

Improving English Pronunciation Competence Using Imitation Technique in *mmmenglish.com* Website

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this research are to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of the imitation technique in mmmenglish.com website to improve students' pronunciation and to find out students' perception of using the media. This research employed a pre-experimental research design with the instruments, namely pre-test and post-test, questionnaire perception, and interview. The subject of this research was the eighth grade which consists of 15 students of SMP N 1 Pringapus, Semarang Regency. The results were shown by pre-test and post-test score categories. The pre-test scores indicated that there were 3 (20%) students in the excellent category, 1 (7%) student in the good category, 2 (13%) students in the fair category, 6 (40%) students in the poor category, and 3 (20%) students in the bad category. The post-test score indicated that there were 6 (40%) students in the excellent category, 5 (33%) good, 4 (27%) in the fair category, and none who were categorized bad. Therefore, the pronunciation abilities of the subjects improved after the treatment. It can be seen that the post-test scores of students were higher than the pre-test in the excellent category. The second result is about the students' perception of using imitating techniques on the mmmenglish.com website. It can be seen that 42% of students were favored with a very high criterion, and 58% of the students were favored with a high criterion. The results showed that the student's responses to using imitation techniques on the mmmenglish.com website to improve their pronunciation ability were positive.

Keywords: pronunciation competence, imitation technique, mmmenglish.com website.

INTRODUCTION

Language is important in communication where everybody can use language to convey messages or express feelings in communication utterance. One of the main targets in learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in English. Speaking is an important basic language skill in English that must be mastered by foreign learners of English because it is used in communication (Garg & Gautam, 2015). There are five aspects of speaking skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension (Brown, 2004). According to Kelly (2004), to be able to speak fluently, learners must have good pronunciation skills. Pronunciation is one of the basic components of speaking skills for the learners to produce a clearer language in speaking even though they have limited vocabulary and grammar.

According to Gilakjani (2012), pronunciation is a habit of learning to speak that is obtained by repeating it over and over again with correction when it is incorrectly pronounced. Further, he claims that in learning pronunciation, students become a crucial part of the learning process, and students must be actively involved in the learning (Gilakjani, 2012). Then the teacher acts not only as a pronunciation checker but also as a "language teacher" who is able to train students' pronunciation optimally, to motivate students to improve their pronunciation competence and help students to be more confident in their pronunciation abilities. Based on researchers' preliminary observations in SMP N 1 Pringapus, some students said that they have difficulties in understanding English material because they found it difficult to pronounce the English words correctly. It was established that when students were given a pronunciation exercise of some words, most of the students make mistakes in pronouncing some English words, particularly the words with silent consonant letters that do not occur in the Indonesian language. Moreover, to support the problem above, the researcher asked students to pronounce five words in the form of silent consonants. Many students could not pronounce the words correctly. For example, the word 'scene' pronounced /skɛn/ should be /si:n/, the word 'write' pronounced /waɪt/ should be /aɪt/, the word 'science' pronounced /sɛn/ should be /'saɪ.əns/, the word 'whole' pronounced /woʊl/ should be /hoʊl/, and the word 'wrong' pronounced /w.rɒŋ/ should be /'rɒŋ/. As mentioned by Ardini et al. (2016) that students' mindsets in communicating are still heavily influenced by Indonesian and Javanese, where a word is pronounced the same as it is written. Moreover, students are still very unfamiliar with the pronunciation of silent consonant letters in English words because there is no pronunciation of silent consonant letters in Indonesian. For those reasons, students still struggle to pronounce them correctly.

According to Taufiqulloh et al. (2018), the teacher's teaching method in the classroom affects the level of student learning success. According to (Sulistianingsih, 2018), the use of audiovisual media type makes it easier for students to understand the concept of material learning. Based on this statement the researchers used the imitation technique on the *mmmenglish.com website* for students in pronunciation learning. Imitation techniques in the context of learning English mean imitating pronunciation, intonation, and the use of a vocabulary in English. According to Tanner & Landon (2009) imitation is a learning technique by copying the words, pauses, stresses, intonation,

expressions, and gestures of native English speakers teaching EFL to listen to the sounds, know the sound patterns of English words' sounds and practicing to imitate the same sounds by themselves.

Meyer (2000) stated that good English videos can be played in class to teach using imitation techniques. Multimedia instructions (combining videos, words, sounds, and pictures) would support students to understand the material better and learn more effectively. Based on this statement it may be easier for students to receive English learning materials if they watch and imitate videos on the *mmmenglish.com website*. Therefore, to know how effective is imitation technique on *mmmenglish.com website* to improve students' pronunciation competence in SMP N 1 Pringapus and to find out the students' perception of using the imitation technique on *mmmenglish.com website*, the researchers conducted research entitled "Improving English Pronunciation Competence using Imitation Technique in *mmmenglish.com Website*".

Perception is a particular individual or group perspective on a phenomenon that entails processing stimuli and integrating memories and experiences in the process of understanding (Cresswell, 2014). Students' perceptions have an important role in the learning process because they can affect an effective learning process for students and improve their achievement. Therefore, the researchers used students' perceptions as support for the results of the effectiveness of using *mmmenglish.com website* as a medium for learning English in improving their pronunciation skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study conducted by Ahmad Fauzi (2019) entitled "The Use of Imitating Actors' English Pronunciation in the Movie of *Inside Out* to Improve Students' Speaking Skill (Classroom Action Research for the Second Year Students of MTsN 1 Boyolali in the Academic Year of 2018/2019)". This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) for research design and imitating actors' English pronunciation in the movie of *Inside Out* to improve students' speaking class is one of many ways in evaluating the teachers' media. The research findings indicate that imitating actors' English pronunciation in the movie *Inside Out* is an effective way to give students more talk time as they build confidence. From the result of cycle I to cycle II, it was found that using audio visuals had a significant influence on improving students' speaking skills. It shows that the

percentage of cycle II reached 88.5%. Based on the findings, it can be said that the students were clear in achieving the expected objective.

The similarity of this research with the previous study above is the use of the imitation technique to improve the students' pronunciation. The difference is the use of the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com* website as a learning media. In this research, students focus on listening, imitating and pronouncing from the native speakers. The researcher also wants to know the effectiveness of the implementation of 3 Simple Step of imitation technique in *mmm.english.com website* to improve the students' pronunciation competence in SMP 1 Pringapus. It is also to know the students' perception on the use of *mmm.english.com website* as a teaching learning media.

Indonesians communicate in three languages: their native language, Indonesian as a formal or second language, and English as a foreign language. Different with other countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, spoken English is used as a second language in daily conversations, but the development of global trade makes English a language that must be mastered. The ability to communicate in international languages is also a main reason for starting to catch up and trying to compete with other countries. As a result, Indonesian government implemented a policy that English is required as a school subject, and English became one of the subjects tested on the national exam.

Mastering English speaking skills is a main priority for most foreign language learners (Richards, 2008). Pronunciation has an important aspect in speaking skill, which are a sound, intonation and stress (Fromkin et al., 2003). The differences in sound, intonation, and stress of each region's languages are the characteristics that define the world's languages. Each Indonesian usually has own difficulties in learning English. It is because English transcripts, sounds, and structures are very different from Indonesian and the mother tongue of each tribe, and they tend to confuse when they speak and write in English.

The students may have difficulty to understand the material during the learning process because they are forced to communicate in a language which they are unfamiliar. According to Kelly (2004) lot of pronunciation teaching tends to be done only when responding to students' in-class pronunciation errors. The lesson did not appear to be planned in advance. However, it is crucial for students to learn pronunciation before learning other aspect in English language in order for them to be able to pronounce words

correctly and their pronunciation minimally understandable when they speak. Pronunciation teaching has made the learners aware of differences sounds and sound features (and what these mean), while also improve their speaking skill immeasurably (Harmer, 2001).

According to Brown (2004) teaching technique is any of a number of exercises, activities, or tasks that are used in a language classroom to achieve a lesson purpose. There are several kinds of teaching techniques that teachers can use to teach pronunciation:

a. Drilling

Drilling is one of crucial techniques in teaching pronunciation which is practiced in classroom. Drilling is basic for teaching pronunciation of sentence stress, word stress, and intonation. The aims of drilling are to help the learners to get the better pronunciation.

b. Minimal Pairs

Teachers use minimal pairs in class to help students focus on pronounce difficult sounds. In this activity, the teacher provides two words with the same pronunciation but different writing, such as sigh and shy, bought and boat, see and she. The aims of minimal pairs are to help learners differentiate between similar and problematic sounds to achieve the goal of language through listening and speaking practice.

c. Visual aids

Improvement of teacher's description on how sounds are produced by audio-visual aids, such as: pictures, mirrors, rods, sound-colour chart, realia, etc. The aims of those techniques are to make learners interest in learning pronunciation and will be more easily to understand materials.

d. Communicative activity

All of the activities, such as: interviews, role plays, drama, speech, and audiotaped dialog journal, is can be used in the classroom to practice pronunciation. Meanwhile, all of those activities are possible done in class if supported by allowed the situation and facilities.

e. Reading Aloud

Focusing on stress, timing, and intonation are the part for learners in learning pronunciation. Reading aloud technique can be involved or not in memorizing the text and it happens in the spoken, such as: speeches, poems, plays, and dialogues.

Based on this statement the researchers used the imitation technique on *mmmenglish.com website* for students in pronunciation learning. According to Tanner & Landon (2009) imitation is a learning technique by copying the words, pause, stresses, intonation, expressions and gestures of native English speaker teaching EFL to listen the sounds, knowing the sound patterns of English words' sounds and practicing to imitate the same sounds by themselves. The website of *mmmenglish.com* are created to help the foreign language learners to improve their pronunciation, to express themselves and become a bold and confident speaker in speaking English. She developed imitation techniques through videos on the *mmmenglish.com website* to practice students' English pronunciation in improving their pronunciation fluency as well as other important aspects of English communication that will make them fluent faster.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach to achieve the research objectives. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website* to improve students' pronunciation and to find out student perception in using the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website* as a medium for learning English pronunciation.

This research used a pre-experimental research design with a single group observed carrying out a test without a control group. This research design integrates both posttest and pretest quantitative approaches to observe the effectiveness of using the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website* to improve pronunciation skill. In the pre-experimental research design, either one group or several groups that were observed after subsequent some treatments were considered to cause changes (Sugiyono, 2013).

Moreover the researchers used questionnaire perception to find out student perception in using the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website*. The questionnaire involved is a test of a people or group's attitude, opinion, and perception scale towards an object which uses the *likert scale* parameter (Sugiyono, 2013).

In quantitative research there is a design survey called a sample where a survey is carried out or a questionnaire is given to a small group of people (Creswell, 2014). This

research was conducted in Class VIIIA at SMP N 1 Pringapus, Semarang Regency, which consists of 15 students (12 females and 3 males) as the sample to collect data.

Both pre-test and post-test were given in the same form. In the testing process, students were asked to record their voices with their phones to practice pronouncing the words provided in the 14 questions. The researchers also used the treatment through imitation technique in the *mmmenglish.com website* to improve students' pronunciation competence, specifically to pronounce the silent consonant words correctly. The researchers showed a 15-minute video of pronunciation practice from the *mmmenglish.com website*, and they were asked to imitate using 3 simple steps. The treatment was given after the pretest and before the posttest. The researcher utilized a perception questionnaire to find out students' perception in using the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website*. The questionnaire consists of 12 questions. The questionnaire includes questions with optional answer based on the Likert scale. The researchers used four optional answers: agree, disagree, strongly agree, and strongly disagree. Students marked their choice of response in the table with a check mark (✓). This questionnaire was given after the pretest until the post test was complete.

The data were analyzed using quantitative data by statistical methods. To determine the individual score of each student, the formula used is as follows:

$$\text{Student's score} = \frac{\text{correct answer}}{\text{Total number of questions}} \times 100$$

The researchers used the scoring rubric of pronunciation to measure students' pretest and posttest results. To find out the effectiveness of used the imitation technique in *mmmenglish.com website* to improve students' pronunciation skill. The researchers would be analyzed statistically by using Paired Sample T-Test through SPSS 21.0.

The questionnaire used the Likert scale. Based on the scoring results, one tendency from the students' responses will be found. Then, to calculate the scoring response, the researchers used the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = ((F1x1) + (F2x2) + (F3x3) + (F4x4))$$

To find out the percentage of the mean or the percentage of respondent's answer

choices from each statement in one indicator using the formula below:

$$\text{Score percentage} = \frac{\sum \text{Score}}{\text{Score Maximum}} \times 100\%$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to answer the first statement of the problem about how effective of used the imitation technique on the *mmmenglish.com website* to improve students' pronunciation competence. This research dealt with the students' score classification of pre-test and post-test, mean score, the significant differences between the scores in pre-test and post-test, and hypothesis testing of paired sample t-test.

The classification of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Score

The researchers used the scoring rubric of pronunciation to measure students' pretest and posttest results. The findings are explained in the description below:

Tabel 1. Score Categorization and Percentage of Students' Pronunciation Ability in Pre-test

Score	Categorize	F	Percentage
80 – 100	Excellent	3	20%
41 – 55	Good	1	7%
56 – 65	Fair	2	13%
61 – 79	Poor	6	40%
30 – 39	Bad	3	20%
TOTAL		15	100%

Table 1 indicated the classification of the pre-test score of 15 students. There were 3 (20%) students in excellent category, 1 (7%) student in the category good, 2 (13%) students in the category fair, 6 (40%) students in the category poor, and 3 (20%) students in the category bad.

Tabel 2. Score Categorization and percentage of Students' Pronunciation Ability in Post-test

Score	Categorize	F	Percentage
80 – 100	Excellent	6	40%
66 – 79	Good	5	33%
56 – 65	Fair	4	27%
40 – 55	Poor	0	0%
30 – 39	Bad	0	0%
TOTAL		15	100%

Table 2 indicated the grading of the post-test score of 15 students. There are 6 (40%) students who are categorized as excellent, 5 (33%) who categorized as good, 4 (27%) who categorized as fair, and none who categorized as poor or bad. Based on tables 2 and 3, it can be concluded that the students' pronunciation abilities have improved after the treatment. It can be seen that the post-test scores of students are higher than the pre-test in the excellent category.

The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

Tabel 3. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pretest and Post-test Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Pair 1	Pre-Test	55,40	15	20,969
	Post-Test	78,07	15	16,434

Table 3 indicated the results of descriptive statistics from the pretest and posttest samples. The mean for the pretest value is 55.40, while the post-test value is 78.07. A total of 15 students were included in the research. Then, the Std. Deviation for pretest is 20.969 and post-test is 16,434. The last is the Std.Error Mean on the pre-test of 5.414 and 4.243 on the post-test. Because the mean value in the pretest was $55.40 < 78.07$ which was the mean value in the post-test, it can be interpreted descriptively that there is a difference in the average student learning outcomes between the pre-test and post-test.

Tabel 4. The Significant Differences between of Score Pre-test and Post-test Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Pre Test & Post Test	15	,827	,000

Table 4 indicated the correlation between the pre-test and post-test variables. Based on the results in the table, it is known that the significant value is 0.000. So, if the significant value is $0.000 < \text{the probability value of } 0.05$, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the pre-test and post-test.

Tabel 5. The Hypothesis Testing of Paired Sample T-test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Test	--	11,830	3,055	-29,218	-16,115	-7,421	14,000
	Post Test	22,667						

The hypothesis was tested by comparing the value of t_{count} with the t_{table} , which involved the calculation of pre-test and post-test data. The conclusion is that if $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$, the H_A is accepted, while if $t_{\text{count}} < t_{\text{table}}$, the H_A is rejected.

Based on table 5, it is known that the result of the calculated t_{count} in the paired sample test is -7,421. The t_{count} is negative because the results from the post-test data are higher than the pre-test, so the t_{count} value can be positive, which is 7.421.

After calculating the result of t_{count} , the researcher calculated t_{table} . The t_{table} is obtained from the value of df (degree of freedom) and a significant value (with a significant level of 5% at a 95% confidence level). Then t_{table} can be determined by the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} t_{\text{table}} &= \frac{\alpha}{2}; (\text{df}) \\ &= \frac{0,05}{2}; (14) \\ &= 0,025 ; 14 \end{aligned}$$

$$t_{\text{table}} = 2.145$$

The result above is used to determine the value of t_{table} . The t_{count} comparing with t_{table} distribution with significant 0,05 and degree of freedom (df) 14. It was found that t_{table} was 2.145 while the result of t_{count} was 7.421.

Based on the previous statement that the t_{count} was $7.421 > t_{\text{table}} 2.145$, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test learning outcomes. It is indicated that the imitating technique in *mmmenglish.com website* has an effect on improving students' pronunciation competence.

The second question in this research is about the perception of the students using imitation techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website*. The findings are explained in the description below:

The Classification of Students' Perception on the Use of Imitation Techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website*

Tabel 6. The Percentage of Students' Answers

Question	Likert Scale				Score	%
	SD	D	A	SA		
1	0	0	13	2	47	83%
2	1	1	3	10	52	77%
3	0	1	5	9	52	68%

4	0	11	3	1	35	63%
5	1	0	13	1	44	89%
6	2	13	0	0	28	93%
7	0	0	3	12	57	84%
8	0	0	4	11	56	79%
9	1	0	13	1	44	89%
10	0	3	11	1	43	77%
11	0	4	11	0	41	80%
12	0	2	11	2	45	73%

Very high criterion : $\frac{5}{12} \times 100\% = 41.6\%$

High criterion : $\frac{7}{12} \times 100\% = 58.3\%$

The second result of this research is about the students' perception on the use of imitation techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website* to improve their pronunciation ability. The result showed that the students' responses to using imitation techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website* to improve their pronunciation ability were positive. Based on the responses to the questions of the students are as follows. The first statement asks students' that "The use of the imitation technique in *mmmenglish website* is a better way to learn English pronunciation because it is more clearly." The majority students (83%) were favored with a very high criterion for the statement. The second statement asks students' that "The use of audiovisual media makes it easier for students to learn English pronunciation than not using audiovisual media." The majority students (77%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement for the statement. The third statement asks students' that "It is important to learn pronunciation to better understand the material being conveyed by the teacher in English learning process." The majority students (68%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. The fourth statement asks students'

that “Learning pronunciation can be done by reading books/dictionaries without having to use audiovisual media.” The majority students (63%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. The fifth statement asks students’ that “The *mmmenglish website* is varied audiovisual learning media to make it easier for us to learn pronunciation.” The majority students (89%) were favored with a very high criterion for the statement. The sixth statement asks students’ that “I (student) could correctly pronounce the silent consonant in English before the treatment.” The majority students (93%) were favored with a very high criterion for the statement. The seventh statement asks students’ that “I (student) have difficulty pronouncing the silent consonant in English before using *mmmenglish website*.” The majority students (84%) were favored with a very high criterion for the statement. The eighth statement asks students’ that “I (student) have a better understanding of how to pronounce the silent consonant in English after using *mmmenglish website*.” The majority students (79%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. The ninth statement asks students’ that “The *mmmenglish website* makes learning pronunciation fun and easy.” The majority students (89%) were favored with a very high criterion for the statement. The tenth statement asks students’ that “The used of imitating technique in *mmmenglish websites* motivates me to keep practicing English pronunciation.” The majority students (77%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. The eleventh statement asks students’ that “The use of imitation techniques to learn pronunciation on the *mmmenglish website* has helped me more confidence in pronouncing English silent consonants.” The majority students (80%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. The last statement number twelfth asks students’ that “The use of imitation techniques on the *mmmenglish website* to learn pronunciation is more interesting than using the song.” The majority students (73%) were favored with a high criterion for the statement. From the data collected, it can be conclude that 42% of students were favored with a very high criterion by calculating the percentage of students' answers that scored 61% - 80%. While 58% of the students were favored with a high criterion by calculating the percentage of students' answers that scored 81% - 100%. It means that students are very interested in using imitating techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website* to improve their pronunciation ability.

According to Kelly (2004) a lot of pronunciation teaching tends to be done only when responding to students' in-class pronunciation errors. The lesson did not appear to

be planned in advance. However, it is crucial for students to learn pronunciation before learning other aspect in English language in order for them to be able to pronounce words correctly and their pronunciation minimally understandable when they speak. Teaching technique is any of a number of exercises, activities, or tasks that are used in a language classroom to achieve a lesson purpose (Brown, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The use of imitating technique in *mmmenglish.com website* is effective to improve student's pronunciation competence. This statement is proven by the result of the pre-test and post-test score. The result of post test score indicated that students were able to pronounce silent consonants better than pretest. It has been demonstrated that student's scores have improved to the good category. Besides that, students who were previously unfamiliar with the English silent consonant letter now have a better understanding of what it is and how to pronounce it.

This research also has a positive impact on the student learning process. The result of the student's response in Likert scale questionnaire indicated that 42% of students were favored with a "very high" criterion, and 58% of the students were favored with a "high" criterion. The use of imitating techniques on the *mmmenglish.com website* makes the students seem to enjoy and be more active in learning English pronunciation. During the practice of pronouncing silent consonant letters in English together using imitation techniques by watching videos through the *mmmenglish.com website*, the students more confident and the learning situation look more fun. They also seem to have a better understanding of how to pronounce silent consonants correctly in English.

The weakness in this research is wasting too much time to explain the material before the treatment, for the reasons that there are many students don't understand about silent consonant letters in English. However, based on the effective this media the researchers suggest for further researchers to use *the mmmenglish.com website* where the research related to learning English in improving students' pronunciation. For the reason, there are many interesting learning videos with various topics of learning English.

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