

Learning pronunciation component using *u-dictionary* application

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Abstract - The topic of this study is about the use of U-Dictionary application in learning pronunciation components for a university student in intelligibility principles to get an understandable conversation in speaking practice. The research questions are asking about the way of using the U-Dictionary application in assisting a student in learning pronunciation components and how are their responses based on the tripartite model from Rosenberg and Havland (1960): feeling, behaviour, and cognition. The participant is a student in the fourth semester of university in Karawang and the data has been collected by an interview based on the Narrative Inquiry method form (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The finding showed that the application can assist her in learning pronunciation components, especially for segmental features such as vowel and consonant and supra-segmental ones in intonation. In short, the U-Dictionary application can assist a student in learning pronunciation components even for supra-segmental features only one aspect existed.

Keywords: segmental features, supra-segmental features,
U-dictionary application, student's response

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of four skills - writing, listening and reading - that has to be mastered when someone is learning English. It is used to communicate orally with native and non-native speakers, such as friends and teachers. One of the many components of speaking is pronunciation (Syafitri & Sumardi, 2018). Cambridge dictionary describes that “pronunciation is the way which a word or letter is said, or said correctly or how a language is spoken”. It is important in learning English in speaking to make the listeners understand what the speakers said. It is in line with the intelligibility feature in the pronunciation component (Levis, 2005).

Talking about pronunciation components, there are two kinds of them, segmental and supra-segmental. The crucial one is supra-segmental such as word stress and intonation. The correct pronunciation will make good communication between the speaker and the listener. Pronunciation should be taught nowadays to engage students’ motivation in speaking with the correct pronunciation.

Pronunciation usually is taught at a high school level in particular learning subjects as Phonetic as in high school level in Karawang. The students who are from the English Education Department learn how to pronounce the words correctly in the third semester. However, even they are learning in the class they still make mistakes in pronouncing the word stress or intonation. The reasons are because they less attention, low motivation, and low pronunciation skills of word stress and intonation (Abbas, 2011 cited in Ahmad, 2018). Also, the limited time of the class makes students get difficulty to ask the teacher about their learning problems. This case will be a concrete one if the students cannot find a way to overcome their troubles rapidly. It can impact students’ abilities in the future and social life as a candidate of teachers because they will be a role model of their pupils soon (Sánchez et al., 2019).

In this industry 4.0 era, there are so many technologies that are used for helping humans in every activity. A mobile phone is one of the primary tools that almost everyone has in their life. One of its functions is helping learners in learning English including pronunciation components of speaking. Based on Cavus (2016), mobile learning in English pronunciation can increase students’ interest and enjoyment, and motivate them in learning English pronunciation which not easy to be learned. Besides, mobile learning must not be taken in the classroom, it also can take in an informal situation and can be done every time, and everywhere the learners are (Miangah & Nezarat, 2012). The mobile phone itself has some features such as social media and application which help in the learning process including learning English speaking through pronunciation component. One of the appropriate applications for pronunciation learning is U-Dictionary. This application contains many words that are spelled in a phonetic form (vowel, consonant) complete with word stress and intonation in sound feature which they all are parts of pronunciation. Also, it can record guess’ voice to look for vocabulary that they are needed.

In line with these problems, this study focuses on the intelligibility principle that concern with how communication can be understandable between speaker and listener (Levis, 2005) of pronunciation learning using the U-Dictionary application to know the way of the application in pronunciation learning and know the student’s response.

2. Method

This research is using the Narrative Inquiry method from Clandinin and Connelly (2000, cited in Creswell, 2006). This research method shows the story of participant experiences about something crucial or important. The study is taken one participant of University students in Karawang in the fourth semester of the English Education Department. The data was collected by open-ended and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Clandinin and Connelly elements of analysis and combine with Braun and Clark's theory of coding and theming. The coding used is an inductive coding analysis and open coding analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

This research focuses on the way of U-Dictionary Application in assisting students in learning pronunciation components to high-level students and her response to it. The data explain student's experiences in learning English especially the pronunciation component. At first, she liked English because she got a task from her middle-English teacher to sing an English song as speaking practice. She told her old sister and ask her suggestion about a song that she had to sing along in filling the practice. She followed the suggestion to choose and decide "A Thousand Years" by Christina Perry and she trained her voice and English pronunciation to get the best result after the practice. That was her story of the beginning of loving English.

Then, after she graduated from middle school, she decided to continue her study at one university in Karawang in English Education Department. Her first story was started when she entered her first class that was speaking. When the lecturer entered the class, the first word uttering was English and all of her monologues were English. She felt surprised and speechless to hear that. She did not understand well what the lecturer talking about. In addition, when the lecturer asked all students to introduce their selves, She saw how good her friends speaking ability while did not her. She was insecure to know that. However, she realized and she clearly knew that it could be her motivation to practice her speaking ability more, she hoped so.

As time went by, she began to know about phonetics when she was in the first semester that she knew it from reading the subject. When I asked her about the implementation of the right pronunciation in speaking subject in the first semester, she told me that she knew it not from speaking subject but in reading subject. At the time, she began curiously and want to know about phonetics by open her dictionary application to see the word transcript on phonetics. The application that she used is U-Dictionary.

Talking about the U-Dictionary application, here I asked the participant to explain her experiences in using U-Dictionary to assist her English language learning process. She had used this application for about two years since she was a fresh student at a university in 2018. She got the information about this application from her friends whom almost all of them using it. Before, she used Google Translate and Kamusku in assisting her to look for the meaning of the word, but the lecturer asked her to change into others. She used U-Dictionary to translate word, listening to the audio, and to know the pronunciation of a word. Besides, she also used U-Dictionary

to translate the words or sentences from Indonesian into English and vice-versa when she will upload status on social media. It shows that she used this application not only for formal learning but also for autonomous learning.

In the third semester, when Phonetic and Phonology are learned, she studied the pronunciation components that consisted of segmental and suprasegmental features. I asked her about the role of U-Dictionary in assisting her to learn pronunciation. She said U-Dictionary had a phonetic symbol that could show words transcription and the right pronunciation of the word. Besides, not only the symbol of phonetic but she also knew the word pronunciation by listening to the voice which is part of U-Dictionary features. Both phonetic symbols and the sound itself are the features in assisting her in learning speaking especially pronunciation so she could pronounce a word correctly when spoken up both presentation or have a small stalk with her friends.

In the third semester, she learned about phonetic deeply. The material was about segmental as the basic part of pronunciation and supra-segmental features to produce the right meaning when uttering words. Talking about segmental, I asked her how many are parts of them? Based on her learning experiences, there were vowels and consonants. However, there was a difference between the vowel that we learned in Indonesian. If Indonesian only has five vowels -a, i, u, e, o- in phonetic it has more than five. They were divided into some categories like a long vowel, short vowel, diphthong, monophthong as linked with a book from Hamann & Schmitz (2005) in *Phonetic and Phonology*. Another one is consonant. In Indonesian, it has twenty-one consonants, phonetic has twenty-four symbols, there are.

When she looks for the word meaning in U-Dictionary she only focused on the segmental one. Whereas, when I told about supra-segmental features that related to intonation, word stress, and syllable she knew but only intonation. She did not release that was word stress and syllable including in U-Dictionary. Whereas, there were some words that she had knew their phonetic symbol like thought /θɔ:t/, genre /'ʒɑ:nrə/, finger /'fɪŋgər/, employee /ɪm'plɔɪi:/ and know the segmental features of pronunciation such as vowels and consonants without paying more attention to the supra-segmental one. Besides, she also using sound features to listen to how sounds are pronounced and it means she heard the intonation too that part of supra-segmental features of pronunciation. Now, error in pronouncing words had been clear after she knew the right phonetic transcription by checking in U-Dictionary.

3.1 The Way of U-Dictionary Application Assist Student in Learning Pronunciation Component

Based on the dialogues between the participant and the researcher, U-Dictionary has features related to pronunciation learning, there are speaker symbols and phonetic symbols. The Speaker symbol is used to hear the correct pronunciation if she does not know how to pronounce the words well. As her experience when she translated short sentences from Indonesian into English, there were some words that she did not know how to pronounce. Then, she clicked the speaker symbol and let the system produced the right pronunciation of the short sentence translated before as her expression.

“... then, if we did not know how to pronounce it we can use the sound symbol and clicked it. It will pronounce itself”

It means that U-Dictionary can perform the intonation of the words through the speaker symbol. Intonation is a part of supra-segmental features in the pronunciation component that can make the conversation understandable and the purpose delivered well (Pourhosein, 2012: 120, cited in Marzá, 2014)).

Another one, phonetic symbol was used when Ismi learning pronunciation. According to Hamann and Schmitz (2005) that “...Phonetic is a concern about how sounds are produced, transmitted, and perceived”. By looking at the phonetic symbol, Ismi knew the vowels and consonants of the words in the linguistic system and those are parts of segmental features. In the linguistic system, there are twenty-four consonants and twenty vowels which should be known by English learners. Before concerning the transcription of the words she must learn each alphabet both consonants and vowels seriously to get the right comprehension in order she can analyze the transcription of the words and produce the utterance well. Then, vowels it is divided into some categories as followed by Hamann and Schmitz (2005) in their book explained, there are monophthong and diphthong, long vowels, and short vowels.

Actually, there is not only a vowel and consonant in the phonetic symbol showed by U-Dictionary. There is also word stress include on the system that Ismi has not released yet about it. When I asked her about supra-segmental features like word stress and syllable, she was still confused and has not has fixed arguments.

3.2 Student's Response in Pronunciation Component Learning Using Mobile Application U-Dictionary

According to the participant's responses, as long as used U-Dictionary in speaking learning especially pronunciation, she feels comfortable and assisted both phonetic symbols to know the segmental features and supra-segmental features and sound-symbol that produces the intonation of the words or sentence that we write by ours or to clarify the pronunciation of the words by her. She liked the application because it is simple and available not only for online users but also offline after she downloaded the words in. In addition, the transcription of the words had been proved accurate by her experiences when the lecturer asked the students to open a dictionary and look for the pronunciation of the words. When she found the words and compared them with the lecture's correction that was equal. Another way is when she rechecked in another online dictionary that the lecturer suggested, it was true.

U-Dictionary is one mobile application dictionary that can be accessed using a smartphone that practice to be used. It was easier for the learner in assisting her in English learning that brings the big dictionaries which heavy and wasting time to find the words out. In addition, it can be used everywhere and every time (Ally, 2009; Hashim et al, 2017). This agrees with Syafitri et al (2018) who used mobile application in learning pronunciation, the students had been motivated by using Powtoon application and its sights from their attitude.

The participant's response in using U-Dictionary to assist her in learning the pronunciation component is divided into three aspects, there are effective, behaviour, and cognitive by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960, see Breckler, 1984). The application influences her in increasing mood and joyful feelings when learning pronunciation

through U-Dictionary. Besides phonetic symbols and speaker symbols, there are some features such as funny video, and other video learning that studies about the pronunciation of the words orally by native or non-native speakers.

The second aspect is about behavior that relates to something behavioral intentions. It showed by her intention in using U-Dictionary when she would like to update status or having a presentation, she always opened the application to make sure that the words that she would her pronounce were right based on the structure.

The last is cognitive that refers to human response which relates to his knowledge and thought of the stimulus given. Since she used U-Dictionary in looking for the right pronunciation of the words, it added her some. For instance, the word thought /**ʊ**ɔ:t/, genre /'ʒɑ:nrə/, finger /'fɪŋgə/, employee /ɪm'plɔɪi/. It finally opened her mind that in middle school there were many words that she pronounces them wrongly and there are still many words that she did not know how the right pronunciation. She is conscious that pronunciation is an important thing to learn in order to produce the right pronunciation and avoiding misunderstanding in delivering information.

4. Conclusion

Based on Ismi's experience in learning pronunciation components using U-Dictionary, it assists her through its features. There is a phonetic symbol that shows the transcription of the words such as vowel, consonant, and word stress and speaker symbol which produce intonation that pronounce by the system in. In short, the U-Dictionary consists of segmental features (vowel and consonant) and supra-segmental features (word stress and intonation). However, she did not realize yet about word stress on the phonetic symbol in the U-dictionary application so she doubts it. Besides, U-Dictionary also helps the student in translating the word or sentence by typing them or it can take a picture and upload it then the system will scanning and translate the text directly.

U-Dictionary also has other features that make the user enjoy and comfortable such as funny videos, learning videos, games that increase student's motivation. The last, using mobile applications ease students nor teachers in getting learning material and save time. U-Dictionary can be recommended as a learning media for English teachers and learners in assisting them studying the four skill -speaking, reading, writing, listening- because it consists of some features which support four of them. In addition, the other researchers can upgrade the research about the usage of the U-Dictionary in other skills or also can be analyzed the same as this study in deeper analysis.

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