LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION PERFORMANCE ANDTEACHERS' ROLES UPON THE USE OF *CLEAR PRONUNCIATION 2* SOFTWARE

Wahyu Kartika Wienanda

Sekolah Vokasi Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta – Indonesia

wahyu.wienanda@ugm.ac.id

Abstract: In the 21st Century teaching, it is becoming the common practice to integrate technology in the classroom, even for pronunciation class. Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) by utilizing pronunciationsoftware has a significant role in altering teachers' roles. This qualitative study looked at unveiling to what extent the use of *Clear Pronunciation* 2 software, as one of the computer technologies for English pronunciation teaching, increased learners' pronunciation accuracy. This research explored the teachers' roles in utilizing the software during teaching-learning practice. Pre-test and post-test, as well as the software reports of exercises, were conducted to measure the learners' performance and the degree of their improvement. Meanwhile, a semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain data regarding teachers' roles in using the software. Research findings indicated that the learners' had quite significant progress in their pronunciation accuracy and the teachers' roles showed more learner-centered practices in which the teacher acted more as a facilitator than as the primary source of information. This study supports the view that integration of technology in 21st Century teaching leads independence and improved language learning.

Keywords: Teacher roles, Teaching pronunciation, Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training.

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has undoubtedly influenced teaching and learning practices and led to the emergence of 21st Century teaching, which is defined by Henriksen, Mishra, and Fisser (2016) as technology-rich education. There have been vast research findings indicating the importance of integrating technology in teaching-learning activities (e.g., Timucin, 2006). Even for the past three decades, there has been an ongoing process of integrating technology into teaching-learning activities.

The importance of technology integration is now even more highlighted as the learners in higher education today, who are then defined by Oblinger and Oblinger (2004) as the millennials, have been so immersed in a digital, media-rich world. These millennialshighly expect that they will get more engaging, participative, and active education due to their digital lifestyle (Dede, 2005). Moreover, it is said that technology integration in education has become a critical part in both, higher and professional educations (Wernet, Olliges, and Delicath, 2000). Thus, technology integration in teaching, more specifically in language teaching, seems to be inevitable. Language teachers are now required to be familiar with, to understand, and to be able to use different kinds of technology such as blogs, social networking, online videos, and some other interactive media

to create more engaging activities for language learners, which also happens in pronunciation classes.

There were many proposed techniques of teaching pronunciation; one of which that reflects the 21st Century teaching is by incorporating the use of pronunciation software to help the learners to practice and eventually improve their pronunciation skill. The use of software in pronunciation class is known as Computer Assisted Pronunciation Teaching (henceforth CAPT). It is seen as a more effective way of learning the rules of pronunciation, including the segments (i.e., vowels, diphthongs, trip thongs, and consonants) and suprasegmentals(i.e., stress, rhythm, and intonation) parts of English pronunciation.Hişmanoğlu (2006) states that through the implementation of CAPT, a teacher can give a stress-free and private environment to the learners to practice and access unlimited resources as well as to get immediate feedback.Jahangiri and Sardareh (2015) conducted experimental research on CAPT using *Lingoes* software in a vocational school in Iran. They found that the learners' pronunciation skill in the experimental group improved and they also had a positive attitude towards the implementation of CAPT.

By implementing the CAPT, the role of the teacher is slowly shifting. Before the emergence of technology, the teaching practice was more on traditional method, which is described by Roblyer, Edwards, and Havriluk (1997) as the practice where learners were obliged to gain the information from the teacher submissively. However, since technology has advanced, there are some alterations to the teacher role in the classroom, especially in the technology-integrated classroom.As proposed by Ryba and Anderson (1990, as quoted in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2014), there are five main categories of teachers' roles in using computer technology, namely planner, manager, facilitator, guide and participant. Similarly, Lai (2006) also proposes three main categories of teachers in the computer-supported learning environment: planner and manager, participant, and guide. Liu, Bonk, Magjuka, Lee, and Su (2005) mention slightly different roles of the teacher in a pedagogical dimension, namely course designer, profession-inspirer, feedback giver, and interaction facilitator. Furthermore, Hung and Chou (2015) add more roles including discussion facilitator, social supporter, technology facilitator, and assessment designer.

It is said that by integrating computer technology in teaching pronunciation, the teacher's role is altered from a giver into a facilitator (David, 1991 as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2014). Moreover, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2014) in their study found that the teacher changed their teaching method when they taught using *Pronunciation Power* software in the Iranian EFL context and it was more learner-centered where the cooperation between learners increased.Prensky (2010) also found a similar result in which the teacher role changes from being a lecturer to being a coach. Therefore, this present study tried to unveil to what extent can CAPT help improve learner's pronunciation accuracy and to discuss the altering role of teachers in pronunciation class using CAPT.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study, focusing on the improvement of learners' pronunciation accuracy and the roles of teachers in implementing CAPT using *Clear Pronunciation 2* software. The participants were 78learners of Diploma of English Programat SekolahVokasiUniversitasGadjahMada, Indonesia, and three teachers teaching pronunciation classes. The learners were in the second semester of their first-year study at the university. They were divided into three parallel classes, and all of them were non-native speakers of English coming from different backgrounds. Most of them have been familiar with using the computer.

Pre-test and post-test were administered to the learners to measure their improvement in pronunciation performance. The pre-test was administered in the middle of the semester, while the post-test was administered at the end of the semester. The tests covered five main topics as presented in the software: consonant clusters, word stress, connected speech, sentence stress, and intonation. In other words, the questions focus more on the suprasegmental features of pronunciation. The learners recorded their voice in response to the questions. The results of the test were then calculated and compared to see the degree of improvement of the learners' pronunciation performance.

As for gathering the data on the roles of teachers, a semi-structured interview with three teachers was conducted. The interview took around 10 minutes for each informant. The answers were recorded and were then transcribed to make it easier to classify the data. After that, the transcribed answers were classified into different roles of the teacher. This study is to find out whether the three teachers had similar or different roles during the implementation of CAPT using *Clear Pronunciation 2* software.

Findings and Discussion

Clear Pronunciation 2 software was used in every meeting of the pronunciation class. Commonly teachers gave a brief explanation about the topic at the beginning of the class, and they let the learners practice their pronunciation using the software by listening to sample pronunciation and recording their voice to achieve accepted English pronunciation.

The Improvement of Learners' Pronunciation Performance

The result of the pre-test and post-test from three parallel classes showed various mean scores, yet in general, they indicate an increase. The mean scores of pre-test and post-test were presented in Chart 1.
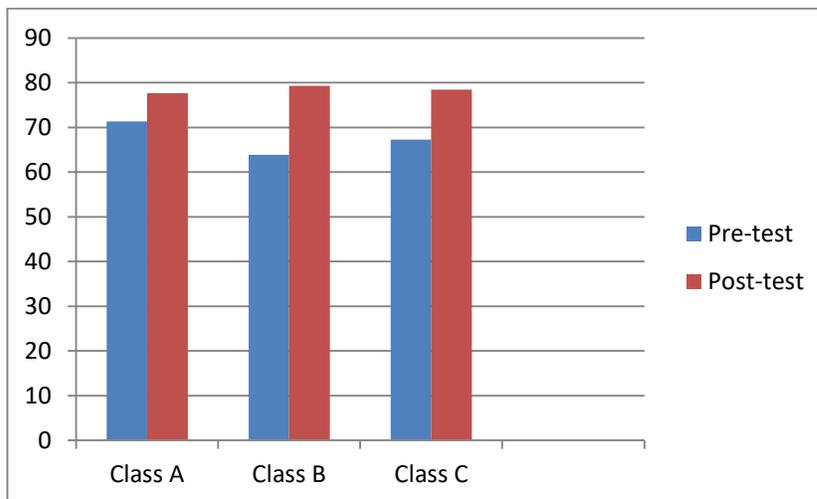
Chart 1. Mean scores of pre-test and post-test of the three parallel classes

From Chart 1, it is seen that the mean scores of all classes experienced an increase from the pre-test and the post-test. These results indicate satisfactory progress on the learners' pronunciation performance after the seven weeks of learning with the software.Even though the progress might not be considered very significant because the overall learners' improvement only ranges around 6 points to 15 points, it still verifies that the use of technology might help the learners to fulfill their needs and to enhance their performance in pronunciation class. This study is in line with the statement asserted by Lai (2006) that saying the incorporation of instructional technology may improve the process of learning to meet the learners' need when the traditional learning environment fails to do so. Moreover, from the increase in the learners' scores, it implies that the learners can learn and understand better through the integration of technology to classroom activity. This result corroborates to Lacina's (2004) belief that learners can construct meaning better and more effectively when they learn in the CALL environment, because the use of technology helps learners to form connections and to make meaning to what they learn. They can also get more information from various sources to expand their knowledge on a specific subject matter.

Moreover, the results of this study also contribute to the expansion of knowledge, especially in EFL pronunciation instruction and teaching practice, in which the results support the implementation of CAPT to enhance learners' pronunciation performance. The learners also seemed more enjoyable during the teaching-learning activities. They did not feel pressured and judged when they learned and practiced to produce the correct and intelligible pronunciation. Instead, they can listen to their recorded voice and practice more than once to achieve the intended pronunciation finally. The result also supports the finding of Sadeghi's research in 2013 where he found a significant improvement in Japanese EFL learners' perception and production of English consonant after the implementation of CALL. This study strengthens the idea that technology-enhanced pronunciation classroom is more motivating and interesting for the

learners, especially the *millennials.* When the learners' motivation is high, they can most likely achieve higher.

Not to mention, through the use of the software, the learners directly got the example from the native speakers of English and is very helpful for them as EFL learners that have limited access to native speaker teachers. The examples on the software are a good model for the learners to know precisely the accurate pronunciation rather than merely listen to the teachers. Reed and Michaud (2011) stated that learners tend to ignore the target pronunciation when modeled by the teachers and continue with the wrong pronunciation. In order to minimize this to happen, the use of software can be the alternative because learners can analyze the target language pronunciation and acquire it. The result of this study indicates that using the software is more useful to give a good model of the target language pronunciation.

The Changes of Teaching Approach and Teachers' Roles in Implementing CAPT

The results of the interview conducted to three different teachers who taught the paralleled pronunciation classes indicate that generally, the teachers believe that they have experienced a shift in their teaching as well as their roles in the classroom. The teaching practice that they implemented shifted from fully teacher-centered to more learner-centered even though the degree of learner-centeredness might be different from one teacher to another. The followings are the roles of teachers as mentioned in the interview.

Teaching Approach

The teaching practice implemented in English Study Program of Sekolah Vokasi Universitas Gadjah Mada is most likely learner-centered, even though there are still some tendencies for the teacher to apply more teacher-centered approach depending on the situation, the characteristics of the learners, and the teacher's perception. However, from the results of the interview, all of the three teachers believe that they have employed more learner-centered teaching practice by using the software in their pronunciation class, yet the degree of the learner-centeredness applied is various from one teacher to another. It implies that currently, teachers are not the most authoritative ones in the classroom; instead, the learners need to be more active and participative during teaching-learning activities.

> *Before I implemented the software, my class was more teacher-centered in which I gave examples to the learners and they practice afterward. It was mostly a repeat-after-me activity. I also hadfull control to the learners during the practice. However, after implementing the software, I felt that I gave more freedom to the learners to experience learning and to practice more by themselves. They can explore the materials on the software by themselves and learn based on their own pace. (T1)*

In my class, I gave an introduction to each topic at the beginning of the lesson and then I directed the learners to use the software by themselves. Through this, they are mostly freed from total dependency on me as the main source of information. (T2)

In general, I would say that my class is quite learner-centered even though I mostly implemented more controlled practice to the learners, so I could monitor and ensure that the learners really practiced their pronunciation and ensure that they improved their pronunciation. Besides, I preferred giving a specific time for the learners to practice in giving them total freedom. This way, the teaching-learning is more organized (T3)

The excerpts as mentioned above showed the difference in the implementation of learner-centered approach done by different teachers. Two of the teachers (T1 and T2) implemented a higher degree of learner-centeredness in their teaching-learning activities. Sharma (2017) claimed that due to the advancement of technology and the implementation of various technologies during teaching-learning processes, most of the teaching-learning processes change from autocratic to democratic. Chapman (1997) mentioned that the use of computer technology moves the teaching practice from teacher-centered to learner-centered that requires the learners to look for information from other sources, analyze and draw their conclusions from data. It means that the teaching-learning process starts to create a personal learning environment that will eventually create more independent and self-regulated learners (Ng, 2005 as cited in Vghnarajah, Lua, and Bakar, 2008) that can engage more to teaching-learning activities, especially in this digital age (Häkkinen&Hämäläinen, 2011)

However, T3 still preferred to have more control in the classroom upon the use of the pronunciation software. It shows that teacher-centeredness and learner-centeredness are a continuum in which one teacher can apply different degrees of them in the classroom depends on various reasons. Wozney, Venkatesh, and Abrami (2006, as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2014) supported the finding that teacher who applied learner-centered teaching practice might also make it teacher-centered.

In addition to the shifting of teaching practice, the roles of teachers in the classroom also experienced some alteration. The teacher is not the only and the primary source of information, which transmits the knowledge to the learners. Instead, now the teachers who were interviewed all agreed that they have more roles than only become the ones with full authority to the teaching-learning activities.

Teacher as a Planner and Manager

The first role that all teachers possessed during the implementation of CAPT is as a planner and manager. All three teachers mentioned that they acted as a planner of the course or a course designer. It is shown from the teachers' statement mentioning that they planned the course and considered many aspects before they integrate the software into their teaching.

Before the semester started, all teachers design a pronunciation syllabus where they plan the materials learned, activities, as well as technology use in the classroom throughout the semester. They also made sure that the computer has already been included in the course and they needed to know precisely when and how computers would be used during teaching-learning practices. They managed to create a clear guideline for the learners as well as to explain the course procedure to the learners. Bailey and Card (2009) mention that instructors in the technology-enhanced classroom should make an understandable guideline for in-class participation and should inform the students about the course expectation and procedures.

Not to mention, the teachers also organized the learning environment and managed the class activities. They did the activities step-by-step in an organized way. They also made sure that the learners learn well without disturbing each other.

Teacher as a Facilitator and Feedback Giver

All three teachers also experience as a facilitator. They mentioned in their interview that they exist to help the learners set the learning goals. Besides, they are also available to give feedback to the learners who need it. Teacher as facilitator is encouraged to provide sufficient and necessary information for the learners and become a fellow learner him/herself (Aspy, Aspy, and Quinby, 1993). It is reflected from the statement of the two teachers (T1 and T2) where they mostly let the learners learn by themselves, but they were always ready to give feedback anytime needed. Additionally, one of them (T2) also gave the introduction at the beginning of the class to facilitate learners' understanding and engagement to the materials.

However, one of the three teachers (T3) went beyond becoming a facilitator, in which she also became the director in the classroom. She mentioned that she mostly gave instruction and direction to the learners to learn the subject matter using the software, and did it in a more controlled way where she allocated specific time for the learners to learn specific subtopic before moving to the other subtopics. She was also ready to give feedback to the learners about how to improve their pronunciation.

Teacher as a Guide

All the three teachers also stated that they became the guide for the learners. This means that they need to be sensitive to the learners' progress and are willing to help them whenever needed (Lai, 1993). One of the teachers (T2) mentioned in the interview that she always tried to check that the learners were on the right track by asking them to come forward and show the

results of their learning by reciting or practicing their pronunciation. It is also one of the ways to assess learners' progress.

Teacher as a not-so-Participant

The last role is the role of the participant where the teacher does not prepare a lesson beforehand (Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2014). However, the three teachers interviewed in this study felt that they did not act as a participant during teaching-learning activity because they indeed prepared the materials to some extent. They still explained at the beginning before they used and let the learners use the software. To some extent, they did agree that they also learned alongside the learners when they use the software because the materials presented in the software might be new for them and were not found in some other sources.

Conclusion

Upon the implementation of CAPT through the use *Clear Pronunciation 2* software in the pronunciation class, it was found that technology integration in teaching-learning activity can help the learners to improve their pronunciation performance, even though the improvement might not be very significant. All in all, learners could be more enjoyable and more motivated when learning with the software. Not to mention, the teaching practice has shifted from teacher-centered practice towards a more learner-centered practice that requires more active and participative learners. This alteration in the teaching practice has also impacted the changes in teachers' roles. If in the traditional teaching practice teacher became the only and primary source of information as well as the most authoritative one in the classroom to dispense the information, in the technological-advanced classroom like the one applied in this study, teacher has more roles, namely as planner and manager, as facilitator, as director, and a guide. Additionally, teachers can also act as a participant to some extent, even though they still have to prepare the materials before entering the classroom and present them to the learners.

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WahyuKartikaWienanda is a faculty member of the English Study Program of SekolahVokasi UniversitasGadjahMada, Indonesia. She earned her master degree in English Language Teaching from UniversitasNegeri Malang. Her research interests are in the area of English Language Teaching, Material Development, and Second Language Acquisition.