INTEGRATING "ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION" APP INTO PRONUNCIATION TEACHING: HOW IT AFFECTS STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AND LEARNING

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aimed to find out whether the integration of the English Pronunciation app in pronunciation class at Mandalika University of Education (UNDIKMA) can increase students' participation and self-learning. This study made use of quasi-qualitative design. Forty-eight first-year English department students from two groups of learning involved in this research, aged between 19 to 21. Each group, group A and group B, comprised of 24 students. Both groups received instruction using the English pronunciation app. Data was collected using class observation and interviews. In conducting observation, the observer chose to take the role of participant-observer in that the researcher immersed with the students during the observation activities. One volunteer assistant was employed to work with the researcher. It was intended to increase the accuracy of the data collected. In regard to the interview process, the researcher used individual and group interviews where one interviewer/researcher interviews a group of students. The result of the study indicates that the integration of the English Pronunciation app in teaching pronunciation increased the students' participation (engagement, attitude, and conduct). In addition, the app brought a positive effect to the establishment of independent learning to a significant number of students.

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation, as part of spoken skills, has been overlooked and considered unnecessary in the teaching of English (Benzies, 2017; Jones, 1997), (Derwing & Munro, 2005). This belief might be the justification of why many teachers, English trainers, and English lecturers deny its importance as part of English mastery. There is one true thing about this despairing assumption that it is contagious to students. In other words, it brings an adverse effect on students' participation and learning. However, what he said could be true for some reason. First, pronunciation is one of the difficulties faced by both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and learners (Sayer, 2015; Salim, Terasme, & Narasima, 2019). EFL teachers are likely to experience under pressure about the idea of teaching pronunciation (Derwing in Jahangiri & Sardareh, 2016). The fact that EFL teachers are born in a country where English is not their first or even their second language reasonably influences their accent which may sometimes lead to unintelligibleness.

The accent of Non-native English speakers (NNES) is typically influenced by the language of their origin (Menon, 2007), (Chung, 2017). Chung (2017) further asserts that Asian and Chinese have not very attractive accents, in which the writer would say that people

from these regions have off-target vowels, wrong or missing consonants, misplaced stress, and odd intonation. Aware of being a Non-Native can be the source of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), as research draws a conclusion that speaking is the most affected skill by Foreign Language Anxiety (Kralova, Skorvagova, Tirpakova, & Markechova, 2017).

Second, insufficient teacher training results in untrained and unconfident teachers (Levis, 2007). In the past study experience undertaken by the researcher (2016-2017) of TESOL major in one of the universities in Australia reveals that pronunciation was not included in the course outline. Interestingly, over half of the TESOL students in my class were NNES who some of them clearly appeared to have an issue with pronunciation. They were from various countries in mostly Asia, Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Europa. Clearly, they came to Australia along with their own accent and spoke with their prior established accent and pronunciation. During two years of study, there had never been any discussion with respect to pronunciation. There was no material specifically provided to deal with pronunciation neither from the lecturers nor from any parties although we realize that we had a problem with our confidence in speaking out our ideas during and after class. These factors could be the underlying cause of why many EFL teachers/lecturers feel inferior to teach pronunciation and result in the denial of taking this job.

The availability or more appropriately the surplus number of sites, apps, online language learning devices, and more, unfortunately, have not much been explored maximally for educational benefits by most English lecturers and learners in Indonesia, at the English department of the Mandalika University of Education in most particular. Although, Pratama (2018) reveals that over 95% of the Indonesian university students possess a smartphone, but most of them generally use their device on social media. This is a clear indication of how university students are fond of the smartphone. It is certainly an opportunity in learning, not a hindrance. Vazquez (2014) states that smartphone and other mobile devices are useful for teaching resources for university students both distance and face to face learning. However, many English teachers/lecturers are unable to take benefit from this opportunity. As a result, teaching pronunciation remains monotonous and unable to increase students' participation and learning awareness.

For those reasons, it becomes extremely necessary to provide a technologically-based learning tool, a Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which lecturers and students can easily access with low cost, which possesses simple operation manual, and which fits into the learning needs of digitized students (digital natives students), but contains the material needed for the achievement of learning goals. *English Pronunciation* app as one type of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is believed to have all the mentioned specification and benefits. To prove this, this study needs to be conducted in search of whether English Pronunciation app, when integrated into pronunciation teaching, positively affects students' participation and learning, which eventually lead to the achievement of learning goals. Therefore, this study was intended to find out whether the English Pronunciation app can support teaching and positively affect students' participation and learning.

Smartphones made positive effects on learning English (Klimova, 2018; Haerazi, Utama, & Hidayatullah, 2020). A research conducted by Wu (2015) proved that college students taught using app significantly outperformed the controlled one in vocabulary acquisition. Another experimental research conducted in one of the Iranian universities by Rahimy (2019) showed that learners in the experimental group treated with pronunciation software overpowered the control one and their pronunciation was better improved. Gilakjani et.al. (2019) further revealed that teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of software, pronunciation power 2, and found it useful to teach pronunciation. The importance of technology utilization in teaching pronunciation was also emphasized by Rogerson-Revell

(2018). Moreover, Saferoglu (2005) exerts that technology has so much to offer when teaching pronunciation for EFL learners. Given that there is a scarce opportunity for EFL learners to hear sounds and to communicate with native speakers. Because of this constraint, technology is becoming more appropriate support in teaching pronunciation (González, 2012). It is, therefore, impossible for EFL learners to disregard the involvement of technology, app in this regard, to help them improve their pronunciation.

The utilization of technology-based learning pronunciation such as app or software enables students to train as long as they wish and self-paced themselves (Neri, Cucchiarini, Strik, & Boves, 2002). Opportunity to utilize the app for learning beyond the classroom will reduce learning anxiety as learners have no teacher or peer pressure at determining their ways of learning. It is all at their own will. This indirectly created learning condition is likely to lead to what Brown (2007) says "willingness to communicate". The more students feel confident to initiate practice to communicate in English the more likely they improve their pronunciation. Gonzalez (2012) states that the only limitation of the app's use in teaching pronunciation lies in giving feedback to students but this issue can simply be overcome with the recent available technology. Apps, software, or other technologically-devised learning increased over time. In July 2015, Apple's app store was 1.500.000 and the number increased for Android to 1.600.000 apps, 10 percent (about 100.000 apps) was specifically designed for education (Marshall, 2016). Today, the number of apps produced by Apple or Android reasonably outnumber the previous date in 2015. English teachers and trainers only need to explore more to obtain appropriate apps for their learning contexts.

English Pronunciation App

1. Basic Feature

This app provides a basic knowledge of pronunciation for students or teachers in need of knowing and getting instant material for teaching pronunciation. It encompasses the definition of certain terms, explanations, and practice examples. The app is also equipped with a variety of menu including a topic on Stress and Intonation, short vowels, long vowels, double vowel sounds, voiced consonant, voiceless consonant, and other topics in the area of pronunciation as can be seen on Figure 1.
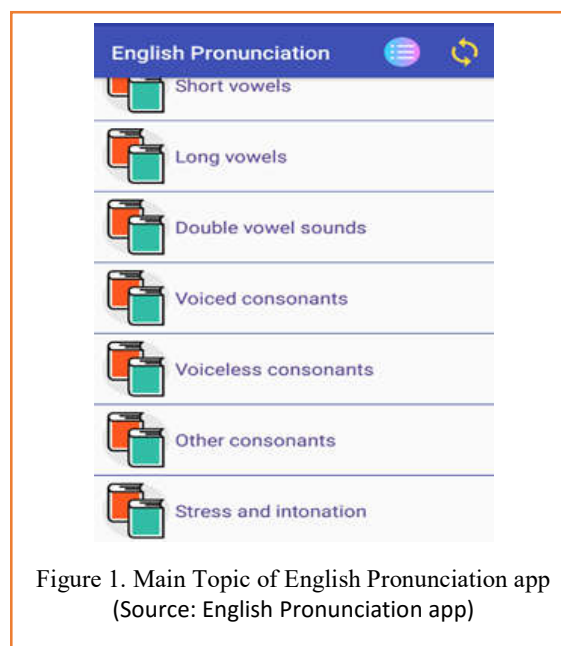

Figure 1. Main Topic of English Pronunciation app
(Source: English Pronunciation app)

Each topic of discussion is completed with concise explanation, sample of words accompanied by their phonetic transcription and sound. A picture of mouth position when pronouncing certain sound is also included, giving more complete assistant for whoever learning to pronounce words provided. The Example of words included is mostly simple words, making it very suitable for early semester students or equivalent to learn, practice, and remember words in English. See Figure 2.
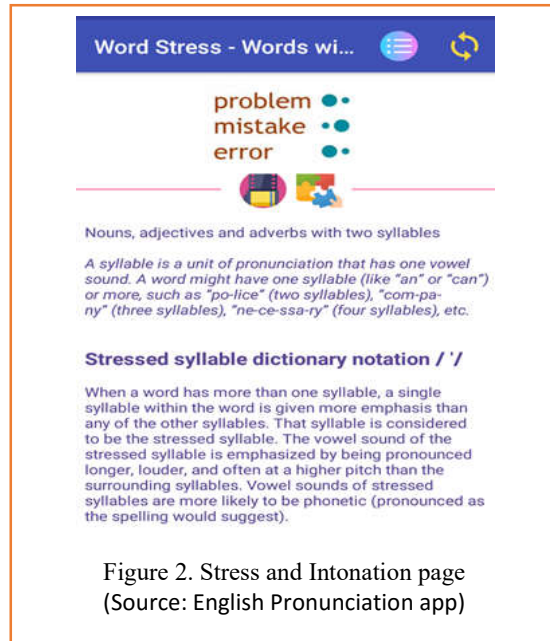

Figure 2. Stress and Intonation page
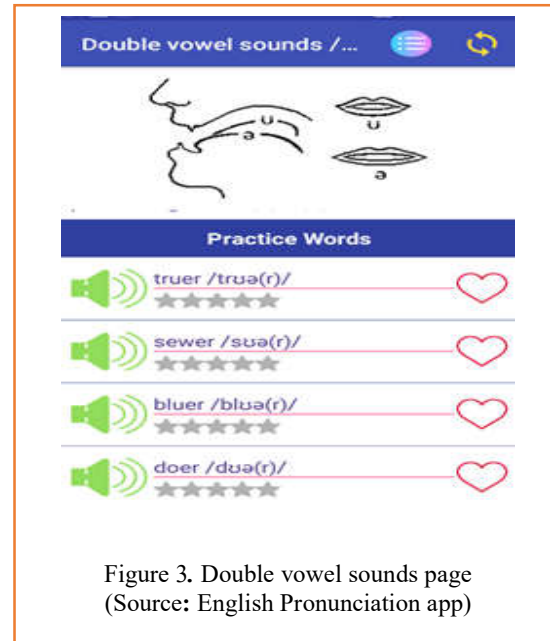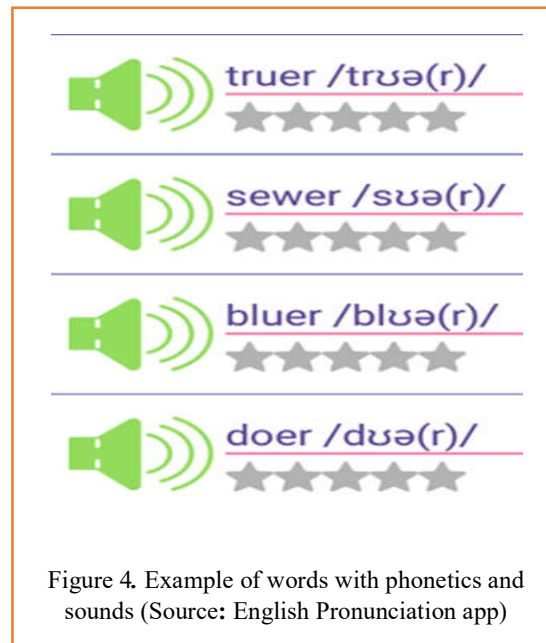(Source: English Pronunciation app)

Figure 3. Double vowel sounds page
(Source: English Pronunciation app)

This app can easily be downloaded through an android smartphone which most students possessed. Unlike other apps, such as Pronunciation Power 1 and Pronunciation Power 2 which can only be downloaded via iOS or Apple devices, the English Pronunciation app is easily downloadable from an android mobile device that most students possess. Moreover, this app can also be used off-line so it is very affordable for students especially. Every student can operate the app even without having mobile data, allowing even poor students to have access to the app. Accordingly, any students who live in an isolated area of the EFL context, in Indonesia in most particular, have the chance to learn from the app with the help of their teachers at the initial stage. At the later stage, students can operate this app at their will and convenience.

2. English Pronunciation App and Vocabulary

The majority of the vocabulary included in the app is basic and simple. This is a very suitable material for beginners or freshmen. Through this, they can review most, if not all, vocabulary that they have learned in their previous English learning. At the same time, they can learn new English words without a burden. Over 600 words are listed in the app. Certainly, students are not required to learn all the words but are not prohibited as well to do so at their will. Some examples of the words can be seen in Figure 3. Interestingly, the listed vocabularies are accompanied by phonetic transcription and sound. These advantages are not possessed by many apps and are significantly helpful for learners to learn the correct pronunciation of the words without the existence of native speakers or teachers. The combination of printed symbols and sound provided by the app would increase interest and engage students in their learning. Once the app users see and read the listed words, and need to ensure the correct pronunciation, they can simply click the sound symbol placed exactly

preceding the words. Look at Figure 4. In addition, the app is presented with colors, giving more attraction for the learner to look at. Moreover, the color used is not too bright and is safe for eyes to look at even in a quite long time. This will increase the sense of comfort for learners to sing the app.

Figure 4. Example of words with phonetics and sounds (Source: English Pronunciation app)

3. English Pronunciation App and Motivation

According to Li (2018), the integration of app in learning increases students' motivation and learning performance. Since the delivery of the material is using the tools which students are familiar with and fond of, it results in learning enjoyment and satisfaction. The traditional language learning approach which puts teachers as the centre of knowledge is not relevant anymore in today's' digitized world (Zainuddin, Habiburrahim, & Hermawan, 2018). In other words, technology must be involved in their teaching to cater to the needs of the digital native students, those who were born with and surrounded by technology. Sun (2014) states that incorporating smartphones as a medium of teaching is proven effective to increase students' attention. Mobile devices can improve interactive communication between teachers and students, leading to the improvement of students' motivation in learning (Kopf, Scheele, Winschel, & Effelsberg, 2005). In addition, another aspect to be considered in EFL context is students' motivation and self-efficacy to learn (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020).

As mentioned previously, the number of students owning a Smartphone nowadays increased significantly. This number is projected to increase significantly in the near future. In this Industry 4.0., society likes to spend much of their time in front of their smart device, showing their high enthusiasm and interest in it. On-campus, for example, most students spend their time with their phones before or after class, not to mention those using it during class for various reasons. Some of the students just visit campus to play their smartphone by utilizing campus free Wi-Fi. This flame of motivation needs adequate attention from teachers or lecturers so they can channel it correctly and appropriately. This condition should be considered as an asset rather than a learning barrier both by lecturers and students.

4. English Pronunciation and Distance Learning

As Vasquez (2014) states that the use of smartphone establishes distance learning. Once the app is downloaded, learners can use it everywhere at their convenience. It does not require

special training for the operation. The teachers only give simple guidance and ask learners to use the app to learn some targeted words at home at one time and go to the others at another time depending on their needs. The practiced words are then discussed again in the classroom where teachers can ensure the correctness of students' pronunciation. When needed or setting a higher learning expectation, this app can be used in tandem with other downloadable apps such as WaveEditor, Pronunciation Checker, and so on that teachers find appropriate, accessible, and affordable for students. To complete the effectiveness and accelerate the achievement of learning goals, teachers can improve the use of the app in their teaching accompanied by certain teaching methods such as echo Method, Look and Say, etc. However, these teaching methods won't be discussed here. One thing everyone needs to know that a good teacher can always spot areas/gaps that need improvement and then facilitate the teaching with effective tools or strategies needed for the learning.

5.   English Pronunciation For Teachers

As English lecturers or teachers the app will be the right choice to anchor the foundation of pronunciation for their students. For university lecturers, this app would, certainly, most appropriately be used to teach freshmen. The features it provides appear to be what students in the beginning semester need. The vocabulary is relatively basic and mostly short, allowing beginners to learn better. The learners do not have to be confused with learning or memorizing long difficult words at the beginning of their study. Such words can be introduced in the later stage of their study, in semester three or above for example. Thereby, teachers can eliminate the possibility of students being bored, uninterested, demotivated, or unenthusiastic. In other words, the utilization of short and simple vocabulary in this app is likely to increase students' motivation in learning pronunciation.

6.   English Pronunciation for Students

Each student is asked to download two apps: English Pronunciation and WaveEditor at the beginning of the semester. It is intended to facilitate their face to face learning in the classroom and to allow them to do self-learning and self-practice at home at their will. Even when they are not online, English Pronunciation can still be used. If they get bored to stay a long time at home they can go to another place and they still can use this app. Specifically, the first app, English Pronunciation*,* is used to read and listen to words, see word transcription, find explanations and suggestions on vocal production. A special space where students store their favourite words/focused words is also provided within the app. Meanwhile, the second app allows students to record their voice, export the voice into saving documents or files at their mobile while still being displayed in the app. Before saving, they can preview the voice too. They can practice listening deeply (not listen and repeat style) to some words given by the teacher. Once they are sure about the correct pronunciation they speak it out.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The research design is quasi-qualitative as it sets a specific focus on one case and a deep study is also carried out on the subject (Bungin, 2017). This study is aimed at investigating whether or not the integration of the English Pronunciation app in pronunciation classes at Mandalika University of Education (UNDIKMA) can increase students' participation and self-learning. The researchers as key instruments try to give a generalization of the research subject by finding out the usage of the English pronunciation app in the pronunciation classes.

Research Subject

The sampling technic employed was Non-probability sampling. This study was done at the Mandalika university of Education and it was conducted during the period of semester 1 of English department students taking pronunciation subject. All first-semester students in the

two classes, namely A and B class, comprising 48 students took part in this study. The students were trained to be English teachers after normally undertaking four years of study or 8 semesters long.

Instruments

The data was collected through observation and interview. When observing, the researcher chose the Role of a Participant Observer in that the observer partakes in the given activities (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the observer was the lecturer who was doing the observation while immersing with the students in classroom interaction. This strategy was chosen to avoid tense or nervousness to students because of their feeling being observed. So, it was conducted like a normal process of teaching and learning. To improve the accuracy of data collection during observation activities, the observer employed one assistant equipped with an observation sheet and tools needed. After one observation was completed, the researcher and the assistant compared the data gathered. The data recorded was about the level of students' participation (engagement, attitude, and conduct) using iRubric.

This observation was conducted for 12 class meetings, once every week, which is the minimum class attendance in one semester regulated by the campus management. This time setting was chosen in order to allow sufficient time for students to take self-learning/practice out of class interaction should they want to. It is also to test whether this app is applicable to be used by university students during one semester-long, not just one or two meetings. In conducting an interview the researcher used individual and group interviews where one interviewer/researcher interviews a group of students (Bungin, 2017). The interview was conducted twice as there were two different groups of students, group A and group B, in the same room, multimedia room, but at different times. Participants in each group being interviewed were only those who fully attended the pronunciation class. Students who missed more than one meeting were excluded. This strategy was intended to ensure all involved students received full class instruction using the app. Thereby, they were assumed to have a complete description and picture of the use and benefits of the app either for classroom needs or beyond.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using a hand analysis of qualitative data in that the researcher read the data, marked it by hand, and divided the data into parts (Creswell, 2014). After observational data were collected and compared, the level of students' participation was calculated and made into a percentage. If they achieved above 50% (from 12 meetings) of each criterion (Excellent, Satisfactory, Need Improvements, Unsatisfactory) in every category (Engagement, Attitude, Conduct) they fell into that criterion of the respected category. For Interview data, three questions were provided. However, before asking the questions, the researcher explained to the students the importance of giving honest answers. They would be judged for having different answers and their answers were nothing to do with the scoring system in the pronunciation subject. The questions were asked to the whole students of each group. The observer put a tick on the sheet to mark answer form every student. Following this, the students' type of answers were categorized and calculated in the form of a percentage.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings
Observation

The students are divided into groups in which the two groups have quite different degrees of participation in class during pronunciation class equipped with the English Pronunciation app. The A-class performs 95% of the students who are marked Excellent. This means that they made a constant focus on the assignment. They tried to perform their very

best in class and worked seriously to improve their pronunciation skill and to understand every lesson presented by the teacher. Only 1 student, number 6 on the list, is identified to perform below satisfactory. This could be triggered by her high percentage of absenteeism in class. The student was known to have extra activities out of class and often went out of the island to join the competition. In the Attitude criteria, a similar percentage, 95, was achieved indicating that the students were always positive, engaged, and enthusiastic, and active during a class activity. They reminded and encouraged one another in completing tasks given. One student shows a satisfactory level of attitude. Although this level of attitude appears lower than most of the other students, it is still considered positive. This lowering of attitude might be instigated by her English level which was lower than all other students. Another student, number 17 on the list, shows an attitude that needs improvement. This student was quite smart but seemed to have a personal problem. He often came late to class, missed the class for four meetings. However, with an aspect of Conduct, all students had a perfect performance. Interestingly, student number 17 on the list appeared to fulfill excellent criteria in regard to his Conduct irrespective of his poor performance in on the aspect of Attitude. It means that the students always listened to the lecturer, did not interrupt, and remained on task. He put respect to the other classmates too.

Dealing with the degree of participation of B class of semester 1 students of the English department, there are 60.6% of the students who show excellence in their level of Engagement. Thirty-three point three percent indicated "satisfactory". In other words, about 66% of the students always stay focus on the assignment and always try their best. They work hard to improve their skill and understanding of the subject taught using the app. And 33.3% of them worked actively to achieve the minimum requirement. Students gave some of their attention to the assignment and sometimes try their best. The next criteria are Attitude. In this area, 75% of the total subject indicates excellence, 25% are on the level of satisfaction. Based on the description in the iRubric, these percentages mean that 75% of students were always enthusiastic, engaged, positive, and active during class interaction.

Students encouraged each other to complete tasks given by the teacher. Twenty-five percent indicate that they are sometimes enthusiastic, positive, engaged, and active during class interaction. Two students, numbers 9 and 19 on the list, fall below satisfactory or need improvement. This could be caused by their poor attention to the subject which was seen from their low attendance in class. The last criteria are Conduct. Ninety-one point six percent of the students marked excellent. Eight point three percent or two students happen to be in the criteria of "Need Improvement" (see rubric). These are the same students who are considered "Need Improvement" on the criteria of Attitude. These students might have an unrevealed internal problem.

Interview

Table 1
Percentage of Students' Self-Learning Using *English Pronunciation* App

Interview questions	Responses and Percentage					
	A Class			B Class		
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	Sometimes
Do you use the *app* to learn or refresh pronunciation subject beyond the classroom at your free time? Can be anywhere, at home, rent house, at canteen, elsewhere.	59%	16%	25%	66.6%	16.6%	16.6%
Before using the *app*, did you open your book, or other references (no app) to learn or refresh pronunciation subject in your free time?		100%		8.3%	91.6%	
Do you enjoy using the *app* to learn	100%			100%		

pronunciation?

According to the data gained and displayed in Table 1, it was found that the majority of the students made self-learning or refreshing or self-practice on pronunciation subject out of the classroom using the English Pronunciation app at their will and pace. There is a slight difference between A class and B class in terms of frequency. In the A-class, there is 59% of the students utilized the app more than 3 times beyond the classroom, about 7% lower than the students in B class. By contrast, students of A-class accounts for 25% who used the app 3 times and below after class, are about 9% higher than the students in B class. Interestingly, a similar number of students in both A and B class never use the app in their free time out of class hours.

Students of A-class never learn or refresh, or practice pronunciation subject after class before using the English Pronunciation app. There were only 8.3% of the students in B class who practiced and learned pronunciation with their friends from their reading books in their rental house. Most of them, 91.6% never did either learning and practicing or refreshing pronunciation subject beyond the classroom. Meanwhile, when asked if they enjoy using the app to learn pronunciation, all students from both groups of learners answered "Yes". From these data, it can be concluded that using the English Pronunciation app to teach pronunciation can establish independent learning and foster joy in their learning.

Discussion

According to the result of this research, the English Pronunciation app has been proven successful in helping to increase students' level of engagement, attitude, conduct, and independent learning. The data gained proved that nearly all students in A class and B class achieved a high percentage on the overall criteria observed. Students answer in the interview rubric also discloses that the majority of them had used the app to learn, refresh, or practice pronunciation beyond the classroom. This practice was never done in their previous lesson on pronunciation. This can be interpreted that the use of the app in teaching pronunciation has a lot to offer for students' learning. A research finding by Hyun (2018) explains that the use of the app in teaching pronunciation boosted the positive attitude of students towards learning and increased their self-learning.

However, students with different English levels, a complete beginner, or intermediate above might find this app over-challenging or under-challenging. Teachers/lecturers might consider delivering material using different app suitable for the level and learning context they teach. Should the teacher want to use the English Pronunciation app for having a certain consideration related to budget or resource availability, for example, it is advisable for teachers to adjust the strategy implemented in the classroom. The teachers may also consider amending or providing supplementary material. Bear in mind, one of the most important aspects to consider is the context of learning. A good teacher will undeniably put this as main consideration before preparing their teaching material. Considering the kinds of vocabulary provided, this app is most appropriately be integrated to teach the pronunciation for beginners or English department freshmen at the university level. For a wider use and benefit of the app, further research on the effect and suitability of the English Pronunciation app to students at the school level, senior high or junior high, need to be conducted. Similar research might also need to be done which targets students base on their level of English proficiency, not school grade.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study reveals that the utilization of the English Pronunciation app can help EFL students, students of the English department especially, to be more engaged, have a positive attitude and conduct towards pronunciation learning. As part of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), this app also encourages learners to do self-study at their will

and pace out of the classroom. It does not only become a new type of learning tool for students but also an alternative resource to listen to the correct pronunciation of English in the EFL context where native speakers are virtually unavailable. Its feature which can be utilized off-line makes it more accessible for even students from a low-income family. The app is easy to operate and has attractive features. It provides students with a bank of vocabulary which they can use to learn or to refresh the vocabulary learned previously.

However, learners at the intermediate level or above might find the words provided are under challenge. So, teachers or lecturers are expected to adjust the level of learners or strategies implemented in their teaching. Although, there is no guarantee if learners at this level are capable of pronouncing most if not all of the words correctly. This app is highly recommended for English lecturers teaching pronunciation for freshmen or beginners learning pronunciation.

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