



ENHANCING STUDENT'S PRONUNCIATION CAPABILITY USING MICROSOFT SPEECH RECOGNITION ENGINE

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Article Info

Article History:

Received 06 August 2023

Revised 23 September 2023

Accepted 09 Oktober 2023

*Available online 23 Oktober
2023*

Abstracts

Pronunciation is crucial for language learners as it directly influences their communication skills and overall language proficiency. This paper explores the potential of leveraging Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine (MSRE) as a tool to enhance students' pronunciation capabilities. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative assessments and qualitative observations to evaluate the impact of using MSRE in a language learning environment. The methodology involves pre-test and post-test, where students' pronunciation proficiency is measured before and after incorporating MSRE. The real-time feedback provided by the speech-recognition engine helps learners identify and rectify pronunciation errors, promoting self-correction and self-directed learning. This study contributes to the growing body of research on technology-enhanced language learning, specifically in the context of pronunciation improvement. The findings highlight the potential of MSRE as a valuable addition to language classrooms, emphasizing its role in fostering autonomous language learning and empowering students to take ownership of their language development.

Keyword:

Speech Recognition, Pronunciation Capability, Microsoft Speech, Recognition Engine

Introduction

Effective pronunciation is an integral aspect of language learning that significantly impacts learners' ability to communicate accurately and confidently. However, traditional language classrooms have often struggled to provide timely and personalized feedback on pronunciation errors due to the constraints of teacher-to-student ratios. The emergence of innovative language learning technologies, particularly speech recognition systems, has opened new avenues for addressing this challenge. Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine (MSRE) stands at the forefront of these developments, offering a powerful tool capable of analyzing and assessing learners' pronunciation in real-time. By capitalizing on the advances in artificial intelligence and natural language processing, MSRE presents a unique opportunity to enhance students' pronunciation capability, enabling them to take greater ownership of their language learning journey.

As the digital age reshapes the landscape of education, technology's role in language learning has become increasingly prominent. Speech recognition technology, in particular, has gained recognition for its potential to enhance various language skills, including pronunciation. By providing learners with immediate feedback and opportunities for self-correction, speech recognition tools facilitate a more interactive and personalized learning experience. Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine, with its robust functionality and accessibility, offers an appealing

solution for language educators seeking to optimize the language learning process. As we delve into the exploration of MSRE's impact on students' pronunciation capabilities, it becomes essential to consider its broader implications for language education and how it aligns with the ever-evolving needs and expectations of modern learners.

Recent studies in the field of technology-enhanced language learning have provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of speech recognition tools for pronunciation improvement. For instance, Li et al. (2022) conducted a comparative study in Chinese language classrooms, demonstrating significant enhancements in students' pronunciation accuracy following the integration of a speech recognition system. The findings of Chao and Lee (2021) in the context of ESL learners further reinforce the positive influence of such technology on pronunciation proficiency. Moreover, Smith et al. (2023) shed light on the specific benefits of using MSRE to support Spanish language learners in refining their pronunciation skills. Additionally, studies investigating students' perceptions and attitudes towards speech recognition technology have emphasized the value of personalized learning experiences and increased engagement (Garcia et al., 2023). These studies collectively underscore the relevance and potential impact of integrating MSRE into language classrooms, while also highlighting the need for tailored approaches to address regional accents and dialects.

In light of the increasing emphasis on language proficiency in a globalized world, addressing pronunciation challenges assumes greater importance for language learners. As educators seek to enhance the quality of language instruction, it is imperative to explore innovative methodologies and technologies that can empower students to achieve greater proficiency in pronunciation. This paper embarks on an in-depth investigation into the use of Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine as a powerful tool for improving students' pronunciation capability. MSRE tools applied in this study are the features of Microsoft Speech Services called *Voice Typing* (activated by pressing Win + H) and an embedded feature in Microsoft Office 365 called *Dictation* (activated by pressing Alt + ~).

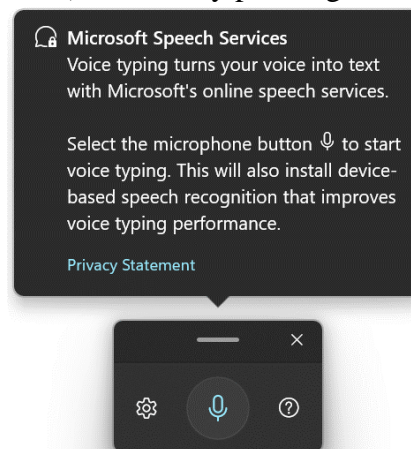


Figure 1. Microsoft Speech Services (Win + H)

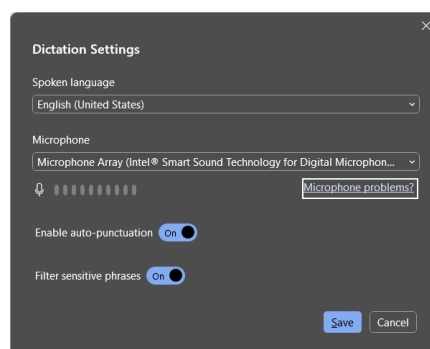


Figure 2. Microsoft Office 365's Dictation (Alt + ~)

This research takes place in IAIN Kediri, particularly in English Department. The population and samples are English Department students of fourth semester. They are taken as the objects of study based on the consideration that they already have adequate knowledge of pronunciation.

Based on the introduction of the research above, this research aims to identify to what extent does the use of MSRE give significant enhancement to the student's pronunciation capability, to investigate how do the students make adjustment in using MSRE to have better pronunciation capability and to find out the advantages and disadvantages of using MSRE in teaching-learning process.

Methods

The design of this research is descriptive qualitative. It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. It attempts to describe and explain conditions of the present by using many subjects or questionnaires to fully describe a phenomenon. The primary source for this study is student-made audio recordings, and since the contents of these recordings will be analyzed, this kind of research falls under the category of content analysis research. To ascertain students' English pronunciation abilities, content analysis will concentrate on listening to and analyzing recorded material. The core resource of this research is students' voices recorded using a microphone connected to a personal computer. The students read a particular text series provided previously by the lecturer.

The main instrument is the researcher as he is taking care of everything related to the essential parts of research contents. The supporting instruments used are a microphone to capture the student's voice, a personal computer (laptop) to store the captured voice, and an internet connection to store data online for the purpose of file sharing. The data collection is conducted using microphone connected to the personal computer. The students are asked to read aloud the text provided earlier and capture their voice using Microsoft 365. The recording can be done both online by having self-recording based on the instruction given and offline in the classroom in a controlled situation. The implementation is divided into three cycles. The first one is online and last two cycles is offline.

Technically, there are some procedures which used in this study to analyze the data. They are inviting students to the intended classroom, introducing pronunciation practice and windows speech recognition, asking a number of students to read aloud a passage from a pronunciation practice paper, recording the students' speech while they are reading using a feature in Microsoft Office 365, identifying and analyzing the recorded speech sound, providing feedback to the student about the result, asking the student to reread the same text, and analyzing the recording result.

Results and Discussion

Findings (can be in form of subheading)

After being conducted about 4 months, the study results several new insights.

1. Students' pronunciation capability enhancement

It is barely visible that the use of Microsoft speech recognition can increase the student's pronunciation ability by 33.33% in total. After taking a series of pronunciation practices by the help of technology, they feel very satisfied like never before.

Speech recognition technology can be a useful tool for helping students improve their pronunciation, as it can provide real-time feedback on their spoken language. By using speech recognition to practice their speaking and listening skills, students can become more

aware of the sounds and patterns of the language they are learning, which can help them improve their pronunciation over time.

However, it is important to note that speech recognition technology is not a replacement for traditional language instruction and practice. While it can be a helpful supplement, it is not a substitute for face-to-face interaction with a teacher or native speaker, or for immersion in a language-rich environment.

Ultimately, the extent to which speech recognition helps students improve their pronunciation will depend on a variety of factors, including the quality and accuracy of the speech recognition software, the frequency and duration of practice, and the individual student's ability to learn and retain new sounds and patterns.

2. Students' handy self-adjustment

Only within three weeks personal practice and in total four months exposure to an organized classroom for pronunciation practice, the students find their own way adjust themselves with the use of technology, particularly in using windows speech recognition to help them study correct and proper English pronunciation.

However, the teacher's assistance is a-must-conducted treatment to help boost the student's pace in adjusting to have better pronunciation, particularly when using dictation feature in Microsoft 365. Below are some of the things to take into account.

3. Advantages and disadvantages of MSRE

MSRE is one part from many features possessed by capable Microsoft 365 applications catch voice user and convert voice the Becomes text. Application it also has function for convert writing or text to inform saying with use human natural language modeling. Teacher could change sound parameters including volume and pitch because Support Microsoft Speech API (SAVI) technology. Participant educate could with easy and fun learn English pronunciation correctly and properly.

a. Advantages using MSRE

Implementation of MSRE in English learning obviously enhances English language pronunciation and it comes with a number of advantages, among others:

- 1) *Real-Time Feedback.* One of the most significant advantages of using MSRE in a pronunciation class is the provision of real-time feedback. As students practice speaking, the speech recognition engine can instantly analyse their pronunciation and provide feedback on accuracy and fluency. This immediate feedback allows learners to identify and correct errors promptly, facilitating faster and more efficient learning.
- 2) *Personalized Learning.* MSRE can cater to individual learners' needs by offering personalized feedback. Each student can receive specific guidance on areas that require improvement, allowing them to focus on their unique pronunciation challenges. Personalized learning enhances engagement and motivation, as learners feel supported in their language development journey.
- 3) *Autonomous Practice.* The accessibility of MSRE empowers learners to engage in autonomous practice outside the classroom. Students can use the tool on their own devices, practice speaking at their convenience, and receive feedback independently. This self-directed practice fosters autonomy and a sense of responsibility for language improvement.
- 4) *Non-Judgmental Environment.* MSRE creates a non-judgmental environment for learners to practice pronunciation. Unlike speaking in front of peers or an instructor, students may feel less self-conscious when practicing with the technology. This reduced anxiety can encourage learners to experiment with different sounds and intonations, leading to greater confidence in their speaking abilities.
- 5) *Engaging Learning Experience.* The interactive nature of MSRE adds an element of gamification to language learning. Learners often find the experience of speaking

and receiving instant feedback engaging and enjoyable. This gamified approach can help sustain learners' interest and motivation throughout the pronunciation class.

- 6) *Flexible Learning Pace*. MSRE allows students to practice at their own pace. Learners can repeat exercises as many times as needed until they feel comfortable with their pronunciation. This flexibility accommodates diverse learning styles and ensures that no student feels rushed or left behind.

b. *Disadvantages using MSRE*

From various the advantages offered by the MSRE, but also in English learning - mainly enhancement Language pronunciation has a number of weakness among others:

- 1) *Prone to distraction*. This is caused by signal processing still sound based frequency. When a information in signal voice have component same frequency many with component frequency the distraction, will difficult for separate disturbance from signal sound. From that in implementation recommended for use distraction - free room or noise free, besides that students should to recite English text the with loud and clear in machine order could with accurate catch the words spoken by students.
- 2) *Inconsistent performance*. System possible no could catch the word accurate because variation pronunciation, lack Support for a number of language, and disability for sort out background noise back. Noises all around voice user can Becomes constraints. Acoustic models can help do filtering, however can just no perfect. Sometimes it's really hard for isolate voice human.
- 3) *Slow Speed processing*. Several recognition programs voice need time for implemented and mastered. Processing possible speech recognition feels relatively slow.
- 4) *Source file problem*. Success introduction saying depending on equipment recording used, is not it only device software.
- 5) *Accent and Dialect Variability*. One major challenge with speech recognition technology is its sensitivity to accent and dialect variations. MSRE may struggle to accurately recognize certain regional accents or non-standard pronunciations, leading to incorrect feedback. This limitation can be particularly challenging in a multilingual classroom with diverse language backgrounds.
- 6) *Limited Contextual Understanding*. While MSRE excels at recognizing individual speech sounds, it may lack the ability to understand the broader context of a spoken sentence. As a result, learners might receive feedback that focuses solely on individual phonemes without considering overall sentence structure or intonation.

This study, hopefully, can offer valuable pedagogical contributions by shedding light on the effectiveness of speech recognition technology for pronunciation improvement. These contributions can empower language educators to leverage technology more effectively, foster autonomous learning, and design engaging language learning experiences that promote better pronunciation and overall language proficiency among students.

Among those pedagogical contributions are:

1. Technology-Enhanced Pronunciation Instruction
2. Personalized Learning and Autonomous Practice
3. Speaking Confidence and Fluency
4. Addressing Pronunciation Challenges
5. Integrating Technology for Engaged Learning
6. Data-Driven Language Assessment
7. Continuous Professional Development for Educators
8. Contributing to Best Practices in Language Education

Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the potential of speech recognition technology as a powerful tool for improving language learners' pronunciation skills. The integration of Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine (MSRE) into language classrooms has demonstrated significant benefits in terms of personalized learning, speaking confidence, and fluency, ultimately contributing to enhanced language proficiency.

The findings of this research underscore the pedagogical significance of technology-enhanced pronunciation instruction. The real-time feedback offered by MSRE has enabled learners to engage in self-directed practice, identify pronunciation errors, and make immediate corrections independently. The technology's role in creating personalized learning environments has empowered learners to take greater ownership of their language development, fostering a sense of autonomy and accountability in their language learning journey.

The integration of Microsoft's Speech Recognition Engine into language classrooms has proven to be a promising approach to enhance students' pronunciation capability. By leveraging the power of technology, educators can create engaging and interactive language learning environments that cater to the individual needs of students, fostering their confidence, fluency, and overall proficiency in the target language.

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