

DEALING WITH STUDENTS PRONUNCIATION: THE “SPELLING BEE” EFFECT

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Abstract: Pronunciation is put on bottom list in English teaching-learning process, and students focused to learn grammar. The aim of this research was to investigate the effect of “Spelling Bee” technique towards students’ pronunciation. The researcher used the experimental method. The sample of the research was 63 students in seventh-grade MTs NU 01 Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi which was consist of 32 female students of seventh E as experimental class and 31 female students of seventh D as control class. The sampling technique used cluster random sampling. The instrument of the research used jumble letters and speaking test as pre-test and post-test which were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The result of the research indicated that there was a significant difference between students’ post-test in experimental class and control class. The mean score of the post-test in the experimental class was (71.806) while the score post-test in the control class was (23.306). Besides, the result of the t-test showed that t-stat (27.125) was higher than t-table (1.688) with a degree of freedom (df) = 36 as a result H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected. It meant that the “Spelling Bee” technique had a significant influence in teaching pronunciation at seventh-grade of MTs NU 01 Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi. “Spelling Bee” can be an alternative technique for teachers to improve students’ pronunciation as well as their vocabulary and spelling skills.

Keywords: *Spelling Bee, Technique, Pronunciation.*

INTRODUCTION

In most cases, English teachers get students to study grammar and vocabulary, practice some functional dialogues and take part in productive skills activities. One of the goals of teaching foreign language is how the teachers can facilitate the learners to master both oral and written communication in the target language.

Dalton & Seidlhofer (cited by Handayani, 2017) defined pronunciation as the production of important sound in two senses. Both are as part of code and as tool to achieve the meaning in context of use. Paulston & Burder (1976) cited in Gilakjani (2016) stated that pronunciation is the production of a sound system which doesn't interfere with communication either from the speakers' or the listeners' viewpoint. Pronunciation is a sound we make while speaking. As the speaker of a language, we need to be able to understand each other with relative ease. The pronunciation patterns native speakers' use reflects those commonly accepted by the particular speech community. It is important to remember that the way a person speaks is a sign of

their origin. Every language in the world has different varieties and different accents. In some languages, there are even different styles of pronunciation for men and women. The way we speak is really a part of identity (Nunan, 2015).

Pronunciation is the former thing which the people may first notice when they talk each other because it constructs good impression to the quality of language skill (Ikhsan, 2017). Based on several studies in Indonesian context, dealing with pronunciation becomes one of big problems faced by a lot of the students because of different phonological features between Bahasa Indonesia and English (Andi-Pallawa & Fiptar Abdi Alam, 2013; Komariah, 2018; Kosasih, 2017). Gilakjani (2012) mentioned several factors influencing students' pronunciation. Those are attitude, motivation and exposure, instruction, and exposure to target language. Furthermore, Kenworthy (1987: 4) mentioned several factors that influence students' pronunciation. Those are the native language, age, amount of exposure, phonetic ability attitude, identity, and motivation. In the other hand, the teachers have to be creative to create and improve teaching techniques, methods or instructional media thus students will be more interesting to learn English especially pronunciation.

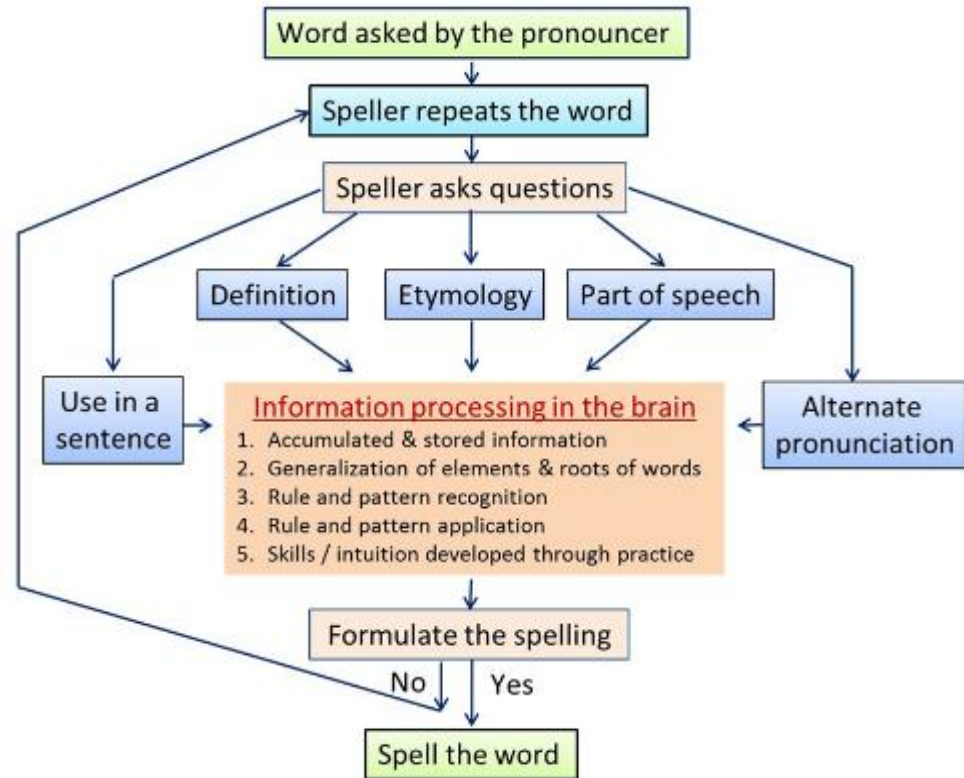
The role of English teachers also has to master and comprehend about English teaching techniques, especially in teaching pronunciation. Many teachers are interested in treating their students to read and write well rather than train them to have good communicative competence, i.e speaking and pronunciation (As Sabiq, 2018). (Kelly, 2000) mentioned several techniques in teaching pronunciation as follow: drilling, minimal pairs and related activities, taping students' English, listening activities, pronunciation and spelling activities.

One of the techniques in spelling activities that is appropriate in teaching pronunciation is the “Spelling Bee” technique since the purpose of this technique is in line with two of the language components of English vocabulary and pronunciation. Sebba (2009, cited in Yusuf, Mustafa, & Alqinda, 2019). It can help students to know the structure of the word and how to pronounce each word accurately and fluently. “Spelling Bee” technique also could engage students' motivation because the way to teach was so attractive and joyful.

Based on Spelling Bee Handbook published by Mcmillan (2012), Spelling Bee is a competition for elementary school students in which they are asked to spell words in front of the audience. It is to help students in improving their spelling, increasing their vocabularies, learning concepts and developing correct English usage that will help them all their lives.

Spelling Bee is one of alternative techniques that can be applied to the students. This is one of the cooperative learning techniques that can be implemented in the classroom. It is an education competition in spelling and vocabulary that can make the exciting learning activities and enriching experience (Payra & Cardona, 2016). The steps in implementing Spelling Bee can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 1. A step-by-step approach for spelling a word in Spelling Bee competition (Payra & Cardona, 2016).



Several studies have been conducted in investigating the use of Spelling Bee, but most of them related the Spelling Bee in improving students' vocabulary. There are still few studies testing the effect of Spelling Bee toward students' pronunciation. Sekarini (2013) found that Spelling Bee can improve the students spelling ability, their motivation and awareness to use the correct spelling. Spelling Bee is highly recommended as the effective strategies in teaching vocabulary to EFL learners and creating a fun classroom atmosphere (Rohmawati, 2015; Yusuf, Mustafa, & Alqinda, 2019).

In order to overcome the difficulties with the spelling of the students' written works, it is necessary to improve the students' spelling ability as well as their pronunciation mastery. "Spelling Bee" technique for learning English is very good for our precision and accuracy in identifying words of English in which English written and pronunciation is very different. This is confusing not only for learners of English as foreign language, but also the case for native speakers. According to Gilakjani (2016), he stated that teaching pronunciation has to aim at intelligible pronunciation and teachers can actively encourage their learners' actual production, build pronunciation awareness and practice. Difference learners in the same class of school or university may well have rather different aims. Some just want enough English to communicate at a basic level, or indeed just enough to pass some examination. Others aim to achieve the best they possibly can.

From the background of the study above, the researchers limit the problems that are going to be discussed. This research focuses on how is the effect of "Spelling Bee" technique toward students' pronunciation at seventh grade of MTs NU 01 Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi Purwokerto. The objectives of this research

are: (1) to investigate the effect of the “*Spelling Bee*” technique toward students’ pronunciation; (2) to describe the students’ learning experience using the “*Spelling Bee*” technique.

METHOD

Based on the variables of the research, it included on experimental research. According to Kothari (2004), he explained that experimental approach is characterized by much greater control over the research environment and in this case some variables are manipulated to observe their effect on other variables. The ideal design for maximizing internal validity is the true experiment, what distinguishes the true experiment from less powerful design is the random assignment of subjects to treatments, thereby eliminating any systematic error that might be associated with using intact groups. The two (or more) groups are then subjected to identical environmental conditions while being exposed to different treatments.

The researchers chose seventh D grade which is consist of 36 female students and seventh E grade which is consist of 39 female students as the population in the research, therefore the number of population in this research was 75 students both 2 classes at MTs NU 01 Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi Purwokerto. The sample of this research was taken by simple cluster random sampling.

Collecting data is the activity to look for data in the field of research to answer the problems statement, meanwhile to gain the data, there were some steps were taken by the researchers, they are: (1) observation; the researchers used participant observation for the reason that the researchers observed students’ conditions while the English teaching and learning process and also applied the technique directly to the respondents; therefore, the researchers could know about the students’ capabilities especially in pronunciation. (2) documentation; the researchers gained the data based on documentation using students’ attendance list, lesson plan, students’ achievement included daily test, mid-term test and practicing student achievement in experimental class and also control class. (3) Speaking test and jumble letters in one paragraph consist of over 220 words combined by jumble letters which were consist of 10 jumble letters questions. Students were asked to read the text, arrange the letters and spell the words after spelling the letters. They should pronounce the words correctly.

The researchers analyzed data using descriptive analysis which counts central tendency (mean, median, and mode); dispersion (range, variance) and standard deviation and inferential analysis including normalized gain score (n-gain). The formula is as follow:

$$n \text{ gain Score} = \frac{\text{posttest score} - \text{pretest score}}{\text{maximum score} - \text{pretest score}}$$

Beside n-gain, the researchers also used t test. Based on Mackey & Gass (2012), t-test can be used when one wants to determine if the means of two groups were significantly different from one another. The formula is as follow:

$$T = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{s \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The highest pre-test score of the students of the experimental group was 32.1 and the lowest one was 18.4 with average score 23. While the highest post-test score was 90.4 then the lowest score was 49.8 with average score 71.8. In addition, the result of normality using n-gain of group in the experimental class was 0.63. According to the data above, it meant that the students of experimental class have a good result on their pronunciation.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic of Experimental Class Result

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
Mode	21.5	71.7
Median	21.6	72.35
Mean	23.0156	71.80625
Max	32.1	90.4
Min	18.4	49.8
Range	13.7	40.6
Varian	5831.06	280934.963
St. Dev	3.70336	9.75688136

The highest pre-test score of the students of the control group of there was 35.2 and the lowest one was 23 with average score 28. While the highest post-test score was 30.4 then the lowest score was 20.1 and the average score is 23.3. In addition, the result of normality using n-gain of group in control class was -0.06. Based on the data above, the researchers could conclude that there was no good or significant result.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics in Control Group Result

Statistic	Pre-test	Post-test
Mode	30.5	20.9
Median	28.4	22.8
Mean	28	23.3065
Max	35.2	30.4
Min	23	20.1
Range	12.2	10.3
Varian	2346.84	1419.19
St. Dev	2.974	2.62259

To know there was a significant influence or not, the researchers analyzed using independent sample t-test by Microsoft Excel with the result shown in the following table:

Table 3. t-test Result

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Post-test of Experimental Class</i>	<i>Post-test of Control Class</i>
Mean	71,80625	23,30645161
Variance	95,19673387	6,877956989
Observations	32	31
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	36	
t Stat	27,12591563	
P(T<=t) one-tail	7,375E-26	
t Critical one-tail	1,688297714	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1,475E-25	
t Critical two-tail	2,028094001	

Based on the data in the table 3, it showed that there were high different in mean and variance between experimental class and control class post test result. Automatically in Microsoft Excel degree of freedom shown 36 and we can see that t-statistic was 27.126 while t-table (t-critical one-tail) was 1.688 so t-statistic was higher than t-table. It meant that H_a is accepted that there is a significant effect of using “Spelling Bee” technique on students’ pronunciation.

Hypothesis Testing

To answer the research question, the statistical hypothesis can be seen as follows:

H_0 : there is no significant influence of using “Spelling Bee” technique on students’ pronunciation.

H_a : there is a significant influence of using “Spelling Bee” technique on students’ pronunciation.

According to the data above, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted because t-statistic higher than t-table. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study which written there was significant in using “Spelling Bee” technique toward students’ pronunciation at the seventh-grade students of MTs NU 01 Mambaul Hikmah Tegalwangi in the academic year of 2018/2019 is accepted.

Learning Experience

The researcher applied “*Spelling Bee*” as technique used several ways to implement it according students’ needs. Through implementing “*Spelling Bee*” as

technique in English teaching-learning process, it helped students to get benefits by it. Concerning to the content validity of the test, the learning materials and the sample of the test in this research were taken from the English textbook used by the school under study, which was “When English Rings a Bell” for seventh-grade students. Through the application of Spelling Bee technique, there were some learning activities experienced by the students.

Introduce new words

The students were put in the situation where they have to be communicative using the words they need as the information. For instances, the students heard and knew word “Lesser one-horned” (the scientific name of kind rhinoceros). The researchers gave primary knowledge about similarity name of rhinoceros. The word of “Lesser one-horned” was a clause, so students could not interpret each word but it should be one of the unities in a clause so the meaning of that clause could not be separated each other. Learn everything students could about each word and its meanings. It could students to improving their vocabulary.

In the classroom activities, “Spelling Bee” technique could gain students’ competency in building their vocabulary and allowing them to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills. Many researchers realized that vocabulary mastery is fundamental basis in second/foreign language use and it also plays essential role in formatting the complete written and spoken text (Alqahtani, 2015; Gu, 2003; Susanto, 2017). Several studies also reported the effectiveness of Spelling Bee in improving students’ vocabulary and making enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Rohmawati, 2015; Sekarini, 2013; Yusuf, Mustafa, & Alqinda, 2019). The teachers are hopefully able to develop interactive and fun learning activities especially in gaining vocabulary mastery with no just memorizing the words.

Introduce proper pronunciation of new words

There were several features of “*Spelling Bee*” technique when applied in English teaching-learning process, familiarity with affixes, phonetics and spelling rules would help students. Indirectly students learned about phonetic and how to pronounce well through spelling therefore it made easy students to know not about pronounce well but knew pattern of English language thus students could speak English more confidently because they knew how to pronounce each words correctly. They could know how to pronounce words when those words contain of affixes consequently they could put where should be voiceless words and voice words. For instances, when students should spell word “islands”. Almost of students in experimental class knew how to pronounce word “islands” with omitting letter “S” in the second letter and added “s” in the end of the word became “/’aɪləndz/”.

In other hand, several students in control class could not pronounce well when they pronounced that word. They did not know the existences of every letters in each word, it should be pronounced or not. They could not make differentiate voice or voiceless word moreover pronounced well. The big problems in control class, they could not distinguish between letters “a” /eɪ/ and “I” /aɪ/ and they still pronounced a word by the letters made so their mother tongue has big influenced when they spoke.

Spelling Bee is kind of educational games that can be effectively applied in teaching learning activities to create fun and meaningful activities. Conducting various interesting and enjoyable game could foster students’ pronunciation ability

and reduce their burden to join the activities (Astuti & Nurhayati, 2015). Moreover, Huang & Liao (2015) reported that the use of digital material with the basis of Spelling Bee vocabulary list enhanced students' spelling ability and self-directed learning.

Introduce how to write correctly

When students learned about spelling, they also knew about the root of the word hence they knew the origin of the word be shaped. Students in experimental class have known about the rules of the words made therefore it easily for them to write a sentence grammatically. They knew when they should put affixes, auxiliary, or structure of sentences moreover in complex sentences. Indirectly students knew syntax of the sentence.

Correct spelling would help the students to write fluently without interruption in the flow of thinking that caused searching the correct word in the dictionary (Zohrabi & Kaashef, 2017). Besides providing enrichment of vocabularies, Spelling Bee made easy for them to write sentences because the students have a lot of vocabularies to put in a paragraph without took long time and confused to build a good sentences. For example, based on the materials in seventh-grade about "I am Proud of Indonesia", the writing skill discussed about simple present tense hence the researcher gave pictures about animals to students then the researcher asked students to make the characteristic of each animals in sentences, to make more communicative, the researchers asked students to involve their friend (grouping) then the researcher wrote on the board two or three of the verbs which have appeared in each sentence. The researchers explained when they should give (-s) or (-es) in a verb for instances, word "eat" if the subject was singular and the end of the letter was consonant so put (-s) but in the end of the letter was vowel so put (-es) and then said them out load and asked students if they noticed any pronunciation difference at the end.

Fun learning

The researcher used pictures, body guess, role play or speech to make it easy when extended the materials of learning. Spelling study did not have to be going through boring list memorization. If students enjoy study, they would be far more likely to persist with it. Hence, find what works for the students and have fun with it.

Sekarini (2013) concluded that the students have positive attitudes on the use of Spelling Bee game in learning activities. It improved the students' motivation and made the learning activities more interesting and beneficial. (Rohmawati, 2015) also reported that Spelling Bee created fun learning atmosphere in English classroom. The students can engage in the teaching and learning process actively.

CONCLUSION

The application of the interesting, fun, and enjoyable teaching technique can lead the students to engage the learning activities and automatically improve their skills. Through this research, Spelling Bee could stimulate the students to enhance not only their vocabulary, but also their pronunciation. It made students not bored during English teaching-learning process so it could improve their motivation in learning English. It also could be applied with grouping activities in which the

students do not only gain the confidence to speak in public or even in front class, but also acquire the equanimity to be able to accept mistakes and handle earning applause at the same time. The use of “Spelling Bee” technique was effective toward students’ pronunciation. The students could spell and pronounce the words well beside enriching their vocabulary mastery. However, because the limitation of the study, it is recommended for other researchers to conduct the further research with similar topic.

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