

## LANGUAGE LEARNING DESIGN FOR PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION: LISTEN-AND-READ METHOD

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### ABSTRACT

Regardless fewer studies have been conducted in pronunciation teaching, pronunciation has a significant role in language learning to make the meaningful communication occurred, as pronouncing word in different ways will cause different in meaning of the word. Therefore, this article concentrated on the innovative language learning design particularly in pronunciation instruction in an EFL setting, in order to improve the students' phonemes of English, and their listening skill as well. This was a classroom research based on observation carried out in a class consisted of 26 students with basic proficiency level. The observation was conducted once a week in a 2x50 minutes teaching time, for 16 meetings. The last 25 minutes learning time was set for pronunciation. The procedure consisted of three activities: brainstorming words, applying the 'listen-and-read' method, and carrying out evaluation. The findings indicated that there was a significant improvement on students' ability in recognizing the sound of the language, and at the same time improving their pronunciation on being intelligible and comprehensible.

**Keywords:** *classroom research, pronunciation, listen-and-read method*

### Sari

Sampai dengan sekarang, penelitian mengenai pengajaran *pronunciation* tidak begitu banyak dilakukan walaupun dapat dikatakan *pronunciation* mempunyai peranan yang sangat penting sekali dalam mempelajari bahasa untuk membuat komunikasi yang terjadi menjadi bermakna. Hal ini dikarenakan *pronunciation* yang berbeda akan memberikan arti yang berbeda pula. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kelas dengan melakukan observasi pada kelas terdiri dari 26 mahasiswa yang berada pada level basic. Observasi dilakukan selama 16 x pertemuan, sekali seminggu dengan durasi jam belajar 2x50 menit, dimana 25 menit terakhir dipakai untuk pengajaran *pronunciation*. Prosedur yang dilakukan terdiri dari tiga kegiatan yaitu: *brainstorming words*,

mengaplikasikan metode '*listen-and-read*', dan melakukan evaluasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *qualitative* sebagai analisa data. Hasil yang didapatkan dari penelitian ini mengindikasikan terdapat kenaikan yang signifikan pada kemampuan siswa dalam mengenali *sound of the language*, dan pada waktu bersamaan meningkatkan keahlian pronunciation mereka untuk dapat dipahami dan dimengerti oleh lawan bicara mereka.

**Kata kunci:** *classroom research, listen-and-read method, pronunciation*

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## **Introduction**

Teaching foreign language in general, and English in particular has been experiencing tremendous challenging related to approaches and methods applied. Language teaching is dynamic, therefore English for Foreign Language (EFL) teachers should improve their teaching-learning interaction with their students. Therefore, the students' role in the class are not only in gaining knowledge, but also in increasing their effort to do some searches, developments, and transformations into practical skills (Shaykina, 2014, 2015). This situation also applies for EFL learners at higher education institution such as Polytechnic. English classes become one of mandatory subject the students must take as it is included in part of the school curriculum (Paci, Delija, & Vishkurti, 2014). They realize that in order to be able to compete with other graduates from other polytechnics in a real-world employment, they should consider the importance of English, especially where in the development of English oral communication fluency is promoted over accuracy.

As a matter of fact, students at polytechnic learn English as multi-skills curriculum. The objective of the course is to enable the students comprehending the four skills in English which are 'Listening', 'Speaking', 'Writing', and 'Reading' (Nation & Newton, 2009). In an EFL setting, the students' language input derived from inside and/or outside of the classroom setting is the primary source for their language acquisition (Hwang, 2008), how ever, classroom interaction becomes the only place for them to exploit and practice their speaking skill since there are hardly opportunities for them to learn it outside the class. At recent times, the students think that the lesson needs to concentrate more on how to pronounce the English words clearly, considering the needs

of employment in this globalization era which requires their applicants to be fluent in English. Besides that, by having intelligible pronunciation, it can affect directly to their communicative competence as well as performance.

Pronunciation as the integral part of EFL learning plays a significant role in supporting students' overall communicative skills like in social interaction especially in its communicative aspects. It is vital for the students learning to speak English as intelligibly and comprehensibly as possible, even though it is not necessarily for them to speak like natives as long as well enough to be understood (Morley, 1991). Therefore, language teachers should be able to determine and ensure sufficient attention on the students' needs regarding to pronunciation skill development. Unintelligibility in normal communication can be avoided when students have had good pronunciation of language (Derwing & Munro, 2015 cited in Nation & Newton, 2009). Here, the teachers play the role as the pronunciation coaches, and the students must be proactive to imitate the teachers through mimicking. It is expected in the development of EFL teachers, they can reassess their roles and contributions to facilitate their learners successful language learning by applying instructions and strategies to meet the skills that their learners needs (Goh, 2013; McKay, 2004).

Undoubtedly in a communication, a message can be delivered back and forth by having clear pronunciation. It is acceptable in spoken communication where learners have several inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/ or grammar, in contrast, they are more likely be intelligible when they speak in good pronunciation and intonation (Gilakjani, 2012). Students sometimes encounter problems in pronunciation particularly for productive skill such as speaking. Therefore, it is importantly to provide students with wide range opportunities so they can have more knowledge in their speech production practice (Ramdani & Rahmat, 2018). Even though in a large class context there might be complexities occurred, teachers are hoped to be able to have creativity in managing their students' emotion and activating their students' acquisition in language learning. Besides that due to varied attentions in teaching pronunciation, this attention should be increased to enable the students developing their pronunciation and become familiar with pronunciation rules and patterns (Nation & Newton, 2009).

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on teaching pronunciation and establishing approaches to pronunciation instruction designed by English teachers in order to overcome the difficulties brought by linguistic diversity, and to meet the standard made. Prior studies have generally found a positive impact on teaching pronunciation by providing students with pronunciation approaches and techniques despite the differences on their students English proficiency level (Shahriari & Dastgahian, 2014), which confirmed by the statistic on the assessment techniques survey that they were conducted in collecting the data. Hwang (2008) and Davis, Summers, & Miller (2012) studies perceived the similar result as well, confirming that intonation became the most influential factor on comprehensibility as appropriate pronunciation took the major role in providing opportunity for the students to practice their pronunciation (Hwang, 2008). Thus by establishing student behavioral management, their cognitive engagement in the learning process, and strategies that help the students in managing their behavior, to some extent can improve the relationship and enhance the learning of pronunciation within the class room context (Davis et al., 2012). However, the result obtained from Hilla (2012) study showed that the non-native language teachers in Finland were struggling to apply approaches and strategies for teaching pronunciation due to the teachers insecurities on their accents to be native like (American and/or British). Consequently, the inconclusive results encourage more researches to be conducted in order to develop students' pronunciation intelligibility by providing them with more chances to hear and to repeat the correct words pronounced.

## **Methods**

It was a classroom research conducted through observation on a class of 26 second year students. The project was commenced in the odd semester of Academic Year 2018/2019. The students themselves understand English as they have been studying it since their Elementary School for some, and since Junior High School for some others. According to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), these students' English proficiency level were at A2-Basic User. Even though they were at the same age, their acquisition on the language was differ from one into another due to

their origin, family, culture, financial, education and parent-education background (Nation & Newton, 2009; Sariani & El Khairat, 2016).

The content of English lesson is different on each department at PNP, as it is in accordance with the department's background. However, the lesson should cover the four skills of English; Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, which is scheduled once a week within a 100-minute of learning time. These language classroom activities should also stress on the need for meaningful communicative tasks, including those that aim on pronunciation (Savignon, 1997). Therefore, the treatment given in this research included the pronunciation instruction which was carried out at the last 25 minutes of the study time.

The procedure was divided into three activities; the first five minutes for brainstorming words, the next 15 minutes for applying the 'listen-and-read' method, and the last five minutes for evaluation by carrying out the dictation activity. To begin with, the lesson plan set up for the class covering the topics of the 16 meetings was distributed in the first meeting to the students. It means that they comprehend the topic of discussion on each meeting, browse for the additional material, and read it prior to each meeting. During the first 75 minutes of the learning time, the students were advised to make a note on difficult vocabulary occurred during the learning. These words were written in a notebook which was aimed specifically for their vocabulary book.

For the first activity, within the five minutes time arranged, the lecturer conducted the brainstorming activity for words which occurred during the 75 minutes study time. The teacher wrote and read out loud all those words gathered from the students on the white board. Afterward, for the next 15 minutes, the teacher read those words written on the white board with the correct pronunciation while the students listened and then mimicked the word pronounced for a couple of times. During this time, the teacher also played an audio from 'Merriam-Webster' online dictionary as an aid in order to help the students to comprehend more the difference of the sound. Finally, the last five minutes was set for the dictation activity as the evaluation. It was where the students writing

down 10 words being dictated by the teacher on a piece of paper, and then checked them with their peer, and the lecturer.

### **Results and Discussion**

Highlighted by Nation & Newton (2009), at first, teachers can ask the students to copy the sound of the word they pronounce, then if the students yet can figure out how to pronounce the word, teachers can help them by explaining to them the position of the tongue and the lips when it utters. Previous study conducted by Andi-Pallawa (2013) focused on the pronunciation teaching on the difference of phonological systems on the English and Bahasa Indonesia. Even though his study concerned on the sound system of a given language as well, it discussed more on to the analysis and classification of its phonemes. This method engages the students with the automatic reproduction of the sounds in the target language by analyzing the sounds of vowels and consonants. So, they can use the sounds communicatively (Murphy, 2003).

To some extent, engaging the students with phonological systems is quite challenging as they have to memorize the phonetic features and how to pronounce it correctly compares to the approach applied in the present study which involving students with listening and immitating orientation (listen-and-read method). For the “listen-and-read” method, the teachers set up the practice in their class taking the “analytic-lingusitic approach”, where the students listen and then immitate the word pronounced by their teachers, and focus only on procusing the correct sound in the target language as their teachers do (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996).

In line with the present study, Shahriari & Dastgahian’s (2014) study also resulted that oral repetition and mimicry was the most intuitive technique for teaching pronunciation, regardless, the difference dictation activity. The dictation activity performed in this current study was a wrap up of the pronunciation learning, and aimed as teacher’ and students’s evaluation whether the listen-and-read activity performed reached the target. By applying this dictation activity at the end of the learning, it enabled the teacher to focus the learning on their students’s language proficiency (Kazazoglu, 2013), in which the students could diagnose their errors and ensure whether their ability in recognizing

the sound of a language accuracy (Alkire, 2002). Thus, this self awareness of the weaknesses triggered them to do self-improvement out side of the class room setting. As pointed out by Nation (2009), dictation was one valuable language-focused teaching and learning technique to help the students to measure their ability in listening and at the same time increase their comprehension on aural and punctuation.

Most of the times, It was a challenge for the teachers during the five minutes set for the brainstorming and writing up the vocabulary onto the white board. Due to some unclear words uttered by the students, misunderstanding appeared due to the pronunciation made by the students. As they uttered the word similar ways they read the word in Bahasa Indonesia as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Samples of the words uttered

Word heard by the teacher	Word meant by the students
Read /rēd/	Red /red/
Tea /tē/	Tie /tī/
Her /hər/	Here /hir/
Elephant /'eləfənt/	Eleven /ə'levən/
College /kəlij/	Colleague /kələg/

Many EFL learners encounter problems regarding to the phonological system of their own language (Bahasa Indonesia) and the target language (English) which differs respectively due to its major role in readings. This constant interference of the two languages make these learner fail to communicate fluently (Andi-Pallawa & Abdi Alam, 2013; Riyani & Prayogo, 2013).

Most vowel and consonant errors occurred in the above mentioned words. such as deletion, and consonant or vowel change/ substitution. Seen in the table that the first, the fourth, and the fifth words the errors made by the students were the consonant or vowel change/ substitution. The word that the students meant was 'red', and it supposed to be pronounced /red/, whereas the word that the teacher heard was 'read' as the students pronounced it /rēd/. For the fourth words, the consonant or vowel change/ substitution here was when the students changed the sound of /ē/ to the /e/ sound instead. The students pronounced it /'eləfənt/, where it supposed to be pronounced /ə'levən/ referred to the word that they intended. Like wise to the fifth word, where they pronounced /kəlij/ as heard by the teacher, where the students meant was /kələg/. As an additional, for errors made on deletion, the example are the second and the third words

(see Table 1). In this case, the students omitted the sound of the last vowel. When they pronounced the word ‘tie’ with /tē/, and the word ‘here’ with /hir/ as heard by the teacher, nonetheless the word they had in their mind were /tī/, and /hər/.

Following this brainstorming activity within the next 10 minutes was the pronunciation practice activity. It was when the teacher chose some appropriate words to focus which were pronounced incorrectly by the students, and then read these words one by one while the students listened carefully on the word uttered. Upon completing pronounced the first word, then the students were asked to do mimicking for several times. This activity was carried out until all of the chosen words read. Other than that, teachers could also use media as an aid for practice hearing the sound such as the audio from ‘Merriam Webster’ online dictionary. This online dictionary was provided with the audio button so that the listeners could hear on how the word pronounced precisely.

By having the audio where the word pronounced by the native speaker, the students got the appropriate sounds for the word. This dependent and guided activity began with the whole class activity, then proceeded to pair work activity where each pair could help each other in correcting their partner’s pronunciation based on the examples given. These students actively engage in distinguishing and identifying the sound, conducting repetition drills, and monitoring this pronunciation activity of their class mate (Nation & Newton, 2009). More over, to have more improvement on their pronunciation, these students could have some more practice at their own time out of the class setting for fluency development (Newton, 2010). Further improvement also can be achieved through feedback which comes from teachers and classmates. Teachers’ feedback is reinforcing the students for intelligibility, by giving the correct model right away when the students make a mistake.

To begin the dictation activity, which was set in the last five-minute of the learning time, the students were asked to prepare a piece of paper and put away all their learning books. So there was only a sheet of paper and their pen. The teacher chose the words taken from the words written on the white board, and assumed to be challenging by the students in regards of their sound. There were 10 numbers in particular for this activity,



where for each word, the teacher repeated it twice, and the students wrote the word on the second utterance. Upon the completion, the students were asked to collect their paper to the teacher, and then the teacher distributed the paper randomly to all students. Afterward, the answers were written on the whiteboard by asking the whole class participation to read the words out loud. At the same time, these students checked the answers on the paper that they held, and made correction of the wrong answer.

Taken from the answer sheets gathered from the students, the number of the wrong answers made by the students then being analyzed. In the initial of the weeks; week 1, 2, and 3, there were still many wrong answers found. Even so, there were several numbers were blank. These blank answers were considered as wrong answer. Starting from week 10, 11 and so forth up to week 16, the wrong answers made by the students began to decrease as shown in the figure 2 below.

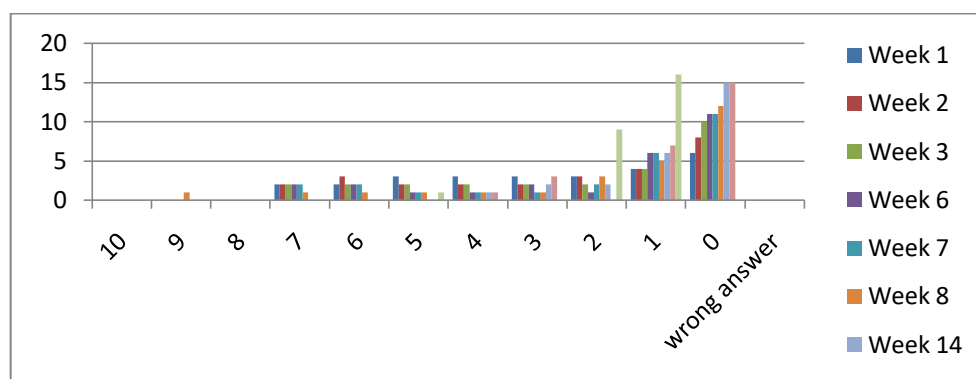


Figure 2. Number of wrong answers based on week

Based on the data illustrated in Figure 1 above, after carrying out the dictation activity for 16 meetings, the result were summed up into a graph to be analyzed. Taking it from week 1, 2, and 3, the students who made the wrong answers were varied between two to three students for eight to nine errors, whereas a few of the errors made was derived from the blank answer. Starting from the week 6, 7, and 8, the number of the students who got the wrong answers was decreased, was varied to two and one students, for eight to nine errors as well. In contrast at the week of 14, 15, and 16, the errors made were downsizing to one until five errors, and none of the students made the wrong answer for six until 10 errors. Seen from figure 1 that the number of students who could answer the whole dictation question was increased, starting from six students at the week 1, and ending it with 15 students at the week 16. Shortly, the dictation activity's

result on each week was affected by the “listen-and-read” method applied by the teachers where these students significantly improved in terms of their language proficiency, particularly in recognizing the sound of the language.

### **Conclusion & recommendation**

In classroom context, the study of pronunciation receives lesser attention compare to other language components and skills. It is inversely proportional with the needs of the EFL learners now adays to be intelligible so that they can have successful communication in their real world employment. The results obtained after engaging the students with ‘listen-and-read’ method in a set of time show the significance improvement in their pronunciation skill. They become more capable in recognizing sound demonstrated by the decrease of the errors made in their dictation. To mention, promoting this pronunciation learning to these learners actuate them to have strong motivational foundation for their behavioral engagement in and out side the classroom context. Despite this achievement, future studies are encouraged to take pronunciation learning in adequate time by providing the learners with varied techniques.

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