#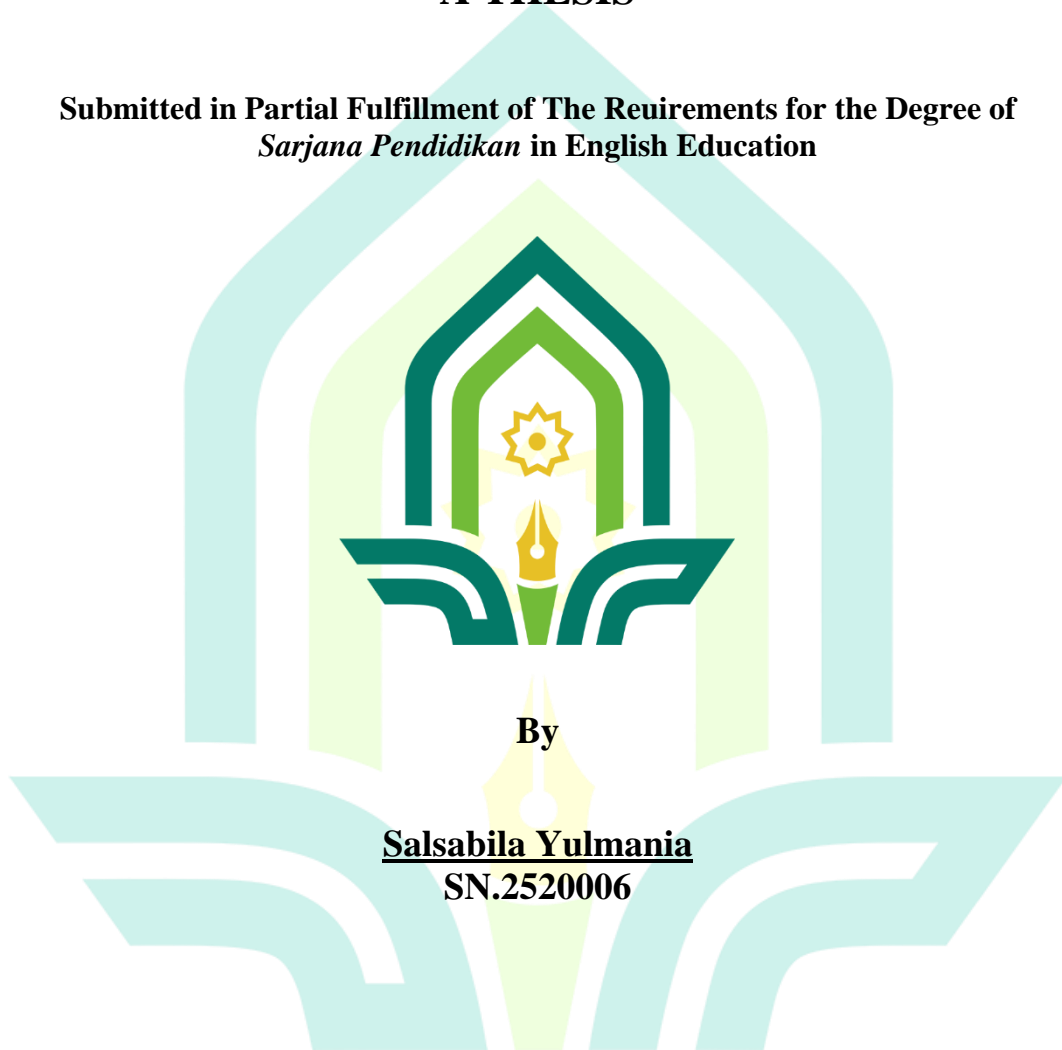 INVESTIGATING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION LEARNING EXPERIENCE USING ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Reuirements for the Degree of
***Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education**

By

Salsabila Yulmania
SN.2520006

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHERS TRAINING FACULTY
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
2024

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Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi yang berjudul **"INVESTIGATING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUANGE (EFL) LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION LEARNING EXPERIENCE USING ELSA SPEAK APPLICATION"** adalah benar-benar hasil karya penulis, kecuali dalam kutipan yang telah penulis sebutkan sebelumnya.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

Pekalongan, 30 September 2024

Yang menyatakan,

Salsabila Yulmania
NIM. 2520006

NOTA PEMBIMBING

Kepada

Yth. Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan

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c/q. Ketua Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris

di

<u>PEKALONGAN</u>

Assalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.

Setelah melakukan penelitian, bimbingan dan koreksi naskah skripsi saudara :

Nama   : Salsabila Yulmania

NIM   : 2520006

Program Studi   : Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul   : Investigating EFL Learners' Pronunciation Learning Experience Using ELSA Speak Application

        Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diajukan dalam sidang munaqasah.

        Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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iii

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MOTO

"What Allah SWT has determined in your life is the best."

(Ustadzah Halimah Alaydrus)

ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is one of the important aspects of English that requires lifelong learning. language is dynamic and continues to develop as new words and phrases. When EFL learners encounter new words, phrases, and accents throughout their lives, they need to learn to adapt their pronunciation through practice, exposure, and continuous refinement. The existence of applications that provide sound modeling by native speakers, interactive exercises, and direct feedback, thus supporting learners to develop pronunciation skills. One application option that can be used as a medium for learning English is the ELSA speak application. ELSA utilizes Artificial Intelligence (AI) and speech recognition to help improve and perfect English pronunciation. This study aims to examine students' positive and negative experiences in learning pronunciation using the ELSA Speak application, and to describe how the ELSA Speak application supports EFL learners' pronunciation skills through the pronunciation aspects taught. This study uses a qualitative method with a narrative inquiry approach. Participants in this study were 4 EFL learners. Data collection in this study used self-reflection sheets and semi-structured interviews, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis from the results of the study. The results showed that EFL learners had a positive impression of the ELSA Speak application such as a flexible learning schedule, the availability of direct feedback, and the availability of animations that can direct how to pronounce correctly. However, EFL learners also face obstacles in using the ELSA Speak application such as limited access to learning, the ELSA system which sometimes cannot detect the user's voice, and also the need for a stable internet connection to access the application. In addition, ELSA Speak provides special learning related to pronunciation aspects such as vowels, consonants, word stress and intonation. This can support EFL learners' pronunciation skills to be more developed. This study indicates that the use of the ELSA Speak application can be the right choice for learners to be used as a medium for learning English.

Keywords: Pronounciation, Learning Experience, ELSA Speak Application.

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude are always addressed to Allah SWT who always bestows enjoyment, guidance, blessings and health so that the process of writing my research thesis entitled **"Investigating EFL Leraners' Pronunciation Learning Experience Using ELSA Speak Application"** can be completed. It is submitted to English Study Program, UIN K.H ABDURRAHMAN WAHID Pekalongan, to fulfill one of the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree. In arranging this paper, the writer truly get lost challenges and obstructions.   Because of that, the writer says thank to all individuals who helps me in the process of writing this final project. Therefore, in this occasion I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

1. The head of the English Education Department and Teachers' Training Faculty of UIN Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
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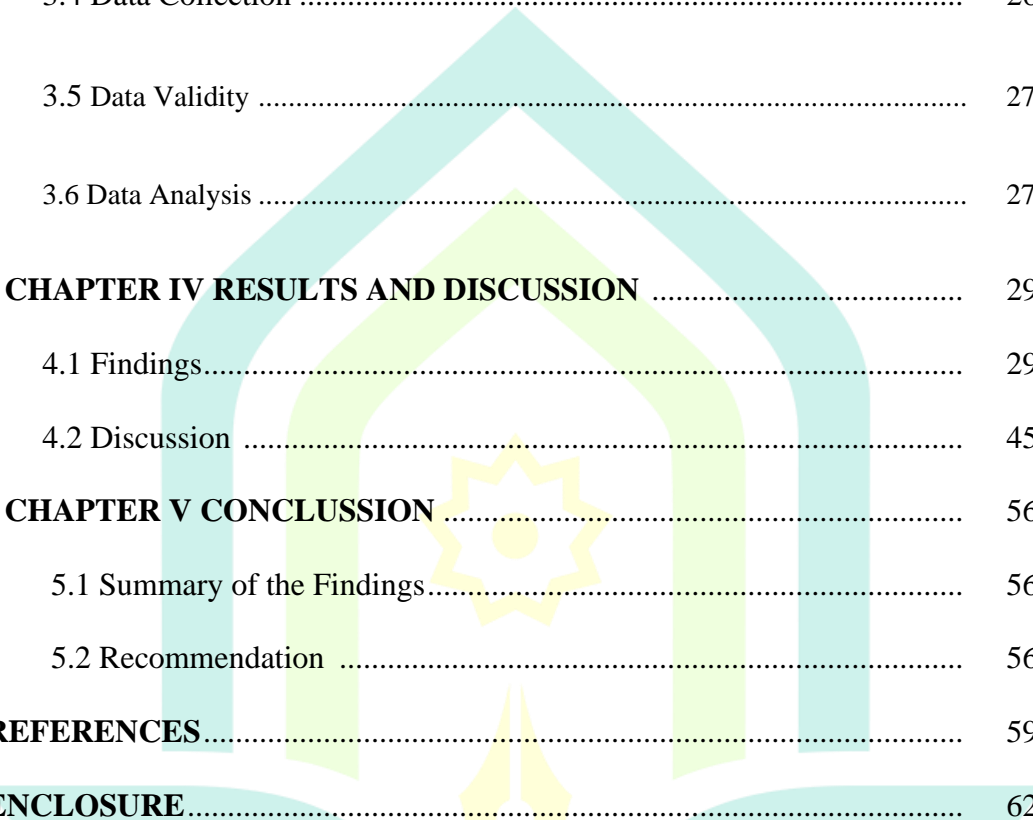5. My beloved friends have accompanied my thesis journey since the beginning.

Pekalongan, 30 September 2024
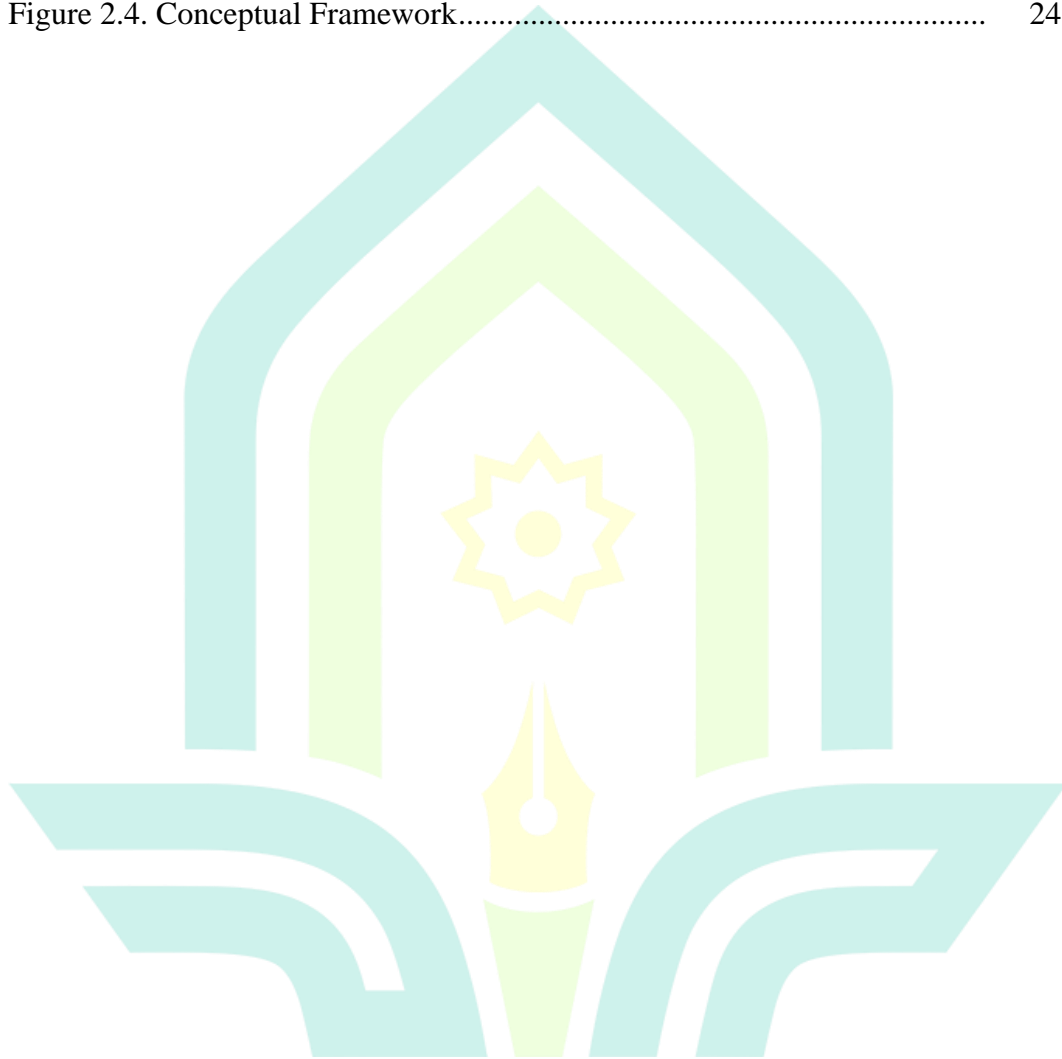
The researcher

TABLE OF CONTENT

FIGURE LIST

ENCLOSURE LIST

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Pronunciation is one of the important aspects of English that requires lifelong learning. According to Mu'in (2019), language is dynamic and continues to develop as new words and phrases. When EFL learners encounter new words, phrases, and accents throughout their lives, they need to learn to adapt their pronunciation through practice, exposure, and continuous refinement. However, to overcome this, just relying on learning English in the classroom is not enough. In the classroom, EFL learners do not have much time to learn each aspect of pronunciation (Gilbert, 2008). Therefore, EFL learners need to learn pronunciation independently outside the classroom. Independent pronunciation learning involves learners autonomously identifying their learning needs, establishing personal objectives, selecting appropriate learning resources and tactics, and evaluating their progress (Lengkanawati, 2017). In learning pronunciation independently, learners need to use various appropriate resources to support the pronunciation learning process, such as using dictionary and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

As time goes by, the experience of learning pronunciation evolves. In the past, learning pronunciation was often limited to using dictionaries that provided phonetic transcription. Learners will look up phonetic symbols in the dictionary to help them understand how a word should be pronounced. However, this has been replaced by technological developments that will make

it easier for EFL learners to learn pronunciation. Technological developments such as smartphones can provide benefits for users to enjoy application features that can be used as a means of learning English, (Blacca, 2016). The existence of applications that provide sound modeling by native speakers, interactive exercises, and direct feedback, thus supporting learners to develop pronunciation skills. One application option that can be used as a medium for learning English is the ELSA speak application.

The English Learning Speech Assistant (ELSA) application was designed by Vu Van in 2015, and is based in San Francisco, United States. This application utilizes Artificial Intelligence (AI) and speech recognition to help improve and perfect English pronunciation (Pilar, 2013). Compared to other applications that only focus on vocabulary and grammar, with the speech recognition technology, ELSA Speak can help learners improve and refine their pronunciation. With this technology, ELSA can detect user pronunciation errors with an accuracy of more than 95%. In addition, ELSA Speak excels in terms of accurate pronunciation analysis, instant feedback, and a strong focus on pronunciation. The application can adjust exercises based on the user's ability, and identify areas that need improvement. ELSA Speak provides more than 1,200 lessons and more than 60 topics for users to practice pronunciation, starting from practicing pronunciation of English words, phrases and sentences (ELSA Corporation). Therefore, with this application, which is accompanied by advanced features, it can support learners to develop their pronunciation

skills properly and correctly, so that learners can build good communication using English.

Pronunciation skills have important meaning for English as a foreign language learners (EFL learners) because they can influence their ability to communicate clearly and be understood by native English speakers. According to Celce- Murcia (1996), good pronunciation helps learners gain confidence in speaking, improves their understanding of the language, and facilitates smooth interactions in real communication situations. If our pronunciation is wrong or inappropriate, the result will be miscommunication, even resulting in the goal of the communication not being conveyed, Because the meaning of a word or sentence is not conveyed properly. In other words, pronunciation is one aspect of achieving successful oral communication because pronunciation is an important element in communicative competence (Syafitri, et. Al., 2018).

However, in Indonesia context, EFL Learners often think that developing English pronunciation skill is considered a difficult field because English pronunciation is different from their native language pronunciation. Some English sounds do not exist in Indonesian pronunciation, making it difficult for EFL learners. According to Ridwan in Nur Wahid Rahman and Ahmad Munawir (2022), stress, rhytm, intonatio, and speech sounds from the first language that affect the second language are the areas where EFL learners struggle with English pronunciation. For example, Indonesia has many dialects depending on region. Based on that, the diversiy of dialects and accents will affect EFL learners so that their foreign language will be sound unnatural

(Samad & Ismail, 2020). Apart from that, the limitations of learning based on curriculum also make it difficult for learners to develop pronunciation skills because a dense curriculum may not provide enough time or attention for adequate pronunciation practice.

Based on that things, it is important for EFL learners to learning pronunciation independently using digital application. The use of digital applications will help EFL learners facing the difficulties in learning pronunciation, so that their pronunciation abilities can develop. This research was conducted to investigate EFL learners' experiences in developing their pronunciation skills using digital application technology. The use of ELSA speak application is expected to become an informal digital learning medium and is considered to be able to support EFL learners in developing their pronunciation skills.

1.2 Research Question

This study focuses on two research question:

1.2.1 How does EFL learners' experience learn pronunciation using ELSA speak?

1.2.2 What aspects of pronunciation does ELSA Speak to support EFL learners in learning pronunciation?

1.3 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, this study aimed to investigate EFL learners' experiences of using ELSA Speak application and recognize the aspects of pronunciation taught by the ELSA Speak application.

1.4 Significance of the study

Theoritical Use   : This study contributed to theory related to EFL learners' experiences in supporting pronunciation skill.

Empirical Use   : This study explored empirical insights about the experiences of EFL learners in supporting pronunciation skill.

Practical Use   : The results of this study can support EFL learners in developing their pronunciation and provide an opportunity to use the ELSA Speak application to develop their pronunciation skills.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

EFL Learners   : People who study English as a foreign language (Gebhard, 2006).

Learning Experience   : All of the procedures that an individual goes through during learning (Liu, 2023).

Pronunciation   : Producing the sound of language, including stress and intonation to express feeling (Harmer, 2007).

ELSA Speak Application : An application for learning English that applies artificial intelligence and speech recognition with a focus on pronunciation, which can recognize non-native speakers,

speech with an accuracy of more than 95% and design lessons to become native speaker (ELSA Corpoation, 2021).
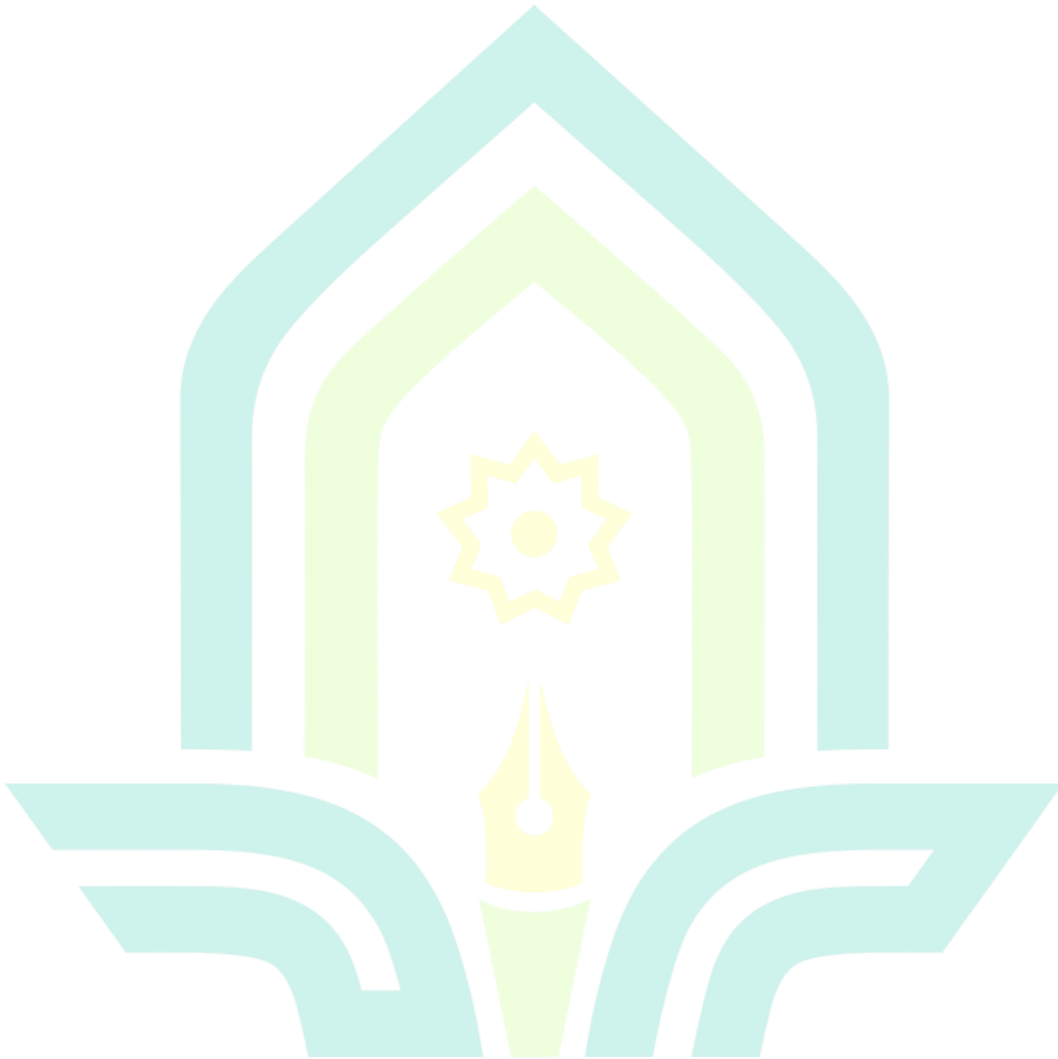
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of The Findings

Based on the results and discussions, the findings revealed that EFL learners have positive and negative experiences while using the ELSA Speak application as a medium for learning pronunciation. Positive experiences experienced by EFL learners include, flexibility of learning schedule, providing immediate feedback, and the availability of animation in the ELSA Speak application clarifies the correct pronunciation. Meanwhile, negative experiences felt by EFL learners include, limited access, the inability of ELSA Speak to detect user's voice, and dependence on internet access.

In addition, ELSA Speak supports EFL learners' pronunciation skills by offering pronunciation aspect skills, such as vowels, consonants, word stress and intonation. ELSA provides visual and auditory features that assist EFL learners in understanding the pronunciation of vowels and consonants, together with phonetic symbol transcriptions that facilitate vocabulary comprehension. ELSA offers instruction on stress and intonation for each word, facilitating EFL learners' comprehension of proper word emphasis. Thus, this can help EFL learners improve their pronunciation.

5.2 Recommendation

The researcher realizes that there are still many weakness and requires further development in this study. The researcher suggests that further research be conducted on the use of the ELSA Speak application as a tool to

improve pronunciation skills by using ELSA Speak premium. Furthermore, the researcher suggests that future research should delve deeper into the experiences of EFL learners with pronunciation, rather than just the use of ELSA Speak media. There may be various additional media that can be used to better understand the experiences of EFL learners with autonomous pronunciation learning. In addition, this study focuses on individual learning outside the classroom, so in future research, other researchers can conduct research on the use of ELSA Speak in classroom learning, which allows teachers or lecturers to be included as research subjects for further
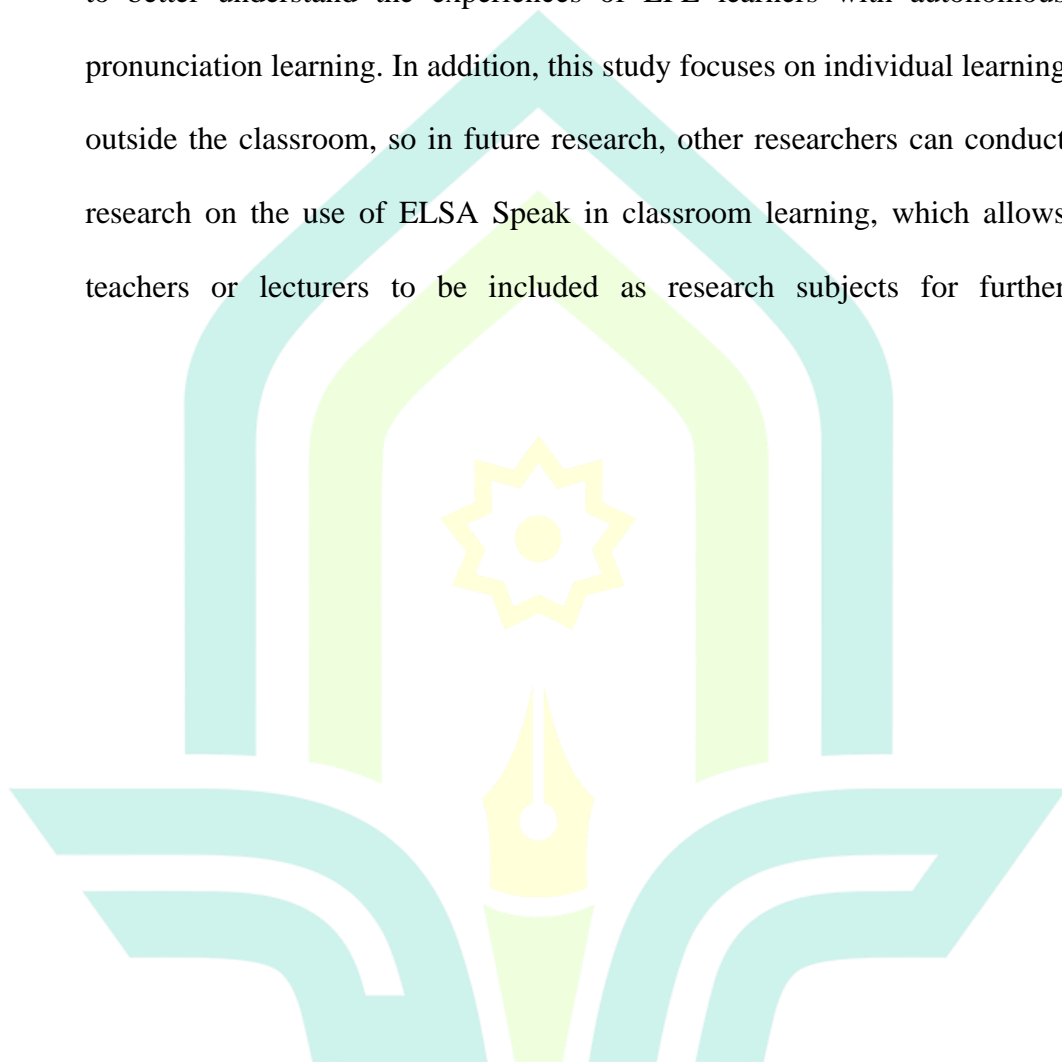
investigation, because their experiences will certainly be different from students.

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