

Students' Perception of the Implementation of the Integrating of Four Skills in Teaching Pronunciation

Ila Amalia

UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

email: ila.amalia@uinbanten.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is one important aspect which determines the intelligibility of spoken language. The aim of this study was to identify the students' perception of the integrating of four skills in teaching pronunciation, especially in teaching past tense verbs. The participants of the study included 30 students of English education department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of UIN "SMH" Banten. Collecting the data, the researcher used Likert-scale questionnaires. The questionnaire covered some aspects of basic principles of integrated lesson proposed by Oxford (2001). The data then analyzed using the descriptive statistical analysis to find out the percentage of each item of the questionnaire. The result showed that the majority of the students were comfortable with the integration of four skills in teaching pronunciation and enjoyed the activities and tasks in the classroom. The study also revealed that learning pronunciation integrated with other skills such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, was very useful to enhance the students' communicative competence. Repetition combined with the use of audio-based resources as well as authentic materials were still considered very helpful for the students to practice pronunciation.

Keywords: Integrated Teaching, English Skills, Pronunciation

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INTRODUCTION

In the English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) teaching, pronunciation takes a specific role since it is directly related to the development of students' communicative competence, language proficiency as well as comprehensibility. Pronunciation is one of the language elements that are very crucial in learning second or foreign, especially in spoken language. Pronunciation constitutes so many aspects such as individual sounds, sound and spelling, pitch, intonation, and stress. Unquestionably, pronunciation constitutes one of the most relevant aspects of oral communication. The quality of pronunciation impacts to a large extent, the intelligibility and comprehensibility of speech. Good pronunciation contributes to successful and effective communication. According to Harmer (2007) knowing aspects of pronunciation will give some advantages both for oral production as well as recognizing English speech. It is very crucial to take into consideration then intelligibility as the central goal of pronunciation instruction.

In fact, some students consider that pronunciation is one of the language aspects that are quite difficult to learn. It is clearly important that having accurate pronunciation of

foreign language could be a helpful way for one's speech is understood by others. However, during the process of learning pronunciation of English, students often fail to get adequate pronunciation. There are many kinds of errors committed by the students when they learn and practice pronunciation because they have not reached the concept of pronunciation. Pronunciation errors could result in critical decay in communication process. It is more irritative to its effect than to its grammatical or lexical aspects. Explaining about error, Brown (1980) adds that an error refers to an apparent difference from the adult grammar of an English native speaker, which represents the inter-language communication of the learners. Students who commit errors usually do not aware and would not be able to correct them.

There are many kinds of errors committed by the students because they have not accomplished the English skills or the students' knowledge of the foreign or second language is still limited. The phenomena of committing errors among the students happened due to lack of pronunciation knowledge. There are aspects or elements of foreign language that the students missed to apply in a proper way. One of the mistakes that are often committed by the students is miss-pronouncing the word endings in past tense forms. In English pronunciation system, past tense forms especially for the regular verbs are indicated by the affix *-ed* at the end of the main verbs. The pronunciation of each affix is also different depending on the last sound of the main verbs it attaches. The *-ed* ending may be pronounced differently such as /t/, /d/, and /Id/.

Meanwhile, in the Indonesian language as the majority of the students' native language, there is no specific affix attached to the main verbs to indicate the past tense form. In Indonesian language, only the use of adverb of time is added to the sentence to indicate the past tense form. In *Bahasa Indonesia* or Indonesian language, only adverb of time is added to the sentence to indicate the time of occurrence, such as *yesterday*, *last week*, *last year*, *a few minutes ago*.

Due to this difference, it is obvious that the students often fail to pronounce the word ending with the correct pronunciation. Potential problems students may have with this aspect would be the students may pronounce *-ed* as a syllable /ed/ rather than a single sound /t/, /d/, or /Id/. Moreover, students may also omit the word endings pronunciation itself. Less of practices and intervention from the students' native language system could also worsen the condition since it can impede the intelligibility and disrupt the meaning of speech. The errors that the students commit in pronouncing the verbs in past tense forms will certainly become a serious problem in communication. Moreover it will impede the intelligibility and clarity of the speech.

There are many strategies and approaches to teaching pronunciation that aims to overcome the errors that students commit in the classroom. Pronunciation lesson should be planned comprehensively if the teachers want to teach pronunciation successfully. There are various alternatives to teaching pronunciation that are available to choose, one of them is integrated teaching. This kind of teaching approach focuses on pronunciation aspects as an integral part of a lesson. Teaching pronunciation in an integrated way builds a vital aspect of the language learning process and production. The language is presented and practiced with other skills within the lesson.

According to Brown (2001), integrated-approach “is a whole language approach where if a course deals with reading skills, then, it will also deal with listening, speaking, and writing skills.” Based on Brown’s statement, it can be concluded that learners actually have been experiencing the integration of these four skills in real life. So it is not only for academic purpose but also for real communication purpose. In another word, the term integrated teaching can be interpreted as learning activity where all four skills occur at the same time facilitated by the instructor, the learners, and learning circumstances.

Many studies have been done for fostering integrated teaching in the EFL classroom. Most of the study claims that integrated teaching which includes the four skills of English such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, is very important to foster students’ communication skills. Most of the study focuses on how important is integrated teaching for motivating the students to develop their communication skill but little attention was paid to the aspect of pronunciation. It is obviously stated before that good pronunciation will determine intelligibility, and intelligibility is the key to communicate effectively. Akram & Malik (2011) have claimed that integrative learning could assist a teacher build such a tranquil and peaceful condition in the classroom, so that foreign learning instruction becomes more meaningful. The role of the teacher in the classroom is to equip the learners with need-based activities that would integrate all the four skills for enhancing the learners’ proficiency. They argue that when a teacher teaches a language by introducing appealing and interesting class activities, it enhances the focus on real communication. It also motivates the students to learn the language and makes them be more enthusiastic in classroom activities.

Meanwhile, Bastías, et.al. (2011) have found that the integration of the four skills of English apparently could give influence to the students’ performance. The study focuses on the students’ performance in reading and listening. In his research, he argues that it is not only a matter of integrating the four skills of the English, but how to integrate them in a lesson so the communication goal of the instruction could be accomplished. The study also reveals that teacher takes important role in the success of the integrated lesson. That is how the teacher manages the classroom, uses of the voice (such as the volume, the intonation, the stress pattern etc.), and uses of English language in the lesson.

It is clear that whatever the context is, the application of integrated teaching brings advantages to the learners, especially to foster communication skill in English. The students are being exposed to authentic language which will challenge them to interact authentically with the language. Learning English is not only for academic purposes but also for developing communication skills in a real communicative setting. Integrated teaching also allows the teacher to keep track of the students’ language progress and performance in various skills within the same moment of instruction. This gives advantage for the teacher for saving much time. (Oxford, 2001).

Pronunciation, as one of the aspects of the English language should be taught in integrative way. Integrated pronunciation teaching along with the study of other English skills has greater advantages that learners will realize the significant role of pronunciation to accomplish the ultimate goal in communication. Based on the reason that has been discussed previously, this study wants to investigate the students’ perception of the

implementation of integrated lesson in teaching pronunciation. Thus, two research questions will be proposed: (1) How is the integration of English skills being employed in teaching past tense regular verbs?, and (2) How is students' perception on the integration of English skills in teaching past tense regular verbs?

This research will be valuable as a reference for other teachers or lecturers for improving teaching strategy especially in teaching pronunciation. Besides, through integrated lesson students are encouraged to develop their pronunciation skill as well as other skills through practices within the lesson.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Definition of Integrated Teaching

Integrated teaching is not a new trend in teaching-learning issue. This approach has been introduced to respond to the situation in which the students' native language is different from the language of teaching instruction. The integrated teaching approach basically is derived from one of the teaching approaches, which is called *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL). CLIL describes a dynamic approach of instruction in which a non-native language is used to teach the lesson as a medium of teaching instruction. In *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL), teaching instruction uses another language for delivering and explaining the lesson contents as well as the language itself. In the teaching and learning process, both language and lesson contents are given the same emphasis in which these two aspect intertwine. They intertwine each other even though at certain circumstance the emphasis is greater at one.

In another definition *Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning* (CLIL) is referring to educational settings wherein a classroom setting a foreign language is used other than the learners' first language as a language of instruction. For the most part, the object of CLIL could be any second or foreign language. The CLIL approach is not a new phenomenon in language education field. CLIL is a renewal integration of both delivering the subject and language at the same time. In CLIL various elements of educational practices are closely connected. Some examples of these practices - such as bilingual education and immersion class program - have been implemented for many periods by some countries with various purposes and contexts. CLIL is a content-based instruction and it is quite different from other language teaching methodologies. The language learning experience in CLL is expanded. The learners have more opportunity to interact with the language not only for the language learning solely but also for gaining other knowledge.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) refer to the teaching of integrated skills as the integrated approach, as "the teaching of the language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing." Meanwhile, Oxford (2001) describes English instruction as a process that comprises the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which when intertwining well through the integrated-skill approach during instruction, learners can use English effectively for communication.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that integrated teaching tries to engage the students with the content being studied. Students will experience learning new thing at

the same time practicing their language skills. Thus, English will be the medium language of any activity. Thus, the roles of the teachers are more effective since at the same moment the teachers can deliver the materials of English skills as well as the content lessons of another subject. The teachers can monitor the students' language proficiency progress immediately and the students' have many opportunities in the classroom to develop their true language competence.

b. Integrated Teaching Principles

The Integrated Language Teaching principles can be performed at English foreign language classes, where integrated lessons will prepare the students to learn the content area of a specific subject as well as to enhance their English skills. This approach can enforce the students to develop literacy competence while they are learning another subject or lesson. To be successfully performed the integrated lesson which is incorporated with another subject in a teaching instruction here are some principles that should be considered by the teachers in designing the lesson plan: (From Enright, D.S. & McCloskey, M.L., 1988).

1. The language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be taught in an integrative way not in a divergent way.
2. To develop language skills, the students use the target language as a medium to accomplish the tasks not as a main subject to study.
3. The teachers must create the learning contexts that are interesting and interactive and these contexts must enforce the students to use the target language naturally.
4. Using the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in integrative ways in solving the problems and accomplishing the tasks will contribute significantly to the students' language proficiency better than if the students use these skills in divergent ways.
5. The students explore their prior knowledge and experiences of a certain topic or lesson by using the target language.
6. The students must practice all the language skills in various activities and strategies as the native speakers do in real communication to enforce language proficiency.
7. The development of the students' language proficiency depends on the supportive atmosphere in the classroom.

c. The Advantages of Integrated-Skill Teaching

Initially, the concept of an integrated approach has focused on using language skills in integrative ways. In integrated teaching classroom the students have chances to explore the language skills through a topic discussion and interact with the language skills naturally. The main goal of integrated lesson instruction is to reach communication competence among the students. Through some various activities designed by the teacher, the students learn and practice the multi-language skills which are used for real communication. Moreover, this approach focuses on English as a tool of communication not as an academic object or a passing grade of a certain examination.

Instead, the students use English a means of interaction and communication among people. This approach let the teachers monitor the students' language proficiency progress

in various skills at the same moment. In a more specific way, integrating the language skills also promotes the learning of a natural context, not just the separation of some language units. Finally, the approach can be implemented appropriately to any level of students with various different backgrounds of age and knowledge. According to Van de Craen, et.al (2008) there are many advantages of applying the integrated teaching approach in the classroom. The advantages will be described as follow:

- (1) Integrated teaching develops self-confident among the students and it can foster students' academic development and communication competence.
- (2) Integrated teaching encourages cross-cultural understanding and community values among the students.
- (3) Integrated teaching allows the students to gain more varied vocabulary in the target language.
- (4) Integrated teaching gives chances to the students to gain proficiency degree in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the target language.
- (5) Integrated teaching enforces the students to be active cognitively throughout the learning session.¹

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study as its specific method. This case study was focusing on the description of integrated lesson being applied in teaching past tense verbs. It also revealed the students' perception of the application of integrated four skills in teaching past tense regular and to see whether this strategy could assist them in learning pronunciation. The participants of the study included thirty students of the third-semester students of English education who enrolled for Pronunciation subject. This study was conducted at English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic University of *Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin* Serang city, Banten province.

In order to obtain the data, the researcher used a questionnaire as the main instrument. To facilitate the teaching process, the researcher as well as the teacher herself, designed a lesson plan, as a supported instrument. The lesson plans consisted some steps that reflected integrated lesson strategy. The lesson plans were designed for four meetings. To monitor the teaching-learning process, the researcher also conducted an observation. After conducting four meeting lessons, the students were asked to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information about the students' perception of the application of integration of the four skills in Pronunciation class. The questionnaire consisted of ten items of integrated teaching aspect proposed by Oxford (2001). The data on the questionnaire was elicited through five options which ranged from 1 — "Strongly disagree" to 5 — "Strongly agree" (Dörnyei, 2003). The participants were instructed to choose one of the choices which reflected their thoughts.

¹ Van de Craen, P, Mondt, K , Allain, L and Gao, Y (2008). Why and How CLIL Works, retrieved from www.univie.ac.at/Anglistik/Views_0703.pdf in University of Cambridge.

To analyze the data of the questionnaire, the researcher used a simple statistical analysis. By using percentage, the researcher calculated students' answer from each item of the questionnaire compared with the total participants to get the percentage of each item. The end result shows the average students' choice from every questionnaire items. The simple formulation of the analysis will be described as follow:

$$\text{Answer (\%)} = \frac{\text{Amount of students answer}}{\text{Total students}} \times 100$$

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

a. The Implementation of Integrated Lesson in Teaching Past Tense Regular Verbs

To get the data on how integrated teaching being implemented in the classroom, the researcher did teaching activity using a designed lesson plan. The lesson plan contained integrated teaching steps and procedures that should be followed by the teacher. There were four teaching sequences which covered different topics of discussion but still the focus was on the pronunciation of past tense verbs. Not all four skills of English (reading, writing, listening, speaking) could be integrated into one teaching sequence. Also, not all elements of language (vocabulary, spelling, syntax, meaning, and language usage) could be integrated into one lesson. The integration was in much of variation in every lesson sequence due to limitation of time and a matter of big class size.

In the following part, it will be discussed how the integrated lesson plan being employed in the classroom. As it has been stated before that there were four sequences of lessons. Due to the limitation of the spaces in this article, the writer will describe only the first teaching sequence, which basically reflects the same teaching sequence as the three other lessons. The differences only lie at the topics being discussed and the language skills being integrated. Here is the example of the lesson plan (adapted from Kelly, 2000).

Example of an Integrated Lesson Plan

- I. Main objective: to practice regular simple past tense verbs' pronunciation
- II. Additional objectives: to give students listening and speaking practice
- III. Language element:
 - a. Structure: Regular simple past verb
 - b. Function: Narrating
 - c. Vocabularies: Arrested, collected, crossed, started, walked, stopped, turned
 - d. Pronunciation: *-ed* endings are pronounced in a variety of ways:
crossed /krɒst/, turned /tɜ:nd/, headed /hedId/
- IV. Potential problems may the students encounter: Students may use *-ed* as a syllable, so crossed /krɒst/ becomes /krɒsed/
- V. Language skills
 - a. Main skills: Listening, speaking
 - b. Sub skills: Listening for specific information
 - c. Skill and work integration:

- Initially presented and practiced verbs all appears in the listening activity
- Students construct short narrative sentences as an extension of the listening activity

VI. Procedures:

- a. To set the context
 - Teacher (T) shares a narrative text with several empty spaces
 - T shows the list of vocabulary to be filled into the empty spaces in the text
 - T tells the students (Ss) they will hear a story about “*Strange but True*”
- b. To elicit/practice vocabulary
 - Ss (students) Practice the vocabulary in the past tense regular verb and look for the meaning
 - Ss Practice/drilling the pronunciation of each word ending *-ed* in past tense regular verb
- c. To listen for specific information
 - Ss listen to a recording of a “*Strange but True*” story
 - While listening, Ss choose the words from the vocabulary list and fill in into the empty spaces in the text
 - T plays the recording again for two times and more if necessary
 - T and Ss correct the answer together
- d. Further practice
 - T creates groups of three students
 - T asks the group to create a similar short narrative story using past tense regular verbs
 - Each member of the group takes a turn practicing the text
 - T monitors and corrects the pronunciation of *-ed* verbs as relevant

According to the lesson plan, before teaching, the teacher brainstormed or activated the students' background knowledge that might have a connection to the lessons that were going to be delivered. The teacher had to make sure that the students were ready to do learning activity. This activity engaged the students with the learning environment. In this phase, teacher usually proposed some questions to check the students' background knowledge. The topics of the questions were still connected with the topic that was going to be discussed in later activity. To activate students' background knowledge teacher used supporting teaching materials to the classroom such as pictures or videos.

In the next step, after the students were ready, then the teacher came into the main activity. The main subject that will be discussed then elaborated with other skills with many varieties of activity. To engage the students in authentic communication, the teacher used learning sources from authentic sources such as from a newspaper or internet-based sources.

In the main teaching activity the teacher focused on the main subject that was the pronunciation of past tense regular verb. The subject was delivered integrated with other skill such as grammar and vocabulary. The main subject was also integrated into the four

skills of English, namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking. From the teaching practice in the classroom, it was found out that not all skills and language elements could be integrated all together at the same session. For example in the first lesson there were only two skills being integrated, they were listening and speaking. In the other lesson, two other skills were being integrated, they were reading and writing. However, since the main lesson was about pronunciation of past tense regular verb, so the element of vocabulary would be the main focus in every lesson. In every lesson, vocabulary practice/drilling became the major concern, whether it was done individually, in pairs, or classical.

In further practice or extended activity, the teacher invited the students to work with their critical thinking activity. Usually, in this extended activity the students were given tasks that elaborated their critical or analytical thinking or problem solving-based tasks. For example, the students were asked to speak up their opinion about issues that came up from the reading text or created the story based on their own life experience.

The focus of this study is on teaching pronunciation skill integrated with other skills. More specifically, the skill that would be the main lesson is on the past tense regular verb pronunciation. The regular past tense word usually indicated by has affix *-ed* at the end of the verbs. This *-ed* ending has different sounds in pronunciation. So, students must be trained or be familiarized with these sounds in order to produce an accurate pronunciation.

One strategy to teach this kind of skill is through integrated teaching. Integrated teaching is very suitable to engage in a more communicative environment. It is in accordance with the study conducted by Munos et.al., (2011) that states the integration of the four skills is the key for creating a classroom environment as authentic as possible in order to teach English in a way close to a real communicative situation. Jing (2006) also reveals that integrated skills leads to focus on realistic language and can therefore lead to the students' all-round development of communicative competence in English.

This context of the study emphasized on pronunciation skills (*-ed* ending pronunciation), but it was integrated with other skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing in order to create a communicative classroom environment that engaged students to improve their language abilities. So practically, it was not only teaching *-ed* ending pronunciation but also teaching reading and listening comprehension with oral and written expression. At the end of teaching activity, it was hoped that the students had communicative and language competence at the same time. This was also stated in one of the principles of integrated language teaching proposed by Enright & McCloskey (1988) which states that language skills are developed when language is being used as a tool to accomplish a task or reach a goal, not when the language itself is the subject of study. With careful planning and selection, the teacher could integrate the language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and strengthen every aspect of language teaching and learning such as the students' interest, the use of authentic materials, and classroom activities.

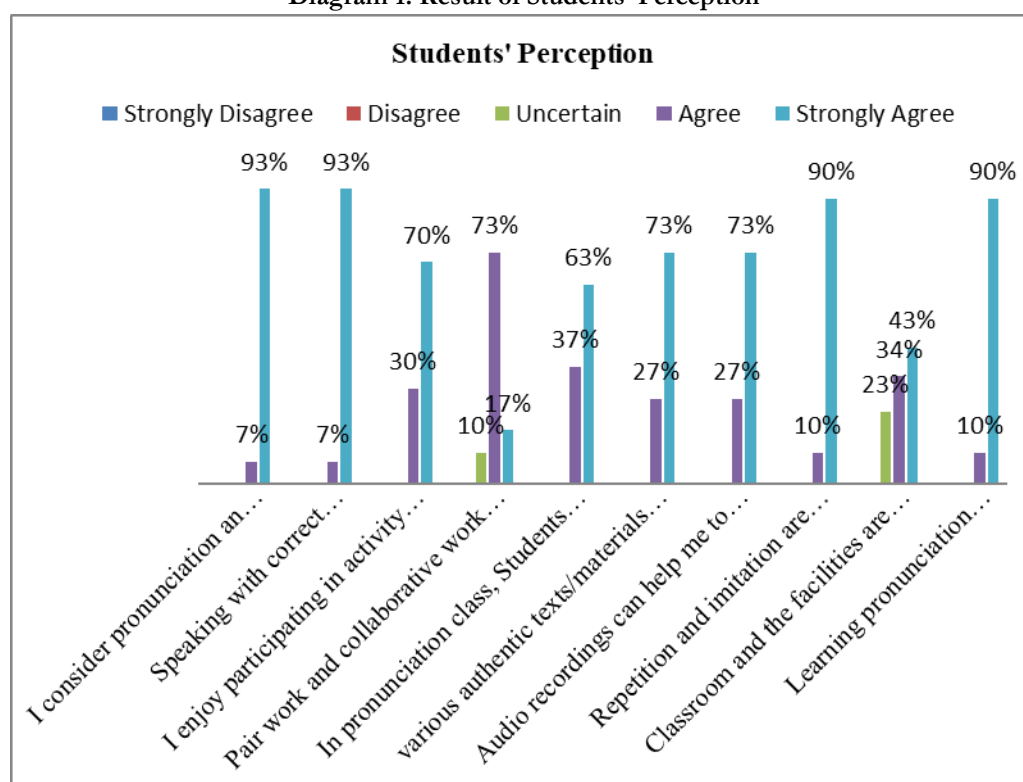
b. The Students' Perception of The Integration four skills Teaching Past Tense Regular Verbs

The following discussion will be the result of students' perception on the implementation of integrated four skills in teaching pronunciation. The questionnaire used to obtain the data on the students' perception covered some aspects such as from students' aspect, teacher aspect, classroom environment aspect, learning resources aspect, and classroom activities aspect. The result indicated that the majority of the students were quite comfortable with the integrated lesson in teaching pronunciation and enjoyed the activities and tasks in the classroom. To sum up, the overall result of students' perception will be presented in the following table and diagram.

Table 1. Students' Perception Result

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I consider pronunciation an important subject in my degree	-	-	-	7%	93%
2.	Speaking with correct pronunciation is very important for communication	-	-	-	7%	93%
3.	I enjoy participating in activity and tasks in the English pronunciation class.	-	-	-	70%	30%
4.	Pair work and collaborative work are very useful for me in the pronunciation class	-	-	10%	73%	17%
5.	In pronunciation class, Students are encouraged and given more chances to speak	-	-	-	37%	63%
6.	various authentic texts/materials provided by the teacher can help me to learn pronunciation better	-	-	-	27%	73%
7.	Audio recordings can help me to practice English pronunciation.	-	-	-	27%	73%
8.	Repetition and imitation are important aspects in learning pronunciation.	-	-	-	10%	90%
9.	Classroom and the facilities are very supportive in pronunciation class	-	-	23%	34%	43%
10.	Learning pronunciation integrated with other skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) is useful to enhance my communicative competence	-	-	-	10%	90%

Diagram 1. Result of Students' Perception



It can be seen from the diagram that students choose 'agree' (26,2%) or 'strongly agree' (70,5%) in every statement of the questionnaire. Meanwhile, only 16,5% of the students choose 'uncertain'. None of the students chose 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. This result indicated that the majority of the students were quite comfortable with the integrated lesson in teaching pronunciation and enjoyed the activities and tasks in the classroom. Integrated teaching strategy could also enforce and help the students to learn and comprehend pronunciation better. This conducive teaching environment would finally arouse students' interest in learning.

Another advantage of integrated teaching is proposed by Tajzad & Ostovar-Namaghi (2014). Their study showed that integrated teaching encourages simultaneous use of all the language skills and creates conditions that are conducive to real communication as opposed to illusive practice of isolated skills. Through this study the students are encouraged to use language to communicate the topic of discussion among themselves and it gives benefit for the students' language proficiency in advance. As Oxford (2001) says that the success English language teaching depends on many aspects such as characteristics of the teacher, the background of the students, the teaching-learning setting, and the relevant languages. Besides those aspects, Oxford also adds, one of the most crucial aspects consists of the integration of the four primary skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. Another aspect includes another sub-skills vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, syntax, meaning and usage. Teacher and the students can get optimal result if all those aspects are tied up together during the teaching-learning process. As this study shows that the teacher has successfully integrated at least two until three skills of English to

accomplish the students' pronunciation competence. The students show great interest in pronunciation since it is learned through fun and interactive ways. Various activities were done to solve the problems and to do the task using multi-skills of English and language elements.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the implementation of integrated lesson employed by the teacher with an adequate lesson plan and well preparation would result in conducive and enjoyable teaching-learning process. It was revealed that students felt enthusiastic when engaging in an integrated lesson. Students had more opportunity to explore their English skills, meanwhile at the same time they could practice their pronunciation skill. The use of authentic materials and various audio-based materials were still considered important to support the students' learning. Repetition was also still needed as one of activities in teaching pronunciation through integrated approach. The integrated lesson can also be one alternative strategy in teaching pronunciation which can evoke students' motivation, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Finally, further research related to integrated teaching which focuses on specific elements of language would be considered valuable.

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