THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF USING U-DICTIONARY IN LEARNING PRONUNCIATION AT STBA PONTIANAK

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Abstract- *This study aims at identifying the perception of students in using U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation. Speaking is one of the most challenging abilities to develop foreign language learners such as Indonesian and one of the components of speaking is pronunciation. People often find a problem with pronunciation when they speak, read, or listen to English words. In the digital era, people can learn anything from the internet platform, such as using online learning through apps at smartphones. This study is qualitative research and the writer describe the students' perception in using U dictionary in learning pronunciation. The writers did an observation to English study program students from the fourth semester who are eligible for this research. There were 30 students participated as respondents and all of them were interviewed in order to have true information. The result shows that most of the students think that as English study program students, learning pronunciation is important, and they perceived that the "perfect English pronunciation feature" in U-Dictionary is practical to overcome difficulties in learning pronunciation in a fun way.*

Keywords: *Students' perceptions, U-Dictionary application, Pronunciation*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Language that mostly used by the scientists, business organization, internet, education, and tourism sectors is English (Rao, 2019). Crystal (2003, p. 7) states that, "a language becomes a global language has little to do with the number of people who speak it. It is much more to do with who those speakers are". On the other hand, Ke (2015) says, a global language serves the needs of people around the world, who appropriate their usage of this communication tool for their purposes and business relation. Global language as a language that is almost known, used, and studied by most people from most countries worldwide. When people travel in a foreign country, they will understand the English language, and there will be an English menu in the restaurant, guide and direction are also can found in an English language (Crystal, 2003). Therefore, a language becomes a global language not measured or

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seen from a large number of language users. However, a language can be a global language because almost all people in the world know that language even not use that language for their second language.

Generally, English language learning for Indonesian people is not easy because it is not a first or second language, but it serves a foreign language. In fact, it is true English is very different from Indonesia. In English, adjectives are before nouns for example; "*there is a <u>red book</u> on the floor*". Meanwhile if the sentence is in Indonesia, nouns are at the beginning; "*ada <u>buku merah</u> di lantai*" (Panggabean, 2015). Moreover, the difficulties are also caused by the way of students in learning English. Riadi (2019, p. 44) States that "the English education curriculum in Indonesia followed current developments in ELT around the globe".The way that is used by people around the world may be different from the way of Indonesia learning English.

In Indonesia, English language learning is from primary school, junior high school, senior high school, and higher education. Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018) state that, in English skill, there are two essential aspects of productive skills such as speaking and writing and receptive skills such as listening and reading. In addition, a productive skill which focuses on the process to determine meaning from the reading, listening and the other such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling toward utterances produced (Menggo, 2018). Therefore, productive skills can produce something to generate language to communicate their ideas to each other either in speech or text.

Speaking is a major skill in communication that involve pronunciation; human beings talked and listened to ages before there was anything for them to read (Hussain 2018). As it is said by Otaño et al., (2017), the speaking skill is one of the most challenging abilities to develop, development of speaking skill is needed a will from within the learners. Riadi (2013) said that pronouncing English correctly is important in English because misspell will make hearer misunderstand the meaning of the utterance, and communication becomes disconnected. Proper pronunciation is the main point in making people comfortable to join with the conversation. Moreover, among the five components above, one of the most challenging parts is pronunciation, because Indonesian as a mother tongue in Indonesia give effect by

one's pronunciation and inaccuracies in pronunciation can affect the listener. People often find a problem with pronunciation when they speak, read, or listen to English words. It is important to learn pronunciation and to learn English pronunciation through a smartphone.

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In digital era, there are many ways for people to overcome difficulties to learn speaking and most people like a simple way to learn by using their smartphone. The rise of the smartphone is playing an indispensable role in daily activities such as playing social media. Using a smartphone can create significant change in teaching and learning practice; it is an attractive way to stimulate the student to improve their speaking skill quickly. Therefore, in the digital era, people can learn anything from the internet platform such as using online learning through apps, one of them is U-Dictionary.

U-Dictionary is an application that is used both when the phone is online and offline, and this application was released on March 24th, 2016, offered by Youdao, Hong Kong. In 2019 U-Dictionary has been downloaded by more than 50 million users in the worldwide. The advantages of using U-Dictionary are free, unique, and simple to get in the application and just download it. For Apple smartphone users it can be download from App Store, and is also available for Android users it can be download from Play Store. There are features which can check and give the rating for speaking pronunciation and fluency when people use this app. Based on the description above, there is a need to analyze whether U-Dictionary application can be beneficial for English language learning. Therefore, the writer would like to elaborate this issue in a thesis entitled "The Students' Perception of Using U-Dictionary in Learning Pronunciation at STBA Pontianak".

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative descriptive research. In this research, the writers focus on finding out the students' perception of the constraints and benefits of using U-Dictionary application or learning pronunciation. Therefore, the research collected the data on the students' perception of using U-Dictionary application in learning pronunciation. The subject of this research is the English study program students at STBA Pontianak. According to Cohen et al., (2018) qualitative research is the

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research that understands the cause and effect process that occurs so that it gives influence the results for the participants to do the interview. In this research, the writer used the descriptive method. Descriptive is a method to collect the data in the form of words, images, and not in numbers; the data comes from the interview script, and take notes (Moleong, 2018). In descriptive method, data are collected in the form of opinions and perceptions from the participants regarding the use of U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation.

Respondent

In this research, the conducted an interview with STBA students, and there are 30 participants from 2 A 1 class. According to Crouch and McKenzie (2006) the small participants in qualitative research is to simplify the writer to find data. In this research, the eligible participants are the participants who meet the criteria that of familiar with dictionary application, still learning English or has Basic English, familiar with British accent or American accent, android users.

Technique of data collecting

The data collecting was conducted by observing and interviewing the respondents. An interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non- verbal, seen, spoken, heard, and indeed with interviews. Observation is a type of qualitative research method which is not only included participant's observation but also covered ethnography and research work in the field. In the observational research design, multiple study sites are involved. Observational data can be integrated as auxiliary or confirmatory research. (Jamshed, 2014, p. 88). Therefore, an observation not only observes the situation at the research site, but also made the writer easy to determine subjects that match the predetermined categories. The writer used the observation sheet to the observation before doing the interview. There are 11 (eleven) questions in this interview sheet. The questions contained opening questions, four questions about the main topic, closing questions in the form of suggestion of the students. Techniques of analyzong data are data collecting, data reduction and categorization, data display, and conclution drawing.

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The secondary data f or this research will be obtained from books, journals, articles, and data from the internet that were relevant to the research.

Through the observation, the writer found the information about U-Dictionary application users and make notes, from the observation data to prepared the interview. The interview took place in the class at STBA Pontianak before started the interview the writer greeted, and give thanks to the students and the lecture for the time given. The time only 2 hours so the writer did the opening directly with the participants in the class, and the writer also introduced about U-Dictionary application and showed them about the perfect English pronunciation feature. The writer asked the participants in the class to download and try to use the application for around 25 minutes. The writer will explain the step by step how to use the challenge feature about pronunciation in U-Dictionary application.

The writer uses a semi-structured interview to do this interview for the students. According to Cohen et al., (2018), a semi-structured interview is a combination of open interviews and guided interviews form. In practice, the writer carries a guideline that is only an outline of the things to be asked, the wording and order in the questions can be adjusted to each participant that being interviewed. The interview took around four until seven minutes for each participant. From the interview, the writer collected their opinion and perception about using U-Dictionary application in learning pronunciation.

Technique of data analysis

In order to process the result of the data that is obtained from the respondents, the writers do some steps to get the result that is ready to be published. In order to have a strong result of research, the writer analyze the result if observation and interview and makes the result valid. According to Leung (2015), validity in qualitative research means "appropriateness" of the data, tools, and processes for data extraction and analysis including, validity and reliability.

1. Validity

    a. Triangulation of researchers

       Triangulation is done by comparing information or data in different ways. In qualitative research writer use observation and interview to obtain true, reliable

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information, and a complete picture of certain information. This method to check the truth. In addition, writers also ask different informants to check the truth of the information.

b. Triangulation of resources

Triangulation of data sources is to find out the truth of certain information through several methods and data resource. Through interviews and observation, the writers can use engaged result of interview, and personal writing. Which is will provide different insights about the phenomenon under study.

c. Triangulation of theories

The final result of Qualitative research is a formulation of information. The information is compared with relevant theoretical perspectives to avoid individual researcher changes in the findings or conclusions produced. In addition, triangulation of theories can upgrade deep understanding as long as researchers are able to explore theoretical knowledge in depth on the results of data analysis that has been obtained.

2. Reliability

The next step in making the data valid is to make sure the data is reliable. According to Silverman (2013) there are five approaches in enhancing the reliability of process and results, they are refutation analysis, constant data comparison, comprehensive data use, and use of tables.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Data was taken from interviews given to 30 students, most of the students are U-Dictionary users. Interviews were conducted in class one by one and recorded through audio. Students are asked to answer questions related to research based on their perception. After collecting interview data through audio recordings, the writer transcripted the results of the interview. The writer analyze the data to get the results of the students' perception of using U-Dictionary with the feature in learning pronunciation. The purpose of transcribing the result of the interview from audio into dialogue text is to give readers the clarity regarding the writer's interview with the

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students from STBA Pontianak. The interview took place on Thursday, 12 March 2020, in the class at STBA building.

There are 36 students in the class and all of them are the participants for the interview. The given time was from 10:00 to 12:00 a.m, and the interview took place for two hours However, interview time for one person took approximately around four to eight minutes; each participant may have a different duration of the interview. This study finds out the students' perception of the constraints and benefits of using U-Dictionary application in learning pronunciation. The explanation of the finding is as follow.

1) **The Constraints of Using U-Dictionary Application**

This aspect discussed The constraints encountered when using the U-Dictionary application taken from the students' perception. U-Dictionary has many features, and some of them can be used in offline mode but some other only available in an online mode such as perfect English pronunciation feature. If the phone is offline, the feature can not be used. Students said that the constraint is the signal, and if the signal is not good then the application has a little problem with responses for getting the clear voice for giving the pronunciation score. In the perfect English pronunciation feature there is an original sound for the user to hear and follow to pronounce the sentence or words before do the challenge. In U-Dictionary application has many ads. When the user start to open the application, it shows up the ads for three seconds, and it cannot skip that ads when using the grammar feature, but the user wants to back to the first page, the ad will appear, and the user needs to click on the x sign to remove the ad. Ads will also appear at the bottom of the display, and it only exists on the quiz available in U-Dictionary.

2) **The Benefits of Using U-Dictionary Application**

The last aspect discussed the benefits of using U-Dictionary application. All of the participants agreed that U-Dictionary application is practical and beneficial for the users to overcome difficulties in learning pronunciation. The benefits of using U-Dictionary Application taken from the students' perception. They believed that there are a lot of benefits when using the U-Dictionary, it had the original sound like a native voice help the user could listen, and how to

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pronounce the word or sentence. Moreover, it makes the pronunciation better. Students said that "this app is good and helpful especially for English learner neither formally nor informally". However, base on their perceptions, all participants are going to use this application in the future. However, one of the participant find it does not simple to use this app and also feel distracted because of the ads. Metruk (2017,p.50), stated that "EFL learners have become fairly interested in practicing their pronunciation though modern electronic dictionaries".

In order to have a clear information about the constraint and the benefit of students' perception using U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation, the following table is presented to show the students' answer:

Table 1

Students' perception related to the constraints and benefit of using U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation

No	Students	Respond	
		Constraint (The application has many features and the feature is sometimes difficult to be used	**Benefit** (The application has original sound like a native voice, and it helps students to practice pronunciation)
1.	Student 1		√
2.	Student 2		√
3.	Student 3		√
4.	Student 4		√
5.	Student 5		√
6.	Student 6	√	
7.	Student 7		√
8.	Student 8		√
9.	Student 9		√
10.	Student 10		√
11.	Student 11		√
12.	Student 12		√
13.	Student 13		√
14.	Student 14		√

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15.	Student 15	√
16.	Student 16	√
17.	Student 17	√
18.	Student 18	√
19.	Student 19	√
20.	Student 20	√
21.	Student 21	√
22.	Student 22	√
23.	Student 23	√
24.	Student 24	√
25.	Student 25	√
26.	Student 26	√
27.	Student 27	√
28.	Student 28	√
29.	Student 29	√
30.	Student 30	√

Source: Data Processed (2020)

From the table above, it can be inferred that students of STBA perception in using U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation said that the application has original sound like a native voice, and it helps students to practice pronunciation. However, still there was one student said that it is sometimes difficult to be applied because sometimes application appear to distract the user.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After researching the students' perception of using U-Dictionary in learning pronunciation at STBA Pontianak, the writers draws some conclusions as follows: U-Dictionary application is not only a dictionary, but there are many features in it, and this is useful for English learners. The English students at STBA believed that "perfect English pronunciation feature" is practical to overcome difficulties in learning pronunciation in a fun way. U-Dictionary also gives benefit for the STBA students because the feature is useful, helpful, easy to access, and free download. The constraints that the English students faced was the signal if there were a problem with the signal, then the application has a problem with responses such as to get clear voices for giving the pronunciation score. The other constraints, the original sound from the native is not cleary, and the ads at U-Dictionary application makes users uncomfortable while using the features. However, there are modern electronic

dictionary applications such as the U-Dictionary application which has features to support learning for English learners. The existence of certain features can help also facilitate learning in a fun way so that users also enjoy when using it.

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