

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TONGUE TWISTERS IN
ENHANCING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION
AMONG EFL LEARNERS**

A THESIS

*Submitted to the Department of English Language Education in a Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Strata I (Bachelor of Education)
in English Language Education.*



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STATE COLLEGE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
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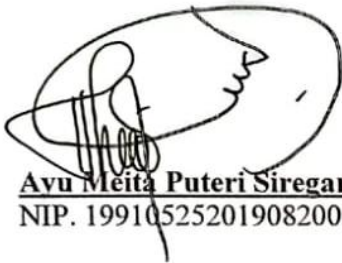
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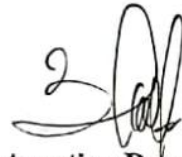
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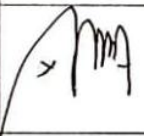
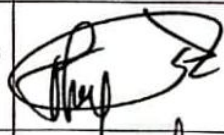
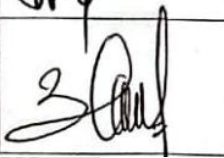


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ABSTRACT

AKBAR IBRAHIM (NIM: 21130017). THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TONGUE TWISTER IN ENHANCING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AMONG EFL LEARNERS. This research investigates the effectiveness of using tongue twisters in enhancing English pronunciation among eleventh-grade students at SMAN 3 Panyabungan in the 2024/2025 academic year. The study was conducted based on the fact that many Indonesian EFL learners face persistent challenges in pronunciation, particularly in articulation, intonation, and fluency, which often hinder clear communication. Tongue twisters were selected as a teaching technique because they provide repeated practice with complex sound patterns in a fun and engaging way. The research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, involving two groups: an experimental group taught using tongue twisters and a control group taught using conventional methods. The population of the study consisted of 50 students, with class 11F¹ as the experimental group and class 11F² as the control group. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests that measured students' pronunciation in terms of articulation, intonation, and fluency. The collected data were analyzed using normality tests, homogeneity tests, and an independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that the experimental group showed a higher improvement in pronunciation skills compared to the control group. The average post-test score of the experimental group was 7.99, while the control group achieved 7.45. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between both groups, with a t-value of 9.54 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the tongue twister technique had a meaningful impact on improving students' pronunciation performance. In conclusion, the use of tongue twisters proved to be an effective strategy in teaching pronunciation, as it not only enhanced students' clarity, fluency, and intonation as it enhanced students' clarity, fluency, and intonation in speaking English. Previous studies indicate that tongue twisters have potential to support pronunciation learning in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Tongue Twisters, Pronunciation, EFL Learners, Experimental Study, SMAN 3 Panyabungan.

ABSTRAK

AKBAR IBRAHIM (NIM: 21130017). EFEKTIVITAS *TONGUE TWISTER* DALAM MENINGKATKAN PELAFALAN BAHASA INGGRIS DI KALANGAN PEMBELAJAR EFL. Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas penggunaan *tongue twister* dalam meningkatkan pelafalan bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa kelas sebelas di SMAN 3 Panyabungan pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Studi ini dilakukan berdasarkan fakta bahwa banyak pembelajar EFL Indonesia menghadapi tantangan yang terus-menerus dalam pelafalan, khususnya dalam artikulasi, intonasi, dan kelancaran, yang sering menghambat komunikasi yang jelas. *Tongue twister* dipilih sebagai teknik pengajaran karena memberikan latihan berulang dengan pola bunyi yang kompleks dengan cara yang menyenangkan dan menarik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimental, yang melibatkan dua kelompok: kelompok eksperimen yang diajarkan menggunakan *tongue twister* dan kelompok kontrol yang diajarkan menggunakan metode konvensional. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari 50 siswa, dengan kelas 11F¹ sebagai kelompok eksperimen dan kelas 11F² sebagai kelompok kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes pra-uji dan pasca-uji yang mengukur pengucapan siswa dalam hal artikulasi, intonasi, dan kelancaran. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, dan uji t sampel independen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen menunjukkan peningkatan yang lebih tinggi dalam keterampilan pengucapan dibandingkan dengan kelompok kontrol. Skor rata-rata pasca-uji kelompok eksperimen adalah 7,99, sedangkan kelompok kontrol mencapai 7,45. Analisis statistik mengkonfirmasi perbedaan yang signifikan antara kedua kelompok, dengan nilai t sebesar 9,54 dan tingkat signifikansi $p < 0,001$. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa *tongue twister* memiliki dampak yang berarti dalam meningkatkan kinerja pengucapan siswa. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan *tongue twister* terbukti sebagai strategi yang efektif dalam pengajaran pengucapan, karena hal itu meningkatkan kejelasan, kelancaran, dan intonasi dalam berbicara Bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, *tongue twister* dapat dianggap sebagai metode alternatif dan inovatif untuk memperkaya pengajaran pengucapan dalam konteks EFL, khususnya di tingkat sekolah menengah.

Kata Kunci: Tongue Twister, Pengucapan, Pembelajar EFL, Studi Eksperimental, SMAN 3 Panyabungan.

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The researcher realizes that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are sincerely welcomed for the improvement of this study and future research. It is hoped that this thesis will provide valuable contributions and benefits for readers, researchers, and the development of English language education.

Panyabungan, July 2026
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MOTTO

" Self-confidence and the courage to be yourself are the foundation of achievement "

(Eric Cantona)

" If you have started, then finish it "

(Penulis)



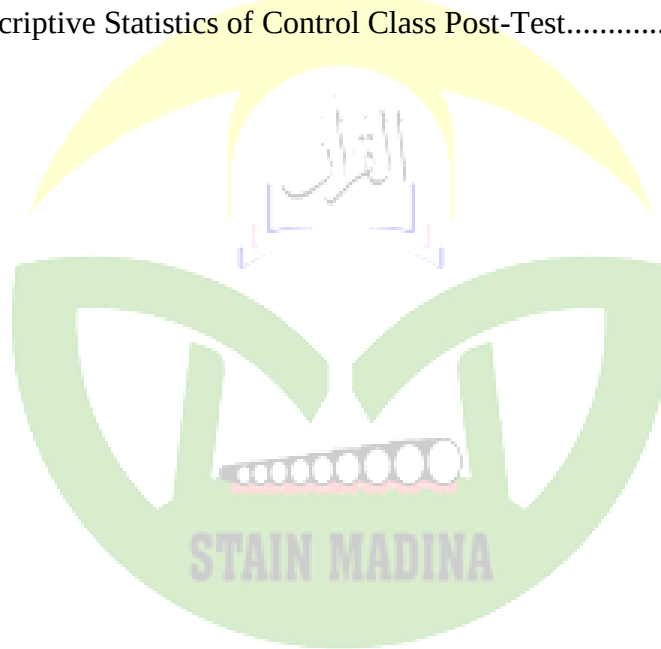
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language serves as a fundamental medium for exchanging facts, information, ideas, and perspectives. Through linguistic communication, humans acquire knowledge from one another about subjects they seek to understand. English represents one such vital language, functioning as a compulsory subject within Indonesia's education system. Students nationwide engage with English instruction from primary through tertiary education levels.

Mastering English as a foreign language presents considerable complexity. Learners must develop core linguistic competencies: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while simultaneously acquiring foundational language components including grammatical structures, lexical knowledge, and phonological proficiency.

Articulation in the context of pronunciation is the physical process by which speech organs such as the tongue, lips, jaws, and vocal cords work in a coordinated manner to produce speech sounds. This process involves the airflow from the lungs which is then modified by the movement and position of the articulators to produce sounds that can be recognized as speech. For example, the position of the tongue in relation to the roof of the mouth determines whether a sound is /t/, /d/, or /n/. Each component has a specific role, like parts in an orchestra creating harmony.

Proper coordination is essential to producing clear and understandable pronunciation. In learning a foreign language, understanding how articulation works greatly helps students to form sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue. Therefore, articulation exercises such as tongue twisters are important in improving pronunciation accuracy by strengthening motor control of the speech organs Wardana (2023)

Indonesian students may struggle to distinguish between short and long English vowel and consonant sounds due to differences between their mother tongue and the target language. In this case, students need to improve their

communicative competence to better understand pronunciation. Research by Irawan (2023) revealed that one of the main challenges in learning English pronunciation is pronunciation habits influenced by students' first language. Certain consonant sounds such as /θ/, /ð/, and /f/ are challenging for students to produce accurately because they are absent from the Indonesian phonological system. This leads them to unconsciously substitute these foreign sounds with more familiar sounds from their first language, such as /t/, /d/, or /s/.

Researchers in the journal emphasized the importance of the role of teachers in explicitly explaining the differences between the English and Indonesian sound systems. Teachers are expected to be able to provide students with an understanding that English has different phonological characteristics and requires special practice to master it. In addition, they are also advised to create learning activities that are challenging and fun so that students are more motivated. With the right approach and consistent practice, students' ability to pronounce English sounds can be significantly improved, thus supporting their fluency in communication in the context of learning and real interactions.

Teaching pronunciation presents significant challenges as mispronunciation often results in communication failures. Several key factors exacerbate this issue: students' unwillingness to participate orally in classroom activities, encounters with unfamiliar lexical items, and insufficient opportunities for listening comprehension and oral repetition practice. Fahruli (2020) stated that in practicing tongue twister, the teacher can make the students focus on one activity, because students will feel attract to the tongue twister technique because it is new to them.

The use of tongue twisters in pronunciation learning has been proven effective in helping students develop their speaking skills. According to Puspita et al. (2023) tongue twisters not only introduce complex sound patterns but also strengthen aspects of word stress, intonation, rhythm, and fluency in speaking. Because tongue twisters contain certain sounds in a rapid arrangement of words, this exercise forces students to focus more on controlling their speech organs. This has a positive impact on the clarity and accuracy of sound. In addition, this

technique also stimulates students' phonological awareness, which is very important for second language learning. On the other hand, the use of tongue twisters in the classroom also increases motivation because of its fun and challenging nature. When students feel actively involved and not stressed in learning, learning outcomes tend to be better. Therefore, integrating tongue twisters routinely into pronunciation learning not only improves the technical aspects of pronunciation but also creates a more interesting and communicative learning atmosphere. In English pronunciation learning, the use of tongue twisters has been proven to be an effective strategy in improving clarity of articulation and fluency of speech.

This technique emphasizes intensive practice on complex and similar sound patterns, thus training the speech muscles to work more coordinated and precisely. The studies by Fraesti (2020) shows that the use of structured tongue twisters in class can improve students' performance in pronunciation, especially in terms of clarity or clarity of speech. Students who are actively involved in tongue twister exercises show significant differences in their speaking fluency and courage in conveying ideas orally. In addition, this method also helps students identify and correct common pronunciation errors, such as substitution of unfamiliar fricative sounds in their mother tongue.

The application of tongue twisters not only improves technical skills but also has a positive impact on students' motivation and participation in speaking classes. Thus, this technique is considered relevant for use in pronunciation teaching, especially at the high school level, as part of a communicative approach that encourages direct and active practice. However, many eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Panyabungan still face persistent difficulties in pronunciation, particularly in terms of articulation, fluency, and intonation, which often hinder their ability to speak English clearly and confidently. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of using tongue twisters in teaching English pronunciation to first-semester students at SMA Negeri 3 Panyabungan.

Speaking represents a cognitively demanding skill for learners. In pronunciation pedagogy, the primary objective is neither to achieve native-like accent acquisition nor to facilitate comprehension solely for native speakers, but rather to ensure mutual intelligibility among non-native English speakers. Developing oral proficiency in English presents particular challenges for these learners, as they are acquiring it as a foreign or additional language a significant proportion of students experience difficulties articulating their thoughts effectively in the target language during spoken communication.

Research has revealed that EFL learners' oral production errors encompass not only segmental aspects (such as specific phoneme pronunciation) but also suprasegmental features including lexical stress, intonation patterns, and rhythmic structures Susilowati et al. (2024) Through systematic observation of student presentations, studies have identified recurrent challenges in maintaining pronunciation that adheres to internationally comprehensible English norms, particularly in formal speaking contexts. Furthermore, the frequent use of inaccurate grammatical forms compounds comprehension difficulties for listeners.

This study recommends that pronunciation teaching should not be carried out separately from teaching language structure. Instead, both aspects need to be taught in an integrated manner to improve overall communication competence. Interventions that combine phonological training with grammar learning, such as the use of tongue twisters techniques integrated with meaningful sentence contexts, are considered capable of improving articulation as well as increasing students' structural accuracy.

This approach can also increase students' confidence in expressing opinions orally in various academic and social contexts. The effects influence various pronunciations, grammar, articles, aids, prepositions, and probable causes appear in writing and pronunciation as errors. Moreover, several discoveries made during the teaching-learning process highlighted the challenge experienced by EFL students, particularly the students' speaking levels and speaking skills during the learning process. Students had average results in word

choice and fluency in earlier studies, but they needed to sweeten their pronunciation, topic mastery, and attitude during speaking presentations. In further research, express that the teacher should concentrate on students' difficulties in speaking, the need to improve students' speaking skills and the development of speaking modules based on students' weaknesses and wants. Concept emphasizes the necessity for teachers to adopt more effective strategies to address students' difficulties in developing English speaking skills, aiming for better outcomes than previously achieved. The use of tongue twisters serves as a tool to enhance students' vocabulary retention and pronunciation accuracy. This approach revitalizes the way speaking skills are taught, offering a fresh and engaging method to improve students' performance.

The tongue twister method also helps students understand the use of intonation and word stress when reading simple descriptive sentences. Incorporating tongue twisters into English learning supports the development of pronunciation skills Fahruli (2020).

This technique, often seen as a playful activity, challenges learners to articulate words quickly and clearly. Tongue twisters are an interesting and useful pronunciation practice method in learning English. These sentences are designed with repetitive sound sequences and difficult phoneme combinations, so they can challenge students' articulation skills. Practicing with tongue twisters helps students become more aware of how they produce sounds, especially those that are uncommon in their mother tongue, such as /θ/, /ð/, or /ʃ/. By repeating tongue twisters regularly, students can improve their speaking speed, accuracy, and clarity.

In addition, this exercise also supports the development of suprasegmental aspects such as intonation and rhythm. Because of its fun and competitive nature, students tend to be more motivated to practice, without feeling pressured or afraid of making mistakes. Recent research by Engelina Salanti (2024) shows that the use of tongue twisters in pronunciation classes can increase students' self-confidence and make learning more active and enjoyable. Therefore, the application of this technique is recommended as an alternative

strategy in teaching pronunciation, because it not only improves the technical aspects of speaking, but also strengthens students' involvement and interest in learning English. The previous study about this issue is the role of tongue twisters in improving the students' speaking skills Yuniar et al. (2021) A similar study was also conducted by Haz & Imansari (2022) who implemented the Tongue Twister Method to Improve English Pronunciation. Puspita et al. (2023) Tongue twisters require precise articulation and enunciation of sounds.

B. Identification of Problem

Base on the background of the study, the writer formulate a question to represent the problem of this research as :

1. How effective is the use of tongue twisters in improving students' English pronunciation skills?
2. What specific aspects of pronunciation can be enhanced through the use of tongue twisters?

C. The Objectives of the study

This research was conducted with the following goals:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of tongue twisters in enhancing students' English pronunciation.
2. To identify the specific aspects of pronunciation improved by tongue twisters.

D. Significances of the Study

1. This research deepens the understanding of how rhythm, stress, and sound articulation play a role in pronunciation, with the use of tongue twisters helping learners internalize the phonemic system of English.

2. The study emphasizes the importance of auditory and oral feedback in improving pronunciation, which can only be achieved through active practice.
3. Pronunciation plays a crucial role in communicative competence, and tongue twisters help students improve intelligibility, fluency, and self-confidence in communication.
4. This research supports the development of students' pronunciation skills through repetitive pronunciation practice, showing how tongue twisters provide challenging input that aids in improving speaking fluency.
5. The study demonstrates how tongue twisters help Indonesian students distinguish similar sounds in English, enhancing both pronunciation and reading skills.
6. By involving multiple senses, tongue twisters support a multisensory approach to learning, combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic aspects, which strengthens cognitive processing and retention of pronunciation patterns.

E. Limitation of Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted only at SMAN 3 Panyabungan and involved a limited number of participants consisting of two classes of eleventh-grade students. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent all EFL learners in different educational contexts or regions.

Second, the duration of the treatment was relatively short, which may have influenced the level of improvement achieved by the students. A longer treatment period might produce more comprehensive results regarding the effectiveness of tongue twisters in improving pronunciation skills.

Third, this study mainly focused on pronunciation aspects such as articulation, intonation, and fluency, without examining other speaking

components such as grammar, vocabulary mastery, or communicative interaction. Therefore, the findings are limited to pronunciation development only.

Another limitation is that the assessment of pronunciation was based on oral performance, which may contain a degree of subjectivity despite the use of scoring rubrics and raters. In addition, external factors such as students' motivation, confidence, and practice outside the classroom could not be fully controlled during the research process.

Finally, the study used a quasi-experimental design without random assignment of participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Even so, the research still provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of tongue twisters as a technique for teaching English pronunciation in EFL classrooms.

F. Key Terms

1. Effectiveness

In the scope of this study, effectiveness refers to the success of implementing the tongue twister technique in improving students' pronunciation skills effectively, with the use of a short time and proportional effort. Effectiveness also describes the relationship between the resources used in the learning process such as time, methods, and energy and the improvements obtained in students' pronunciation skills.

2. Tongue Twister

A tongue twister is a collection of words or phrases that contain similar sounds that are repeated and arranged in a certain phoneme pattern, making it quite difficult to pronounce quickly and accurately. This exercise is often used as a pronunciation training medium to improve the clarity of students' articulation. According to Hakim & Sampurna (2020) the use of tongue twisters contributes to increasing accuracy in pronunciation and supports memory of how to pronounce words.

3. Teaching

In the context of this study, teaching is defined as the teacher's activity in conveying knowledge and skills to students through certain methods namely tongue twisters to support the development of English pronunciation skills holistically.

4. English Pronunciation

Pronunciation in English refers to the ability to pronounce words correctly, both in terms of segmental such as letter sounds and suprasegmental, including stress, rhythm, and intonation. Puspita et al. (2023) stated that regular practice using tongue twisters can improve the quality of pronunciation and make it easier for students to adapt to the rhythm and intonation typical of English.

