

## Students' Ability In Pronouncing Vowels Based On "Sound Of English"

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan mendeskripsikan Kemampuan Siswa dalam Mengucapkan Vokal Berdasarkan "Suara Bahasa Inggris". Permasalahannya adalah Bagaimana Kemampuan siswa dalam melafalkan huruf vokal berdasarkan "Sound of English"? Penelitian ini hanya difokuskan pada kemampuan siswa dalam melafalkan bunyi vokal yang terdiri dari [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [e], [ə], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [æ], [ʌ], [ɑ:], dan [ɒ]. Dalam penelitian ini peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif. Ada 65 siswa yang peneliti ikuti penelitian ini. tes pengucapan digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data dalam penelitian ini, terdiri dari 48 item dalam tes pengucapan. Data dievaluasi dan dianalisis dengan "Sound of English". Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kemampuan siswa dalam melafalkan vokal cukup baik hampir pada semua bunyi vokal seperti [e] sebesar 99,23%. Suara [æ] adalah 97,69%. Bunyi [ɑ:] adalah 96,38%. Kemudian bunyi [ɜ:] sebesar 94,23%, bunyi [ʊ] sebesar 93,46% dan [ɪ] sebesar 90,76%. Setelah itu [ə] adalah 87,30%. Bunyi [u:] adalah 84,61%. Kemudian, [i:] sebesar 79,61% dan Bunyi [ɔ:] sebesar 78,46%. Setelah itu [ɒ] adalah 61,15% dan bunyi terakhir [ʌ] adalah 60,38%. Hampir semua partisipan dalam penelitian ini berhasil mengucapkan bunyi vokal. Artinya dosen fonologi sudah berhasil mengajar. Peneliti menyarankan, dosen lebih banyak memberikan latihan kepada mahasiswa agar mereka dapat melatih pengucapan mereka tidak hanya untuk tujuan mempelajari fonologi tetapi juga dalam penerapan kegiatan sehari-hari mereka.

### ABSTRACT

*This research is intended to know and describe Students Ability in Pronouncing Vowels Based on " Sound of English. The problem was How is the Ability of students' in pronouncing vowels based on "Sound of English"? This research is just focused on the students' ability in pronouncing vowel sounds consists of [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [ e], [ ə], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [æ], [ʌ], [ɑ:], and [ɒ]. In this research the researcher used descriptive method. There were 65 students that the researcher folowed this research. pronunciation test was used to collect the data in this research, it consisted of 48 items in pronunciation test. The data was evaluated and analyzed by "Sound of English". The result of this research showed the students' ability in pronouncing vowel was good almost in all of vowel sounds like [e] was 99.23%. The sound [æ] was 97.69%. The sound [ɑ:] was 96.38%. Then sound [ɜ:] was 94.23%, sound [ʊ] was 93.46% and [ɪ] was 90.76%. After that [ə] was 87.30%. The sound [u:] was 84.61%. Then, [i:] was 79.61% and The sound [ɔ:] was 78.46%. After that [ɒ] was 61.15% and the last sound [ʌ] was 60.38%. Almost all the participant in this reserach was succes to pronounce vowel sounds. It means that phonology lecturers have succeeded in teaching. The researcher suggested, the lecturers give more exercises to the students in order that they can practice their pronunciation not only for the purpose of studying phonology but also in the application of their daily activities.*

## INTRODUCTION

English is as a foreign language taught in the school until university becomes the problems for some students. The fact that there are many students have problem in pronouncing the English words correctly. Therefore, English has to be paid more attentions either by the school in term of English learning. In order to develop the students' ability in English subject, one of criteria that have to be noticed is the students' English skill.

In English at university level pronunciation is taught as compulsory subject that should be mastered by English study program. As an international language, English is crucial subject for the students to be learnt, like in English study program Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu the students must master the subject with study of pronunciation in order to be like a native speaker.

Pronunciation is one subject that should be taken by students of English study program. Pronunciation is important to support other skill especially for speaking skill, because there are many advantages which could be gotten for some purpose such as the students can be a good speaker, speak English with more confident, start noticing other people mistakes in pronunciation, learn the answer to many question about English pronunciation, speak more clearly and be understand by others. Someone

who has a good pronunciation in English can be easily understood by addresser and it is clear that learning English pronunciation becomes important activity in studying English. But it is not a simple process of memorizing a number of items that can be mapped into mother tongue. Even ESL students who have a background of two more languages often find English to be rather confusing and difficult to learn.

The study of pronunciation refers to the production of sound that we use to make a meaning. It includes two fields in pronunciations, namely phonetics and phonology knowledge. While, definition of phonology has relevance to phonological development. According to Dodd et al (2003), phonological development refers to speech development and is concerned with how humans develop from having no speech to a stage of being able to use speech in its full adult form. Traditionally speech development in children has been assessed from two distinct approaches: a phonetic and phonology. Phonetic refers to the study of speech sounds. It is clearly connected: speech organs move to produce sounds, which travel in sound waves, which are received by the ears and transmitted to the brain. If phonetics deals with the physical reality of speech sounds, then phonology knowledge, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with how we interpret and systematic sounds.

According to Kelly (2000, 2). The study of the phonology of English looks at the vowels, consonants and suprasegmental features of the language. Within the discipline of phonology, when we talk about vowels and consonant we are referring to the different sounds we make when speaking, and not the vowel and consonant letters we refer to when talking about spelling. Vowel is one of the important elements in phonology knowledge that have roles in speaking. However, it can be found the role of phonology knowledge in speaking, when someone produces the sounds such as the word "sin" and "seen", both are pronounced differently, "sin" it have phonetic symbol /sin/ and "seen" have /si:n/ as phonetic symbol, so if we want to know how to pronounce the symbol we have to know about Vowel. In here we study how to use the symbol like in the example / i / in the word "sin" / sin / , short read , different with / i : / in the word " seen" / si : n / , read length and of course the meaning of them is different. Another example "bed" and "bad" have a phonetic symbol /bed/ and /bæd/. Where /e/ in the word "bed"/bed/, read short /æ/ in the word "bad" /bæd/, read short too but it 's different read like /e/. The last example is / e / in the word "said" / sed / , short read. / æ / in the word "sad " / sæd/ short read.

On the other hands, a Consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. Examples are [p], pronounced with the lips; [t], pronounced with the front of the tongue; [k], pronounced with the back of the tongue; [h], pronounced in the throat; [f] and [s], pronounced by forcing air through a narrow channel (fricatives); and [m] and [n], which have air flowing through the nose (nasals). Where consonants sounds may be voiced or unvoiced occur when the vocal cords in the larynx are vibrated, for example /f/, as in fan and /v/, as in van. So, we can see that how important to role phonology knowledge to students pronunciation because, If it can produce a good pronunciation, it will be understand with another people and it will be a good speaker. However, when it can't produce a good pronunciation in speaking, the meaning of words that are pronounced can be incorrectly interpreted by the listeners. Based on the background above, the researcher is interest to know," How does the role of phonology knowledge to students' pronunciation in speaking?".

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a part of speech which includes word, intonation, and the sounds of the language. According to Harmer (1996, p, 26), he states that: "pronunciation is knowledge how to say a word that is how to pronounce it" there are many different kinds of English as there are speaker of it; no two people speak exactly alike – we can always hear different geographical areas". And Ur (1996.p.16) says that: the concept of pronunciations may be said to include the sounds of the language, or phonology, stress, and rhythm, intonation.

#### Vowels

According to Peter Roach, "vowels are sounds in which there is not obstruction to the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips. The main difference between vowels and consonants is in their



different distributions. Vowels can be described in terms of its height consisting of four main degrees (close, close-mid, and open-mid, open), backness (front, central and back vowels) and lip-rounding which determines whether the lips are rounded, spread or neutral. In English language phoneticians distinguish short and long vowels. While short vowels are represented by the following symbols: /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɒ/, /ʊ/, long vowels which tend to be longer than the short ones and consist of one vowel symbol with a length-mark [:], include these five symbols: /i:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/ (1991, 10-19).

### RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research was descriptive research. The instruments of data in this research are: Pronunciation Test, Video recorder.

#### Data Collecting Technique

The researcher was collected the data from the recording. The researcher had the steps as followed:

1. The researcher found eighth semester
2. The researcher gave pronunciation test to students in eighth semesters.
3. The researcher was record the student's pronunciation.
4. Transcribe of the finding.

#### Data Analysis Technique

The data was analysed from pronunciation test based on "Sound of English" as guide.

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### Finding

The result of this research showed that students' ability in pronouncing vowels based on "sound of English" was good. It can be see that the students can produce good pronunciation, it can be understood by other people. However, when the students can't produce good pronunciation, the meaning of words that are pronounced can be incorrectly interpreted by the listeners. Based on the result of pronunciation test it was known that the students had ability in pronouncing vowels. Vowel is one of the important elements in phonology knowledge. When someone produces the sounds such as the word "sin" and "seen", both are pronounced differently, "sin" it have phonetic symbol /sin/ and "seen" have /si:n/ as phonetic symbol, so if we want to know how to pronounce the symbol we have to know about Vowel.

#### The Result Of Pronunciation Test

There were 65 studentz of eighth semester had followed on pronunciation test. All of students sound had recorded on june 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014. From the recorded the researcher had analyzed which students had good pronouncing in vowels. While, from the data that had been collected and counted, the researcher found that the students in eighth semester had good ability in pronunciation about vowels like [i:] for example see [si:], sound [u:] for example blue [blu:], sound [ɪ] for example guy [gal], sound [e] for example bed [bed], let [let], get [get], yes [yes], sound [æ] for example dad [dæd], man [mæn], bad [bæd], sound [ə] for example away [ə'wei], sound [ɜ:] leader [li:dʒ:], sound [ɔ:] for example saw [so:w]. The correct pronunciation of students in eighth semester ( it can be seen in list of table 4.1.1) that for sounds [e], the percentage of population who were able pronounced well was 99.23%. The percentage of population who were able to pronounced well [æ] was 97.69%; [ɑ:]was 96.38%; [ɜ:] was 94.23%; [u] was 93.46% ; [ɪ] was 90.76%; [ə] was 87.30%; [u:] was 84.61%; [i:] was 79.61%; [ɔ:] was 78.46%; [ɒ] was 61.15%; and sound [ʌ] only 60.38% of population who were able pronounced well. The complete data about the ability of students' in pronouncing vowels by eighth semester students of English Department students of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu showed in description below.

## Sound [e]

The data showed that this sound was put as the highest rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. Almost all students knew how to produce this sound with the position in front of the tongue is slightly behind and below the close front position.

## Sound [æ]

The data showed that this sound was put as the second rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 97.69% students can produce this sound with the position the front of the tongue is raised to just below the half-open position

## Sound [ɑ:]

The data showed that this sound was put as the third rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 96.38% students can produce this sound with the position the back of the tongue is in the fully open position.

## Sound [ɜ:]

The data showed that this sound was put as fourth of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 94.23% students can produce this sound with the position in the centre of the tongue is between the half - close and half – open positions.

## Sound [ʊ]

The data showed that this sound was put as fifth rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 93.46% students can produce this sound with the position of the tongue just behind the centre is raised, just above the half-close position.

## Sound [ɪ]

The data showed that this sound was put as sixth rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 90.76% students can produce this sound with the position in the part of the tongue slightly nearer the centre is raised to just above the half close position.

## Sound [ə]

The data showed that this sound was put as seventh rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 87.30% students can produce this sound with the position the centre of the tongue is between the half-close and half-open positions.

## Sound [u:]

The data showed that this sound was put as eight rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 84.61% students can produce this sound with the position back of the tongue is raised just below the close position n.

## Sound [i:]

The data showed that this sound was put as ninth rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 79.61% students can produce this sound with the position the front of the tongue is slightly behind and below the close front position.

## Sound [ɔ:]

The data showed that this sound was put as the third rank from the lower of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 78.46% students can produce this sound with the position the back of tongue is raised to between the half-open and half close positions.



**Sound [p]**

The data showed that this sound almost a half of students capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 61.15% students can produce this sound with the back of the tongue is in the fully open position.

**Sound [ʌ]**

The data showed that this sound was put as the lower rank of capability in producing of vowel sound in pronunciation test result. There were 60.38% students can produce this sound with the centre of the tongue is raised to just above the fully open position.

**Discussion**

In fact from the findings above, the researcher found the ability of students in eighth semester of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu in pronouncing all of vowels like [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [e], [ə], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [æ], and [ɑ:] was good. The student which have good in pronouncing vowels like [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [e], and [ɑ:] because those vowels had similar accent like we had in Indonesian accent. While, there was vowel like [æ], have good in pronouncing by student of eighth semester although [æ], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], and [ə] do not exist in Indonesian, student still good in this vowel because words which used in this vowel like; bed /bæd/; bird /bɜ:d/; small /smɔ:l/; sofa /sofə/; are familiar words that students can found in daily communication or listen.

The first, the student had difficult in pronouncing word English because the letter will be read different so the students tend to pronounce bahasa Indonesia like love pronouncing /lov/. Wheel, the correct pronouncing of love is /lʌv/. While, the second reason, students difficult in pronouncing word in English because they have problem in their articulators speech. It can be like pronounce /coffe/ pronouncing /kafi/. Wheel, the correct pronouncing of /coffe/ is /kofi/.

The last reason assumed, students did not care to open their dictionary at home and campus to checking correct pronunciation of a word. So, words which often find exactly uncorrect in pronouncing, like words /love/ and /coffe/ it is familiar words. But, infact word like/ love/ and / coffe/ are poor in pronouncing vowels.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the finding of the research, the ability of the eighth semester students of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu in pronouncing vowels [i:], [ɪ], [ʊ], [u:], [e], [ə], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [æ], [ʌ], [ɑ:], and [p] can be categorized good.

**SUGGESTION**

After completing this research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions as follows. This study was conducted in a very limited time and limited subject. Therefore it is suggested that further research is conducted with a large subject and much more time. So it is hoped that the next researcher can get the complete finding.

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