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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING TED TALKS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS’ PRONUNCIATION AT THE TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMK MUHAMMADIYAH WAY SULAN IN 2016-2017

Muti’atus Saniyati¹, Yanuarius Yanu Dharmawan²
¹English Education Study Program, Bandar Lampung University, Indonesia,
²English Education Study Program, Bandar Lampung University, Indonesia

Abstract

This research described the use of TED Talks to improve students’ pronunciation. Moreover, it was to find out whether TED Talks is effective to improve students’ pronunciation at the twelfth grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah Way Sulan. This research used experimental design in which attitudes were assessed both before and after an experimental treatment. The subject of the research was consisted of 60 students, they were divided into experimental and control group. The instruments used for collecting data were test which was consisted of pretest and posttest. The data analysis of this research was attempted by using independent sample T-test which was calculated through computing with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The result indicated that the students’ mean score of experimental and control group in posttest were significantly different. It showed that t-count was higher than t-table (10,706 > 2,002) and the sig. 2-tailed value was lower than sig. level (0.000 > 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It meant that there was effective impact of using TED Talks towards students’ pronunciation. In conclusion, using TED Talks as a media was effective to improve students’ pronunciation. Therefore, it was suggested the use of TED Talks as a media in teaching English generally and teaching pronunciation particularly.

Keywords: TED talk, Pronunciation

1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a crucial part in speaking beside grammar and vocabulary. In a real life, effective communication is determined by how clear you speak the words of sentences. Different pronunciation represents different meaning. To make the listeners understand what we say, we need to speak with correct pronunciation. Therefore learning pronunciation is very important. Learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood even if their grammar is perfect (Gilakjani: 2012). Good pronunciation skills also give learners more confidence when communicating in English with foreign people socially and professionally. Gilakjani (2012) also states that learners with poor pronunciation might be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lack of knowledge. There is no doubt that people have views on pronunciation. It is not wise for learners to ignore them completely. So, it cannot be denied that learning pronunciation is important for English learners for communicating.

Unfortunately, many learners give less attention to pronunciation. It might be because practice of communicating is not enough in their classroom. The teacher and classmates who are from the same country also give imperfect example of English pronunciation. So, it is difficult to find the standard pronunciation of English in the classroom only.

Students mostly find difficulties to pronounce some specific words in English. They find out that their mother tongue or native language is different from English as the target language. MacKay (1967) as cited in Pal (2013) points out that the appearing of errors in non-native pronunciation can be caused by some
factors that come from native language shifting; there are the equality of learning in foreign language, an obscurity, memorizing correct form, or inadequacy ability and sensibility of language. In other words, pronunciation errors are influenced much by the student’s basic knowledge of their mother tongue.

While in most of Indonesian words, there is no difference between its writing and its sound (Ruyattman: 2014). Indonesian is supposed to be an easy language to spell and to pronounce. Therefore Indonesian students get confused with different sounds of one specific symbol. Students are also difficult to pronounce some sounds which are not common and even do not exist in their mother-tongue. They are difficult to differentiate sounds between /θ, ð/, they commonly pronounce it /t, d/.

Another problem is that students are not familiar with cluster sounds. Cluster or consonants cluster is a group of two or more consonant sounds that come before (onset), after (coda), or between (medial) vowels (Nordquist: 2016). To pronounce clusters we should delete the middle consonant sound or transform a sound to use less movement of the tongue. Beside those problems, Providing appropriate media can be a good solution to solve those problems. The use of these media not only can make teaching-learning process more interesting but also can give students the appropriate guidelines or direction of what they learned. I try to use TED Talks (name of website) as media to improve students’ English pronunciation. Ted Talks is a series of informative, inspiring, and educational talks delivered by the world’s famous thinkers. It can be easily accessed in www.tedtalks.com.

Although TED Talks is not designed specifically for education, there are many features that we can use for teaching-learning process. TED Talks allow us to watch many videos of inspiring talks from many people all over the world while we can also read the subtitle or script in many languages. This can be used as the way to improve students’ pronunciation. When students watch or listen to the talks, they also read the subtitle or script of the talks at the same time. It will ease them to notice and imitate proper pronunciation of every single word that appears. From these problems, I want to see whether TED Talks is effective to improve students’ English pronunciation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Nordquist (2016) defines pronunciation as the act or manner of speaking a word. It is the way how we produce words, utterances, and sentences orally. In English there are many words which are not pronounced the same way as they are spelled. As the result, many words spelling in English do not represent the way they are pronounced. Therefore pronunciation is rather the way how the language is spoken, not written. In addition, Orlowski (2004) as cited in Essay (2013) state that pronunciation is a way that is accepted and generally understood. It is a way of speaking a word that can be accepted and understood by people generally.

Teaching pronunciation is important for students to get ready with the real life communication. By mastering pronunciation they are not only easy to be understood, but also easy to understand what other people talk about. Tennant (2007) states that pronunciation is not just about producing the right sounds or stressing the right syllables, it is also about helping students understand what they hear. So, it cannot be denied that pronunciation is useful for students both to understand and to be understood when connecting other people. In teaching pronunciation, the idea of native-like pronunciation as the main goals is argued to be unrealistic. Actually students do not need to speak with native-like
pronunciation. It is more important that when they speak, it can be comfortably understandable. In line with this, Burns (2003) states that it is more important that speakers of English can achieve; intelligibility (the speaker produces sound patterns that are recognizable as English), comprehensibility (the listener is able to understand the meaning of what is said), and interpretability (the listener is able to understand the purpose of what is said). Then it is important to be noted that teaching pronunciation goal is to help students speak with understandable way, and their pronunciation is at least sufficient for that purpose.

TED is a nonprofit foundation devoted to spreading ideas which is in the form of short talk delivered in the conference. This well-known conference is held all around the world. There are two main conferences which are held annually on the North America west coast, and in Edinburgh, Scotland. TED conference is began in 1984 with three main topics covered, namely Technology, Entertainment, and Design. However, today Ted covers almost all topics, issues, and subjects, such as science, education, business, global issues, etc.

TED Talks is relatively short video from some of the most engaging speakers around the world (Nelson: 2013). TED Talks are delivered by the most well-known thinkers and doers in the world who share what they know, research for, and experience in their life. Pell (2015) states that Ted is a series of informative, educational, inspiring and sometime jaw-dropping talks that present “Ideas worth Spreading”. This series is delivered by influential speaker to inspire people all over the world of wonderful ideas which they bring. TED Talks’ aim is to open people’s mind of new, inspiring, and educational ideas. Ted talks are available and free to watch at TED website and YouTube. More than 1,900 talks are available at Tedtalks.com in more than 110 languages.

Kelly (2015) suggests some ways which TED Talks can help in the Teaching-learning process, especially in English language teaching. They are talking about language, simplying listening, providing Ted transcripts.

By using TED Talks students especially teenage students become more interested and motivated in joining teaching-learning process. Pell (2015) states that “teenagers, being YouTube generation find Ted talks highly engaging and motivating.” Every TED Talks is different, so teachers can exploit in various ways (Pell: 2015). By using TED Talks teachers can do various activities in the classroom, such as role plays, debate, presentation, and many others. TED Talks can also be used by students at home. It provides an attractive context which can improve students’ English at home. Thousands videos of TED Talks can help students to improve their English skills, from listening to vocabulary to pronunciation, and many others.

As a website in accessing TED Talks we need to prepare good internet connection, electricity, and gadget. Other than that, availability of gadgets still becomes the crucial problem. Most of Indonesian schools lack of gadget or media to be used in teaching-learning process. Using TED Talks in the classroom requires us to prepare some assisted tools such as computer, sound system, and LCD projector, yet not all classrooms provide us such tools. Beside its advantages and disadvantages, the effectiveness of using TED Talks as teaching media is based on the way how we utilize it. As we go further into the 21st century, technology is more and more integrated into our society. Smart phones are now commonplace, tablets are replacing or substituting for computers and laptops. So, there will be many ways to integrate it in the classroom.
3. METHODOLOGY
This research used experimental design. It was used in which attitudes were assessed both before and after an experimental treatment. Therefore in this research, the subject of the research was firstly given a pre-test to know their basic pronunciation ability before a treatment was given. Treatments were given to the students in three meetings by using TED Talks. Post-test was given after the treatments were finished, it was done to know how far the influence of using TED Talks to improve students’ pronunciation.

The subject of this research was the students of SMK Muhammadiyah Way Sultan. The numbers of population were approximately 350 students. There were ten classes involved in this research as the population. They were X Accounting A, X Accounting B, X Automotive A, X Automotive B, Accounting B, and XII Automotive. However, not all classes were considered as the sample of this research due to the limitation of time and funds. This research employed purposive sampling; it involved only two classes from the ten existing classes, namely XII Accounting A and XII Accounting B class.

I chose those two classes students because of following considerations. First, in this research, I tried to use TED Talks as media to improve students’ pronunciation. Second, this research focused on helping students to get alternative solution in their pronunciation improvements. The XII Accounting A and XII Accounting B class students have been in the final year of secondary school. However, they still made many poor pronunciations on consonant and vowel sounds.

The instrument used in this research was test. The objective of the test was used to identify students’ improvements in pronunciation. Other than that, I also used audio recording to record the data obtained, because it could give an accurate and detailed data of students’ achievement in pronouncing English words. I did analysis on three pronunciation features; vowels, consonants, and word stress. The standard pronunciation used in this research was International Phonetic Transcription (IPA).

Pre-test was the first activity of this research. It was conducted in the first meeting and followed by both experimental and control group. I asked the students to read 50 words taken from the videos used in the research. While the students read the tested words, I recorded them to get the accurate result when researcher gave the scores.

After giving pre-test, I gave the first treatment. The treatment was administered for the experimental class by using TED Talks, while control group received the traditional teaching. Firstly, I gave the students printed script of the video before watching a TED Talks video. Then, they were asked to read some bold words in the script. After that, I played them the TED video, the students were asked to pay attention and watch the talk while they should also read the printed script.

After watching the video, the students and I had small discussion about it. The students were asked to freely give comments about the video. After that, I played the TED video again. I paused the video when the speaker said the bold words, so the students could possibly repeat it. The treatments were given in 3 meetings. Every meeting the researcher gave a different video but with the same procedures as the first treatment. The videos used were *The best gift I ever survived by Stacey Kramer, Try Something New in 30 Days by Matt Cutts, and The worlds’ English Mania by Jay Walker*. 
Post-test was the last activity of this research. It was done by reading the list of the words used in pre-test. The procedures of doing post-test were also same as pre-test. After those procedures were done, I started to distinguish between pre-test and post-test result by counting the scores, mean, and t-test.

The data were collected by giving pretest and posttest to experimental and control group. Pretest was given in the first meeting, while posttest was given in the last meeting or after treatments were done. I asked the students to read list of words which used during the process. Then I gave scores by comparing between recording of students' pronunciation and phonetic transcription of the words.

In collecting the data, I analyzed the data from both pretest and posttest. The data were analyzed in order to find out whether there was significant difference between the score of experimental and control group. The data were calculated through computing with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The data was analyzed by using independent sample t-test analysis at the significance level of 0.05.

4. DISCUSSION
The result of this research shows that the students’ scores of both control and experimental group are quite low in the pretest. Table 4.1 and 4.2 shows that the total score of control group is 1,320 while the total score of experimental group is 1,330. The mean score of control group is 44 while experimental group is 44.3. In the pretest, from 50 words which are tested the students are only able to pronounce sixteen to twenty-seven words correctly. In the pretest, the students make many improper pronunciations in vowel, diphthong, and consonant sounds.

The improper pronunciations which are made by most of students such as in the vowel sounds /ə, æ, e, u, ʊ, ɔ, ɒ, ɔː, e, uː/, diphthong /au, əu, ei, ai, eə/ and consonant /ʃ, ʒ, ɕ, ɡ, ʒ, z/. In vowel sounds such as /ə/ as in words memorable /ˈmɛmərəbl/ and novel /ˈnəʊvl/ they pronounce them /ˈmɛmərəbl/ and /ˈnəʊvl/. Improper pronunciations in diphthong sounds are such as /au/ as in flower /ˈflaʊə/ and montain /ˈmaʊntən/ they pronounce them /ˈflaʊə(r)/ and montain /ˈmaʊntən/. And then, Then in consonant sounds are such as /θ/ as in enough /ˈɪnʌf/ and philosopher /ˈfɪləˈsəfər/ they pronounce them /ˈɪnʌf/ and /ˈfɪləˈsəfər/, /θ/ in word faith /feɪθ/ and thousand /ˈθæʊsand/ they pronounce it /ˈfeɪθ/ and /ˈθæʊsand/.

During the treatments, it is found that actually the students are familiar with the words and their meanings. However, they are not familiar with the correct pronunciation. As well as they are not used to pronounce the words with correct pronunciation. Therefore, in the pretest they make many improper pronunciations. However, the students improve their pronunciation ability during the treatments.

As the result, the scores of both control and experimental group in the posttest are improved. Table 4.1 shows that the total score of control group in posttest is 1,592. It improves 272 points from the pretest score. In posttest each student of control group gets 4 to 14 points higher than in pretest. It means that they can only pronounce two to seven new pronunciation correctly.

Meanwhile, the total score of experimental group in posttest is 2,188. It improves 858 points from the pretest score. In posttest each student of control group gets 16 to 36 points higher than in pretest. It means that they can pronounce eight to eighteen new pronunciation correctly.

Those results shows that the experimental group scores increase significantly higher than control group. It is more than 500
points higher than control group score in posttest. So, we can conclude that students who are given treatments by using TED Talks have higher score than those given treatments by traditional teaching.

After learning pronunciation using TED Talks in three meetings, students achieve better pronunciation. They can minimize or even omit the errors in both pronouncing the sounds and putting the stress. Based on the result of experimental group in posttest, the students improve their pronunciation in vowel sounds such as /ə/ as in words people and novel, /ɪ/ as in trust, stuck, and country, /ɪə/ as in envision, /ɒ/ as in problem and conversation, /ʌ/ as in envision, /æ/ happiness and practice, /eɪ/ as in change, diphthong sounds such as /au/ as in flower and montain, /au/ over and vocabulary, /ei/ as in faith, mania, and waiting, /ai/ as in write, scientist, and giant, and consonant sounds such /f/ as in philosopher, /ʃ/ as in mention, emotion, and conversation, /k/ as in country, incredible, vocabulary and conversation, /ʤ/ as in picture, /ʤ/ as in giant.

The result analysis of independent sample t-test shows that the experimental and control group mean scores in pretest are not significantly different. Table 4.7 shows that t-count is lower than t-table (0.229 < 2,002). It also shows that the sig. 2-tailed value is higher than sig. level (0.820 > 0.05). Then, the t-test analysis of the mean score of experimental and control group in posttest shows that the mean score of experimental group is higher than the mean score of control group. Table 4.10 shows that t-count is higher than t-table (10,706 > 2,002). It also shows that the sig. 2-tailed value is lower than sig. level (0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. From the facts above, we can conclude that TED Talks is a good media to improve students’ pronunciation. It is proved by the analysis result of students’ mean score in the posttest which is showed the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) and the acceptace of alternative hypothesis (Ha). It means that there is effective impact of using TED Talks towards students’ pronunciation. Therefore, TED Talks is effective to improve students’ pronunciation at the twelfth grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah Way Sulan.

5. CONCLUSION
After analyzing the result of the study, there are some facts to be summarized. First, the students’ score of both control and experimental group are quite low in the pretest. the pretest, most students make many errors in pronouncing some vowel, diphthong, and consonant sounds. Second, during the treatments the students improve their pronunciation ability. As the result, in the posttest their score are improved. Third, the result of independent sample t-test shows that the students’ mean score of experimental and control group in pretest are not significantly different. So, it means that the two groups have the same level of Pronunciation ability before the treatments. Fourth, the result of independent sample t-test in the posttest shows that the students’ mean score of experimental and control group in the posttest are significantly different. It shows that t-count is higher than t-table (10,706>2,002). It also shows that the sig. 2-tailed value is lower than sig. Level (0.000 > 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

From the facts above, we can conclude that TED Talks is a good media to improve students’ pronunciation. It is proved by the analysis result of students’ mean score in the posttest which is showed the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) and the acceptace of alternative hypothesis (Ha). It means that there is effective impact of using TED Talks towards students’ pronunciation. Therefore, TED Talks is effective to improve students’ pronunciation at the twelfth grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah Way Sulan.

6. REFERENCES


