STUDENTS’ ERRORS IN ENGLISH VOWEL PRONUNCIATION

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ABSTRACT
This research aimed to describe students’ error in English vowel pronunciation and the factors caused these errors at fourth semester students in English Education Department of UMMY Solok in 2021/2022 academic year. The researcher found some problems in English vowel pronunciation; students had lack of knowledge of pronunciation and understanding of English words, and students struggled as there are no similar sounds of their original language or mother tongue in English. This research was conducted by using descriptive quantitative. The sample of the research was all fourth semester students in English Education Department of UMMY Solok in 2021/2022 academic year, which consist of 14 students. The data were collected through pronunciation test and questionnaire. The results of this research showed that the level of students score in English vowel pronunciation was “very good”. However, there are five majors of students’ error. These errors occurred in the pronunciation of vowels /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ɜ:/, and /ǝ/. Then, the factor affecting students to do errors was interlingual errors, the errors caused by the difference between pronunciations letters of students’ first language with the target language. It is hoped that this research will be useful for the lecturers, students and the next researchers.

Keywords : English vowel, Error analysis, Pronunciation

INTRODUCTION
One of the factors which has a great impact on learners’ successful communication is English pronunciation. However, students still do errors in pronouncing English words. In Phonetics and Phonology subject at English Education Department of UMMY Solok, pronunciation has been studied and introduced. However, most students think that they have poor pronunciation skill. Their pronunciation is still not in accordance with Received Pronunciation of English and it is still incorrect. The majority of students could have difficulty pronouncing words, particularly vowel sounds. Even when they have already learned the material in class, students still struggle with pronunciation.
According to Puspita (2007) and Riyadi (2013), there are several reasons on why college students still do errors in English pronunciation, especially English vowel pronunciation. First, the students have lack knowledge of the correct pronunciation. Second, the students’ inability to recognize the words. Third, students’ difficulty to pronounce those new sounds as they are not trained to pronounce such sounds since they were children.

Regarding to pronunciation, English is very challenging for Indonesians, including students at English Education Department of UMMY Solok. This is due to the differences between the source language and the target language of students. There are two differences between Indonesian language and English language; first, the count of vowel and consonant sounds. Indonesian language have six vowels sounds they are /i/, /u/, /o/, /a/, /e/, /ə/ and twenty one consonant namely /b/, /ć/, /d/, /f/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /p/, /q/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /v/, /w/, /x/, /y/, /z/. English has twelve vowel sounds namely /i:/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɑ:/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ǝ/ and twenty four consonant they are /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /h/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/, /j/, /w/. English vowels and consonants are more complex and complicated than Indonesian vowels and consonants. Second, in general, Indonesian language does not have distinctions between letter spelling and pronouncing the sounds, but English have differences in spelling the letter and sound pronunciation.

The problems that were analyzed in this research are the kind of vowel pronunciation error made by the students and the reasons for the problem of pronouncing vowels. The differences between the languages of the students and the target language are what underlie the pronunciation problems encountered by foreign language learners. Swan & Smith (2001) have described the language challenges faced by Indonesian students in their language learning are divided into three, phonological elements, students' difficulties during the course of their study and social issues.

The article was conducted to review due to pronunciation of English vowels may interfere the understanding of listener if they are not provided correctly. Based on the observation which was done before conducting this research, there were a lot of students who could not pronounced some words properly which gave misunderstanding in not just conducting the class, but also in communicating in general. This should have not happened since they are already in the fourth semester, which could be assumed that they have learned a lot from vocabulary to some field of linguistics. This article is important to be conducted because this is useful as evaluation and reflection for fourth semester students in English Education Department of UMMY Solok in 2021/2022 academic year. It was proven by the
result of students’ pronunciation test and information from the students by using a questionnaire.

In conducting the research, research questions are needed. The results questions were stated as follows:

1. What kind of vowel pronunciation errors made by the fourth semester students of English Education Department UMMY?
2. What factors caused students to do errors in pronouncing English vowels?

METHOD
Research Design
This research was conducted by using descriptive quantitative design. Siyoto and Sodik (2015) say that descriptive research is concerned with the investigation of phenomena in depth or distinguish one phenomenon from another. This research aimed to describe the kind of students’ errors in English vowel pronunciation. There were two research questions which needs to be answered while conducting the research.

The researcher used quantitative research design because the data was collected in the form of numerical data. According to Sugiyono (2013), quantitative method is a research method that presents data in the form of numbers and analysis using statistics. The researcher analyzed the students’ errors in English vowels pronunciation at the fourth semester students in English Education Department of Universitas Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin at 2021/2022 academic year.

Population and Sample
According to Arikunto (2002), population is people or other things discussed in the research. The population of this research was the fourth semester students of English Education Department UMMY Solok at 2021/2022 academic year. It consists of fourteen students.

The researcher used saturation sampling method in taking sample. According to Sugiyono (2013), saturation sampling is a sampling approach that involves sampling the entire population. This is frequently done when there is a small population (less than 30 people).

There were some reasons why the researcher chose this class. First, students had just taken Phonetic and Phonology subject. Second, for students in this year, pronunciation is difficult because they have not mastered speaking English and are still confused to pronounce English words. Third, students are the nearest sample as subject of the research. So, the
researcher wanted to analyze the students’ error in English vowel pronunciation at fourth semester students in English Education Department of Universitas Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin in 2021/2022 academic year.

**Instrumentation**

Arikunto (2010) states that instrument of the research are tool that is used by a researcher to apply a method in order to get data. Instrument is important part in the research because it uses to collect the data. The kinds of instrument that were used in the research are tests, questionnaires and interview.

Test and questionnaire were used as the instrument of the research. The kind of test that was used is pronunciation test. Pronunciation test aimed to know the kind of vowel pronunciation error. The researcher asked students to read the list of English words which is made by researcher. Then, students’ voice was recorded.

Questionnaire aimed to know the factors caused students’ error to pronouncing English vowel. It is developed by adjusting the statements about the types of error based on source. Students can determine whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements in the questionnaire by checking it. The checklist was analyzed by using likert scale. The scale response which used in this questionnaire is the level of agreement. Wade (2006) mentions the level of agreement in the likert-type scale response anchors which are strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree (neutral), agree, and strongly agree. The check list questionnaire consists of 10 statements.

**Technique of Data Collection**

Collecting the data is significant step in doing the research. The purpose of collecting the data is to obtain information about the fact that can be trusted. In this research, the data was collected by giving test and questionnaires.

To get the data which is related to the object of this research, researcher used oral test of pronunciation. There were some steps in collecting the data by giving the test. First, researcher came to the class and did an introduction. Second, researcher gave a piece of paper which contains a list of English words to the students. Then, the researcher asked the students to read personally before recording. Next, researcher asked students to read the text one by one. Researcher gave 4 minutes for each student. Then, the researcher recorded students’ reading. Finally, researcher gave questionnaire to the students. Students have given 3 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.
Technique of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, researcher analyzed it. The technique that used in analyzing the data was error analysis. The data had been transcribed and decoded by researcher before analyzing it.

The researcher used the following procedure in analyzing data according to Saat and Mania (2020):

a. Coding

Coding is the process of converting data into symbols, either letters or numbers. It is important to organize the data and to make them easier to be analyzed. Researcher used Oxford Dictionary of English as the handbook for English standard pronunciation.

b. Organizing

Data must be arranged after it has been coded. It will be tough to comprehend and understand data that has not been properly structured. After identifying the students' errors in pronouncing English vowels, the writer classified them into two categories: correct and incorrect pronunciation. To determine whether the pronunciation is correct or error, it was analyzed by Mr. Yuli Herman, M.Pd, Miss Risza Dwiputri S.S, M.A and Suci Permata Sari.

c. Counting or Scoring

The researcher gave score to know how the students’ pronunciation based on the following steps (Arikunto, 2009):

1. Finding Out the Students’ Score

To score students’ pronunciation, researcher use formula:

\[
\text{Score} = \frac{\text{correct pronunciation} \times 100}{n}
\]

Description:
\(n = \text{total number of the test}\)

2. Finding Out the Students’ Score Average.

The formula as follow:

\[
M = \frac{\sum x}{n}
\]

Description:
\(M = \text{mean}\)
\(\sum x = \text{sum of the score}\)
\(n = \text{the number of students}\)
3. Categorize the Students’ Pronunciation Ability.

**Table 1: Scoring Rubric of Pronunciation Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-79</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-55</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-39</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate the percentage of error pronunciation, researcher used the following formula as stated of Sarwono (2006):

\[ P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% \]

Description:

- **P** = Percentage
- **F** = Frequency
- **N** = The total number of students
- **100\%** = Constant Number

The calculation of this descriptive percentage as follows:

a. Checking the pronunciation of students that were recorded.

b. Calculating the frequency of students’ pronunciation.

c. The overall number of students.

d. Insert into the formula.

e. Interpret the result with the table.

d. Tabulation

It is the process of summarizing all data that has been input into a table. It can only be done after all of the data has been coded, organized, and counted. Data counting and tabulation can be done at the same time in some cases. The researcher made a valid conclusion in the short description form of the errors.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

1. *Pronunciation Test*

The data was collected through pronunciation test to know kinds of English vowel pronunciation error. Before having pronunciation test, researcher tried out the
instrument on August 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2022. The try out was done at sixth semester students of English Education Department. Based on the reliability on Chapter III, the instruments of this research are reliable in the level “very highly reliable”. After analyzing it, researcher continued to the real test at fourth semester students on August 14\textsuperscript{th}, 2022. There were fourteen (14) students followed the test. The total score of students’ vowel pronunciation as seen in the table below:

**Table 2: The Total Students’ Vowel Pronunciation Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Students’ Name</th>
<th>Correct Pronunciation</th>
<th>Incorrect Pronunciation</th>
<th>Individual Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agung Muhammad</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Achmad Fauzi</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fauzi Rahmad Zeda</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Willis Purnama Adi</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aidil Fitra</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adam Al Warishi</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hafizatul Azian</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bedya Hestika</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sisri Afrilia</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Triana Akhirta</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sukma Fajri Oktavia</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sri Surya Nada</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Khatimun Nisa Urasida</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yulia Pagansa</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>708 (84.29%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>132 (15.71%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.080</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mean score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that from 14 students and 1.080 total score of the pronunciation test, the correct pronunciation score is 708 (84.29%) and the incorrect pronunciation is 132 (15.71%). The mean score is 84, it was classified in ‘very good’ category.

2. Questionnaire

Data analysis of questionnaire was used to know the factors caused students to do error in English vowel pronunciation (to answer the second research question “what factors cause students to do errors in pronouncing English vowels at fourth semester students in English Education Department of Universitas Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin in 2021/2022 academic year?”). Questionnaire was developed by the indicators which
have explained in Chapter II. Students may decide if they strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, or strongly agree with the statements given in the questionnaire by checking them. The result can be seen in the following table:

**Table 3: The Factor Cause Students’ Error in English Vowel Pronunciation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>A. Interlingual errors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You are used to using English as a second language at home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(21.43%)</td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
<td>(57.14%)</td>
<td>(14.29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The pronunciation of letters in your first language is different from the target language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(35.71%)</td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>You use a local accent when speaking English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14.29%)</td>
<td>(21.43%)</td>
<td>(21.43%)</td>
<td>(35.71%)</td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>B. Intralingual errors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>You have learned the phonetic symbols</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(35.71%)</td>
<td>(64.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>You can pronounce phonetic symbols correctly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(21.43%)</td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
<td>(42.86%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>You understand vowels pronunciation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
<td>(14.29%)</td>
<td>(35.71%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(14.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You ever tried to train yourself to utter words with different English vowels outside of class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
<td>(21.43%)</td>
<td>(57.14%)</td>
<td>(7.14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>C. Teaching method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>You are interested in learning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
<td>(28.57%)</td>
<td>(42.86%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English vowels

9 Your lecturers often corrected your mistakes in pronouncing English vowels

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14,29%)</td>
<td>(21,43%)</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td>(14,29%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The technique used by lecturers in teaching English vowels is easy to understand

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14,29%)</td>
<td>(21,43%)</td>
<td>(57,14%)</td>
<td>(7,14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

In the finding above, researcher presented the result of pronunciation test and questionnaire. Researcher then discussed the result of the data which were taken from questionnaire and pronunciation test at fourth semester students in English Education Department of Universitas Mahaputra Muhammad Yamin in 2021/2011 academic year.

Related to the research findings, this research answered the research questions. First, the result of pronunciation test shows the kind of English vowel errors that have pronounced by students. After analyzing the data, the result of the pronunciation test was very good. The percentage of students’ error was only 15,71%. The average of students score was 84. The students score was classified in “very good” category.

Despite the category of students’ pronunciation score was “very good”, students still pronounced some English vowel in the words incorrectly. There were kinds of vowel which students still have error in pronouncing them. First, in vowel /iː/, students have pronounced the words “sheep”, “easy”, “bee”, “fever”, and “sleep”. The highly percentage of error was word “fever”. Second, the highly percentage of error in vowel /æ/ was in the word “bullet”. Third, in vowel /æ/, the percentage of incorrect pronunciation was very low. Fourth, in vowel /ʌ/, the highly percentage of error was in the word “bus”. Fifth, in vowel /ɑː/ students have understood how to pronounce this vowel correctly, but they were still confused in pronouncing word “laugh”. Sixth, most students did error in vowel /ɒ/ because of they have not understood how to pronounce it correctly. Seventh, in vowel /ɔː/ most students pronounced it incorrectly, the highly percentage of error was in the word “saw”. Eighth, in vowel /ʊ/, most students can pronounce this vowel, but some students have not understand the
different between vowel /ʊ/ and /u:/, such as in the word “good”. Ninth, in vowel /u:/, some students had some errors in the word “shoe” and “two”. Other than that, all of them could pronounce other words correctly. Tenth, in vowel /ɜ:/, there were some errors in pronouncing the words “third” and “birth”. The last, in vowel /ɑ/ a lot of students were still confused and have not understood how to pronounce the vowel correctly. The position of tongue can also influence how the vowels are pronounced. Kelly (2000) mentions that the position of the tongue is a significant reference point for describing the differences between vowel sounds.

These findings of this research are consistent with those of Stibbard (2004); Islamiyah (2012); Habibi (2016); Emran and Anggraini (2017), who found that the distinctive feature between long and short vowels are not realized, i.e., long vowels are shortened. They found that [iː] was shortened to [I], [uː] to [ʊ], [ɜː] to [ǝ], [ɔː] to [ɒ], and [ɑː] to [ɑ]. These studies highlighted that errors on long vowels occur because they cannot be found in the first language vowel inventory.

Second, questionnaire helped the researcher to answer the second research question which was to find out the factors caused students to do errors. There are three factors of errors in English vowel pronunciation, they are interlingual error, intralingual error and teaching method in learning process. The results show that students have learned phonetic symbols and they have understood how to pronounce English vowel. They also have no problem in teaching method in learning process, but students were still pronouncing English vowel incorrectly. This is caused of the interlingual error. Students’ errors caused of the differences between the letter pronunciations of their first language with the target language. Students are also not used to using English as second language. Young (2001) claims that due to the different phonological system between Indonesia and English, there are serious problems that can cause confusions in pronunciation.

In conclusion, the result of this research shows that some students still do errors in English vowel pronunciation. Then, the factor caused students do error in English vowel pronunciation was in interlingual error. Finally, in this research, the researcher found that the different between pronunciations letters of students’ first language can give an impact to their English vowel pronunciation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After conducting the research, it was found that the students were considered “very good” in pronouncing English vowels according to Arikunto’s criteria. Furthermore, based on finding from questionnaire, the problems were caused by interlingual factor; students’
difficulty to pronounce those new sounds as they do not exist in their language, the distinction between pronunciation of letters in students’ first language with the target language, and the use a local accent when they speak. Based on this result, the writer would like to give some suggestions; 1) for the lecturers, they should give more practice in speaking English to students in order to make them more fluent in pronouncing English vowel especially in vowel /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /ɔː/, /ɜː/, and /ə/. The researcher also suggests that lecturers to be careful in providing and selecting pronunciation materials to improve their students’ ability in pronouncing English words, 2) for the students, it is hoped that the students have more effort to improve their ability in English vowel pronunciation. It is hoped that the students can do practice more to pronounce English vowels, 3) for the next researcher, it is hoped that the next researcher can continue in improving the research in the future. It is suggested for researcher to carry out further studies related on students’ error in English vowel pronunciation, so that it can give more information.

REFERENCES


