

# Investigating Pronunciation Error Produced by English Department Students: A Study on Phonetics

Tasya Indah Widjaya Putri  
*Universitas Lampung*

---

**Abstract-** *Pronunciation is important component in English speaking activity since it can highly influence the meaning of utterances. If someone makes error in pronouncing some words in a sentence, it can disturb the communication. This study aims to find out the errors and factor influence the error produced by English Department students. The researcher applies qualitative research design. In collecting the data, the researcher uses observation and interview. The findings show that the students produced error when they say fricative sound /v/, and Palato-alveolars /dʒ/ and the internal factor influence the error produced by them. To sum up, the students feel difficult in pronouncing the consonants instead of vowels.*

**Key words:** *pronunciation errors; Phonetics*

---

Date of Submission: 05-03-2023

Date of Acceptance: 18-03-2023

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

When learners learn English, there are four skills that they must master. The skills are, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Besides these four skills, there are some important components that the students must understand. Such as one of the linguistics branches called Phonetics. As stated by Kleider (2004) phonetic deals with speech in its purely physical aspects. The way sounds are articulated by the speaker, the acoustic properties of sound, waves, and the effects that these have on the ear of the hearer (and on the ear of the speaker, for that matter). Phonetics related to pronunciation. According to Kenworthy (2015) pronunciation is integrated in all English skills. In addition, Oxford Dictionary states pronunciation is the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is spoken. In other words, pronunciation is the way how we utter, stress, a word in English and if someone has a good and clear pronunciation, it will be easy for that person to understand what native speakers says. It will be easier to convey the meaning. When the learners produce error the meaning what they say will be different.

In learning pronunciation, the learners may produce some error yet the pronunciation mostly ignorant, because some of the teachers more focus on teaching other skills. For instance, the learners produce error when they say the word “three” they do not sound the /θ/ correctly. Learning pronunciation is not that easy. To make the learners understand and able to utter words correctly, the teacher must produce accurate pronunciation and speech production. Harmer (2000) states that concentrating on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making learners aware of where words should be stressed- all things give them extra information about spoken English and help them achieve the goal of improved comprehension and intelligibility. This can be one of the factors influence learners’ error in pronouncing English words because sometimes the pronunciation is ignorant.

In this study, the researcher wants to find out the errors produced, and the factors of pronunciation error produced by the master’s degree students of English department. The research question is formulated as follow:

1. What are the pronunciation errors produced by the students of master’s degree at English Department Universitas Lampung?
2. What are the factor influence pronunciation errors produced by the students of master’s degree at English Department Universitas Lampung?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is important component in English speaking activity since it can highly influence the meaning of utterances. If someone makes error in pronouncing some words in a sentence, it can disturb the communication, even it can be one of the factors which can lead to the conversation breakdown. Pronunciation also connected to listening, if someone can pronounce the word correctly, it’s easier to listen what other say

accurately.

According to Hornby (1995), pronunciation is the way in which a word is spoken, the way a word which is pronounced, the way a person speaks the words of a language. Meanwhile, Rebecca (1993) defines pronunciation as the act of producing the sound of speech including articulation, vowel, formation, accent inflection and intonation, often with reference to the correctness or acceptability of the speech. Pennington & Rogerson (2019) explain that pronunciation is the foundation of messaging in speech. It is the production of English sound system for making a good meaning (Yates, 2002 as cited in Gilakjani, 2016).

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that Pronunciation is the way to utter word in English. Pronunciation is important because it deals with the meaning of words. If someone make error in pronunciation it can affect the communication and meaning.

## **2.2 The features of pronunciation**

The Features of Pronunciation consists of Consonant, vowels and diphthongs.

### **1. Vowel**

Vowel is a sound produced with a free passage. The free passages means, the vowel sound are produce without forcing of mouth and it vowel sound are divided into two kinds. They are, long vowel with it patterns, such as /i:/, /ɜ:/,

/a:/, /u:/, /ɔ:/, and short vowel as a pattern, like ɪ, /e/, /æ/, /ə/, /ʌ /, /ʊ/, /ɒ/.

### **2. Consonants**

Consonant sound is produced with an aggressive flow of air is coming out from our mouth. Ramlan said that there are twenty-four consonant's phonetics those are, p, b, t, d, k, g, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, θ, ð, m, n, ŋ, h, i, r, w, j. Based on the positions, the consonant phonetic alphabets are classified into two parts.

First, voiced which are b, d, dʒ, g, j, l, m, n, r, v, ð, y, z, ʒ, ŋ /. Second, unvoiced such as, f, p, t, tʃ, k, θ, s, ʃ/.

### **3. Diphthongs**

Diphthong is the combination of two vowels sound, and it is getting movement from one vowel sound to another. Rochmad says that diphthong is part of vowels inside of English pronunciation. For instance, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ʊə/, /eɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /iʊ/, and /əʊ/. Those sounds need higher position in your mouth, and it has combination sound.

From the explanation above, it can be said that International has three main features, which are consonants, vowels, and diphthongs. Each of the features classified into some sounds.

## **2.3 Place of Articulation**

Yule (2010) classified Place of articulation into:

### ➤ Bilabials

When the consonant sounds are articulated by using the closing movement of lips, they are called as bilabial. The bilabial sounds are /p/, /b/, /m/, and /w/.

### ➤ Labiodentals

Labiodental refers to the sounds that are articulated by the lower lip with the upper teeth in case of touching each other. Such as the sound /f/ and /v/.

### ➤ Dentals

Dental is a sound which is articulated by the tip of the tongue (lower articulator) with the teeth that imply a very soft contact of both articulators. The dental consonant sounds are /θ/ and /ð/.

### ➤ Alveolars

When the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge, therefore they articulate the /t/, /d/, /z/, /s/, /n/, and /l/ consonant sounds.

### ➤ Palato-alveolars

The palato-alveolar happens when the blade or tip of the tongue is used only behind the alveolar ridge. The consonant sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are include to this classification.

### ➤ Palatals

Palatal refers to a sound that is articulated with the front of the tongue against the hard palate. The only palatal sound is /j/. g) Velars The sounds that are produced with the back of the tongue against the soft palate are called velar consonant sounds. They are /g/, /k/, /w/ and /ŋ/.

### ➤ Glottal

Glottal refers to the glottis. The glottal consonant sound is only /h/ in which produced by the close contact of a focal folds that produce friction. English /h/ often appear in syllable initial position or the beginning of a word, and rarely place in the middle of the word.

#### **2.4 Manner of Articulation**

Yule (2010) divided Manner of articulation into:

➤ **Plosives or stops**

Plosive involves a complete closure of articulators, prevent the escape of the air, and then release explosively after the closure. There are six oral plosives or stops, they are /p/, /b/ (bilabial), /t/, /d/ (alveolar), /k/, and /g/ (velar).

➤ **Fricatives**

Fricative happens when two vocal organs are closely together for the air movement. Fricative sounds are /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/, /x/, /ç/, and /ʒ/.

➤ **Affricatives**

Affricates are the sequences of the plosive and fricative. Both articulators are together to be progressively done the release stage. The affricate consonants are /tʃ/ and /dʒ/.

➤ **Nasal**

Nasal consonants are considered as a different type of articulation. It is due to the raising of the soft palate and makes the velic opening does not take place. The airflow escapes only from the nose because the velic opens with a complete obstruction at the same point within the mouth. Nasal consonant sounds are /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/.

➤ **Lateral**

Lateral consonant sound is only /l/. It is articulated by the blade of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. So that, the air is freely flow around the sides of the tongue.

➤ **Glide**

An approximant is produced when the vocal organs are not too close to cause an audible friction. English has four approximant consonant sounds, they are /r/, /w/, (w) and /j/.

#### **2.5 Factors of Pronunciation Error**

Djajaningrat (2011) states that because of the difficulties in English pronunciation, many English language learners including the Indonesian learners tend to generate errors in the articulation of the sounds. The problems faced by the learners are caused by two sources of errors. According to Richard (1971) errors are caused by negative transfer or the effect of their mother tongue, which are called inter-language errors. Besides that, the errors made because the students do not know the target language well belongs to intra-lingual errors. Beside the sources of errors above, the learners make errors caused by two factors. They are internal and external factors. Internal factor refers to the students' motivation in learning English while the external factor refers to the environment of the learner. To sum up, errors in pronunciation influence by both internal and external factor of the learners itself.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs qualitative research design as the researcher described the result. The subject of this research was master's degree of English Department students at Unila academic year 2021/2022. There were 6 samples chosen for this study. To answer the research question, in collecting the data, the researcher used observation and interview. The observation done to get the data of students' error in pronouncing the words. meanwhile, the interview was done online. The interview conducted to get more data about the factors why the students produced errors.

### **IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The result of this study was gained from the observation and interview conducted by the researcher.

#### **Result of observation**

The observation was done on Nov 26<sup>th</sup> in Linguistics class. The researcher recorded the class on google meeting. The topic was about the 'language change' then the lecturer asked 10 students to present their analysis about the journal which has been shared by the lecturer. From 10 presenters, the researcher found that there were 6 students produced error during their presentation in linguistics class.

Name of the speaker	Mispronounced words
Speaker 1: SM	Language, change, chapter, happen, theories.

Speaker 2: M	Language, change, gesture, temperature, meant, measure, awareness.
--------------	---

Speaker 3: ABP	Change, current, require, language, environment, current, ambiguous, address, variety, substitute, such as.
Speaker 4: RA	Day, actors, variety, affect, those, language, change, play, adapt.
Speaker 5: IV	Argue, paper, language, change, variation, convenience, knowledge, approach
Speaker 6: KR	Change, language, paper, approach, climate, figure, speech, various.

**Table 1. list of students' pronunciation error.**

➤ The result of the observation showed that the most frequent errors found in words language, change, variety (variation). It can be seen that the students face difficulty in pronouncing the fricative sound /v/, and Palato-alveolars /dʒ/. The students modified it into fricatives sound /f/ when they uttered variety and variation. The students modified Palato-alveolars /dʒ/ when they pronounced the word language, most of them modified into Palato-alveolars /tʃ/. Then they also modified affricative consonants /dʒ/ when they say change into nasal consonant /ŋ/. During the observation, the researcher did not find the speakers find difficulty in vowels. On the other words, the researcher produced error mostly in consonants sound.

#### 4.2. The result of Interview

The interview was conducted online via google from. The result of interview functions to figure out the students' reason in producing pronunciation error. The researcher gave 5 questions related to the topic.

The first question was about the language they spoke every day. They used Bahasa Indonesia in their daily conversation, English as some of them work as English teachers and study in English Department and their local language such as Javanese. The researcher asks this because the language they speak everyday can influence the way how they sound English words.

In the second question, I asked them whether when they speak English influenced by their 1<sup>st</sup> language. Most of them said that they were agree 1<sup>st</sup> language influence their pronunciation. As they are accustomed to use Bahasa Indonesia every day, the way they pronounce English words is sometimes the same as when they say Bahasa Indonesia.

The third questions, I asked them about how their pronunciation skill like. I found that there were some students that realize they had difficulty in pronouncing English words and need more improvement. There was one student stated that he had good pronunciation and one student said that he actually able to say the words correctly but its sometimes mixed with the accent of 1<sup>st</sup> language. The researcher asked this because the researcher wanted to know their awareness toward their pronunciation skill.

The fourth question was the gist of the whole questions. The researcher asked about the factor influence them producing pronunciation error. The researcher found that the most frequent factors stated by the speakers is because they don't understand about the word. When they get new English words, they feel confuse and do not know how to say it. Another factor because they do not use English frequently, so when they have to pronounce the words in English, they feel the word is so hard for them.

The result from interview can be concluded that the factors influence master's degree students of English department produced error is the internal factor.

## V. CONCLUSION

Learning Pronunciation might be difficult for many students as it deals with the spoken language. The students tend to produce some errors in pronunciation and the errors influence by some factors. Based on the result of observation and interview, the students face difficulty when they have to utter consonants sounds. The factor influences their errors is the internal factors related to their motivation in learning and practicing English words. further research about the same topic can do deep analysis on the internal factors as if they use to pronounce the words correctly their pronunciation will be fossilized.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Djajaningrat, I. (2011). The Mapping of Pronunciation Error.
- [2]. Jakarta: Universitas Darma Persada.
- [3]. Gilakjani, A.P. (2016). English Pronunciation Instruction: A Literature Review.
- [4]. International Journal of Research in English Education 1,(1). 1-16 Harmer, J. (200). The Practice of English Language Teaching. London:
- [5]. Longman Group Ltd.
- [6]. Hornby, A.S. 1995. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [7]. Kenworthy, J (2005). Teaching English Pronunciation. Longman Inc. New York. Kreidler, Charles W. (2004). The Pronunciation of

- English: A Course Book.  
[8]. Cornwall: Blackwell Publishing.  
[9]. Pennington, M. C., & Rogerson-Revell, P. (2019). English pronunciation teaching and research: Contemporary perspectives. London: Palgrave Macmillan.  
[10]. Rebecca M D (1993). Accurate English. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, p.7. Richards, J. C. (1971). A non-contrastive approach to Error Analysis. English  
[11]. Language Teaching Journal. 25. 204-219  
[12]. Rochmad Dio Pratama, Error Analysis on Diphthong Sound Pronounced by Fourteen Semester Students in English Department UIN Sunan Kalijaga.  
[13]. Thesis of Serjana, Faculty of Arab and Cultural Science, State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, 2017.  
[14]. Ramlan, English Phonetics, Semarang: UNNES Press, 2003.  
[15]. Yates, Linda. (2002). Pronunciation 1. La Trobe: Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre.  
[16]. Yule, George. (2010). The Study of Language: The Fourth Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tasya Indah Widjaya Putri. "Investigating Pronunciation Error Produced by English Department Students: A Study on Phonetics." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 13(02), (2023): pp. 43-48.