FACILITATING PROPER ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN STORYTELLING BY VIRTUE OF HIJAIYAH SOUND MEDIATION

Rosalin Ismayoeng Gusdian
English Language Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Rina Wahyu Setyaningrum, Riski Lestiono*
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

*Email: riskilestiono@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
Story telling has been an icon of local culture preservation. Since local wisdoms knotted in local cultures are prone to be eroded along the changing eras, an effort to bring back and preserve them should be the penultimate concern, before implementing those values in real basis. Folklores have been the media to incarnate those local wisdoms, and thus the book ‘Bilingual Nusantara Folklores’ is worth referring to when it comes to the topic of folklores for storytelling. All folklores covered in this book are originating from Indonesia, as the name suggests, “Nusantara”, served in bilingual versions – Bahasa and English. A series of training and drilling were planned to be conducted in SMP Negeri 02 and 03 Batu so as to project the English pronunciation precision. The stages include the followings: (1) FGD (Focused-Group Discussion) between researchers and the teachers as well as the students to tap challenging sounds susceptible to be mispronounced during storytelling the folklores taken from the book; (2) mapping corresponding English-Hijaiyah sounds to train; (3) modeling by Community Service Team and English teachers; (4) the students’ English pronunciation training by means of Hijaiyah corresponding sounds; (5) reflection and feedback for the betterment of training activities; (6) the students’ simulation for storytelling; and (7) video taking and making.

KEYWORDS
storytelling, English pronunciation accuracy, folklores

INTRODUCTION
Preliminary collaboration between the lecturer team of English Language Education Department (ELED) Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FTTE) University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM) and the English teachers of SMP Negeri 02 and 03 Batu has been marked by the successful publication of ‘Bilingual Nusantara Folklores’ (Lestiono et.al, 2016). The book has been an answer to query of best preparing the students in both schools to acquire their competence in story telling (mostly competed in regional story telling contests). Three ELED FTTE UMM lecturers, co-authored by the two English teachers in both partner junior high schools, wrote the book.

Storytelling has been an icon of local culture preservation. Since local wisdoms knotted in local cultures are prone to be eroded along the changing eras, an effort to bring back and preserve them should be the penultimate concern, before implementing those values in real basis. Folklores have been the media to incarnate those local wisdoms, and thus this book is worth referring to when it comes to the topic of folklores for storytelling. All folklores covered in this book are originating from Indonesia, as the name suggests, “Nusantara”, served in
bilingual versions – Bahasa and English. Some popular titles are: Timun Mas, Ande-Ande Lumut, Lutung Kasarung, Putri Mandalika, and others in a long list. Besides, Malang Raya and Batu folklores are also parts of this book: Singosari Temple, Songgoroti Temple, Mbah Batu, and some others.

Two years after the publication of this folklore book, particularly following the frequent use of the Nusantara folklores upon teaching and competition preparation, the further need analysis was conducted in both junior high schools. There is something in common in both schools. It is evident that student storytellers are fluent in English and highly expressive in narrating their stories. However, the challenge faced by the English teachers as trainers and the students as storytellers lies on the issue of accuracy, in this sense pronunciation (Dardjowidjojo 2009; Crystal 1995; Flege and Port 1981). The scoring rubric of story telling puts considerably more portion on articulation, and thus pronunciation. The inexistent sounds of English in Bahasa Indonesia have made it hard for the students to produce proper English pronunciation upon story telling (Jarvis, 2008; Nguyen, 2011; Jarved, 2013).

SMP Negeri 02 and 03 Batu are two favorite schools in Batu. They both are located in the downtown of Batu with considerably big number of students. The fame of both schools is proven by their winning several competitions, one of which is a storytelling contest. The interest of students’ in English is shown in their active participatory in English clubs. In SMP Negeri 02 Batu, the English club is named English Conversation Club (ECC). The activity of which is mainly on speaking. It is manifested in several agendas, such as English conversation, discussion, and debate. Offered quite differently from the club in the previous school, the English club in SMP Negeri 03 Batu, named Trigger English Club (TEC), focuses on storytelling, conversation, and poetry reading. Both schools and their study clubs need sustainable supervisory and development.

In the meantime, it is generally known that most people in Indonesia are Muslims; and a result, they are obliged to be able to read Quran, which is written in Arabic. With respect to this condition, it is then assumed that many Indonesian EFL students own some knowledge about phonological and phonetic aspects of Arabic (Pallawa and Alam, 2013). In connection to this, Lestiono and Gusdian (2017a; 2017b) have carried out a series of studies on whether Indonesian EFL students are capable of pronouncing English words correctly through their knowledge of Arabic sounds. Consequently, the studies have gained affirmative answers; Arabic consonant sounds do help Indonesian EFL students to pronounce English words. Further, Gusdian and Lestiono (2018a; 2018b) implemented these findings to facilitate the pronunciation accuracy of the students in the university and senior high schools. As results, the implementation was deemed successful in both levels of education.

Regarding the accuracy problems faced by the students and the aforementioned findings on Hijaiyah sounds, a little extra help from the English experts—in this case is English language lecturers from FTTE UMM—is indispensable. Eventually, this study aims at equipping junior high school students with knowledge to improve their English pronunciation specifically in pronouncing certain English sounds. Through raising students’ awareness about several English sounds which do not occur in their native tongues and training them with Hijaiyah sounds to bridge them to arrive at accurate English pronunciation, it is eventually expected to give benefits to the partner schools in forms of: (1) Students’ awareness of the existence
of Hijaiyah sounds that facilitate English pronunciation; and (2) The improvement of junior high school students’ accuracy in English pronunciation through the storytelling media.

RESEARCH METHOD

From the initial observation and interview conducted in both partner schools, it is found that although the majority of the students are proficient and fluent in English, their accuracy still becomes a major problem, especially in the production of certain English sounds. Thus, in order to help students to deal with this issue, this study was initiated. Below are the stages of how the study was conducted:

Stage I: Initiation
- FGD (Focused-Group Discussion) between the researchers and the teachers as well as the students to tap challenging sounds susceptible to be mispronounced during story telling the folklores taken from the book
- Deciding the working schedule as well as the target of the program

Stage II: Implementation
- Mapping corresponding English-Hijaiyah sounds to train
- Modeling by the researchers and English teachers;
- Training the junior high school students’ English pronunciation by means of Hijaiyah corresponding sounds;
- Reflection and feedback for the betterment of training activities; and
- Students’ simulation for story telling
- Video taking and making

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study has been conducted for several months following the stages planned in the previous sections as the guideline of the framework of implementation. The scenarios of the program service are elaborated in the following section:

Firming the Capstones of Instruments
The instruments used mainly in this program are English-Hijaiyah Consonant Corresponding Chart portraying five English sounds that exist only in both English and Arabic. They are useful for facilitating English learners to acquire proper English pronunciation, the chart has been registered for a copyright and declared to be successfully issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights with the Reg. number EC00201939946 dated on May 13, 2019. This attainment is a strong legal basis to make use of the chart for a wider public under the law of proprietorship.

Another capstone set is the registration of Bilingual Nusantara Folklores book written by the team to win another copyright for the intellectual property. The legal basis for this manuscript was currently released with the Reg. number EC00201947542 dated on July 25, 2019.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD)
The FGD was aimed to a) introducing the concept of Hijaiyah consonant sounds (Bosha, 1993, 2008) that are potential for facilitating the proper English pronunciation (as underpinned the notions of the acquired target pronunciation by Davenport & Hannah, 2010;
Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Fromkin et.al, 2012; Yule, 2012); and b) developing the selected folklores from Bilingual Nusantara Bilingual book into a story plot containing dialogues among characters and embedding the targeted sounds

**Determining folklores for training and performances**
This stage constitutes choosing possible stories to be narrated by the student storytellers; considering the complexity of the story and the targeted sounds to emphasize, the team and teachers looked through Bilingual Nusantara Folklore book and came up with four selected stories. Two stories are originated from Central Sulawesi and West Kalimantan. The other two stories are originating from Batu where the two partner schools are located. Those four stories are respectively titled The Origin of Putri Duyung, the Crying Stone (*Batu Menangis*), Songgoriti Temple, and Mbah Batu.

**Selecting nominated students from each School**
The process of selection was conducted within the following criteria: a) The students are joining English Clubs in both schools (Trigger English Club (TEC) for SMP Negeri 03 Batu and English Conversation Club (ECC) for SMP Negeri 02 Batu); b) The students are fluent in English; and c) The students join training and preparation for story telling contest. According to the abovementioned criteria, the total of four students were selected, two students of each partner school.

**Modeling the teachers**
Modeling means training the teachers on how to use the charts of English-Hijaiyah Corresponding Consonants. By that, the team exposed the teachers to a number of minimal pairs of words sharing tricky targeted sounds for proper pronunciation. It is expected that the teachers will become the front-liners for integrating the concept of integrating Arabic consonant sounds into the teaching of English pronunciation. Later, the teachers could assist the students from year to year by making use of the copyrighted chart and book.

**Student Training and Rehearsal on Storytelling Focusing on Accuracy**
In order to be able to perform storytelling with the accuracy in English pronunciation, training and rehearsal are necessary. It is the time when the university team make use of the copyrighted English-Hijaiyah consonant corresponding sound chart to facilitate the four selected students from two partner schools when pronouncing some targeted sounds. Those five sounds are challenging for the students during the training because of their absence in their mother tongue. However, by the help of the chart, the four students could easily grasp the proper sounds they are supposed to pronounce.

As for the stories to be told, there are two Nusantara folklores and the other two are Batu—rooted stories. Two students from SMP Negeri 02 Batu are to tell about *Mbah Batu* and ‘Crying Stone’. Meanwhile, two other stories are titled ‘Candi Supo’ and ‘The Legend of Mermaid’. The trainings have been conducted four times in total; two meetings per school. During the trainings, the students have been drilled to read and retell the story not only considering fluency but mainly focusing on accuracy as projected in this program.

**Video Taking and Making**
Prior to video making and taking as the output of the program, the university team visit the two sites in Batu which are going to be taken as the background of the storytelling activities. These two sites have not been much retold; therefore, capturing the sites is iconic and
originally supporting the properties of the storytellers. For the other two Nusantara stories, the settings are accessible through the internet since they are well-known nationwide. The four videos are distributed to the two partner schools to store in their library and language laboratory to support English learning, particularly story telling and English pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

A number of efforts have always been conducted to facilitate the EFL learners' accuracy in using the target language. This current study was aiming for this sort of acquisition. There are some ways to learn English in a fun way; one of which is storytelling. One of the contributing factors for difficulties in storytelling accuracy is the five English sounds that are inexistent in the learners' mother tongue, requiring the mediation of Hijaiyah sounds. This current study has elaborated the implementation of that mediation to facilitate the four storytellers in local junior high schools in producing correct English pronunciation upon their storytelling recorded in videos for further learning.

REFERENCES


