THE USE OF "SAY HEY GOOGLE" FOR PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY TO PRESENT DIALOGUES IN A SPEAKING CLASS

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Abstract

Pronunciation has been always a problem especially for students of English as a foreign language. This is because the phonological system of the native language differs significantly from that of the target language. The current study offers a new way of pronunciation feedback by using "Say Hey Google". On pronouncing a particular word on the application (Smartphone), Hey Google will reproduce the word in writing. When Hey Google writes the word correctly, it means that the pronunciation is correct and intelligible according to the received standard of pronunciation. The findings show that the subjects (consisting of 22 students of Semester 1 FBIB, Unisbank) varyingly managed to use Hey Google as pronunciation feedback device. Some words which they failed to correctly pronounce were pronounced by the lecturer to get the correct pronunciation. Surprisingly, the majority of the students have positive attitudes and perception of the device (Hey Google).

Keywords: pronunciation, hey google, smartphone

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Indonesia has undergone several paradigmatic changes (Mistar, 2005), starting from the focus on reading comprehension, communicative approaches to a more quite recently discourse approaches. All have attributed to the dire and pressing needs for being literate in the four language skills. A person is labeled as being literate when he or she is able to participate in any discursive practice intelligibly in the sense that he or she does not cause other people to misunderstand the messages (Giroir, 2014). Meanwhile, intelligibility itself requires a strict performance of pronunciation which, in practice, shall go not only with words in isolation but also with words as they are used in utterances. In other words, intonation and rhythm become arguably important to gain overall intelligibility (Burgess & Spencer, 2000).

There are quite a number of ways to train pronunciation. Studies show that most pronunciation drill focuses on the pronunciation of individual words in isolation. Special sessions actually should be devoted to the teaching of intonation and rhythm by which people actually make use of language. Words in isolation may be pronounced differently if they are put in contextual sentences. Thus intelligibility s very much supported by intonation and rhythm, next to the fact that the pronunciation of particular words shall not be ignored (Chela-Flores, 2001).

One drawback of using pronunciation drill for the digital natives is that most students (digital natives) do not want to participate fully in the training. They do not like parroting as was done by their seniors back in the 19th century with the typical prompt by the teacher "Repeat after me." Lucky enough for those who studied English in language laboratory that they repeated after the recordings that they can get acquainted with correct pronunciation (Chela-Flores, 2001) . The seniors, our teachers, professors, were educated in this way (parroting); yet, their English is intelligible. What is wrong with the digital natives? They keep making mistakes in pronunciation in such as a way that their English is not intelligible; and thus causing other people to misunderstand. In other words, they have not yet achieved the communicative competence as one of the elements in discourse competence (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011).

Google, as one of the social media providers has a number of facilities (search engine, email, news feed, and say hey Google). The 'Say Hey Google' serves actually quite similar services as in Search Engine. The only difference between the two is that Say Hey Google can recognize oral inputs while 'Google Search Engine' employs written inputs (Halverson, Julia, Voutsas, & Cheyer, 2004).

Based on the backgroundand a little bit of elaborated description on the current situation related to digital natives' stance on the study of a foreign language and Google's services relevant to the current study, the research questions can be formulated as follows: (1) How can 'Say Hey Google' be used to enhance acquisition of correct pronunciation? (2) What are the attitudes of the students toward the use of 'Say Hey Google'? (3) What are the perceptions the students toward the use of 'Say Hey Google?

Question 1 can be responded in Chapter IV by providing SOP for the use of Say Hey Google written in a procedural text with occasional example in support of the argument. Questions 2 and 3, requires a survey to the students with respect to their attitudes and perceptions. The answer to the above research questions may open up our minds to create changes for future betterment of English language teaching methodology. In other words, the current study is aimed at investigating the use of 'Say Hey Google' for accurate pronunciation to present dialogues in a speaking class.

The current study's novelty deals with speaking fluency. It is arguably true that, in communication process, two events are normally involved, namely (1) encoding and (2) decoding. In encoding, a speaker tries to produce intelligible texts for other individual to decode. A listener will decode the texts to understand the message to which he or she may respond by encoding different texts. Such a communication pattern is called a two-way communication. Both activities (encoding and decoding are primary concerned with intelligible texts.

With respect to oral communication, pronunciation is the key to full comprehension. Thus, there is a high correlation between intelligibility and pronunciation. This research is of high urgency since it is high time to know the attitudes of the students towards the strategies of intelligibility feedback

2. THEORETICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Four Language Features

The normal goal of learning a foreign language is to acquire the four language skills which can be used to carry out linguistic exchanges in any discursive practice (Kramsch & Thorne, 2002) . Two skills, namely listening and speaking are similar to two sides of a coin in the sense that one cannot go without the presence of the other. Similarly the other two skills, reading and writing may also be represented in the same way as two sides of a coin.

A question may arise; which one comes first? Listening or speaking? According to the biological process of human development, a baby is born with the ability to hear sounds around him or her prior to the natural activities of picking up bits of language which later on are developed into a complete mastery of the native language. Thus, in this respect, it can be assumed that 'listening skill' comes before 'speaking skill' (Morozova, 2013). This phenomenon is adopted in the learning and teaching of a second and or foreign language. In this respect, teaching and learning a foreign language shall start by teaching listening.

The other two language skills, reading and writing undergo a similar turn. Reading shall be given first; then writing follows. Thus, it is assumed that writing is the highest and most difficult part of all the four language skills.

From this point, it can be argued that speaking is mostly supported by how much listening a student is exposed; similarly, writing is mostly influenced by how much reading a student is exposed. This is in line with the principle that the amount of listening and reading greatly influence the amount of speaking and writing respectively (DJEBBARI, 2014).

Some argued that language skills may also be divided into two parts, namely receptive skill and productive skill in which the former refers to listening and reading; while the later refers to speaking and writing.

This study, as the topic reveals, focuses on the speaking skill as one of the favorite goal of learning a language. It is the barometer of success in language learning prior to commencing to learn other language skills. Speaking skill has be researched by a number of scholars. Choice of words in speaking, for example, was researched only to find that pronunciation is the most dominant factors contributing to intelligibility (Rajadurai, 2007). In other words, wrong pronunciation may lead to misunderstanding in which the ears cannot receive the correct speech sounds that correspond to the intended meaning of an utterance. This is usually referred to as intelligibility failure.

Concept of Intelligibility

Intelligibility has been commonly known as the quality of language use in which the language form can be understood by the collocutor who, in turn, responds to it, accordingly (Zayaruznaya, 2017). There are three levels of intelligibility, namely elementary, intermediate and advanced. Elementary level can be understood by intermediate level, but not on the other way around. This is why it is important to have a placement test to place a particular student on a level he or she is likely to start learning (Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard, & Wu, 2006).

Intelligibility covers the four language skills, (1) listening, (2) speaking (3) reading and (4) writing each of which has special intelligibility features. Listening, for example, can be intelligible if the utterance is within reach of the listener's decoding perception. Speaking can be intelligible if the speaker employs correct pronunciation (word level) and correct intonation / rhythm (phrase and sentence level). Meanwhile, reading intelligibility involves another term 'readability'. A text is measured in compliance with its readability index to see what kind of text is suitable for what kind of readers (Suleiman & Crosman, 2014). Writing is very complex. Intelligible piece of writing involves particular criteria which include the level of lexical items (technical or non-technical) and grammatical complexity or intricacy (Goddard, 2011).

To focus on the current study, it is necessary to deal with speaking in term of its teaching methodology. A question recently arose whether speaking can be taught. Some argue, methodologically, that speaking can simply be practiced by applying phonological, grammatical and lexical knowledge of the language. However, the presence of a teacher is still necessary as a facilitator or motivator, including the designer of classroom activities.

'Say Hey Google' Facility
The Say Hey Google facility has other names, such as Ok. Google or Hey is displayed as follows:
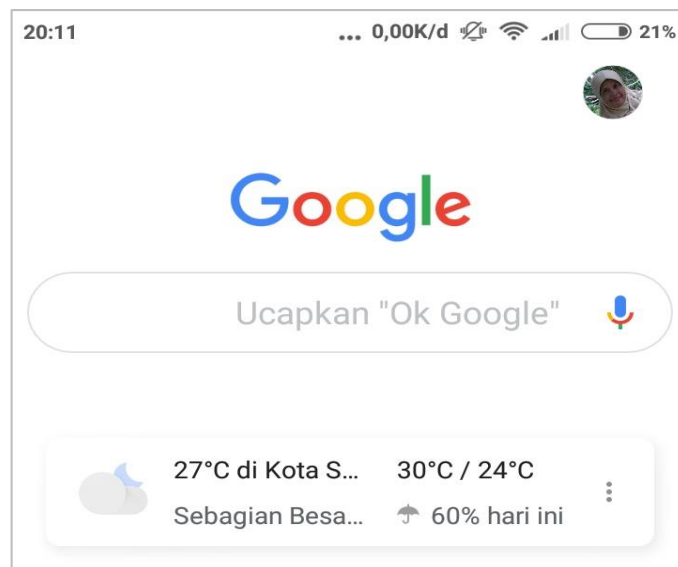

Exhibit 2.1

When the icon speaker is clicked, Google is ready to listen to any form of language such as English. When you make an utterance, If your pronunciation is acceptable (correct according to the standard of English pronunciation or received pronunciation), Hey Google will write it or show the written form. This is what is referred to as instant feedback. In this research, subjectswill be asked to perform the assigned dialogues. Satisfactory performance is achieved when Hey Google gives instant feedback by providing the text corresponding to what is spoken.

Analytical Framework
Analytical framework is based on the mechanism of Hey Google in response to the input produced by the research subjects. Secondly, the subjects (students) will form attitudes and perception of Hey Google with respect to the learning process—how Hey Google helps English learners to achieve standardized pronunciation (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2013) as revealed Exhibit 2.2:
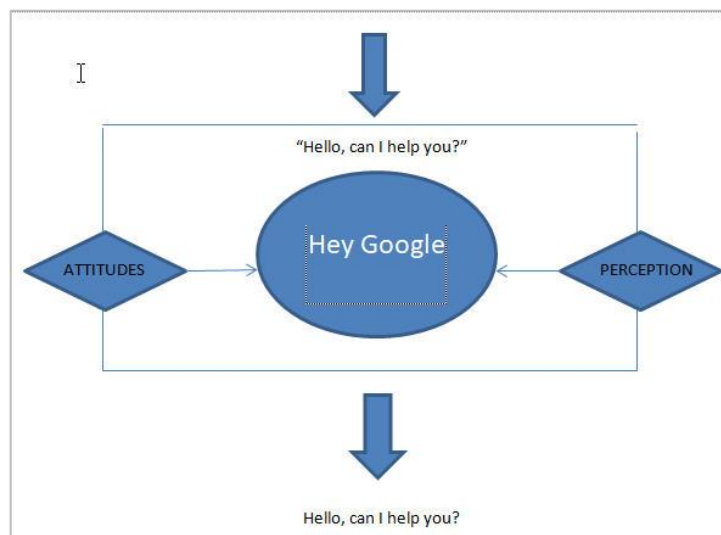

Exhibit 2.2

When a subject produces an utterance "Hello, can I help you?" correctly according to the 'received pronunciation' and 'intonation', Hey Google will respond to the stimulus by writing Hello, can I help you? Thus it is a kind of instant feedback. From this mechanism, the researcher(s) wants to investigate the students' attitudes and perception.

However, the current study focuses on the pronunciation of individual words. Thus, it is limited to pronunciation which consists of word stress, individual consonant, vowel and diphthongs.

3. METHODS

This research employs a survey, qualitatively examining the attitudes and perceptions (Reeves, 2006) of the English Department Students toward one of Google Facilities called 'Say Hey Google' for an instant intelligibility feedback with respect to the pronunciation of words within an utterance. Even though the current study is qualitative in nature, simple quantification (%) was used to support to support the process of qualitative analysis. Three speaking classes were involved in the study. In this study, there are two units of analysis. One is the frequency of attempt for each word by assigned students. The other is each response produced by the research subject which would be analyzed to come up with the students' attitudes and perception, on the basis of which recommendations on the use of Hey Google could be made and therefore developed into a good teaching medium.

In each speaking class, 10 words were collected from the dialogues to be assumed as having difficult pronunciation. The students took turn pronouncing each word of the ten words. Maximum attempts were five students beyond which the lecturer supplied the correct pronunciation A survey instrument would be administered to the research subjects with respect to the mechanism of Hey Google viewed from its competitive advantage, and instant pronunciation feedback. A Likert Scale will be used to measure their attitudes and perception about Hey Google. There were 40 students from three speaking classes.For unit of analysis 1, average of attempt was displayed to show the relative difficulty of the words in question. Meanwhile for unit of analysis 2, the results were be identified in simple proportion (%) to find out the dominance for each unit of analysis2. Overall tendency would also be identified as the basis of formulating recommendation with respect to the use of Hey Google in future researches of similar topic of discussion. Findings will also be discussed to highlight important issues to support recommendations.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pronunciation Feedback

In a speaking class, it is a normal practice that a teacher uses dialogues as models for the students' speaking practice. The rationales of using dialogues include the possibility of adopting the style of speaking by extending the meaning through employment of different lexical items. However, one of the problems in using dialogues is that the students may not be able to pronounce correctly every word presented in the dialogues. With respect to the procedures of using Hey Google for pronunciation feedback, below are step by step procedural ways that language learners may adopt: (1) Select the vocabulary (lexical items) that will be consulted to Hey Google to get pronunciation feedbacks; (2) Set your smart phone at "Hey Google" through which you will have to pronounce the word(s) to get feedback with respect to the pronunciation of each word you have produced. (3)Very often you have to pronounce the word several times until you achieve 'correct pronunciation'. (4)The frequency of attempts you try for every word determines the level of your pronunciation accuracy. (5) If you pronounce the word correctly, Hey Google will give feedback by writing the correct word you referred to. For example: You say: "table", Hey Google will write 'table' which is the correct feedback. Conversely, if you say something else for the word 'table', Hey Google will also write something else, which indicates 'wrong pronunciation'.

Below are words that the students in a speaking class consulted the pronunciation. Each word experienced different attempts of Hey Google. More attempts indicate that the student tried and tried hard to get it right in pronunciation of a particular word. It should be noted that the words were taken from parts of the dialogues in a speaking class. Three classes were taken for this study. Thus, there were three groups.

Table 4.1 Words in Consultation with Hey Google

Group 1

No	Word	1	2	3	4	5	∑
1	Preserved	x	x	√			3
2	Biography	x	√				2
3	Color blind	√					1
4	Experienced	x	x	x	x	√	5
5	Succeeded	√					1
6	Quote	x	√				2
7	Permits	x	x	√			3
8	Zuckerberg	x	x	x	x	x	5
9	Culture	√					1
10	Clothes	x	x	x	√		4
						Total	**27**
						Ave.	**2.7**

Table 4.1 shows that the average attempts to get the correct pronunciation is of 2.7. This means that it is difficult for the students to the first pronunciation 'correct'. The most difficult word is Zuckerberg (Facebook founder). It may be caused by the fact that it is a name. Despite five attempts being made by the students, they were still not able to pronounce 'Zuckerberg' correctly. In this case the lecturer (teacher) had to provide the correct pronunciation.

Meanwhile, the word 'experienced' posed a problem. The students had problem with the diphthongs and suffix –ed. Only after several attempts did the fifth student manage to orally produce the word 'experienced' with correct diphthongs and suffix-ed. Other words with problematic diphthongs include 'clothes', 'quote', 'biography' while the problem related to suffix-ed., includes 'permits' and 'preserved'.

The students failed to identify voiced and voiceless sounds determining whether the suffix shall be pronounced as [-d] or [-t] with reference to the past tense form of the verb, and as [-s] or [-z] with reference to pluralization. Meanwhile, diphthongs exist in a word without specific characteristics, for example the word 'diversity', the first syllable is a diphthong [aI], which is unpredictable.

With respect to the unpredictability of English pronunciation, there is no other way than to consult a reliable dictionary with phonetic or phonemic transcription. The terms 'voiced' or voiceless or other terminologies that belong to phoneticians may look strange to non-English Department students. Therefore the use of online pronunciation clue, such as Google Translate which has a button on which to click to produce the correct pronunciation of any particular word in question.

In practice, the students, upon knowing the correct pronunciation, are supposed to practice pronouncing the word(s) again and again, to use them in making utterances, in a variety of context by means of which the words will eventually be acquired and the students can use them as they wish. It should be born in mind that language skills, especially speaking and writing can only be mastered through constant practice.

Table 4.2 Words in Consultation with Hey Google
Group 2

No	Word	1	2	3	4	5	∑
1	Scrutinized	x	x	x	x	x	5
2	Butterfly	√					1
3	Seventeen	x	√				2
4	Peeling	√					1
5	Lion	√					1
6	Founders	x	x	√			3
7	Ground	x	x	√			3
8	Bloodshed	x	x	x	√		4
9	Develop	x	x	x	√		4
10	Scholastic	x	x	√			3
						Total	27
						Ave	2.7

Similar to Table 4.1, Table 4.2 clearly indicates that among 10 words, the average attempts of pronunciation is of 2.7, meaning that a number of attempts had to be made prior to arriving at the correct pronunciation. The word 'scrutinize' is supposed to be a passive lexical item and therefore not every student managed to get it correctly pronounced. The teacher had to supply the correct pronunciation. Other words dominated problems of diphthongs and suffix-ed., mostly caused by failure to identify voiced and voiceless sounds to indicate the pronunciation of the suffix.

The word 'seventeen' is confusing with reference to the stress, which is on the last syllable. It is confused with the word 'seventy' which is stressed on the first syllable. Another problem in stress belongs to the word 'develop'. Some students think that the word 'develop' is stressed on the third syllable, which is actually stressed on the second syllable. Meanwhile, the word scholastic is confused with the word 'school' therefore only on the third attempt did the student manage to get the correct pronunciation of the word 'scholastic'.

Words spelt with [oo] such as 'wood', 'book', 'took' which are mostly pronounced as [U:] are often confused with words similarly spelt with [oo] but pronounced as [Â] such as in the words 'blood' and 'flood'. There is no rule with respect to such a type of pronunciation. The students have to memorize words with special pronunciation. A good dictionary, such as Oxford or Cambridge dictionary has been provided with phonetic transcription employing IPA (International Phonetic Association). Other types of dictionaries, even they may employ different phonetic transcription, have a list of IPA to which students can occasionally refer, in case of doubt.

Table 4.3 Words in Consultation with Hey Google
Group 3

No	Word	1	2	3	4	5	∑
1	Watching	√					1
2	Friends	x	√				2
3	Whiteboards	x	√				2
4	Excited	√					1
5	Succeeded	x	√				2
6	Installments	x	√				2
7	Importantly	√					1
8	Haphazard	x	x	x	x	x	5
9	Skyscrapers	x	x	x	√		4
10	Donald	x	x	√			3
						Total	23
						Ave	2.3

Table 4.3 also lists ten words that the students were not sure with respect to pronunciation. It turned out that the average attempt was of 2.3, meaning that the students had to attempt several time prior to arriving at the correct pronunciation. The word 'haphazard' is a passive lexical item that sometimes an individual may know the meaning without knowing the pronunciation. Such a word often is used in a written text. Meanwhile, the word 'Donald' which is a name may be pronounced as it is spelt [donal] as it is also referred to as a restaurant of fried chicken so that the word has been borrowed by Indonesian as McDonald to be pronounced as it is written [makdonal]. Only on the third trial did the student manage to pronounce it correctly possibly after consulting the dictionary.

It is normal that Indonesian students learning English would encounter difficulty in trying to produce suffix-ed./-s. for the past tense / and pluralization, including **verb+s**. Only by practicing hard can the students achieve acceptable and intelligible pronunciation of English.

4.1.2 The Students' Attitudes and Perception toward Hey Google

The second and the third research questions of the current study are the students' attitude and perception with respect to the use of Hey Google. There are 10 points in terms of attitude and perception involving the use of Hey Google as outlined below:

a. From the lecturer's guide and instruction, the students are well equipped with knowledge and strategies to use Hey Google to get pronunciation feedback.
b. From the experience in the use of Hey Google, it is actually a smart application that can be used to obtain pronunciation feedback with respect to English words or sentences.
c. It terms of the working mechanism of Hey Google, whenever an individual pronounces any English word **correctly** according to its received pronunciation (in any variety of English), Hey Google will write the given word **correctly** according to the correct spelling.
d. It terms of the working mechanism of Hey Google, whenever an individual pronounces any English word **wrongly** according to its received pronunciation (in any variety of English), Hey Google will write the given word **wrongly** according to the correct spelling. Or it will replace the given word with whatever form as heard.
e. Item 3 above indicates that the pronunciation of the given word is correct as produced by an individual, agreed upon by Hey Google.
f. Item 4 above indicates that the pronunciation of the given word is wrong as produced by an individual, refused by Hey Google.
g. In terms of pronunciation feedback, Hey Google is best used to deal with pronunciation as word or phrase level.
h. In terms of pronunciation feedback, Hey Google is not quite capable to deal with the pronunciation of linguistic forms beyond longer utterances
i. The students will consult Hey Google for every word they meet with.
j. Only when in doubt about pronunciation of certain words will the students consult Hey Google.

The results of the survey in line with the above ten items can be seen in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 Attitude and Perception of Students towards Hey Google

No	Item	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	
1	Item 1							19	*86.4*	3	*13.6*	
2	Item 2							17	*77.3*	5	*22.7*	
3	Item 3							20	*90.9*	2	*9.1*	
4	Item 4							18	*81.9*	4	*18.1*	
5	Item 5									22	100	
6	Item 6									22	100	
7	Item 7					15	*68.18*	7	*31.82*			
8	Item 8					11	50	11	50			
9	Item 9							13	*59.1*	9	*40.9*	
10	Item 10							22	100			
										∑ subjects		22

Note: 1) totally disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neutral, 4) agree, 5) totally disagree

It is outlined in Item 1 that teacher's instructions are very importance before the students can make the best use of Hey Google. This indicates that the teacher's instructions are still required without regard to the issues of being digitally smart. It turned out that 86.4% agreed to this kind of phenomenon, while 13.6% expressed total agreement. This can be said that the students have positive attitude toward Hey Google. However, the students should have known this since they are exposed in the internet world most of the time. No one is to blame in this respect. The world is out there.

Most importantly, this Hey Google has been found useful beyond what it was created for. Originally Hey Google was created to help people get information about direction to go to some places (map), and any other form of information relevant to any personal, academic and business encounters. Through Hey Google, an individual can communicated orally without writing messages on the search engine.

Expressed in Item 2 is that Hey Google is a smart application which can give pronunciation feedback by simple input of an individual's voice (pronouncing the word / phrases or sentences). The output is that Hey Google will write as it heard. In this respect, the students have positive attitude and perception about Hey Google. It can be seen that 77.3% of the research subjects agreed that Hey Google has the capacity and ability to give feedback with respect to English pronunciation. Meanwhile, the rest (22.7%) expressed total agreement to the case. This further supports the fact concerning the performance of Hey Google—that it can do beyond what it was created for.

Item 3 of the survey deals with the working mechanism of Hey Google in giving pronunciation feedback. Most the subjects have both positive attitudes and perception. This can be seen from the fact that 99.9 of the subjects agreed to the working mechanism of Hey Google, even 9.1% expressed total agreement. However, there is one problem that might discourage an individual to use Hey Google. He or she may have tried several times to pronounce a particular word; yet he or she fails to meet the received pronunciation. For example, the word 'gave' in which to involve a diphthong /eI/ may cause difficulty due to insufficient approximation of the diphthong /eI/ to successfully pronounce the word 'gave'. An Indonesian student most frequently replaces /eI/ with a similar vowel /æ/ so that he or she pronounces the word 'gave' as [gæv] instead of [geIv].

A student with such a difficulty in pronunciation is encouraged to take a look at features of the English phonetics, especially with respect to the production of English vowels and diphthongs. Such a case is understandable. There are more vowels and diphthong in English than in Indonesian. It is therefore logical to assume that Indonesian students learning English will more **unlikely** produce the assigned speech sounds.

Item 4 of the survey is opposed to Item 3. Item 4 elaborates the working mechanism of Hey Google, it says "… whenever an individual pronounces any English word **wrongly** according to its received pronunciation (in any variety of English), Hey Google will write the given word **wrongly**. Or it will replace the given word with whatever form as heard." In this respect, the students (81.9%) realize this fact and therefore they will be very careful to supply the word to Hey Google. In practice, one word may be pronounced repeatedly until the received pronunciation is reached. The word 'haphazard', for example, is thought to be very difficult. Five students have attempted to pronounce the word; yet none succeed. Finally the lecturer had to supply the correct pronunciation.Item 5 justifies the correct supply of words to Hey Google. Meanwhile Item 6 justifies the incorrect supply of words to Hey Google. These two facts have been made aware to the students. They expressed   total agreements (100%) in both items.Surprisingly, Item 7, despite the positive tendency, the students' responses stay around neutral (68.18%). This means that they have realized that actually Hey Google can be used to give feedback at phrase, clause or eve sentence levels. However, we suggest that pronunciation feedback employing Hey Google is best used at word level to avoid possibilities that Hey Google will respond as an exchange.

For example, when you say "I want a nearby restaurant." Here, Hey Google does not respond as repeating the sentence "I want a nearby restaurant." but it will provide information on the location of nearby

restaurant. That is why we recommend the use of Hey Google for pronunciation feedback only on word level. This has also been justified by 50% of the students (Item 8). Items 9 and 10 refer to when and in what situation the students will consult Hey Google. Responses vary but they still show their positive attitudes toward the use of Hey Google. Most of them prefer to use it when they are in doubt about the pronunciation of words.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Much has been discussed on the problem of pronunciation. A number of articles have also addressed the problems. The current study proposed Hey Google to be used as a tool to gain feedback on your pronunciation. It is called a feedback because the input is given by the student on which Hey Google to produce the evaluative feedback in the form of the correct spelling on the input. It turns out that this technique is very beneficial in terms of its easy and simple procedures. Moreover, the students mostly have positive attitudes and perceptions towards Hey Google. Therefore follow-up activities are recommended to train other fellow students and teachers, especially at high school level. This can be done through the community service of the tertiary education.

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