress and rhythm, intonation, and fluency. These pronunciation difficulties arose from the transfer of first-language pronunciation patterns into English. The findings further indicate that the drilling technique was effective in minimizing such interference by providing learners with repeated pronunciation practice, opportunities for imitation, and immediate corrective feedback. Evidence from both the qualitative data and the quantitative results supports this conclusion. Students' average pronunciation score increased from 66.59 on the pretest to 82.32 on the posttest, demonstrating that systematic drilling contributed to substantial improvements in pronunciation accuracy and overall speaking performance.

Recommendations for English Teachers

English teachers are encouraged to incorporate the drilling technique into pronunciation instruction by providing repeated practice, clear pronunciation models, and immediate corrective feedback. They should also create regular opportunities for students to practice pronunciation through reading aloud, dialogues, and interactive speaking activities to improve sound accuracy, stress, intonation, rhythm, and fluency.

Recommendations for Students

Students are encouraged to practice English pronunciation regularly, actively participate in drilling activities, and use learning resources such as dictionaries, pronunciation applications, audio recordings, and English videos. Continuous practice and constructive feedback can help reduce local dialect interference and improve pronunciation accuracy.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with larger samples and different educational contexts. They may also compare drilling with other pronunciation teaching techniques and examine additional factors, such as motivation, language exposure, learning strategies, and first-language background that influence English pronunciation.

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