The Effect of Teaching Reading Aloud Technique in Improving English Pronunciation

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Abstract: Pronunciation is one of the essential components in oral form and is considered the basic ability of speaking English as well as other languages that has to be learnt by the students. Pronunciation is the production of sounds that is used for making meaning. The correct pronunciation of English is very important because the target of learning English is to help students to speak accurately and fluently which leads them easy to understand the utterances and to produce intelligible sounds. Reading aloud is an activity to read something loudly. By reading aloud, students can test themselves whether the pronunciations that they are saying is correct or not. This research was conducted to know the effect of teaching reading aloud technique in improving English Pronunciation. This research used "One Group Pretest and Posttest Design". The sample of this research was the ninth-grade students by taking 31 students (13 male and 18 female). The result showed that the calculation of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was 0.000. Since 0.000 < 0.05 even <0.001, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there is a significant effect on students' pronunciation of English by teaching using reading aloud technique.

Keywords: reading aloud, English pronunciation, technique of English teaching

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the essential components in oral form and is considered the basic ability of speaking English as well as other languages (Huang, & Radant, 2009). The correct pronunciation of English is very important because the target of learning English is to help students to speak accurately and fluently which leads the students are easy to understand the utterances and produce intelligible sounds.

The study of pronunciation has become an important aspect in teaching English as a foreign Language. In the learning process, the student may face difficulty which is crucial to be described and analyzed. One of them is difficulty in pronouncing English words. Pronunciation has become a dilemma for students. As a result, making errors in pronouncing English as foreign language is common. It is natural in the early stage of second or foreign language learning process. Goodwin (2001: 117) says, in teaching pronunciation, the goal of instructions threefold: to enable our learners to understand and be understood, to build their confidence in entering communicative situations, and to enable them to monitor their speech based on input from the environment. To accomplish these goals, he describes the tools we need to teach pronunciation in a systematic and principled way.

In most languages, including Indonesian language, pronunciation follows predictable rules but not in English. Spelling is not a reliable guide to know how a word is pronounced. English must surely rank among the most irritating language when it comes to pronunciation. Certainly, it has caused so much trouble for the learners. The same cases also happen in

SMPN 2 Palangka Raya where the students always found difficulties in pronouncing English words. English is one of difficult subjects for them, especially in pronunciation. Based on the research in SMP 2 Palangka Raya students making errors in pronounce. Moreover, they usually use their regional language in their daily life as mother tongue. Furthermore, Baker (1982) says students of different mother tongues have different pronunciation problems. Particularly at beginner level, some students may be happy to spend some time on sounds which are easy for them, deriving some encouragement in the relief of finding an English sound which they can pronounce.

However, time is usually precious and if some of it is to be spent in this way, teachers must be aware of how relevant this practice is to the students' real pronunciation needs. From the researcher observation, the researcher found that the students usually reading in a whisper because they felt worried if they made errors in pronouncing the words. They get difficulties especially in English vowel sounds. In producing different sounds, the learners are sometimes influenced by the native language interference. The interference of native language process influences the learners' imitation. Hence, the errors in mastering a new language cannot be avoided. For example, they may pronounce the word very is said [pery] not ['veri], another example when they pronounce the word heavy is [heapi] not ['hevi].

In the teaching-learning process, the students seldom get the exercise about pronunciation. In teaching, the teacher just reads the text, explains the material, and asks students to read and answer the question in individual or pairs without explaining how to pronounce it well. Therefore, when the teacher asks them to read the text the students felt shy and worry about their pronunciation and they always read in a whisper. The smart students listened to the teacher and did the task easily, while the others who did not understand what the teacher was explaining would get trouble in doing task, so they were not interested in doing the task and copied their friends' answer without understanding it. Not all of students took part actively in this teaching learning process especially when the teacher asks them to read the text, they get bored because they always get same instructions from the teacher. The students less motivated in learning.

In learning English, students have to master four basic language skills of the target language. Those basic skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and writing are language production (productive skills), while listening and reading belong to language comprehension (receptive skills). Among those four skills, reading is vital in language comprehension.

As cited from Fauzi (2018: 102), reading is one of the four skills that students should learn and care of. Reading process means not only "read" but tries to make interaction between the reader and the text. It is a constructive process that can help students to acquire new knowledge of language, experience about life and so on. Simply, reading is defined as "the active process of understanding print and graphic texts" (Souhila, 2014: 4). It is deals with how the readers can convey the meaning through the written symbols and process them into their mind. In more classical term, reading defines as the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols (Nuttal, 1982: 42). This definition indicates that reading is a result of the interaction between the perception of graphic symbols that represent language and the reader's language skill, cognitive skill and knowledge.

Therefore, reading process also makes connection between a text, a reader and social context with in which the activity take place. This is in line with Hudelson in Murcia (2001: 154) that reading process involves the reader's acting on or interpreting the text and the interpretation is influenced by the reader's past experiences, language background, and cultural frame work, as well as the reader's purpose for reading.

Reading aloud is a classroom activity which has fallen in and out of favor with teachers at various times. The main argument against it is that it can interfere with successful pronunciation; spelling clearly affects pronunciation performance adversely. But reading aloud offers opportunities for the study of the link between spelling and pronunciation, of stress and intonation, and of the linking of sounds between words in connected speech; all of these can be highlighted and investigated further in fun and interesting ways through reading aloud.

Reading aloud is an activity to read something loudly. Reading aloud is necessary to be learned. It is support by Huang (2010: 148) "reading aloud is an important part in education for all-around development, which has several functions in English teaching". By reading aloud, students can test themselves whether the pronunciations that they are saying is correct or not. If the pronunciations are not correct, the teacher can easily revise it. In addition, Huang also said that reading aloud is used as the major and magic way to improve students' oral-English.

Huang (2010) at English Department, Zhenjiang Watercraft College of PLA in his research about reading aloud said "reading aloud to middle and high school students can motivate them to read, enticing them with good a short story and providing a model of excellent reading, phrasing, expression, and pronunciation". When the teacher reads aloud to students, the teacher engages them in texts that they might not be able to teach. In the process, the teacher expands their imagination, provides new knowledge, supports language acquisition, builds vocabulary, promotes reading as a worthwhile, enjoyable activity. All students, from pre-school through high school, can benefit from being read to.

Lundy (2004) in English Autumn from the British Council said that "Reading aloud has been actively discouraged in the EFL classroom since he first trained as a teacher. Furthermore, he said that it is obvious that some people are much better at reading aloud than others. They are confident, polished and interesting. In all reading aloud it is important to emphasize the main ideas while conveying the appropriate attitude or emotion. As most of my students' aim were, vaguely, to improve pronunciation.

According to Huang (2010: 148), reading aloud technique is used as the major and magic way to improve students' oral-English. Also according to Gibson (2008: 30), reading aloud is a technique which offers opportunities for the study of the links between spelling and pronunciation, of stress and intonation, and of the linking sounds between words in connected speech.

In addition, the purpose of reading aloud, according to Huang (2010: 149), can facilitate foreign language classroom with five functions.

1. Practice pronunciation; reading aloud is a kind of comprehensive practice of pronunciation. Reading aloud can help them correct their dialect effectively.

2. Improve oral English; the students with perfect oral English should pronounce properly and speak fluently. Most students learn English with a focus on reading and writing skill. For some students who don't have the confidence to practice spoken English, reading aloud can help them overcome the faults of disfluency, repeat, improper pause, and develop natural and good pronunciation habit.

3. Get deeper understanding; in fact, reading aloud is reappearance of all the original content of idea, feeling, attitude and style in the form of voice.

4. Strengthen the knowledge; we can strengthen what we have learned by listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading aloud, which has relevant to listening, speaking, reading, is the practice of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. General oral English is an important method, but it has some restriction in vocabulary and structure. As a practice, reading aloud can make up with the lack of oral English, for its material has wide range in topic, vocabulary and grammar.

5. Improve the classroom atmosphere, in class, especially in intensive class, students may feel tired and dull after some time. At that time reading aloud can help them back to the class. "During read-aloud, we share the excitement, the suspense, the emotion, and the sheer fun of a new book and its intriguing or annoying characters," said Nancy Lacedonia, who teaches in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that reading aloud very helpful to improve students' ability in their pronunciation.

Also, there were some advantages of reading aloud that defined by Gibson (2008), such as reading aloud can improve reading fluency, monitor pronunciation, reduce speaking anxiety as it controlled, and be the part of being proficient in a language. From these facts, the researcher considers that reading aloud technique can help students to solve their problem in English pronunciation. Therefore, the researcher chooses reading aloud as a technique to drill students' pronunciation of English.

METHOD

This research applied pre-experimental research design with a quantitative approach in which only one group was taken as research subjects and involved in a pretest, having the treatment, and a posttest. The pretest was done to measure the students' pronunciation ability before being given them the treatment twice. The sample taken for this research was ninth grade students of SMP Negeri-2 Palangka Raya which were filled by 31 students (13 male students and 18 female students). In the treatments give to those students, researcher did teaching reading aloud to the students.

The following are the procedure in teaching reading aloud technique:

1. The students were explained about pronunciation first.

2. Then the researcher gave a familiar short story or text to be read aloud by using correct pronunciation.

3. The researcher divided the students into small groups then she dictated sentence to sentence from the text and allowed the groups to imitate the words read after her loudly.

4. Next, the researcher gave the copy of story to the students in respective group.

5. The students in the group discussed how to read the story and to pronounce the text in the correct pronunciation.
6. Then, the researcher asked each group to read the story loudly with correct pronunciation.
7. At the end of the treatment, the students got a feedback and evaluation from the researcher to correct the wrong pronunciation or non-target like pronunciation of words during the reading aloud activity. And, students were asked to practice pronouncing such corrected words.

As the treatment was complete, the researcher administered the posttest with the purpose to measure the students' pronunciation improvement after conducting the treatment. Finally, the means of two tests, both pretest and posttest were analyzed to know whether there was a significant effect before and after the treatment carried out.

The test of pronunciation was used as the research instrument. There were 24 consonant sounds used where each consonant consisted of 2 items which were one represented the initial sound position and one for the final position. Meanwhile, in relation to vowel sounds, there were 12 sounds to be tested in which 1 vowel sound consisted of 2 items which were one sound in initial position and one in the final sound position. So, the total number of items tested was 72 items covering consonants and vowels for the targeted pronunciation. Before the research instrument being given to students, it was tried out first to be tested whether it was reliable or not. The result of try out showed the reliability value 0.995 from the evaluation of inter-rater reliability using Pearson correlation product moment. By this result, it confirms that the research instrument is reliable and appropriate to be given to the research subjects.

The data of this research are the scores of students' pronunciation of English words. To score the pronunciation test, it was used the following scoring rubric adapted from Djiwandono (2008).

Table 1. Scoring rubric of pronunciation test

Pronunciation Aspect	Score	Description
Accuracy	4	Pronouncing the whole words accurately and does not cause any misunderstanding.
	3	Pronouncing nearly whole words accurately does not cause any misunderstanding.
	2	Pronouncing almost of the words by little misunderstanding.
	1	Most of the words are pronounced inaccurately. So, it causes misunderstanding.

Then the scoring rubric above was proceeded to find students' score with the range of 0—100 by using the formula proposed by Purwanto (2008:102) as follows:

$$\textbf{Score} = \frac{R \text{ (Students' accuracy score)}}{N \text{ (Maximum score for the test result} = 288)} \times 100$$

To analyze the data obtained from the test, it was used Wilcoxon sign rank test—a non parametric test since the test of data normality yielded not normally distributed.

RESULT

The following is the result of pretest of students' pronunciation before they were given the treatments of teaching reading aloud.

Table 2. The result of students' score in pretest

No	Students Code	Accuracy Score	Total Score
1.	A1	188	65.27
2.	A2	109	37.84
3.	A3	107	37.15
4.	A4	165	57.29
5.	A5	191	66.31
6.	A6	105	36.45
7.	A7	112	38.88
8.	A8	195	67.70
9.	A9	102	35.41
10.	A10	110	38.19
11.	A11	200	69.44
12.	A12	170	59.02
13.	A13	185	64.23
14.	A14	107	37.15
15.	A15	103	35.76
16.	A16	105	36.45
17.	A17	100	34.72
18.	A18	183	63.54
19.	A19	168	58.33
20.	A20	103	35.76
21.	A21	172	59.72
22.	A22	163	56.59
23.	A23	102	35.41
24.	A24	187	64.93
25.	A25	104	36.11
26.	A26	174	60.41
27.	A27	171	59.37
28.	A28	104	36.11
29.	A29	167	57.98
30.	A30	111	38.54
31.	A31	105	36.45
	Total		**1516,51**

Then the result of posttest are depicted in the following.

Table 3. The result of students' scores in posttest

No	Students Code	Accuracy Score	Total Score
1.	A1	227	78.81
2.	A2	139	48.26
3.	A3	136	47.72
4.	A4	185	64.23
5.	A5	231	80.20
6.	A6	134	46.52
7.	A7	146	50.69
8.	A8	238	82.63
9.	A9	129	44.79
10.	A10	142	49.30
11.	A11	236	81.94
12.	A12	212	73.61
13.	A13	223	77.43
14.	A14	137	47.56
15.	A15	132	45.83
16.	A16	130	45.13
17.	A17	128	44.44
18.	A18	219	76.04
19.	A19	208	72.22
20.	A20	127	44.09
21.	A21	211	73.26
22.	A22	183	63.54
23.	A23	102	35.41
24.	A24	187	64.93
25.	A25	131	45.48
26.	A26	214	74.30
27.	A27	206	71.52
28.	A28	129	44.79
29.	A29	193	67.01
30.	A30	146	50.69
31.	A31	158	54.86
	Total		**1847,23**

Then, the scores of pretest and posttest on Table 2 and 3 are statistically calculated using non-parametric Wilcoxon test to find out the significance difference of both test scores.

Table 4. The Result Wilcoxon Sign Rank Test

		N	Mean rank	Sum of rank	Z	Asyimp. sig. (2-tailed)
Score pretest and posttest	Negative Ranks	0[a]	0.00	0.00	-4.704[b]	0.000
	Positive Ranks	29[b]	15.00	435.0		
	Ties	2[c]				
	Total	31				

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference on students' pronunciation of English by using reading aloud technique after two times of treatment given. Hence the treatments given to the subjects succeed to improve students' pronunciation. This is specified by statistical test values where $Z = -4.704$ and $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

The result of this research shows the reading aloud technique gave improvement on English pronunciation to students. This is in line with some studies related where reading aloud is proven to be able to improve students' pronunciation. Muflikhati (2013), for instance, used a classroom action research method to teach reading aloud in improving English pronunciation to eleventh graders of SMA. The research was conducted in two cycles. From the observation and interview result, students' pronunciation was improved in every cycle. Then, she made a conclusion that reading aloud could improve the pronunciation ability.

Furthermore, Adita (2014) carried out the classroom action research method to investigate reading aloud technique to improve eight graders' pronunciation by reading narrative texts. The result again showed the use of reading aloud technique can also improve the students' pronunciation in reading narrative text and students' participation during teaching and learning pronunciation was very motivated.

In addition, the result of this research also confirms Huang's (2003) study that reading aloud can motivate students to read and provide them a model of excellent expression and pronunciation. Furthermore, this research also confirms what Lundy (2004) yielded in his study that reading aloud technique can make his students confident and also improve their pronunciation of English.

Besides, from this research it is also found some factors that may improve students' pronunciation such as students are given the way how to pronounce difficult words containing consonant clusters. By doing so, students are familiar with English pronunciation which then makes them easier to follow the instruction and feedback during the treatments.

CONCLUSION

The reading aloud technique can help students to improve their English Pronunciation. The researcher believed that despite of the succession in attracting and motivating alternative technique in learning process, using reading aloud technique can make learning English pronunciation to be more effective and challenging. As the result, students' accuracy to

pronounce targeted words after being given reading aloud technique has improved significantly.

In relation with this result, teachers should provide appropriate technique in teaching English pronunciation. Reading aloud technique is one of the appropriate techniques in enhancing students' accuracy to pronounce English words. This technique can be a reference for teachers to make their students interested in drilling English pronunciation. Besides, teachers should also motivate their students to be interested in reading aloud since reading aloud bears positive things in enhancing students' pronunciation. Again, this research is far from perfect, so many more models and designs can be used to study the similar cases with the more ideal technique to be implemented to research subjects.

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