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PROMOTING STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS LEARNING THROUGH ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION APPLICATION IN LEARNING PRONUNCIATION

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ABSTRACT

This study presents the use of English Pronunciation application to promote students' autonomous learning in learning pronunciation. This study is aimed to interpret students' perceptions towards the use of English Pronunciation application on their autonomous learning in learning pronunciation and to explore the use of English Pronunciation application in promoting students' autonomous learning in learning pronunciation. A qualitative case study was applied as the research design of this study. The data were collected by using questionnaires and interviews. The participants were 30 students of the freshman of English Education Program in Galuh University. The result of this study showed that the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation is effective to promote students' autonomous learning. Moreover, the students perceived that the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation can help them in overcoming their problems in learning pronunciation. Besides, it makes them more motivated, feel better and confidence with their pronunciation and also can improve their pronunciation skills.

Keywords: *autonomous learning, English Pronunciation application, and pronunciation.*

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is really important, since it is as an aspect to support the English language skills, especially to speak English with correct pronunciation to make our language deliver clearly and understandable. According to Hornby (1995, p. 928) pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken; the way in which a word is pronounced and the way a person speaks the words of a language. It also indicates the level of communication because poor pronunciation leads to poor communication power. So, it is really important for every English language learner to know and learn the correct pronunciation.

However, pronunciation is the complex and most difficult one, especially for new English language learner because of some reasons. For instance, adult learners find pronunciation as one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from the teacher (Morley 1994; Fraser 2000). Moreover, learners should spend lots of time to improve their pronunciation (Aliaga García, 2007; Martínez-Flor et al., 2006; Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). Therefore, teaching pronunciation is quite challenging, since the teachers do not have sufficient time in the class to teach pronunciation completely. Hence, the teachers have to find out the appropriate tools to help and guide their students to learn more by themselves in and outside the classroom.

Related to this problem, there are so many teachers who already applied the modern learning concept to their students as the solution for limited time in teaching and learning pronunciation which quite complicated if should finished in the classroom activity, that is autonomous learning strategy. In autonomous learning the students are learn independently in or outside the classroom. In language learning,

autonomous learning is a capacity, attribute, and attitude (Holec, 1980; Little, 1991), and can take different forms in different contexts, and to different degrees as a result of the characteristics of each learner. Moreover, Holec (1981, p. 3) defines learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one's own learning and noting that this ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural means or by formal learning”. Rather, it needs to be activated and developed. It means that the teachers have to help and guide their students in doing the autonomous learning.

Therefore, there are so many teachers had tried to apply technology in teaching and learning pronunciation through many useful tools, to help students in their barriers. One of the most popular one is the application of MALL (Mobile-assisted language learning). Especially for using some proper application in smartphone for their students to enhance their ability in pronunciation. There are so many kinds of application that can be used in learning pronunciation, for example using English Pronunciation application. English Pronunciation is an application for helping learners, especially beginners who have difficulties on how to pronounce word properly and how to distinguish the various English sounds. So, they can learn pronunciation by themselves without limitation of time or space. As Gredds (2007) states that mobile learning means learning anywhere and anytime. It becomes the solution for teachers and learners who didn't have much time in the pronunciation class.

The researcher has found several previous studies which are relevant with this topic. First study was conducted by Alzubi & Singh (2017, p. 59-72) entitled “The Use of Language Learning Strategies through Smartphones in Improving Learner Autonomy in EFL Reading among Undergraduates in Saudi Arabia”. The second study was conducted by Leis, Tohei, and Cooke

(2015) entitled “Smartphone Assisted Language Learning and Autonomy”. The third previous study was conducted by Haggag (2018, p. 189-204) entitled “Teaching Phonetics Using a Mobile- Based Application in an EFL Context”. The last previous study is about “Promoting Students’ Autonomous Learning Through ICT Based Learning in ICP: A Case Study” by Budianto (2014, p. 126-134).

That four previous studies related with present study discussed about students’ autonomous leaning and the application of technology in ELT. However, those researchers did not focus on the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation. Thus, the researcher tried to investigate the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation which elaborate in this paper entitled “Promoting Students’ Autonomous Learning Through English Pronunciation in Learning Pronunciation” (A Case Study to the Freshman of English Education Program in Galuh University).

Furthermore, there are two research questions dealing with this study. They are: 1) What are the students' perceptions towards the use of English Pronunciation application on their autonomous learning in learning pronunciation? 2) How does the English Pronunciation application promote students’ autonomous learning in learning pronunciation?

According to Voltz (2008), autonomous learning comes from Greek words “auto”, which means self and “nomos”, which means rule or law. Moreover, Holec (1981, p. 1) notes “autonomous learning is the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. In addition, Ivanovska (2015) states that “there are various terms used to denote learner autonomy, which have similar concepts in language education, such as learner autonomy, learner independence, self-direction, autonomous learning, and independent learning”.

Further, learning autonomy basically is developed based on a constructivism belief in which effective learning should be the active learning (Little, 2007). Besides, Taylor (2004, p. 143) explains that autonomous learning emphasizes learner's own responsibility for his or her learning, but that does not mean that teacher should abandon their rights of organizing and directing the class. Addition, Zoghi & Dehghan (2012) defined the students as their own "active learning manager" and the lectures only role as the facilitator which provide space for students' autonomous learning progress. It can be concluded that autonomous learning is someone's ability in managing their own learning.

English Pronunciation application is the application which created and developed by Yobimi group which provided to help learners who have difficulties or questions on how to pronounce words properly and how to distinguish the various English sounds. The English Pronunciation application presents for android user with some features, levels and pronunciation tips. This app also supports by British and American accent, so the user can listen and practice both accents. Through this app, learner will have a great time to learn about English phonetics and sounds and also practice pronunciation skills by word or sentences together with listening and speaking skills without consider limited of time or space.

In a basic level, the feature consists of vowel sounds, diphthong sounds and consonant sounds. When the application is started, the student is presented with a familiar everyday picture which has a suitable sound with the certain sound in this application, such as animal, food and things around us. In this level the learners are able to tap to hear a sound or tap and hold to practice the sounds. Besides, this basic lesson also provided with words, phrases and sentences, which in each type it is supports by British and American accent, so the learner can listen and practice both accents in words,

phrases and sentences. Moreover, this basic level also provided with rating to check our pronunciation as the feedback. When we tap to record and we pronounce the word, phrase or sentence, there will appear how high and low our rating is. The rating consists of 1-5 star, 1 is low and 5 is excellent or perfect. Through this rate we will know the quality of our pronunciation, whether it has corrected or still mispronounce. If our rating is still low, we can replay and replay to get a high rating, which shows that our pronunciation has correct. In this level, besides we are able to pronounce English and voice recording and compare it we can also practice some pronunciation exercise including listening and writing word, writing English phonetic, and writing English word with phonetic.

Furthermore, in an advanced level consist of linking word, stress intonation. In each part there is a brief information and description about linking word, stress and intonation. In this level could find a definition, types, and some example. So, learner can read and learn the material related to linking word, stress and intonation and they also can tap to listen and practice through some example which provided.

The last feature is pronunciation tips. This feature consists of silent letters, homophones and homographs, pronounce specific word, pronounce specific spelling to sound, pronounce specific practice topic and other lessons such a nasal and glottal. In pronunciation tips also complete with example and exercise.

Pronunciation can be defined as the production of important sound in two senses. First, sound is important because it is used as part of a code of particular language. Second, sound is important because it is used to achieve meaning in context of use (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 3). As stated by

Richards, Platt, & Weber (1992) that “pronunciation is the way sounds are comprehending by the hearer”. According to Kristina, Diah, et al (2012, p. 12), pronunciation is the act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech. In other words, it can also be said that it is a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood. Furthermore, Kelly (2014) stated that “pronunciation is the ability to use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation of a word in a spoken language”. From those definitions, it can be concluded that pronunciation is the sound which produced to generate a meaning between the speaker and listener.

METHOD

In this research, the researchers employed Qualitative research design by implementing a case study upon the object of the study (participants). Qualitative research is a systematic scientific inquiry that seeks to build holistic, largely narrative, descriptions to inform researchers of understanding of social or cultural phenomena. It is also defined as an approach to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups relating to social or human problems.

As stated by McMillan and Schumacher (1993, p. 479) qualitative research is defined as, "process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships between categories." This definition implies that data and meaning emerge naturally from the research context. Qualitative research is carried out under a combination of observations, interviews, and document reviews. Based on the explanation previously, case study was chosen as the design of the research. Case study is a detailed investigation of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event (Merriam, 1988, Yin, 1989; Stake, 1994).

Moreover, Thomas (2013) states: "Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods". Furthermore, case studies are a design which can be found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. In case, the researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012) and its bounded by time and activity. In addition, case study can be defined as an empirical research method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, focusing on the dynamics of the case, within its real-life context. Case study used to demonstrate an entity that forms a single unit such as a person, an organization or an institution.

In this research, the researchers used purposive sampling as the technique sampling, to choose the participants who have the categories that already determined. Moreover, "in purposive sampling—also referred to as judgment sampling—sample elements judged to be typical, or representative, are chosen from the population." (Nunan, 1992, p. 156). This study was conducted to the freshman of English Education Program in Galuh University, especially students who are taking Pronunciation subject utilizing English Pronunciation in and outside the classroom. The researcher has several reasons in choosing this participant. First, the researcher be aware to the learners' difficultness in learning pronunciation as the researcher's experience. Second, the pronunciation subject is available on Freshman college students and pronunciation is one of challenging one especially for the beginner. The researcher selects a particular class as participants, it is Class A and B for a total 30 students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, the researchers analyzed the data from close-ended questionnaire to find out the students' perceptions towards the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation. To report the result of the study, the researchers analyzed the obtained data from the students' answers to the questionnaire items.

Table 1. The responses of the students

No	Statements	Answer				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
Students' problems in learning pronunciation						
1	<i>I think learning pronunciation is difficult</i>	6.7%	23.3%	33.3%	33.3%	3.4%
2	<i>I feel less confident with my pronunciation when I have to talk to other people</i>	6.7%	60%	23.3%	10%	0%
3	<i>I cannot practice more my pronunciation in pronunciation class because of limited time</i>	3.4%	63.3%	23.3%	10%	0%
4	<i>I need to hear a native speaker to know how to pronounce a word correctly</i>	30%	53.3%	13.3%	3.4%	0%

Students' interest in learning pronunciation through mobile based application

5	<i>I prefer learn and practice my English pronunciation on my own through mobile application than in the classroom</i>	3.4%	43.3%	43.3%	10%	0%
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Learner autonomy in learning pronunciation

6	<i>Learning pronunciation through mobile based application make me more autonomous</i>	3.4%	56.6%	40%	0%	0%
7	<i>I use English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation in/out of classroom</i>	3.4%	53.3%	33.3%	10%	0%

Students' viewpoint to the implementation of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation

8	<i>I enjoy learning and practicing my pronunciation through English Pronunciation application</i>	10%	46.6%	3.4%	10%	0%
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9	<i>I often use English Pronunciation for practicing my pronunciation</i>	16.7%	53.3%	30%	0%	0%
10	<i>Using English Pronunciation make me more motivated in learning pronunciation</i>	16.7%	66.6%	13.3%	0%	3.3%
11	<i>English Pronunciation helps me to overcome the problems and difficulties in learning pronunciation</i>	33.3%	60%	6.7%	0%	0%
12	<i>It is effective to use English Pronunciation in learning pronunciation</i>	30%	60%	6.7%	3.3%	0%
13	<i>I can improve my pronunciation skill with practicing my pronunciation using English Pronunciation</i>	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
14	<i>I feel better and confidence when I should practice my pronunciation in the classroom since I've practice at the previous using English Pronunciation</i>	16.7%	56.7%	26.7%	0%	0%

15	<i>English Pronunciation is the appropriate tool to support the English language learner in learning pronunciation autonomously</i>	33.3%	50%	13.3%	0%	3.4%
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Based on the result of the data analysis from the questionnaire response that was presented in the table 1, it can be assumed that most of respondents answered agree and showed the positive response to all statements. It means that they have used English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation. The researcher found that students' have various perspective and experience in learning pronunciation and utilizing English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation. The researcher classified the result of questionnaire into four point. The first is students' problems in learning pronunciation. This point refers to the statements number 1 to 4. The result revealed that some of them find that learning pronunciation is not difficult, although the other students feel uncertain with their answer. Instead some of them also find that is difficult. So, the researcher concludes that sometimes they have difficulties and sometimes no.

Moreover, there are some problems faced by students in learning pronunciation. One of the big problems is they were less confident while speak English because they are not sure to their pronunciation. This is crucial for the EFL learners, because if they were not confident to their pronunciation, it will give a bad influence to their speaking quality. The second problem is they cannot practice more their pronunciation in the classroom because of limited time. Whereas the pronunciation is one of the

most subject which loved by students, unfortunately there is no enough time for learning and practicing pronunciation deeply. The next problem is the students' need to hear a native speaker to know how to pronounce a word correctly. Although they taught by the lecturer with good pronunciation, but they also need a native speaker to support and make sure their pronunciation.

The second point is about students' interest in learning pronunciation through mobile based application. This point is found in statement number 5. The data showed that the students prefer learn and practice their pronunciation by themselves through mobile application, although some of them look uncertain because they need both lecturer and the application, and a little number of the students prefer learn and practice their pronunciation with the lecturer. From this data, the researcher concluded that some of students feel enjoyed their own learning through mobile application and the others feel bored to learning by themselves or they still reliant to the teacher.

The third point cover the statements number 6 and 7 about learner autonomy in learning pronunciation. From the data, the researcher found that most of the students used English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation in or out of classroom and they noted that learning pronunciation through English Pronunciation application make them more autonomous.

The last point is about students' viewpoint to the implementation of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation refer to the statements number 8 to 15. The data revealed that the students often use English Pronunciation application because they feel enjoy, motivated to learn,

more confidence and make them more autonomous. They also argued that this application is effective to support their learning because it can help the students to overcome their problem in learning pronunciation. Moreover, they stated that English Pronunciation application is the appropriate tool to improve their pronunciation skills.

Secondly, the researcher discussed the result of the research based on the data from the interview. This finding of interview was aimed to discover how does the English Pronunciation application promote students' autonomous learning in learning pronunciation. students have a various problems or difficulties that faced in learning pronunciation. Based on their experience, they need example on how to pronounce the words and to correct their pronunciation. Besides, they also difficult to pronounce a new words or strange words and how to differ British and American accents.

Hence, they use English Pronunciation application in and out of classroom to help their barriers in learning pronunciation. They enjoy their learning through this application because they can learn, practice and check how good their pronunciation is. They also can learn and practice anywhere and anytime as much as their needed, which makes them more autonomous. So, they can manage their learning by themselves.

Moreover, the English Pronunciation applications' rating also affect their enjoyment in learning pronunciation. They stated that they will keep trying when got the low rating. It means that the rating of this application gives the influence for their motivation in learning pronunciation.

In addition, most of the students stated that the implementation of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation is a good way to support their learning, it also really useful, especially for the teacher and the student.

For the teacher or the lecturer, it helps them for teaching pronunciation while for the student it helps them because learning and practicing their pronunciation can be easier, even though there is no lecturer.

Therefore, as cited in McCrocklin (2016) students struggle to monitor themselves which can lead them to feel more dependent on an instructor for feedback. The students' ability in receiving feedback from instructors/teachers without relying to them is a critical for autonomy and there is a great need for practical tools and strategies that will give students this ability. Technology is a tool that can promote autonomy by enabling experimentation through self-access work outside of class while also providing immediate feedback to learners. Hence, the English Pronunciation application is an appropriate tool to support students in learning and practicing their pronunciation. This application also makes their learning easier, it can help them to overcome the problems in learning pronunciation, make them more autonomous learner, and improve their pronunciation skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Referring to the research question of the present study, it concludes that the use of English Pronunciation application in learning pronunciation can helps the students to overcome their problems in learning pronunciation, makes them more motivated in learning pronunciation, makes them more autonomous learner, feel better and confident while practicing their pronunciation and can improve their pronunciation skills. They also assumed that feedback which provided in English Pronunciation application gives the big effect to their motivation and their autonomous learning. It can appreciate their self while got the highest score/good feedback, and will motivate them

while they got the low score/bad feedback, which makes them wants to learn and practice more, without forced by anyone.

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