
English Pronunciation Practices: From Tongue Twisters to YouTube Channel

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Abstract

Background:

Pronunciation plays an important role to create effective communication since incorrect pronunciation may lead to misunderstanding. The EFL teachers should be aware of this issue by identifying the appropriate methods for teaching pronunciation to EFL students, with expectations; students may correctly pronounce the English words that support comprehensible communication. This research aims at describing the tongue twisters method for practicing English pronunciation as well as the YouTube channel for sharing their pronunciation practices.

Methodology:

This research employed an observation sheet and pronunciation task through students' tongue twisters video uploaded on the YouTube channel as the instruments. The observation sheet was applied to find out students' activities of tongue twisters practice in five meetings and their difficulties during the practice. Meanwhile, students' uploaded tongue twisters video on the YouTube channel was analyzed to get the result of their tongue twisters practice.

Findings:

The students were given 26 tongue twisters consisting of 24 English consonant sounds to pronounce four times for each of them. The result showed that tongue twisters for sounds /p/, /f/, /v/, /ð/, and /z/ were difficult enough for them due to the interference of their mother tongue that commonly missed on these sounds. Besides that, the highest percentage of students who got a score of 60-69 on their YouTube channel video indicates that they still need more practice.

Conclusion:

Having tongue twisters' practice and uploading the practice video on YouTube channel create learning experiences for students. They need to allocate more time practicing the English pronunciation better intensively. Therefore, the teachers should create maximal lesson planning and preparation to make sure that each student gets the same opportunity to practice it.

Keywords: English pronunciation; practices; tongue twisters; YouTube channel

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the English language components playing important roles to create effective communication. Since pronunciation becomes the power factor to determine the success of communication, EFL students should be encouraged to practice their pronunciation abilities as fluent and accurate as possible (Tsunemoto & McDonough, 2020; Bøhn & Hansen, 2017; Buss, 2016). Dealing with this issue, creating the success of oral communication, the pronunciation aspect becomes the crucial one to consider. The EFL teachers should be aware of this issue by identifying the methods for teaching pronunciation to EFL students. It is expected that students may correctly pronounce English words to support comprehensible communication.

Human communication is arranged mainly through sounds. The symbol of sounds is expressed by the arrangement of words (vocabulary) and structures of the sentence (grammar). Besides, pronunciation stands up as an aspect setting the system of sounds so that the production of vocabulary and grammar are used correctly in oral communication. The EFL teachers should have awareness of taking this issue by prioritizing the order of phonological features into pronunciation instruction (Moedjito, 2018:10; Chein, 2019:1; Masrai, 2020; Senowarsito & Ardini, 2019).

Since the study of phonological features leads students to imitate their teachers in the early stages of the language learning process, it is obvious that the teachers themselves should be accurate and clear in determining what approaches or methods of teaching should be selected for their students. Arimilli et al., (2016:110-111) describe that there are nine possible methods of teaching pronunciation the EFL teachers can carry out as a reference to be taught based on students' needs. They are naturalistic method, phonetic transcription method, minimal pair drills method, sentence drills or contextualized minimal pairs, visual reinforcement, vowel shifts and stress shifts drills, tongue twisters, reading aloud, and recordings. Some of these methods are conventional ways; some of them use technological devices (Gilakjani, Sheikhy, Montashery, & Alizadeh, 2019; Pourhosein Gilakjani & Rahimy, 2020).

As many various methods are available and possible to be implemented in pronunciation classroom practice, this research tried to carry out tongue twisters as one of the proposed methods to the second semester students of the English department at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin batch 2018. Tongue twisters were implemented in this study based on the consideration that this method helps students developing better pronunciation. Although this method has been implemented more in the past, it was perceived that tongue twisters still

become a potential pronunciation exercise as the students offer repetition of a sound or a group of sounds, along with the stress, rhythm, and intonation of a natural speech.

This research implemented tongue twisters with the expectation that it will help students developing phonological awareness by demonstrating similar sounds with constant repetition. A previous study on the use of tongue twisters was conducted by Prosic-Santovac (2009). The result of his research stated that there were 73.5% of 34 students like tongue twisters in general because they offer a great opportunity to enhance pronunciation. Some of them said that although they were complicated, at the same time, it was interesting, make them laugh, and the text seems easier to read. Due to the positive attitudes given by students in this research, the researcher tried to implement this method to students.

Furthermore, since tongue twisters are considered as the common way of practicing English pronunciation, it is still reasonable for the researcher to implement this method considering the fact that most of the students engaged in this research are beginner pronunciation learners. They do not get the pronunciation instruction before entering the college stage so that they need to know more about the sound system, sound production, and practice it carefully. Nagai (2011) emphasized that EFL teachers can maximize the efficiency of oral practice to produce a certain and inevitable effect on learners. Based on the factor that they do not have any background knowledge on pronunciation matter, tongue twisters practice is important for students having the proper English sounds practice.

Meanwhile, this research wants to see the result of students' tongue twisters practice to be shared and published through the YouTube channel as one of the social media platforms for getting any possible feedback from other people. Ayodele O & Ogunbanwo (2019) conducted similar research on the use of YouTube for performing phonetics and phonology. They found out a result that students who utilize YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology have better success academically than those do not. It contributes to the pronunciation of sounds and the articulation of speech so that students gain better intonation and language speaking skills generally. Hence, this research investigated a similar thing with the expectation that the YouTube channel facilitates students to have learning experiences in pronunciation practice.

Based on the description above, the objective of this research is to describe the activities of practicing students' English pronunciation using tongue twisters and performing the students' tongue twisters production on YouTube channel as a video sharing platform. This research is expected to give a contribution to EFL teachers on giving reference as

consideration of selecting possible methods to practice English pronunciation based on students' needs.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employed descriptive design with quantitative approach and supported with qualitative data obtained from the observation sheet. There were 21 students of the English department at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin batch 2018 engaged in this research. They were second semester English department students taking Pronunciation Practice subject focusing on learning English consonant sounds. This was the second session of pronunciation activity given to them in which they have learned pronunciation practice for English vowels in the previous semester. In other words, the activity of pronunciation practice for students being investigated in this research was focused on practicing the pronunciation of 24 English consonant sounds with the assumption that they have mastered the vowel and diphthongs sounds given in the previous semester.

Moreover, there were two instruments used in this research. They were observation sheet and pronunciation task through students' tongue twisters video uploaded on the YouTube channel. First of all, the observation was carried out to observe the process of students practicing English consonant sounds during five meetings. The teacher monitored each of the individual processes and progress on their tongue twisters practicing by making substantial notes. After that, the students were asked to transform their practices in forms of pronunciation video uploaded on the YouTube channel.

The second instrument was the pronunciation task through students' tongue twisters video uploaded on the YouTube channel. This video was scored as the final output of students' tongue twisters practice. After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the data to get the results. The result of teacher's observation on students' tongue twisters practice in the classroom was analyzed by describing the result of practice, the difficulties encountered by students, and the examples of error occur in the practice. Furthermore, the uploaded students' tongue twisters videos on YouTube channel were analyzed quantitatively using the pronunciation practice assessment rubric adapted from TFU Foreign Language Assessment Rubric as presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. The Pronunciation Practice Assessment Rubric

Grade	Score	Criteria
Excellent	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost error-free• Phonetically correct• Awareness of accent• Genuine effort to sound like a native speaker
Good	70-79	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensible, generally correct

Grade	Score	Criteria
		• Occasional error
Enough	60-69	Frequent errors that confuse the listener and require guessing at the meaning
Fair	50-59	Many errors that interfere with comprehensibility
Poor	<50	Most words and utterances contain errors, incomprehensible, and little communication

The collected data were evaluated and described to get the conclusion by analyzing the result on the occurrence trend from both of the instruments.

3. FINDINGS

The finding of this research presents the results derived from the investigation. They are presented as follows:

3.1 Findings of the Observation

The result of the observation was presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. The Result of Observation in English Tongue Twisters Practice

No	Meeting	Important Points Derived from Tongue Twisters Practice in the Classroom
1	I	<p>This was the first meeting of students practicing tongue twisters. The students learned pronouncing the sound /p/, /b/, /t/, and /d/. The teacher delivered examples of tongue twisters consisting of these sounds. The teacher asked them to read the tongue twisters and then practiced them individually. They were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Printed papers under pressure make pens prickle</i> <i>Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers</i> <i>Ben bought a bit of butter, but the butter was bitter.</i> <i>Ben bought a bit of better butter to make the bitter butter better</i> <i>Two tutors who tooted the flute tried to tutor two tooters to toot</i> <i>The doctor being doctored wants to be doctored as he wants to doctor</i> <p>Each sound should be tried four times. Some of the students did not have any difficulties pronouncing these sounds. However, the sound /p/ was not well pronounced due to the interference of their mother tongue. They pronounced this sound with sound /f/ instead</p>
2	II	<p>The students learned and practiced the sound /k/, /g/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, and /w/. The teacher delivered examples of tongue twisters consisting of these sounds. The teacher asked them to read the tongue twisters and then practiced them individually. They were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?</i> <i>A girl guide giggled at a glum guardsman guarding the gates</i> <i>The witch switched the switch that the witch had switched</i> <i>Jim jumps at the gym for the jack which was jumped by the jumper in the gym</i> <i>Wayne went to Wales to watch walruses</i> <p>Each sound should be tried four times. Most of the students did not have any difficulties pronouncing these sounds.</p>
3	III	<p>The students learned and practiced the sound /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, and /j/. The teacher delivered examples of tongue twisters consisting of these sounds. The teacher asked them to read the tongue twisters then practiced them individually. They were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A flea and a fly flew up in a flue, so they flew through a flaw in the flue</i> <i>Of all the vids I've ever viewed, I've never viewed a vid as valued</i> <i>The thirty three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday</i> <i>The seething sea ceaseth and thus the seething sea sufficeth us</i> <i>The young player yells while playing the yellow yoyo in the yard</i> <p>Each sound should be tried four times. Most of the students have difficulties in pronouncing tongue twisters for the sound /f/ and /v/ due to the interference of their mother tongue. They pronounced these sounds with sound /p/ instead. Besides that, the sound /ð/ was also difficult for them. They pronounce this sound with sound /d/ instead.</p>
4	IV	<p>The students learned and practiced the sound /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ʌ/. The teacher delivered examples of tongue twisters consisting of these sounds. The teacher asked them to read the</p>

No	Meeting	Important Points Derived from Tongue Twisters Practice in the Classroom
		<p>tongue twisters and then practiced them individually. They were:</p> <p>a. <i>Six sleek swans swam swiftly southwards</i> b. <i>Fuzzy wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy wuzzy was not fuzzy</i> c. <i>I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish. I won't wish the wish you wish to wish</i> d. <i>The measurement of measure is used to measured measurable measure</i> e. <i>Don't take a leak in the lake even you look like a licker that likes a lake a lot!</i></p> <p>Each sound should be tried four times. Most of the students have difficulties in pronouncing tongue twisters for the sound /z/ due to the interference of their mother tongue. They pronounced these sounds with sound /ð/ instead.</p>
5	V	<p>The students learned and practiced the sound /h/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, and /r/. The teacher delivered examples of tongue twisters consisting of these sounds. The teacher asked them to read the tongue twisters and then practiced them individually. They were:</p> <p>a. <i>I hear that the hair of the horse will be hit in the hoarse near the harbor by Harry</i> b. <i>Imagine an imaginary menagerie manager managing an imaginary menagerie</i> c. <i>I know that's not the note that Noel wants to note in his notebook</i> d. <i>The single singer sings a song which will be sung in a single song by another single singer</i> e. <i>If rustlers wrestle wrestlers, could rustlers rustle wrestlers?</i></p> <p>Each sound should be tried four times. Most of the students did not have any difficulties pronouncing these sounds</p>

From the result of the observation presented in Table 2, there were two important points to note on the process of students' tongue twisters practice. First of all, the students' mother tongue accent influenced their tongue twisters practices for some sounds. Second, the mother tongue accent contributed to the difficulty for students practicing the tongue twisters for the sound /p/, /f/, /v/, /ð/, and /z/ since these sounds commonly missed for Banjarese language.

3.2 Findings of the Documentation of Students' Video on YouTube Channel

The documentation of students' videos on the YouTube channel was presented in the following figure.



Figure 1 Samples of Uploaded Students' Pronunciation Video on YouTube Channel

The students' uploaded video on YouTube channel as shown in Figure 1 were assessed by using the rubric in Table 1. The result of students' scores was presented in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3 The Score of Students' Video on YouTube Channel

Grade	Score	Number of Students
Excellent	80	1 student
Good	70-79	9 students
Enough	60-69	11 student
Fair	50-59	-
Poor	<50	-

Table 3 shows that most of the students got a 60-69 score indicated that they should allocate more time for pronunciation practice intensively using tongue twisters to maximize their pronunciation performances.

4. DISCUSSION

Pronunciation practice is one of the English language components considered as a complex activity since most EFL teachers do not allocate much attention to it among other components. Pronunciation becomes an essential part of contributing to effective communication. Exploring how students practice English pronunciation cannot be neglected. English Department students at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin come from different background knowledge of English learning. The majority of them learn English pronunciation at the college level for the first time so that the teacher should train them from the early stage of pronunciation learning. Pointing out on giving students the feature of English pronunciation as proposed by Chein (2019), they are invited to recognize the English sound system through tongue twisters as an oral exercise of the muscles in the mouth.

Almeida, Castillo, & Parra (2018) emphasized that tongue twister can be an alternative method in developing phonological awareness by demonstrating similar sounds with constant repetition. This way contributes on practicing students' pronunciation clearer and allows them to pronounce unfamiliar and difficult words easier, for instance: asking the students to pronounce the sound /p/ like *Printed papers under pressure make pens prickle*, the sound /b/ like *Ben bought a bit of better butter to make the bitter butter better*, and others English consonant sounds. During five meetings, the students under this research practiced tongue twisters for 24 English consonant sounds in the classroom. Each tongue twister for each sound should be practiced four times and they should perform it in front of the classroom in turns. The teacher observed them and analyzed the result of their practices. Based on the result of students' tongue twisters practice, in general, most of the students did not have difficulties in pronouncing English consonant sounds. It seemed that tongue twisters

contribute new experiences for them demonstrating constant repetition of the words. It was interesting and made them laugh for some sounds to demonstrate due to a humorous connotation on the meaning of the tongue twisters.

However, there were five English consonant sounds in which most students failed to pronounce. They were the sound /p/, /f/, /v/, /ð/, and /d/. Many errors occurred occasionally made by students in classroom practice. The interference of students' mother tongue caused inaccuracy on their consonant sounds production for these five sounds. The students' mother tongue accents disturbed on the sound production they made. The students were confused among the sounds /p/, /f/, and /v/. Most of them pronounced tongue twisters of /p/ with the sound /f/ and /v/ while the sound /f/ and /v/ were pronounced with /p/. Take for instance, when the teacher asked them to pronounce *Printed papers under pressure make pens prickles*, the students pronounced *frinted fafers under fressure make fens frickle* instead. On the contrary, when the teacher asked them to pronounce *a flea and a fly flew up in a flue*, the students pronounced *a plea and a ply plew up in a plue* instead. The same error came when they should differentiate the sound /d/ and /ð/. It seemed that the tongue twister *seething sea ceaseth and thus the seething sea sufficeth us* containing the sound /ð/ were pronounced with the sound /d/ like *seeding sea ceased and dus de seeding sea sufficed us* instead. Considering this situation, Hassan (2014:33) mentioned that the over practice of the mother tongue causes mispronunciation of the sounds. This is commonly named as fossilization.

The interference of students' mother tongue in pronouncing tongue twisters for the sound /p/, /f/, /v/, /ð/, and /d/ occurred for them who speak Banjarese as their daily language. Under this research, most of the students come from South Kalimantan who speaks mostly in Banjarese language as their mother tongue. The sounds /p/ and /d/ are available in the Banjarese sound system while the sounds /f/, /v/, and /ð/ are not (Hapip, 2008). As a result, the words *fly flew* are pronounced /plaI plu:/ instead of /flaI flu:/ by students as there is no sound /f/ available in Banjarese language. Due to this case, the existence of mother tongue interference can be viewed as a language transfer that affects learning as mentioned by Thyab (2016:1) that it is the influence of the native language of the learner on her/his acquisition of the target language. Referring to this matter, it is needed for the teacher to provide students more exposure to pronunciation practice intensively beyond the classroom practice.

As the end of the tongue twister practice during five meetings, students must record their practices to be given feedback and possible suggestion for improving their performances. Supporting this matter, the students are assigned to create a video that records

their tongue twisters practices as the output of their works. Nevertheless, the teacher becomes the only one who listens to the students' tongue twisters practice without any opportunities for others listens too. The students get any feedback on their pronunciation videos from the teacher only. Besides the teacher, there are no other people who listen to the students' videos that can give the idea, provide constructive feedback and comment as well as suggest any valuable response on the students' pronunciation practice improvement. There should be any sharing content platform used to show the students' tongue twisters performance so that they will get any comments and suggestions from people around the world to have better pronunciation learning in the future.

As the need of using a sharing content platform to display students' tongue twisters practice, this research utilizes YouTube channels as video sharing sites considering that most of them have been familiar with this application (Yeo, 2014:55). The students are assigned to upload the pronunciation practice video through the YouTube channel. Dealing with this activity, Ghasemi, Hashemi, & Bardine (2011:65-67) explain that as one of the commercial sites which are created as a forum for people to create and to share short video clips online, YouTube offers some benefits as video sharing media. Uploading video clips to YouTube is a quick and easy process and works in similar ways on other video sharing sites. Besides that, the uploaded video may be displayed as a suggestion in other videos that are related to ours. Through its channel, other people around the world can comment on our videos which will increase the traffic to our channel. People can subscribe to our video and they will be notified every time we upload a similar video. These lead to the opportunities for others to deliver feedback on students' pronunciation practice uploaded video on YouTube channel (Alhamimi, 2013:9-10).

As the students are assigned to create pronunciation videos uploaded on the YouTube channel, the teacher then gives a score on the content of it. From the result of students' scores on their YouTube channel video as presented in Table 3, most of the students got 60-69 indicating that frequent errors still occur in their pronunciation video. There are occasional errors that occur potentially and make listeners confused when they pronounce the sounds on their YouTube video both on fluency and accuracy of the sounds. This becomes the future challenge for both the students and the teacher to improve the pronunciation learning and intensively allocating more time for independent pronunciation learning. Furthermore, improving pronunciation learning should cover and consider the selection method that meets students' needs.

5. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that tongue twisters can be an alternative way for students practicing English pronunciation. Besides that, the YouTube channel also becomes an accessible platform for sharing their tongue twisters video. The feedback, comments, and suggestions from people around the world will motivate students to have better pronunciation learning in the future. Considering that the students still have difficulties pronouncing tongue twisters for five English consonant sounds under this research, the teacher should give them more exposure to it. Optimizing the implementation of tongue twisters in English pronunciation practice needs more time and energy. Therefore, the teachers should create maximal lesson planning and preparation to make sure that each student gets the same opportunity to practice it.

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