

Improving English Vocabulary for Elementary Students in Grade 4th through Listening with Received Pronunciation (LWRP)

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Abstract

This study investigated the improvement of English vocabulary for elementary students through Listening with Received Pronunciation (LWRP). There were sixty-one students in grade 4th of elementary school involved in the study. They were given pre-test and post-tests to measure their vocabulary skills. The results indicated that students who had been taught through LWRP got higher average scores than students who had not. In conclusion, LWRP are fruitful medium to improve students' mastery in learning English vocabulary at an early age.

Keywords: Improving; English Vocabulary; Listening with Received Pronunciation

A. Introduction

The importance of having sufficient vocabulary depends on the ability of young EFL learners to listen, it can be inferred. (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Ghonivita et al., 2021; Listiani et al., 2021; Syafii et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2020; Thi & Nhat, 2021). To assess appropriate methods for the teaching of listening to young pupils, different methodologies and techniques have been used. The results of previous

studies have shown that the majority of techniques and methods applied can be very effective at helping young learners learn to listen. Most methods and techniques used are very effective in improving the listening skills of younger students, according to results from previous studies. (Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Listiani et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). There are also a number of deficiencies with regard to listening, such as nervousness (Kormos et al., 2020; Wah, 2019), and motivation (

Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). Learning new vocabulary for EFL learners discusses how to properly pronounce the word. In addition, prior studies have shown that pronunciation plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition. (Aratusa, 2019; Candan, 2020; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019; Playsted & Burri, 2021; Reid & Debnarova, 2020; Vančová, 2019).

Unfortunately, the vocabulary of young learners is under a bit of scrutiny. (Budianto et al., 2022b, 2022a; C. M. Chen, Chen, et al., 2019, 2019; C. M. Chen, Liu, et al., 2019; R. W. Chen & Chan, 2019; Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019; Larson et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2019; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021; Puimege & Peters, 2019; Song & Ma, 2021; Vartiainen et al., 2020). By listening to and watching not writing or even reading, young EFL learners acquire new vocabulary. Unlike adult learners, young learners prefer pictures audiovisuals like to study new vocabulary and like flashcards (R. W.

Chen & Chan, 2019), digital storytelling (Leong et al., 2019), iPad tablets (Elyas & Al-Bogami, 2019), and the newest one; Artificial Intelligence (Vartiainen et al., 2020). Even young learners often don't know how to say a word, but they can recognize it.

When young learners first learn to speak a language, they don't have to be good at writing. They should have the necessary listening skills, which would lead to improvement of their speaking abilities (Kormos et al., 2020), metacognitive (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Kormos et al., 2020), and pronunciation (Tsang, 2022).

Some teachers and students may argue that pronunciation is a trivial matter when learning a language, but not when it comes to young learners. As long as pronunciation is comprehensible, EFL students say that it can be claimed to be good (Candan, 2020). It is not only the young learners who can't pronounce correctly (Asmaradhani et al., 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Yürük, 2020), but also for university students (Candan, 2020;

GHOUNANE, 2019; Zafary, 2021), English teachers (Astina;, 2020; Bai & Yuan, 2019; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020). Attention paid to teaching pronunciation leads to misinterpretation of the word's meaning. To be native-like is the main goal of foreign language learning.

English teacher has a very crucial role in developing students' speaking. One of the elements of speaking is pronunciation. In the EFL context, the teacher quality has to pay careful attention. Moreover, a study showed that EYL's parents suggest emphasizing on native-like pronunciation from English teachers (Bozsó & Nagy, 2018). Through the previous studies of teachers' and students' pronunciation have indicated some factors which affect the pronunciation quality as so-called RP (received pronunciation) like institutional sociocultural context (Bozsó & Nagy, 2018), motivation (Aratusa, 2019; Astina;, 2020; Reid & Debnarova, 2020), error correction (Couper, 2019; Febrianto, 2021; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et

al., 2020; Quoc et al., 2021; Reid & Debnarova, 2020). In short, English teachers have a crucial role in bettering students' pronunciation since a teacher with a good theoretical background can raise student's awareness and performance in pronunciation (Vančová, 2019).

B. Research Method

This research used descriptive statistics to measure the percentage of the improvement before and after the treatment. Sixty-one students of elementary level from grade 4th were taken to participate in the study. Twenty-five questions were given in pre-test and post-test. The scores from the pre-test were compared with the scores from the post-test to ensure there was any improvement before and after the application of Listening with Received Pronunciation (LWRP) in the class.

C. Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistic revealed that the mean of the using LWRP is 84 which is greater than the mean of the no LWRP which is 72 (See Table 1). Therefore, it can be stated that the use

of LWRP is beneficial for young learners in learning vocabulary. There are seven students from LWRP group reaching 96 or 22,6% (See Table 2) while group without LWRP 88 reaching 88 or 12.9% (See Table 3).

The result of using LWRP is higher than using without LWRP. The result is in line with the previous studies saying that hearing is similar to listening skills in learning language. Relating to listening skills, this study shows definitely that listening has a crucial role in helping students understand new vocabulary. A similar finding reports that having sufficient vocabulary depends on how well EFL young learners' listening skills (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020; Aldukhayel, 2021; Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014; Ghonivita et al., 2021; Listiani et al., 2021; Syafii et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2020; Thi & Nhat, 2021; Tsang, 2022; Wah, 2019).

Moreover, the results of previous studies report that most techniques and methods used are very effective in assisting young learners' listening skills (Dung, 2021; Ghanbari & Hashemian, 2014;

Listiani et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). However, a few weaknesses relating to listening are also found like anxiety (Kormos et al., 2020; Wah, 2019), and motivation (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020). The weaknesses of young learners listening skills reported by the previous studies were caused probably classical ways to present the vocabulary lesson like uncolorful pictures and no audio to show the way to pronounce correctly. EFL young learners' listening skills influences their pronunciation abilities. Most EFL young learners have got incorrect pronunciation when learning vocabulary.

Received Pronunciation (RP) is the main fundamental in learning pronunciation for young learners. The result of this study also in accordance with the previous studies reporting that pronunciation is one of prominent roles in acquiring vocabulary (Aratusa, 2019; Candan, 2020; Cox et al., 2019; Febrianto, 2021; GHOUNANE, 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019; Playsted & Burri, 2021; Reid &

Debnarova, 2020; Vančová, 2019). Unfortunately, pronunciation is assumed as a trivial matter in acquiring new vocabulary in EFL. Consequently, EFL teachers have to be aware of it. In short, listening new vocabulary for EFL young learners deals with how to pronounce the word correctly for searching long-term effects and having a standard English dealing RP (received pronunciation). One of the reasons why English pronunciation is not easy is that some English phonemes are not found in EFL young learners' native language. Indonesian young learners of English

are not familiar with phonemes such /θ/, /ð/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /z/, and /ʃ/.

In fact, previous studies claim pronunciation is not easy not only for young learners (Asmaradhani et al., 2019; A. P. Gilakjani et al., 2019; P. Gilakjani et al., 2020; Yürük, 2020). It is in agreement with the finding of the study where pronunciation skills are correlated to listening skills of a young learners in acquiring vocabulary. It means when a student has a difficulty in listening, he also has a problem in pronunciation in EFL. It happens since the way student pronounce a word is not like what it should be pronounced.

| | N | Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|---------|----|------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| LWRP | 31 | 84.7742 | 14.83849 | 20.00 | 100.00 |
| No LWRP | 30 | 72.8000 | 14.98137 | 32.00 | 92.00 |

| | | Using LWRP | | | Cumulative |
|-------|--------|------------|---------|---------------|------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Percent |
| Valid | 20.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| | 56.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 6.5 |
| | 76.00 | 2 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 12.9 |
| | 80.00 | 4 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 25.8 |
| | 84.00 | 6 | 19.4 | 19.4 | 45.2 |
| | 88.00 | 6 | 19.4 | 19.4 | 64.5 |
| | 92.00 | 3 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 74.2 |
| | 96.00 | 7 | 22.6 | 22.6 | 96.8 |
| | 100.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 31 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 3. Using No LWRP

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|------------|
| | | | | | Percent |
| Valid | 32.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| | 44.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 6.7 |
| | 48.00 | 2 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 13.3 |
| | 60.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 16.7 |
| | 64.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 20.0 |
| | 68.00 | 7 | 22.6 | 23.3 | 43.3 |
| | 72.00 | 2 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 50.0 |
| | 76.00 | 1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 53.3 |
| | 80.00 | 4 | 12.9 | 13.3 | 66.7 |
| | 84.00 | 4 | 12.9 | 13.3 | 80.0 |
| | 88.00 | 4 | 12.9 | 13.3 | 93.3 |
| | 92.00 | 2 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 30 | 96.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 1 | 3.2 | | |
| Total | | 31 | 100.0 | | |

D. Conclusion

Teaching English vocabulary for EFL young learners would be effective when listening and received pronunciation were emphasized and got adequate attention from the English teacher. Teacher's pronunciation quality has a crucial role as an English teacher plays as the role model for the young learners. To show a new vocabulary in EFL context, young learners should be taught how the word is pronounced correctly through listening NOT by showing the spelling of the word. When, the young learners have recognized the new vocabulary and the way how to pronounce it, the spelling of the word can be taught. Finally, having a good listening and pronunciation skills would not lead the misinterpretation of the word's meaning in students' speaking and writing ability in the future.

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