

## INTERNET-BASED VIDEO LESSONS ON THE LEARNER'S ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION: WHAT THE RESEARCH REVEALS

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### ABSTRAK

Pronunciation has regained its existence in the investigative attempts in the areas of TESOL, Sociolinguistics, and Intercultural Communication. This burgeoning growth has proven the importance of pronunciation teaching and learning, notable in this technology-based language learning era. However, little attention has been given to the description of how the participant learned English pronunciation through internet-based video lessons (IBVL). Hence, this study addressed the void. Avril (a senior high school student in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia) was recruited as the investigative participant. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed with Thematic

Analysis. The findings reported that she learned English pronunciation by imitating the English tutor of the MmmEnglish channel. She learned by applying three main stages, namely listening and reading, listening and repeating, and shadowing. Pedagogically speaking, this study provides practical contributions to students, TESOL practitioners, and policymakers notably in Indonesia that technology-based pronunciation learning enables teachers to help their students reach intelligible pronunciation as multilingual speakers.

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### INTRODUCTION

English progressively becomes a language used for international communication (Gilakjani, 2012; Sardegna, Lee & Kusey 2018; Lee, Plonsky & Saito, 2020). Millions of people around the world use English as their mother tongue. Therefore, English is being second and foreign language (Macháčková, 2012; Nguyen & Newton, 2020). In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. English becomes more important to be learned since it is mostly used for international communication. It is challenging to learn a foreign language for Indonesian learners.

Pronunciation is well-recognized as one of the major issues of many foreign language learners (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Chavangklang, 2013; Alghonaim, 2020). As such, EFL learners often find it difficult to pronounce English words intelligibly (Rofiq, 2016). It also has no exception with the process of learning English accents for EFL learners. Learners, teachers, and researchers emphasize the importance of acquiring a native-like accent. Due to the consequences and the processes, native-like accent acquisition becomes a considerable issue. It is also problematic as it affects psychological and physical well-being, and educational and employment opportunities (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Al-Rifou, 2015; Suzukida, 2021). Accent, which is learned more easily by younger children, has some indications to support the fact that adults can also learn native-like pronunciation (Munro & Derwing, 1995; Munro, 2008; Zhou, 2015; Low, 2021).

Using technology as the media is one of the ways to help learners in learning English. Technology took on different forms, from visual, audio, and audio-visual Mohan (2012). In previous studies, educators have enhanced the use of technology for learning especially English Pronunciation. There is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning (Levy, 1997). It embraces a wide range of information and technology in the application of teaching a foreign language. It forms from the traditional drill-and-practice program to more recent materials among virtual learning environments, and web-based distance learning.

On the other hand, Computer Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) is included in particular in CALL (Neri et al., 2002). CAPT applications are tools to meet instructional goals based on an explicit theoretical approach to language teaching (Levis, 2007). It is assumed that well-designed CAPT instruction can improve a wide variety of pronunciation skills (Levis, 2007, Munro, 2008).

These tools play their role in involving learners in learning and acquiring language targets. Hismanoglu (2012) expressed that one of the technologies, the use of video, helps learners to learn new content by observing their context. Video can also help the capability of EFL learners in pronouncing new words or expressions. Moreover, it supports suitable intonation patterns and other aspects of learning pronunciation in communication.

Dealing with the problems above, the researchers found a gap based on preliminary interview results. The preliminary interview results assumed that there was a student whose unique learning strategy in English pronunciation. The student is an autonomous

learner. She was watching and following English video lessons. During her activities in learning English pronunciation, the researchers conducted an unstructured interview on the 8th of August 2017. One of the data shown as the participant's statement, *namely*

“I like learning from this channel because imitation is a very helpful pronunciation learning technique in learning English pronunciation (Avril’s statement in preliminary interview, 2017)

The abovementioned statement proves that *MmmEnglish channel* as one of the internet-based video lessons enabled Avril (the participant of this investigation) to learn English pronunciation effectively. Further, she contended that such a channel employed imitation technique to help its audiences perform intelligible pronunciation.

Concerning the issue, numerous studies have been conducted on pronunciation teaching and learning practices (e.g. Morley, 1991; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Saricoban & Kuc, 2010; Saito & Plonsky, 2019; Pennington, 2021; Zhu, Zhang & Li, 2022). To illustrate, Zhang & Yuan (2020) scrutinized the effects of explicit pronunciation instruction on the development of L2 pronunciation. The findings reported that the effects of explicit pronunciation teaching practices allowed students to increase their comprehensibility on a sentence-reading task. This increase was supported by statistically significant progress. On the other hand, they showed their enhancing comprehensibility on suprasegmental features in spontaneous speaking activities. Dai & Wu (2021) studied the effective use of Automatic Speech Recognition-based peer feedback in mobile-assisted pronunciation learning. The findings revealed that the investigative participants enhanced their pronunciation, notably the Co-non-ASR and the Co-ASR groups, indicated similar perceptions on the distributed questionnaires, and displayed general and typical technical, social, psychological and educational affordances. Moreover, Al-Jarf (2022) explored YouTube videos as a resource for self-regulated pronunciation practice in EFL distance learning environments. He outlined that YouTube pronunciation videos (YTPVs) should be applied meaningfully to advocate the students’ self-regulated pronunciation practices. It was aimed at engaging them in Distance Learning pronunciation learning activities. Further, Jafari, Karimi and Jafari (2022) examined the beliefs and practices of Iranian EFL teachers on pronunciation teaching. They concluded that the teachers tended to deploy traditional pronunciation teaching beliefs and practices. As an example, they still focused on implementing word-level features and individual sound learning practices manifested in repetitive and imitative pronunciation learning activities.

Although these prior studies have offered valuable insights on pronunciation teaching and learning practices viewed from diverse viewpoints (e.g. comprehensibility, mobile-assisted pronunciation learning, self-regulated pronunciation practices, and beliefs and practices of pronunciation teaching), little attention has been given to the delineation of how the participant learns English pronunciation through internet-based video lessons (IBVL). Hence, this study addresses the void.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The present study employed an exploratory case study as the investigative method to explicate a phenomenon that provides a specific explanation of the scrutinized evidence (Yin, 2003). This allowed researchers to understand and explain the investigated phenomena, namely how IBVL helps the participant learn English pronunciation and its impacts on the participant's pronunciation.

This study involved a female student, Avril (pseudonym), as a participant from a state-owned senior high school in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. This 16-year-old student speaks Bahasa Indonesia as her first language (L1) and English as her foreign language (FL). Avril has been learning English for eleven years (General English) encompassing four basic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Avril was recruited based on some considerations. First, the phenomenon related to this investigation was found in her language attainment, namely producing a native-like accent of English pronunciation. Second, she learned English pronunciation autonomously by watching various IBVLs on YouTube (e.g. video lessons from [mmmEnglish.com](http://mmmEnglish.com)). She deployed typical pronunciation learning techniques, such as imitation and ear training. More importantly, she showed a willingness to participate in this study. Hence, recruiting her as the participant in the current study remains demanding to probe how the participant learned English pronunciation through IBVL.

The data were collected by applying semi-structured interviews. The interviews helped researchers gain an obvious explanation of interviewing procedures guided by selected topics of questions. Richards (2009) contends that utilizing semi-structured interviews allows researchers (interviewers) to expand and anticipate the erratic responses of the interviewee (participant). More practically, the interview questions cover three main indicators adapted from the principles of Krashen's second language acquisition (1987), namely the Affective Filter Hypothesis (e.g. less anxiety and high self-esteem).

Once the data were collected, they were analyzed thematically through Thematic Analysis (henceforth, TA). TA allows the researchers to analyze, manage, delineate and inform themes in a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In practice, TA was operationalized in several stages, namely familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

## FINDINGS

Once the data were analyzed, the findings revealed one predominant theme and three sub-themes. It indicated how the student learned English pronunciation through IBVL. More specifically, those findings are elicited subsequently.

### Learning English Pronunciation through Internet-Based Video Lessons

Dealing with how the student (Avril) learned English pronunciation through IBVL, she argued that she watched video lessons from the MmmEnglish channel. This channel was hosted by Emma an English Confidence Coach. It has 4.78 million subscribers. The video lesson watched by Avril has been viewed 599 thousand times, given 19 thousand likes, and gained 873 comments. This channel is highly popular among English language students around the world.

**Table 1.** Learning English Pronunciation through Internet-Based Video Lessons

Participant	Extracts
Avril	I learned English pronunciation from <b>one of the most popular channels</b> on YouTube. It is <b>the MmmEnglish</b> channel. I chose such a channel because it was hosted by a <b>professional English tutor, Emma</b> . Emma is also an English Confidence Coach in the program. Another reason for viewing the videos from the channel as it has <b>4.78 million subscribers</b> . Besides, the channel has been viewed <b>599 thousand times, obtained 19 thousand likes, and achieved 873 comments</b> . Commonly, <b>the most viewed channel</b> on YouTube tends to have a <b>good reputation</b> and <b>massive impact</b> . (semi-structured interview, November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)

Further, Avril claimed that the YouTube channel owning extensive attention from the viewers tends to have a good reputation. In addition, it also has a massive impact on the viewers. In other words, IBVL offering English pronunciation teaching materials and practices in the MmmEnglish channel fit the learning needs of its audiences.

Practically speaking, Avril learned English pronunciation by employing *the imitation technique* guided by the English tutor in the videos. As an example, she contended that the English tutor led her to learn English pronunciation in three stages, namely *listening and reading, listening and repeating, and shadowing*.

**Table 2.** Learning English Pronunciation through Internet-Based Video Lessons

Participant	Extracts
Avril	I learned English pronunciation through several stages as explained by the tutor. Those stages are <b>listening and reading, listening and repeating, and shadowing</b> . These stages also helped me learn English systematically. (semi-structured interview, November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)

Further, she elaborated that those stages facilitated her learning English systematically.

### Listening and Reading Stage

In the first stage, *the listening and reading stage*, Avril was guided to get familiar herself with teaching material (a story). The story was displayed in both oral and written forms. She perceived that it was helpful because listening to the audio and reading the displayed subtitles enable her to comprehend what was discussed in the video.

**Table 3.** Listening and Reading Stage

Participant	Extracts
Avril	In <b>the listening and reading</b> stage, I was guided to <b>familiarize</b> myself with a <b>story as teaching material</b> . It was <b>served</b> both in <b>oral and written forms</b> . Hence, I could <b>understand</b> how it was <b>written and read</b> . More importantly, it <b>helped</b> me <b>pronounce</b> the <b>words</b> properly. In addition to getting <b>familiar</b> with <b>the teaching material</b> , I also felt <b>comfortable</b> with <b>my English</b> because this step <b>offered</b> me a <b>chance to build my knowledge</b> . (semi-structured interview, November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)

Even, she argued that the most important aspect of this stage was an opportunity to pronounce English words accurately based on the exemplified pronunciation. She also realized that this stage made her comfortable learning English pronunciation. Overall, she claimed that the activities in this stage gave her a chance to establish her knowledge of English teaching materials, notably pronunciation.

### Listening and Repeating Stage

In *listening and repeating* (second stage), Avril was guided to listen to what Emma said. Next, Emma would pause what she had uttered. This was performed to allow the

audience, including Avril to repeat what she said. In this case, Emma requested the audience to imitate her as exact as possible to pronounce English words. This repetition was carried out regularly until the audiences were able to imitate what she pronounced naturally.

**Table 4.** Listening and Repeting Stage

Participant	Extracts
Avril	In the second stage, I need to <b>listen to what Emma said</b> . Then, <b>she'll pause</b> to give me <b>a chance to repeat</b> . After that, I should <b>copy her exactly</b> as she said. She'll <b>repeat the activities regularly</b> until the <b>audience</b> could <b>pronounce the sounds of the words naturally</b> . She <b>frequently reminded us to pronounce</b> English words <b>without hesitating</b> and <b>getting tongue-tied</b> . Again, she asked us <b>to practice it repetitively</b> . She also asked us <b>to slow down the speed</b> during <b>practising</b> before <b>returning to a regular pace</b> . Then, she <b>guided us to increase the speed gradually</b> until we could <b>pronounce</b> English sounds <b>natural</b> . (semi-structured interview, November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)

Emma also reminded the audience to pronounce English words confidently. It means that the audience should pronounce English words without hesitation and get tongue-tied. Similarly, she guided the audience to slow down the speech rate while practising pronouncing English words until they reached a particular rhythm. Once it arrived at a certain rhythm, she requested the audience to increase the speech rate gradually until they could pronounce English words naturally.

### Shadowing

In the last stage, shadowing, the audiences encountered the most difficult learning practices. In particular, Avril stipulated that this stage was the most challenging English learning activity, notably in pronunciation practices. As a matter of fact, she should be able to imitate what Emma verbalized spontaneously. She regarded it as the trickiest learning activity. Conversely, she believed that the activity was the best way to foster her English pronunciation to sound natural. The natural pronunciation could be attained when she was able to adjust her pronunciation to match Emma's pronunciation. Also, Emma reminded Avril and other audiences to focus on enjoyable learning activities (e.g. singing an English song) and ignore the mispronunciation. This was carried out to help her engage in English pronunciation practices.

**Table 5.** Listening and Repeting Stage

Participant	Extracts
	In the last stage, <b>shadowing</b> , I faced <b>the most challenging</b>

Participant	Extracts
Avril	<b>learning activities.</b> As an example, I should be able to <b>imitate</b> what Emma uttered <b>at the same time.</b> It was <b>tricky.</b> <b>However,</b> it was <b>the best way to develop a natural rhythm</b> as I speak in English. I need <b>to adjust the sounds</b> to match <b>her pronounced words.</b> Besides, she said that "It is <b>potential</b> to make <b>a lot of mistakes</b> but <b>ignore</b> them." This <b>motivated</b> me to keep <b>practising pronunciation.</b> Further, she guided us <b>to focus on joyful learning activities</b> (by singing favourite songs). This stage also helped us <b>get familiar with the new and interesting vocabulary, add English words and expressions,</b> and <b>increase our English word level to the advanced ones.</b>

(semi-structured interview, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

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Other contributions of this stage are to enable the audiences to familiarize themselves with fascinating and novel English vocabulary, enrich English vocabulary and expressions and upgrade vocabulary knowledge to an advanced level.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at exploring how Avril learned English pronunciation through IBVL. The findings reported that Avril learned English pronunciation by following what was instructed by the MmmnEnglish tutor (Emma). The instructions cover three central stages, namely *listening and reading*, *listening and repeating*, and *shadowing*. Sardegna & McGregor (2013) label these pronunciation practices as scaffolding pronunciation learning activities. Overall, these stages represent the tutor's explicit English pronunciation teaching which enables students to learn English pronunciation gradually (Celce-Murcia, et. al. 1996; Couper, 2003; Kim & Yoo, 2021; Rosmala, et. al. 2021).

In the *listening and reading stage*, students are directed to familiarize themselves with English sounds. In this sense, they are guided to listen to what the tutor speaks. Next, they were required to read loudly what is displayed in a video. This belongs to the *ear training* pronunciation technique (Abdullah, et. al. 2022; Tergujeff, 2013). Further, Tergujeff (2013) argues that *ear training* intends to help students familiarize themselves with various English sounds. Besides, it also functions to facilitate them in discriminating individual sounds accurately. Regarding reading aloud, Gabrielatos (2002) contends that reading aloud (RA) is aimed at allowing students to practice pronunciation. In this case, students are guided to improve their pronunciation through what they read loudly. On the one hand, they listen to what they have pronounced whether the words are



pronounced intelligibly or not. On the other hand, they try to produce English sounds by reading words loudly (Andriani, et.al., 2017; Besner, et. al. 2021). Briefly stated, the listening and reading stage allows students to establish their background knowledge and form their pronunciation learning habits from a natural order of language acquisition, namely listening and reading aloud.

In the *listening and repeating stage*, students are led to listen and repeat what has been pronounced by the tutor spontaneously. This stage is assumed to be able to stimulate their spontaneous pronunciation practices. Jones (1997) claims that *listening and repeating* in pronunciation learning accentuate the production of accurate isolated sounds. Additionally, it is aimed at building communicative aspects in pronunciation learning which tends to be performed in decontextualized pronunciation learning practices. Therefore, this stage enables students to pronounce English sounds in a less anxious learning atmosphere (Yates, 2002).

In the last stage, *shadowing*, students are required to imitate what is pronounced by the tutor simultaneously. They should listen and pronounce English sounds instantly without being given a chance to familiarize themselves with pronounced English sounds. *Shadowing* refers to a paced, auditory tracking task which involves the immediate vocalization of auditorily presented stimuli" (Lambert, 1992, p.266). *Shadowing* tends to be identical to other pronunciation repetitive practices. However, this technique puts a heavy emphasis on the cognitive process (Hamada, 2018). In this case, *shadowing* only gives students little time to listen to the audio input and practise it spontaneously. This activity is also popularly known as an online task (Shiki, Mori, Kadota, & Yoshida, 2010). Although this stage seems to be challenging for students, particularly those learning English as a foreign language, *shadowing* helps students enhance their comprehensibility and intelligibility of their English pronunciation both in segmental and suprasegmental features (Abdullah & Lulita, 2018; Hamada, 2018). Even, *Shadowing* is considered a haptic pronunciation teaching technique that emphasizes building stress-free, low-anxiety-inducing activities (Brown, 2001; Hidayati, et. al. 2021).

## CONCLUSION

This study aims at dismantling how the participant learned English pronunciation through IBVL. The findings revealed that Avril learned pronunciation by viewing IBVL. In particular, she learned English pronunciation by following the English tutor on the MmmEnglish channel. She learned by performing three main stages, namely *listening and reading, listening and repeating*, and *shadowing*. Pedagogically speaking, these stages enable

Avril to build her knowledge of English pronunciation, reproduce the modelled English pronunciation and independently produce English sounds. In other words, pronunciation learning practices are started in the guided to self-regulated ways which allow students to foster their pronunciation gradually, realistically, and naturally.

Although this study has provided valuable contributions to English pronunciation practices, it still has several limitations, such as a limited amount of participants, single data collection technique, and single case study. Therefore, future investigation attempts are expected to involve more representative participants, triangulated data collection techniques, and multiple case studies to enhance its trustworthiness.

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