

Students Perception on the Use of Speech Texter Application in Teaching Pronunciation Skills

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ABSTRACT

Teaching pronunciation for EFL, students ideally need to learn how to produce sound like a native speaker. Students should be assisted to practice and drill the correct pronunciation. However, teaching pronunciation in pandemic covid-19 situation became problematic not only for the lecturers but also for students. This research aimed to find out the students' perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. The method of the research was descriptive qualitative with 18 students as the subject of the research at the first semester students of 2020/2021 academic year. The instrument was in the form of semi-structured interview which was given to the students. The data were analyzed by using three analysis components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. After analyzing the data, the result showed that the use of speech Texter application was interesting and motivated them to drill the pronunciation until they produced the correct words. Then, they were also sure to be able to speak with the correct pronunciation after using the application. Thus, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill.

Keywords: **Perception, Speech Texter, Pronunciation Skill**

INTRODUCTION

Gadget application can be used as an alternative teaching media in pandemic covid-19. The demand of the use of technology while study from home has put gadget as the most frequent devices to be accessed in daily activities. Students as a native digital seem addicted to use gadget for various purposes. They spent most of their time to access the device. Due to this reason, gadget applications are considered as an effective teaching media which can be accessed every time and everywhere.

In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the issue of gadget had been carried out. Fauzi (2018) found that gadget are significant for EFL teachers and researchers for introducing innovative methods and helpful materials for the English classroom. In line with this research, acevedo (2016) identified the use of technology-enhanced-gadgets can aid in the creation of attractive and cooperative lessons that promote meaningful learning. Then, Fathira (2019) revealed that the implementation of application on android based can improve the learners' ability in pronouncing ending -s. From the result of previous research, it can be concluded that gadget can be used as an attractive teaching media which are able to enhance English language teaching.

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Pronunciation skill is one of English Language Teaching which taught in university level. Pronunciation as the study of words production emphasized or how words to be spoken (Nordique in Kurniati, 2016). The pronunciation learning is not only about the way learners utters or articulates both segmental and supra segmental features of a foreign language, but also how s/he perceives and interprets them (Bergess and Spencer in Zsyzka, 2017). Segmental refers to sound units, arranged in a sequential order which consisted of vowel and consonants. Then, Suprasegmental features refer to stress, pitch, length intonation and other features that always accompany the production of segmental (Ramlan, 1985:22).

In segmental units, English vowels are divided into long vowels and short vowels O'Connor (1998:79), then he named it as simple vowels. Sometimes, vowels are gliding and form diphthong. Diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds and involving a movement from one vowel sound to another (Kelly, 2000) for example /eɪ/, as in rain. Furthermore, O'Connor (1998:24) classified Consonants in English into three categories: friction, nasal and lateral. They were classified based on their position where they produced in speech organ. Friction which is also divided into fricative and affricative. Fricatives are characterised by a "hissing" sound which is produced by the air escaping through a small passage in the mouth. Affricates begin as plosives and end as fricatives. These are homorganic sounds, that is, the same articulator produces both sound, the plosive and the fricative. According to the position of consonants, it can be divided into: voiced consonants: /b, d, dʒ, g, j, l, m, n, r, v, ð, y, z, ʒ, ʁ / and unvoiced consonants: /f, p, t, ʃ, k, θ, s, ʃ/. To know whether voiced or unvoiced consonant can be done by putting finger on throat. If there is vibration while speaking, the consonant is voiced. Contrary, if there is no vibration in throat, just a short explosion of air, it means that the consonant is unvoiced.

Suprasegmental features refer to stress, pitch, length intonation and other features that always accompany the production of segmental. Suprasegmental features are like the style used in words or sentences. There are four kinds of supra segmental features, they are stress, pitch and intonation, pause and rhythm.

In teaching pronunciation, especially for EFL like Indonesia, students need to learn how to produce sound like a native speaker. Pronunciation as the study of word production was important for nonnative students in order to able to speak clearly. The incorrect pronunciation will give different meaning, which lead misunderstanding between speaker and hearer. For example, in bahasa Indonesia, the sound /θ/ and /ð/ as are not exist. Bahasa Indonesia only has /t/ for both sound /θ/ and /ð/. When students were not able to differ the pronunciation between thank /θæŋk/ and tank /tæŋk/ the hearer potentially will have misunderstanding. So, ideally, the teaching pronunciation quality should be referred to native speaker, because the main goal of teaching pronunciation is not only make students aware of different sound features, but can also improve their speaking skill (Harmer, 2000:183)

However, teaching pronunciation in EFL country in pandemic covid-19 situation became problematic not only for the lecturers but also for students. From lecturers, the problems were described by several points. First, the problem occurred due to lecturers' limited time to assist students in practice pronunciation. Since Indonesia put English as a foreign language, study pronunciation is crucial to be assisted and controlled by lecturer. It makes sense because some of sounds in English pronunciation do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia, such as fricative and affricative consonants, such as the sound /θ/ as in thank /θæŋk/ and /ð/ as in father /'fɑ:ðər/. Bahasa Indonesia only have /t/ for both sound /θ/ and /ð/. Most of them were unable to produce the correct sound. Students needed lecturer's help to assist them to make the correct articulation while producing the sound. The sound production made by students should be corrected in order to avoid fossilized. Second, study from home by using internet connection made the lecturer cannot pay much attention to all students one by one. On screen studying mode made lecturer difficult to be identify whether students were correct or incorrect in pronouncing the words. The lecturer cannot

see their mouth position directly in producing sound. This condition made the lecturer difficult to correct every student's mistake. Without any guidance and feedback from lecturers, most of students can not correct their pronunciation. Third, the lecturers were also difficult to determine application or software to make students able to self-check their accuracy in uttering the word. The lecturer tends to use media for face to face teaching and learning. This strategy seemed difficult to implement as the limit of interaction by screen interaction. In students' factors dominantly by feeling shy when they were incorrect in producing sounds and they friends start laughing at them. They also found difficulties in practice because they have limited opportunities and also place to do it. Those conditions made teaching pronunciation are problem for non-native country.

There are some media which can be applied to teach pronunciation skill such as gadget application. The most common gadget used by students was android. Speech Texter can be used as one application to assist lecturer. Speech Texter is an android application which enable a computer to detect, identify and processing spoken language and transform it to be data which can be recognized by computer (Herlim, 2002). Speech Texter application provides self-learning method by self-checking whether their words production was correct or not. By applying it, students can realize whenever they produce the incorrect words; the application will wrongly type their expected words. Students will repeat it until they produce the correct words' sound. The instrument can assist the students to practice their pronunciation skill as a self-checker application. Besides that, it is convenience instrument to use because this is simple installed in mobile phone which can be used every time and carried everywhere.

Most of research about gadget application mostly concern about text to speech application which convert text into a sound or voice and computer software called Automatic sound recognition. While the research about application which based on speech to text in android application relatively scarce. Because of the reason, this research was conducted to fill the gap by finding the students' perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skills.

METHOD

This research was descriptive qualitative research. Best (2005: 25) said that descriptive research describes the situation or thing that exists at the same time of the study. It means that this research does not tend to find a new theory but only verify and describe the existing one. By implementing qualitative approach, it attempt to find out the students' perception on the use of Speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. This research was conducted at STIBA Persada Bunda Pekanbaru, Jalan Diponegoro number 42 Pekanbaru. The respondent of the research was the first semester students of 2020/ 2021 STIBA Persada Bunda.

The respondent were taken from regular class of English letter department which consist of 18 students. The respondent consisted of 5 males and 13 females. The distribution of respondent can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Number of respondents

Gender	Number of Respondent
Male	5
Female	13
Total	18

The instrument of the research was in the form of interview. Four semi structured interview were prepared. The question aimed to find out the students perception on the use

of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. The questions were designed to get the following perceptions. First, the question was about whether or not the Speech Texter application as an effective application to learn pronunciation skill. Second, it was about positive effect of the use of Speech Texter application to learn pronunciation skill. Third, it was about the negative effect of the use of Speech Texter application to learn pronunciation skill. Fourth, it was about whether or not students able to pronounce phonetics sound correctly after using speech Texter application.

The data were collected by using interview. The interview was designed in semi structured type. Fathira (2019:87) said that semi structures interview is suitable to this kind of research because it was not asking directly only to the questions given, but also the reason needed related of each question to support the question itself. The interview was conducted to every students to find out their perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. Interactive model analysis was applied in to analyze the data for this research. Miles and Huberman (1992:16) emphasized on three analysis components which he called data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the interview, the data were scripted, reduced, and converted into percentage. The data were presented in the diagram. The result of semi-structured interview were described as the following:

The first question of four semi-structure interview was whether or not Speech Texter application is effective in teaching pronunciation skill, the result of the interview can be seen in the following diagram:

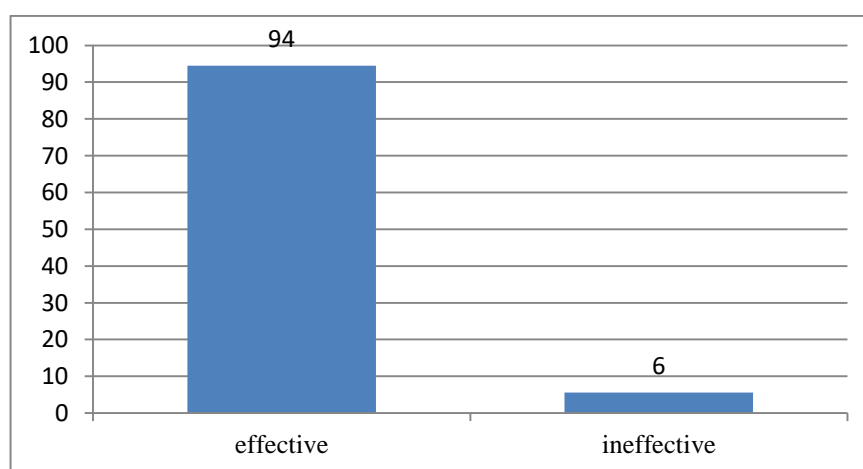


Figure 1. Speech Texter as an Effective Application

From the diagram, it can be seen that 17 out of 18 students or 94% answered effective, but one student or 6% said that it was not effective. The following was the extract of the interview:

Students 3: *"It was not effective because the application was install in smart phone and I often distract with some notifications, especially social media and others which made me curious to open the social media just to check what it is".*

From the interview, it can be seen that the student can not focus because of other application notification and he wanted to open it and see the social media. The only students who regarded this application was ineffective due to his ability to manage his concentration and it did not have any relation with the function of the application. So, from the percentage it can be concluded that speech Texter application was effective in teaching pronunciation. The result was also inline with the result of Eksi, GY and Yesilcinar (2016) research which

found out that speech Texter application was effective self-study tools in improving pronunciation.

The second question about the positive effect of the use speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. The result depicted in the following diagram:

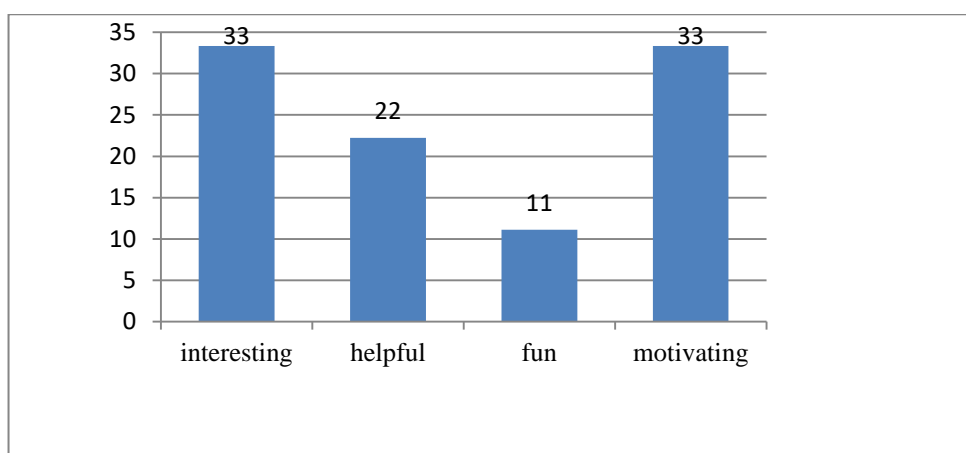


Diagram 2. The Positive Effect on the Use Speech Texter Application

From the diagram, it can be seen that the positive effect of students were responded as "interesting", helpful", "fun", and "motivated". The extract of the interview can be seen in the following respond:

Student 4: *"The application is helpful to practice the pronunciation like native"*

Student 5: *"it is fun and I understand the correct and incorrect pronunciation"*

Student 7: *"I'm getting motivated to repeat the words until I made the correct pronunciation"*

Student 10: *"It is interesting application which has a good accuracy"*

From the interview, it can be seen that students' perception on the use of Speech Texter application responded into four category: "interesting", helpful", "fun", and "motivated"

The second semi-structured question about the positive effect of the use Speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill, the result showed that students respond were divided as "interesting", helpful", "fun", and "motivated". Students said that the application was interesting as it gave accuracy text based on the students' utterance. When students were incorrect to utter the word, the text typed differently with what we intent to utter. Next, There were also 33% students responded the application was motivated. Based on interview, it was found out that the students enthusiastic repeat the words until they were able to pronounce correctly. Then, 22% students said that the application was helpful. They said that the application helped them to pronounce like a native speaker. This result was also supported by the result of the previous research conducted by Eksi, GY and Yesilcinar (2016). And, 11% students responded that the application was fun. Students responded that it was fun as they understand which one was correct and incorrect one. So, they understand how to produce the words sound well which can improve their pronunciation skill (Lele, 2019).

The third question about the negative effect of the use speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. The result of the interview were as the following:

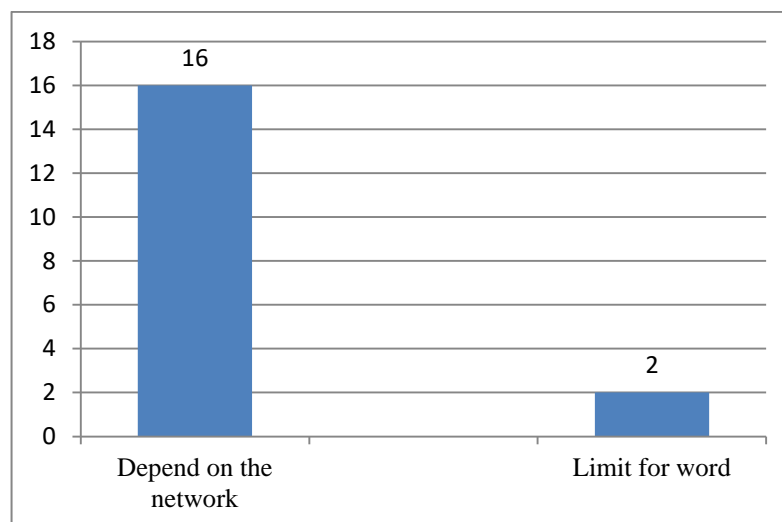


Figure 3. The Negative Effect on the Use of Speech to Text Application

From the figure, it can be inferred that the negative effect on the use of Speech Texter application were responded as "Depend on the network" and "limit on words but not suitable for assimilation". The following were the extract of interview:

Student 2: *"this is good application, but it depends on the network..."*

Student 8: *"It is limit for word for word text, but it is difficult to assimilation"*

From the interview, it can be seen that most of students complain that the application depends on the network. Even speech Texter can be used in offline mode, but it work slowly or even inaccurate.

The third question about the negative effect of the use Speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation skill. Students' perception were divided into two responded "Depend on the network" and "limit for words, but not for assimilation". The result showed that there were 16 out of 18 or 89% students said that the application depends on the network. It was commonly believe that Indonesian archipelago was wide and consist of sea and mountain. It condition made network coverage was unstable and became a problem for internet users. When the network is unstable, the application work would be unstable, too. It caused the network was unstable to deliver the sound from the microphone and synchronized to basic data to find the words (Suryadharma et al., 2014). Next, 2 out of 18 or 11 % students responded that the application was limit on word by word, but not suitable for assimilation. Assimilation is a sound change in which some phonemes (typically consonants or vowels) change to be more similar to other nearby sounds. It happened because the speech Texter only recognizes words.

The last question about whether or not students able to pronounce phonetics sound correctly after using speech Texter application. The result can be seen in the following diagram:

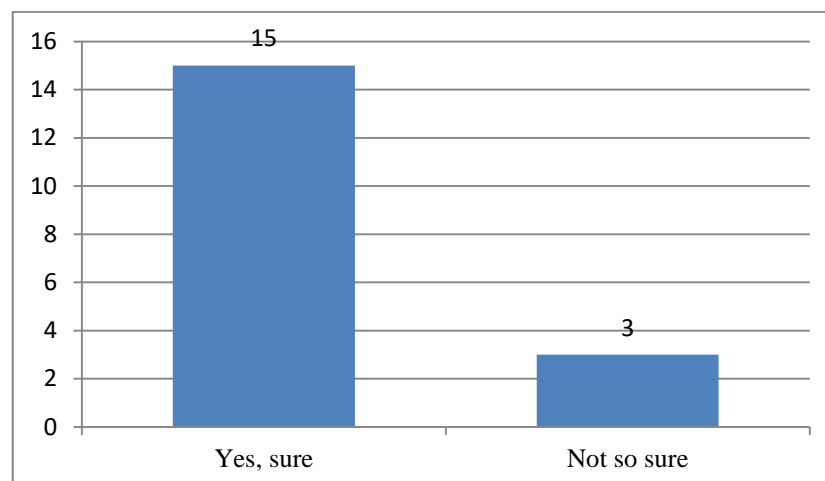


Figure 4. Students' Perception on the Use of Speech Texter

From the diagram, it can be seen that students' perception on the use of Speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation responded as "Yes, sure" and "Not so sure". There were 15 out of 18 or 83 students were sure if they were able to pronounce well after using the application. The process of repeating for many times made them remembers how to pronounce the correct way and they still use it in everyday communication. Moreover, repeating words were easy because the android is portable and easy to be carried everywhere and accessed anytime. The respond of interview can be seen in the following extract:

Students 4: *"Yes, of course. After repeating for many times finally I am able to produce the correct words, and I always remember to use it, even I don't use the application anymore"*

From the interview, it can be seen that the process of repeating for many times made them remember how to pronounce the correct way and they still use it in everyday communication. This was in line with the result of the study was conducted by Acevedo (2016) While 3 out of 18 or 27 % students were not so sure if they were able to pronounce well after using the speech Texterapplication.

Student 3: *"I am not sure mam, because only the words which are familiar I tested in the application, whereas many words exist and I haven't tested yet"*

From the statement, it can be inferred that the student tent to made the correct sound for the words which had been tested in the application and he was not sure with other words which had not been tested. In line (Oktalia and Drahati 2018) state that the student tent to made the correct sound for the words which had been tested in the application and he was not sure with other which had not been tested. Even they thought that they were not sure, but basically the application helped students to improve their pronunciation, because mostly English have similar rule for pronouncing the words. Since students' have a positive perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation, it is recommended to lecturers as well as teachers to implement this application to their class. This application offered some advantages as a teaching media and bring new atmosphere in English Language Teaching class. (Pardede 2018) agrees that the students pronunciation can be improve by different atmosphere with explicit teaching approach.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented in the previous sections, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception on the use of speech Texter application in teaching pronunciation

skill. They said that the application was interesting and motivated them to drill the pronunciation until they produced the correct one. Then, they were also sure to be able to speak with the correct pronunciation after using the application.

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