

Do Native Speakers in Youtube Videos Benefit EFL Students' Phonological Appropriation?

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Abstract

This classroom action research investigates how YouTube videos containing pronunciation drills exposed by English native speakers develop the EFL students' phonological appropriation. This activity also relates to developing classroom-based materials via accessing various relevant resources inside and outside the classroom as they are available in the information, communication and technology (ICT) era now. The study was based on the problems that the students got difficulties in English Phonology class pertaining to the segmental, supra-segmental phonemes and phonological contrast. It is all about the phonology complex rules that students have to understand and drill in a very short meeting hour (2 credits course- 2x45 minutes per meeting). The participants of the study were the fourth semester students (class F) of English Education Department of Faculty of Education, Lancang Kuning University in Riau. The study was conducted from March to May 2014 only in one cycle consisting of seven meetings. The study reveals that using such YouTube videos could improve students' phonological appropriation and assist them in understanding the complex rules of English phonology class since they had been experienced with English native-speakers as the models for their pronunciation learning and practices as they could access them in YouTube.

Keywords: Youtube videos, Phonological Appropriation, ICT

Apakah Video Pembelajaran *Youtube* dengan Model Penutur Asli Bahasa Inggris dapat Meningkatkan Kemampuan *Pronunciation* Mahasiswa dalam Konteks Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Sebagai Bahasa Asing?

Abstrak

Penelitian tindakan kelas ini menginvestigasi bagaimana YouTube yang menayangkan banyak video latihan pengucapan bahasa Inggris yang diperagakan oleh penutur asli bahasa Inggris dapat memperbaiki kemampuan pengucapan mahasiswa. Aktivitas mengakses video ini juga berkaitan dengan bagaimana mengembangkan materi berbasis kelas menjadi lebih bervariasi dengan kegiatan mengakses banyak sumber belajar baik di dalam maupun di luar kelas karena memang sumber atau materi belajar yang relevan tersebut sangat mudah di dapat pada era ICT ini. Adapun masalah yang mendasari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa menemui kesulitan belajar dalam mata kuliah Phonology terutama dalam memahami aspek *segmental, supra-segmental phonemes*

and phonological contrast. Permasalahan utama dalam penelitian ini disebabkan oleh rumitnya teori ilmu fonologi yang menuntut mahasiswa untuk memahami teori-teori tersebut dan juga berlatih pengucapan bahasa Inggris yang benar namun tidak didukung oleh waktu yang memadai (hanya 2 sks selama 90 menit) per tatap muka. Penelitian ini melibatkan mahasiswa semester empat (kelas F) prodi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, di Universitas Lancang Kuning di provinsi Riau. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan mulai dari bulan Maret sampai Mei 2014 dalam satu siklus penelitian yang terdiri dari tujuh kali tatap muka. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa menggunakan video YouTube dapat memperbaiki ketepatan pengucapan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa serta membantu mereka dalam memahami teori-teori fonologi yang begitu kompleks dikarenakan mereka benar-benar mendapatkan pengalaman belajar fonologi dengan cara menonton video dimana penutur asli bahasa Inggris sebagai model dalam pembelajaran fonologi mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Video Youtube, Kemampuan Pronunciation, ICT*

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) as a learning tool has long been acclaimed as a catalyst for educational transformation. Over the past decade, evidence of good uses of ICT has emerged in numerous studies. The studies have covered a wide spectrum of technologies used by English teachers and learners worldwide for computer assisted language learning (CALL), including the Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Beauvois, 1997; Gu & Xu, 1999; Kramsch, A'Ness, & Lam 2000; Warschauer, 1999). Situating learning in an authentic context and being open to different perspectives is identified as a major strategy through which ICT can assist teachers in enhancing the scope and depth of students' learning.

Information and digital literacy are identified as essential learning skills that students need to take advantage of technology's potential of enhancing self-exploratory learning. They are also essential skills for personalized learning. The Internet has greatly broadened the scope of learners' information sources beyond the

classroom and curriculum and has thus given them more latitude to pursue their personal interests. However, the availability of ICT alone will not automatically turn into actual learning. This is where teachers' teaching strategies or pedagogy should come into play: should learners be permitted to fish in the wild or should they just buy fish in a shop. In sum, it is actually the idea of what Hedge (2003) refer to as learner autonomy or the self-directed learner - one who is self-motivated, takes the initiative, has the clear idea of what he wants to learn, and has his own plan for pursuing and achieving his goal. At present day, engaging students in self-initiated use of technology for language learning is a must (Lai & Gu, 2011).

In line with the above explanation, as ICT highlights the fact that not only computers and CD ROMs can help the teachers in the day to day teaching of languages, but also the new communication technologies that the Internet provides, such as the World Wide Web, email, chat, and YouTube. I decided to take advantage of this part of the Phonology class to look into the impact and implications of using

YouTube video containing pronunciation drills exposed by English native speakers in order to trigger students' phonological appropriation in the EFL classroom. My aim is to investigate if such YouTube videos could assist the students in learning English phonology in order to yield their phonological appropriation and find out the benefits of using it in the Phonology class.

In terms of the models and problems of teaching English phonology in the EFL context, most teachers and students have experienced misunderstanding in English as a Foreign Language class. It might occur because the students receive incorrect phonological interpretations. Consequently, there are numerous misinterpretations. This shows how tricky phonological appropriation can be for EFL teaching contexts. By phonological appropriation, I mean matters of sounds such as phonetics, the study of speech sounds, rhythm and intonation, phonology, the abstract way of phonemes function (Parker, 1986), as well as mastering a linguistic form and its meaning, allowing a learner to use it in an authentic communication situation.

Until very recently few teachers or learners really questioned the idea that in order to be understood when speaking English, students would need to get as close as possible in their pronunciation to one of the dominant native-speaker accents, such as Received Pronunciation (RP), the standard British accent, or GA (General American), the USA equivalent. In fact, until now the teachers and the learners still bring the idea that the measure for successful pronunciation should be the speaker's degree of intelligibility as determined by a native-speaker. Otherwise, the teaching and learning

pronunciation in EFL situation has emerged some problems. It has been my experience that teaching clear pronunciation as one of the language skills can be frustrating because hours of practice in the classroom often yield minimal improvement. More pronunciation drills do not satisfactorily improve how well the students speak and are understood.

2. METHOD

This study was a classroom action research which investigated the benefits of using YouTube videos containing pronunciation drills exposed by English native speakers in enhancing the students' phonological appropriation. The participants were undergraduate students of the fourth semester (class F consisting of 16 students) of English Education Department of Faculty of Education, Lancang Kuning University in Riau. The study was conducted from March to May 2014 only in one cycle consisting of seven meetings. The research instruments were test (oral practice), observation and unstructured interview. Written test was also given to know students' cognitive aspects pertaining to phonological rules. The result of the test was statistically analyzed to get the average score of the test. The two qualitative instruments; observation and unstructured interview were used to provide useful information pertaining to the effective use of YouTube videos to assist the students in acquiring phonological appropriation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first question investigated in this study is whether using YouTube videos containing pronunciation drills exposed by English native speakers can enhance the students' phonological appropriation in the Phonology class. The results from the students'

Phonology class tests indicate that there is a significant increasing point of the students' score with a mean 78.75 compared to their previous mean score that was 63.08 (before using the videos).

The second question explored in this research is what benefits of using YouTube videos in yielding students' phonological appropriation. The results show that using this media has contributed some benefits for improving students' phonological appropriation and facilitating them in understanding the complex rules of English phonology since they had much time to access and learn more phonology materials not only inside but also outside classroom. Also, they knew their needs and worked productively with the Phonology lecturer toward the achievement of their objectives, in this case is the goal of learning the subject and establishing the knowledge of English phonology.

Also, they could make use classroom-based materials provided in the given syllabus and expand it by searching some relevant resources or additional/authentic materials that are available in YouTube media. Gradually, they knew how to use resources independently. It can be seen for example as the students had presentation in the class; they mastered the material well and they could share what they had understood to their classmates well. The students found them learn with active thinking after they have been functioning YouTube videos in their learning. By using this media, they could adjust their learning strategies when necessary to improve the way the learn pronunciation in order to yield their phonological appropriation. They were also experienced with English native-speakers as the models of their pronunciation learning as they could

access them in YouTube. Finally, they realized that the lecturer is not the only one model who can give them the ability to master the language and the classroom is not the only place to study.

As a matter of fact, this study reveals that there are some benefits of using YouTube videos containing pronunciation drills exposed by English native speakers in order to yield students' phonological appropriation. This media is motivating both students and lecturer. It makes the learning process more enjoyable. As what Walker et al. (2012) claims that using ICT media in this case is YouTube also offers a wide range of learning resources enabling texts, images, audio and video to be combined in interesting and stimulating ways for presentation purposes in the phonology class. In fact, YouTube media offers access to a rich resource of authentic materials pertaining to English phonology, particularly in pronunciation practices. In sum, it could be said that the successful implementation of ICT use in the EFL classroom depends on the teachers' creativity and innovation in teaching and their ability to guide their students to be independent learners. This idea is supported by Jamieson, Chapelle, & Preiss, (2005) that argue a successful implementation of the ICT use for instructional purposes is based on three factors: students, teachers, and infrastructure/developer.

This study also reveals that during the research there was the balance between learner autonomy and the lecturer control in the learning process. It is the lecturer's job to know when and how much to intervene. Thus, the control and management of the learning process continues to be part of the teacher's responsibility, but gradually, the learners will become more conscious of their own learning and

desirably more independent from their lecturers or teachers and more prepared to collaborate with the lecturer or teacher and classmates.

In addition to the discussion of this research finding, there is a wealth of literature and recent studies that discuss the application of ICT in the EFL context/education particularly in enhancing or fostering the language skills and the potential ways of learning as what has been proven by using YouTube audio videos in the Phonology class. For example, the study on mobile assisted language learning (MALL) conducted by Hsu (2012) reveals that all participants agreed that MALL is a potential tool for constructivism in EFL learning. Also, Gordian, et al. (2011) investigate the impact of asynchronous computer-assisted language learning (CALL) approaches on high and low achievers' vocabulary retention and recall of English as foreign language learners. The study reveals that the difference between the two groups was significant in terms of retaining vocabulary in immediate post-test (retention) and delayed one (recall); however, high achievers benefited from the CALL approach to learn vocabulary in both retention and recall processes, while the low achievers gained the chance of learning vocabulary just in retention period.

Current research has identified various potentials of ICT for language learning. To realize and maximize these potentials, engaging students in self-initiated use of technology for language learning is a must. Lai & Gu (2011) investigated Hong Kong university students' use of technology outside the classroom to self-regulate their language learning. It showed that these students were actively engaged in the use of technology, although there were variations both among the students and

in the aspects of language learning that they opted to support using technology.

To sum up, the relationship between teachers and students will possibly change when using ICT resources in the ELT classroom are extended. As the implication of the ICT advance, it absolutely effects to self-study resources, the responsibility for many of the learning decision made is passed over to the learners, such as decisions about what to study, when to study, how to study and how long to study for. The extent to which the learner will acquire the above skills depends on the learner's and the teacher's views of their relationship and respective roles (Dickinson, 1987).

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have direct implication to the environment of English language learning and teaching in relation to the ICT use in general and particularly as what has been revealed in this research that is in learning English pronunciation in terms of yielding phonological appropriation. With the advance of ICT, the students could enjoy their active status in language learning. As a matter of fact, using YouTube videos could trigger the students' phonological appropriation. In general, it is proven that ICT can open up a new range of self-access and learning opportunities, thereby making access to learning more widely available to students who have to study outside normal hours, who live in remote areas, or who have special needs. Also, the implication for the teachers and learners is that they should be aware of the relative advantages and disadvantages of ICT uses and tools particularly in using YouTube media and be able to choose learning tools fit for the teaching and learning aims and needs.

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