

Teaching Students of Remote Area English Pronunciation through (CALL) Sephonics Software

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Abstract— This research was aimed to solve the difficulty in learning pronunciation. Thus, it answered the research questions (1) How was the implementation of using sephonics software for teaching pronunciation?(2) Was there any improvement of students' pronunciation after being taught using sephonics software? The participant of this research was the 3rd semester students of ELT Department of Education Faculty that consisted of 28 students. It was a classroom action research that had two cycles. The methods of data collection were test and observation in all cycles.

This study showed that: (1) the first thing that the teacher needed to do to use this software as a teaching aid was that he or she must conduct the class in a language laboratory. If it was not possible, the teacher could conduct the class in a regular classroom by providing several computers or laptops. Then, the students must be grouped based on the number of the computers. The second thing was that this was CALL learning based; the teacher might explain how to use the software in order that the students could practice by themselves outside of class schedule. (2) After collecting data, it was found that it had very significant improvement in cycle 1 and cycle 2. It meant that the research was successful to improve the students' pronunciation abilities. In conclusion, Sephonics software was successful to facilitate students' pronunciations.

Keywords Pronunciation; CALL; Sephonics Software

I. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of language components. All of native language users in Indonesia have different pronunciation rules based on their own native languages. They have own rules of their pronunciation which are different from English pronunciation.

English pronunciation is very important for all age levels; nonetheless, it is still neglected by not only students but also teachers. Nowadays, some teachers are still facing difficulties to pronounce some English words, and admit to a lack of knowledge about the theories of pronunciation. It gives a big and significant influence toward their students for enhancing English pronunciation in the classroom.

Therefore, the teachers are expected to improve their practical skill in teaching pronunciation.

Then, to conduct the teaching and learning process, the teachers are forced to be more creative to teach the students. They need specific methods and techniques to conduct learning process. They can use games, songs, etc. to be used in the learning activity. Even, many institutions invite the native speakers to teach their students in order to get good understanding of English materials, especially pronunciation.

Responding to what have been elaborated above, an ideal condition for learning English must cover the language skills well especially pronunciation. In this case, the students ought to be taught by a capable teacher. So, they will understand well and clearly grasp the pronunciation theory of English.

Most of non-native English speakers still speak English with their native languages' accents. Therefore, it sometime causes English native speakers' difficulties to understand the foreigners' speeches.

The development of technology nowadays gives a breakthrough dealing with the problem above. One of the developments related to it such as the invention of computer application in the classroom language learning.

The use of computer in language class does not mean that the teacher or the students can use the computers for finishing their work assignment merely. It has a special usage for implementing classroom learning as the teaching aid. Computer consists of hardware and software which support the work of it. In this research, the practice of computer software namely Sephonics was applied to facilitate the pronunciation teaching process.

Based on the problem that has been stated above, two research questions were investigated through this research. They were:

1. How was the implementation of using sephonics software for teaching pronunciation (plosive consonant sounds)?
2. Was there any improvement on students' pronunciation of plosive consonant sounds after being taught using sephonics software?

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

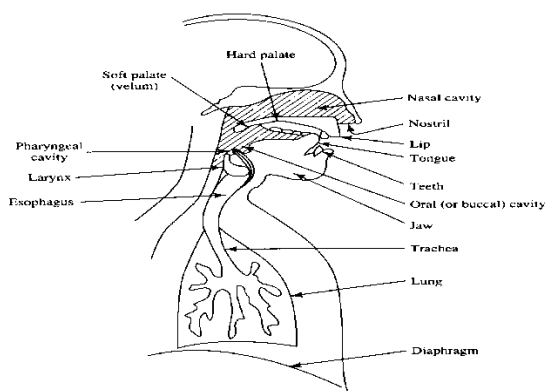
Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way a word or a language is spoken, or the manner in which someone utters a word. If one is said to have "correct pronunciation", then it refers to both within a particular dialect.

Pronunciation has an important role for human being in oral communication. It determines understanding from speakers who convey messages, ideas and thoughts, to listeners.

According to Hornby, "pronunciation is the way in which a language or particular word is pronounced". (Hornby, p.928). Pronunciation also can be defined as the act of producing the speeches. Speech sounds are sounds produced by the speech organs (Ramelan, p.17).

The diagram of speech organs is as follows:
Picture 1



The process of speaking involves modifying the column of air which enters and leaves our lungs as we breathe, thus producing audible sounds. Hence essentially all of the human respiratory tract is included in the organ of speech. (Robert, p.41) In addition, Ramelan (2003) states that speech sounds are produced only when there is some interruption of the out-going air and this interruption is carried out by those part of the speech organs. When we breathe restfully, the air also goes in and out but it is uninterrupted and no speech sound is produced.

Then, there are several theories on how to teach English pronunciation. Most of them involved in rote and drilling that memorizes the word pronunciation. These methods can work well for some students. Gerard Kelly states that there are some techniques and activities in teaching pronunciation. They are drilling, minimal pairs and related activities, pronunciation and spelling activities, taping students' English, listening activities, and reading activities. (Kelly, p.15)

Teaching Pronunciation

English is taught in many schools in Indonesia. So, English has an important role in education. Toward those purposes, of course the schools need development in English teaching, especially in pronunciation since it becomes one of the most important things in teaching English.

Kelly (2001) explains that there are six techniques and activities in teaching pronunciation. They can be divided into some kinds as follows:

1) Drilling

One of the main ways in which pronunciation is practiced in the classroom is through drilling. The drilling simply involves the teacher saying a word or structure and getting the class to repeat it. Being able to drill properly is a basic and fundamental language teaching skill. Drilling aims to help students achieve better pronunciation of language items, and to help them remember new items. And given the complex relationships between English spelling and pronunciation, drilling is best done before students see the written form of the language.

Teaching pronunciation through drilling for both segmental and suprasegmental features can be done in many ways. According to Kelly (2011) there are three varieties of drilling for teaching pronunciation. They are chaining, open pair, and substitution drilling. Chaining drilling is used for drilling sentences which prove difficulty for students to pronounce, either because they are long, or because they contain difficult words and sounds.

Open pair drilling sets up question and answer drills which are implemented across the class with one student asking, another responding, and so on. Having drilled a question chorally and individually, the teacher uses prompts and invites students to ask questions each other and respond in turn across the class.

Substitution drilling is another important and useful variation. It involves drilling a structure, but substituting items of vocabulary into the sentence being dealt with.

2) Minimal pairs and related activities

The examples *rat* /ræt/ and *rot* /rot/ were used to show the phonemic principle in action; changing just one sound leads to a change in meaning. The same applies to words like the soap /səʊp/ and soup /su:p/, and paper /'peɪpə/ and pepper /'pepə/. These are all examples of minimal pairs – words or utterances which differ by only one phoneme. Teachers can use minimal pairs to good advantage in the classroom as a way of focusing on sounds which have been causing difficulties for students.

3) Pronunciation and spelling activities

Homograph and homophones can provide useful opportunities for such work. Homographs are words which have the same spelling, but with different pronunciations (*why don't you read this book?* and *I've already read it;* *wind* /wɪnd/ as in weather, and *wind* /waɪnd/ as in what you do to a clock). Homophones are words which have the same pronunciation but

have different spellings (*write* and *right*; *there*, *their* and *they're*; *fair* and *fare*).

4) Taping students' English

Taping learners' spoken English from time to time can be effectively conducted. Tapes can be made while students are engaged in language practice activities, and used for all manner of language difficulties, but especially those concerned with pronunciation.

5) Listening activities

Listening comprehension exercises in course-book are often designed to sound as realistic as possible, with the participants talking at a normal speed and using natural language. These can play a key role in helping students to notice the existence of a pronunciation feature. The listening exercise can then require students to listen out for this area of language and listen out for how it is used and pronounced in the context of a narrative or, say, a conversation.

6) Reading activities

In reading activities, although the medium is the written word, work on pronunciation can be successfully integrated here too. Like listening, reading is as receptive activity (i.e. students receive the language rather than produce it), and so it provides a suitable means of bringing language features to students' attention.

In addition, to acquire a goal of pronunciation, teacher can also drill with learning to listen and imitate every phoneme that will be taught. In line with this condition, Orion quoting from Acton's article (1997), describes that:

"Acquiring good pronunciation is the most difficult part of learning a new language. As you improve your articulation you have to learn to listen and imitate all over again. As with any activity you wish to do well, you have to practice, practice, practice, and then practice some more".

Furthermore, the integration of teaching pronunciation can be achieved through various activities such as drills, listen and imitate, and computer-assisted pronunciation teaching. (Gonzalez, 2007; Goodwin, 2001; Hansen, 2005; Kilickaya, 2006; Levis, 2007; and Seferoglu, 2005)

Jenkins (2005) points out that the goal of teaching pronunciation is not to make the learners sound like native speakers of English and only few highly gifted and motivated individuals can achieve it. Therefore, a more realistic approach is to enable the learners to pronounce the language without detracting from the ability to comprehend the message (approximating) (Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J.D., 1996)

Based on those theories, along with the medium of the software, this study employed drilling, reading aloud, listening, and taping students' pronunciation to teach students pronunciation.

Teaching Media

Media is as derivation for Latin word, *medius* means medium (singular form) or agent or intermediary. Azhar also explains of teaching media experts in his book. They are Gerlach Ely. They stated that media is person, material or events that established condition that enable students to reach knowledge, skill, or attitude. (Arsyad, p.3)

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that media are varieties of substances, used by teachers during teaching and learning process when delivering the lesson in order to be easier and more effective. Therefore, media has an urgent role for teaching and learning process. It can encourage students' motivation and interest in the learning process. So, the students are able to comprehend better than they are taught without using media.

In short, media can help students in acquiring lessons that are being taught. It also gives many choices of teaching aids that help both students and teachers for learning process.

There are some classifications of media. They are visual, audio, audio-visual, and role play. Combination of visual and audio media can be effective when used for enjoy teaching and learning situation. For example, two or more students simulate the drama action, role-play, games or theatrical group. (Hamalik, p.29)

In addition, as the result of technology development, media can be classified into four categories. They are printed media, audio visual media, computer based media, and combination between printed and computer based media.

Sephonics Software

Picture 2. Sephonics main menus appearance



Sephonics 1.0 is a Windows program that will teach the users the English phonetic alphabet, which is a subset of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA, in short).

Sephonics includes seven different exercises for practicing English pronunciation and the phonetic alphabet, including a phonetic memory game to relax between the lessons. There are also exercises where the users learn to match a sound to a phonetic sign, transcribe from phonetic text to ordinary text, and much more. Sephonics is freeware. It requires Windows 95 / 98 / NT / 2000 / XP or better.

This computer software is created by Marianne Wartoft. She lives in Uppsala, Sweden. Since 1995, she has developed several educational programs that she originally marketed as shareware. In order to be able to spend more time on her consulting business, and to let more people use her software, then, she finally released all my software as freeware.

III. METHOD

In this research, researcher used classroom action research (CAR). An action research is a research that has been done reflectively and systematically about various action or steps that have been done by teacher, start from planning until assessing about real action in the class such as teaching learning activity to improve learning condition. (Subyantoro, p.8)

According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart cited by Nunan(1992, p.17) moreover, an action research is a group of activities and a piece of descriptive research carried out by teacher in his or her own classroom, without changing the phenomenon under investigation.

The researcher concluded that an action research was one of the strategies in improving the practice of learning that can be achieved by doing such reflection in order to diagnose condition, and then tried it systematically as an alternative way to solve learning problems.

In this research there were two cycles applied. According to Kemmis as cited by Mills, there are four components in one cycle for doing a classroom action research. They are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Participant

For this research, the participants were 8 graders of MTs Al Mustaqim, Sungai Bulan, Sungai Raya, Kubu Raya. There were 28 students in the class. They live in a very remote area with limited public facility.

Technique of Data Collection

As the technique of data collection of this research, researcher collected the data from two ways. They were test and observation. Test was used in the end of each cycle while observation was acted during learning process.

Test of this research was oral test. The students pronounced some words that contained plosive consonant sounds. There were ten words provided in the end of each cycle.

Then, Observation on this research was guided with observation check list. For doing the observation, the researcher was assisted by the collaborator. There were five points of the observation aspects that were needed to fill the data for the observation. They were below:

- a. Students' attention on teacher's explanation.
- b. Students' activeness in asking questions.
- c. Students' activeness in responding questions.
- d. Students' enthusiasm in doing test.
- e. Students' corporation in group work.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Cycle 1

Before entering cycle I, the researcher did the preliminary research to know students' ability in pronouncing plosive consonant sounds of words with the purpose to compare with the result in each cycle. There were some steps in this cycle:

- a. Planning
 - 1) The researcher prepared the teaching aid (a computer for using sephonics software).
 - 2) The researcher made a lesson plan.
 - 3) The researcher prepared present list in order to know students' activeness in joining teaching learning process.
- b. Acting
 - 1) The researcher (as a teacher) greeted students.
 - 2) The researcher did ask and answer about various things related to the students' condition.
 - 3) The researcher told the role.
 - 4) The researcher gave motivations to the students related to the material that was taught, its purposes were: in order the students understood the material exactly to concentrate students' attention on the learning situation.
 - 5) The researcher explained the material.
 - 6) The researcher used the process of transformational of material by using contextual approach.
 - 7) The researcher gave an example of words in practice to the students in front of class.
 - 8) The researcher asked students to practice it by using sephonics software together.
 - 9) The researcher asked students to make it in written form.
 - 10) The researcher asked them to collect their result after the students finished their writing.
 - 11) The researcher gave a test to students after the cycle 1 treatment.
- c. Observing
 - 1) The observer observed the teaching learning process focus on students' ability that indicates their understanding and concerns on the lesson and students' activities based on checklist observation.
 - 2) The observer observed the students when they pronounce the words help by sephonics software.

Besides observing the classroom activities, the researcher also observed the result of the test of this cycle. The test was conducted after the teaching and learning process of cycle 1. It aimed to know the progress of the students' improvement in pronunciation.

From the result of second test, score percentages could be categorized as bellow:

Table. 1
The Percentages of The Cycle 1 Test Criteria

Level of Achievement	Number of The Students	Percentages
Excellent	26	92.8 %
Very Good	2	7.2 %
Good	0	0
Fail	0	0
Σ	28	100 %

From the result above, it can be concluded that the students' ability in pronouncing the words with plosive consonant sounds was wonderful. Even almost all of the students were in excellent level for pronouncing the words with plosive consonant sounds. It can be seen from the percentages of the level of achievement, which is 92.8% of the total number of the students were wonderful in this test. Then, the 7.2% categorized as Very Good level.

Based on the explanation above, the mean of students' result in the second test was 98.7. According to the criteria of score, the students' achievement level in this second test was excellent. It could be said that a treatment, which was given was able to improve students' ability of pronunciation on plosive consonant sounds. It had a very significant improvement.

d. Reflecting

Based on the observation of cycle 1, teacher and researcher need to do some improvements such as follows:

- 1) The researcher should use louder voice when explaining the materials.
- 2) The researcher should give motivation and guidance to students.

The researcher needed to make a group work, which made the students get involved in it.

Cycle 2

There were several aims of cycle II such as to solve the weakness in cycle I, to give more opportunities for students to improve their ability in pronunciation of plosive consonant sounds by using sephonics software; group work as an application of pronunciation as cooperative activity in this cycle. The activities are below:

a. Planning

- 1) The researcher prepared the material of words.
- 2) The researcher chose the sephonics software as an aid in teaching according to the material.
- 3) The researcher designed lesson plan of cycle II.

b. Acting

- 1) The researcher greeted the students and opened the lesson.
- 2) The researcher did ask and answer about the difficulties on the last meeting.
- 3) The researcher reviewed the materials.
- 4) The researcher explained the materials of English consonant sounds.

- 5) The researcher showed some words as examples and asked the students to pronounce.
- 6) The researcher divided the students into three groups.
- 7) Teacher explained the game rules by using sephonics software.
- 8) The researcher started the game.
- 9) The researcher announced the winner.
- 10) The researcher made a conclusion about the materials.
- 11) The researcher gave a test for students, they were asked to pronounce the words.
- 12) The researcher ends the lesson.

c. Observing

- 1) The observer observed the teaching learning process focus on students' ability that indicates their understanding and concerns on the lesson and students activities based on checklist observation.
- 2) The observer observed the students when they pronounce the words help by sephonics software.

Again, the researcher did not only observe the result of classroom activities. The test result of this cycle was also observed. It was done after cycle 2 treatment. It aimed to know the students' improvement

The result of the test could be categorized as below:

Table. 2
The Percentages of Cycle 2 Test Result

Level of Achievement	Number of The Students	Percentages
Excellent	26	92.8 %
Very Good	2	7.2 %
Good	0	0
Fail	0	0
Σ	28	100 %

It could be seen that there was a very significant improvement of the mean. And also, the percentages of each category improve well. It could be concluded that the improvement of the students' ability in pronouncing words with plosive consonant sounds was very successful. Then, based on the result of the third test, the cycle treatment was stopped.

d. Reflecting

In this cycle, the improvement was necessary. Because in this cycle, the students' improvement on their abilities in pronunciation was more significant. It could be seen from the mean improvement score of the test. Teacher and researcher concluded that it showed significant improvement mean after being given treatment by using sephonics software. It was seen by their enthusiastic in learning process, they were serious in paying attention when the researcher explained the material, the number of students who asked questions and responded the questions were increasing. They were also serious in making effort to understand the materials of pronouncing the words that contain plosive consonant sounds.

Discussion

Analysis of the test

The comparison of the whole test can be seen at the following table:

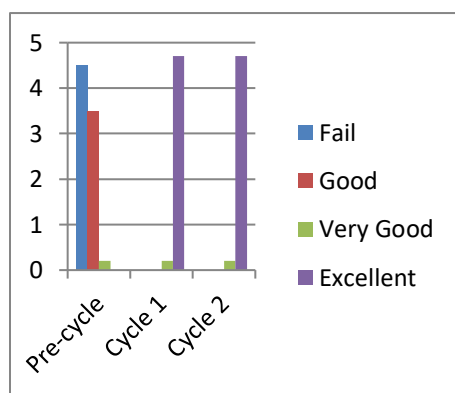
Table. 3
The Comparison of The Means of Students' Scores on Pre Test, Cycle 1 Test, and Cycle 2 Test

NO	Test	Mean
1	Pre Test	69
2	Cycle 1 Test	98.7
3	Cycle 2Test	99.6

Table. 4 The Comparison of The Percentages of Students' Score on Pre Test, Cycle 1 Test, and Cycle 2 Test

Level of Achievement	Pre Test	Cycle 1 Test	Cycle 2 Test
Excellent	0 %	92.8 %	92.8 %
Very Good	3.5 %	7.2 %	7.2 %
Good	39.3%	0	0
Fail	57.2 %	0	0
Σ	100%	100%	100%

Chart. 1
The simple description of student improvement in each category from pre cycle to cycle 2



The whole meetings of the cycles ran well, even, there was a very significant improvement from pre-cycle to cycle 1. It was great. The complete result can be seen on the tables that showed the progress of students' achievement.

Analysis of the observation

There were 5 items of categories that were used by the researcher to complete the needed data. These were used for

observation checklist. They are: paying attention, activeness in asking questions, activeness in answering questions, enthusiasm in doing test, and corporation in group work. The complete result of observation from pre cycle to cycle 2 can be seen below:

Table. 5
The Result of Observation Pre Cycle to Cycle 2

Cycle	A	B	C	D	E
Preliminary	28	3	2	17	0
Cycle 1	28	11	18	28	0
Cycle 2	28	11	14	28	28

Explanation:

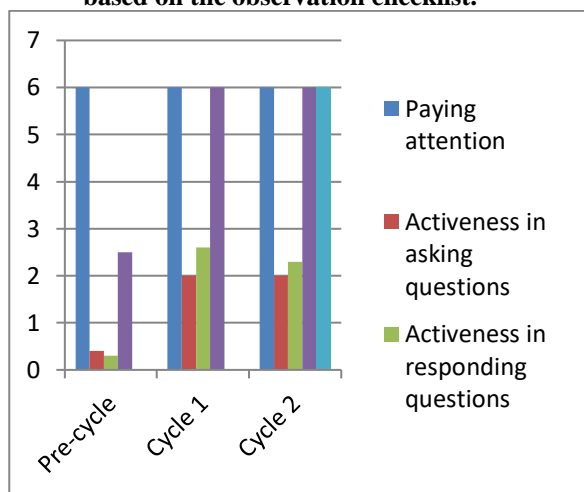
- A: Paying attention
- B: Activeness in asking questions
- C: Activeness in responding questions
- D: Enthusiasm in doing test
- E: Corporation in group work

Pre cycle observation was conducted while pre cycle learning process was being run. It was on September 19th 2011. Then, the observer observed about the students' activities based on the checklist observation sheet. It can be seen from the table above where it shows there were 28 students who paid attention to the teacher's explanation. Besides that, there were only 3 students who were active in asking questions. Otherwise, there were only 2 students were active in answering questions. Then, 17 students had enthusiasm in doing their test. There were no students active in the group work corporation because there was no group work in this pre cycle.

Cycle 1 observation was conducted while cycle 1 learning process was being run. It was on September 26th 2011. Then, the observer observed about the students' activities based on the checklist observation sheet. The table above shows that there were 28 students paid attention to the teacher explanation. Then, 11 students were active in asking questions. Otherwise, there were 18 students were active in answering questions. 28 students had enthusiasm in doing their test. Then, no student was active in work group corporation. Because there was no work group in this cycle1.

Cycle 2 observation was conducted while cycle 2 learning process was being run. It was on October 3rd 2011. Then, the observer observed about the students' activities based on the checklist observation sheet. The table above shows that there were 28 students paid attention to the teacher explanation. 11 students were active in asking questions. Otherwise, 14 students were active in answering questions. 28 students had enthusiasm in doing their test. Then, there were 28 students were active in group work corporation.

Chart. 2
The simple description of student development based on the observation checklist.



In conclusion, the researcher concluded that the students were good enough for being taught. The explanation above shows the students’ activity improvement that was very positive.

V. CONCLUSION

Having conducted the research of teaching pronunciation by using Sephonics software as a teaching aid, the researcher draws some conclusions based on the discussion. The conclusions are:

1. The implementation of using Sephonics software to facilitate students’ pronunciation can be done in computer laboratory, language laboratory, or only in a classroom by providing some computers or laptops. Then, the teacher divides the students into some groups to operate a computer for each group. In addition, as the learning based on CALL, the teacher may assign to students to practice by themselves individually. It aims to implement one of the functions of technology usage to facilitate self-learning process.
2. According to the data from result of tests and observation that have been done and analyzed in the previous chapter, it showed indicators that the use of Sephonics software to facilitate students’ pronunciation on plosive consonant sounds has significant improvement in each cycle. It can be

seen from the score means of the tests that show 69 for pre cycle test, 98.7 for first cycle test, and 99.6 for second cycle test. Then, it also can be seen from the numbers of student categories in observation checklists.

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