

## Students' Word Pronunciation Errors in Reading Aloud English Paragraph

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Nanda Rian Pratiwi<sup>1</sup>, Laily Nur Affini<sup>2</sup>, Siti Musarokah<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas PGRI Semarang

Corresponding Author: [20420021@upgris.ac.id](mailto:20420021@upgris.ac.id)

### A B S T R A C T

This research analyzes the errors in students' pronunciation when students read a paragraph aloud. Data was obtained from research on 15 class XI students of SMK Swadaya Semarang. The researcher chose a research methodology using a qualitative approach were taken using a simple random sampling method, which the researchers then transcribes the recording into phonetics to analyze errors. The results of the research show that most students replace sounds that are not found in Indonesian and replacing English vowels with Indonesian vowels. Students are familiar with the following phoneme similarities: /i/ as /i:/, /i/ and /e/ as /ae/ , /Λ/ as /ɑ:/, /ə/ as /ɜ:/, /v/ as /ɔ:/, /e/ as /æ/, and /u/ as /ʊ/, /u:/. Thus, it seems that there are still many students who still have difficulty pronouncing English words correctly because their tongues are not yet used to vowels other than the vowels in their mother tongue. The mistake that students most often make is replacing English vowels with Indonesian vowels

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## INTRODUCTION

When learning English, it is recommended to focus on four key skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, reading. All of these abilities are related to pronunciation. Pronunciation is how someone pronounces words in a language. Pandya (2020) stated pronunciation is also defined as the reproduction of language sounds such that the intended message can be conveyed clearly. According to Prashant (2018) correct pronunciation will contribute significantly to resulting in a positive first impression. If we modify the pronunciation, the meaning changes. Pronunciation includes attention to specific sounds in a language (segments), such as intonation, syllables, phrases, timing, stress, the rhythm of how sounds are projected (voice quality) and gestures and expressions that are directly related to the method of speaking. Hidayatullah (2018) emphasizes that with perfect pronunciation, distinctions in language sounds, syllables, words, phrases, and sentence discourse in general, mental content is exposed, which can be understood by language users without misunderstanding or confusion by people who listen.

As all of us know, English is a foreign language in Indonesia which makes teaching and learning difficult even some students have been learning English since they were children. Indonesia's numerous regional accents, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Batak can make it challenging for students to acquire English as a foreign language. According to Nafisa (2018) English pronunciation is hard and difficult since the vowel and consonant system has many different sounds. Sianipar et al., (2022) also argue that vowels and consonants are commonly used in speech and can produce both low and high sounds. Vowels and consonants also assist everyone to understanding the meaning of the language itself. As the result, some students

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may have difficulty in pronouncing English words. English has many a variety of intonations, Purba et al. (2020) identified five types of tones in English intonation: falling, rising, falling-rising, rising-falling, and level. Tone units are required for the analysis of intonation. Each tone unit has a tonic syllable (TS). Tonic syllables carry a tone. And if the tonic syllable has both a tone and a sort of stress, it is referred to as tonic stress, therefore learning and understanding how to pronounce words correctly is critical for improving English language skills.

We can learn phonemes to improve our pronounce words. Sirait et al., (2023) argue that phonemes are divided into two categories: consonants and vowels. In phonetics, a vowel is a sound in spoken language, similar to ah! (ɑ) or oh! (əʊ) in English, which is pronounced in an open mouth passage with no air pressure above the glottis. Pronunciation is the process of pronouncing words. Good pronunciation might also help to avoid misunderstanding. Phonology and phonetics are the two components that make up pronunciation. Phonology is the study of the sound system of language in which spesific sounds are used in each form of language as well as the integrated system of encoding information and how the system differs from one language to another. Hamka (2021) defines that phonology is the study of a language's sound system and sound combinations.

In Indonesia, teaching English has become an important part of the curriculum at all levels of education, including Vocational High School (SMK). SMK Swadaya Semarang as one of the educational institutions, is dedicated to offering to its students, including English language learning. Although English learners in the classroom have strived to improve their skills in English, there is still a considerable gap in their ability to pronounce words accurately. Based on previous observations made by researchers, researchers found that many students made mistakes and had difficulty conveying their understanding of English and were even afraid to speak it. Incorrect pronunciation may affect learning understanding while also lowering students' confidence in spoken communication.

Errors refer to the process of making mistakes. Foreign language learners sometimes make mistakes. According to Ramasari (2017), a mistake cannot be the same as an error. A mistake is a performance error that is either random or a slip of the tongue, in which it is failure to use a known system correctly. However, an error must be analyzed to troubleshoot the error. Pronunciation is an important skill in English. Good pronunciation allows a person to communicate clearly and be understood by others.

Previous research has indicated that pronunciation errors are frequently caused by a range of variables, including the effect of students' original language, a lack of practice speaking in English outside of class and a lack of confidence. Preliminary studies show that many students often say words repeatedly. pronunciation errors, which can affect their understanding and communication. Therefore, a deep understanding of the types of pronunciation errors that often occur in the classroom is required for developing more effective learning strategies. Some students continue to pronounce or read words with an Indonesian accent. For example, when students pronounce the word "study" as /'stʌdi/ instead of /study/.

Several researchers have previously studied pronunciation errors in students. Research includes that conducted by Donal (2016), it was found that Indonesian students tend to have difficulty pronouncing the diphthong [aʊ] and find it easier to pronounce the diphthong [ɔɪ]. Many factors influence students' difficulty in pronouncing English diphthongs, namely the influence of the student's mother tongue, lack of knowledge and failure to use loan words in English. Many Indonesian students pronounce them based on the Indonesian version. Based on research conducted by Mutiana & Kania (2019) found that students had difficulty pronouncing and spelling words that had affixes and prefixes to consonants, vowels and diphthongs, such as top, aunt, life, death, answer, knock, hut, dwarf, and enough. Furthermore, research conducted by Zuliana (2021) This research uses audiovisual material as a data collection technique and interviews as a second option, Researchers found many pronunciation errors made by 10 class XI students in pronouncing vowel and consonant

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sounds, most of vowel sound classifications contain errors in height (/i:/, /ɪ/, /u:/, /ʊ/). Research was also conducted by Sariyani (2021) who concluded that students' interlanguage substitution errors were influenced by their first language. Apart from that, the most dominant factor causing student errors is internal factors. Similar research conducted by Dimas et al (2023) found that common mistakes made by students were errors in pronunciation of English vowels, namely substitution errors. Meanwhile, In research conducted by Ishardini (2014), English consonants are included which errors do students make the most, namely the consonant /v/. Based on these problems, the researcher was interested in investigating what pronunciation errors were made by class XI students at SMK Swadaya Semarang when reading English paragraph.

## METHOD

The researchers chose a qualitative study methodology based on the problems above. Chrawter & Lauesen (2017) states that qualitative research frequently focuses on specific individuals, events, and contexts, allowing for an idiographic analytical style. In this research, researchers are present in the field and research subjects are aware of their status as researchers. The data collection technique used by researchers in analyzing pronunciation errors is documentation. Documentation is a data collection technique that can be done by taking documents, pictures and the like to obtain data. In this research, the data instrument used by the researcher is the student's Audio Voice Notes which are used to record the participant's synthesis when reading a paragraph presented by the researcher in mp3 format. Apart from that, the researcher also uses phonetic analysis, namely using the Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary, a website that will be used to make phonetic transcriptions of student recordings. In the data collection process, students will read a paragraph aloud which is recorded with a voice recorder and the recording results will be transcribed into phonological symbols and errors identified.

After that, in the data analysis process, researchers used data analysis procedures based on Miles et al (2014) which included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the data reduction process, researchers collected documentary data in the form of audio recordings which were then made into phonetic transcriptions based on the Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary to help researchers analyze the data. Next, the researcher displays the data in the form of tables and descriptions to provide information to the reader, then the researcher makes conclusions based on the research that has been carried out.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis of research on pronunciation errors in class XI students of SMK Swadaya Semarang; documentation of student ability tests in reading paragraphs is used by researchers to find out student errors in the pronunciation of each word in English paragraphs.

Table 1. The results of the data analysis

| No | Word        | Phonetics<br>Transcription | Correct<br>Pronunciation | Frequency of errors |
|----|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1  | Saturday    | /'sætər.dei/               | 3                        | 12                  |
| 2  | perhaps     | /pər'hæps/                 | 7                        | 8                   |
| 3  | most        | /moʊst/                    | 9                        | 6                   |
| 4  | highly      | /'haɪli/                   | 7                        | 8                   |
| 5  | regarded    | /rɪ'gɑːdɪd/                | 7                        | 8                   |
| 6  | because     | /brɪ'kæz/                  | 6                        | 9                   |
| 7  | presumably  | /prə'zʌməbli/              | 5                        | 10                  |
| 8  | work        | /wɜːrk/                    | 3                        | 12                  |
| 9  | attend      | /ə'tend/                   | 5                        | 10                  |
| 10 | individuals | /ɪndə'vɪdʒəwəlz/           | 10                       | 5                   |
| 11 | everyone    | /'evri.wʌn/                | 8                        | 7                   |

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|    |            |              |    |    |
|----|------------|--------------|----|----|
| 12 | having     | /'hævɪŋ/     | 15 | 0  |
| 13 | plans      | /plænz/      | 9  | 6  |
| 14 | other      | /'ʌðər/      | 8  | 7  |
| 15 | leisure    | /'leɪʒər/    | 5  | 10 |
| 16 | related    | /rɪ'leɪtɪd/  | 5  | 10 |
| 17 | activities | /æk'tɪvətɪz/ | 8  | 7  |
| 18 | generally  | /'dʒenərəli/ | 8  | 7  |
| 19 | thought    | /θɔt/        | 5  | 10 |
| 20 | partake    | /pɑr'teɪk/   | 6  | 9  |
| 21 | hobbies    | /'hɒbɪz/     | 9  | 6  |
| 22 | couldn't   | /'kʊdənt/    | 5  | 10 |
| 23 | otherwise  | /'ʌðərwaɪz/  | 7  | 8  |
| 24 | during     | /'dʊrɪŋ/     | 7  | 8  |
| 25 | week       | /wi:k/       | 9  | 6  |

The research findings above are based on 15 students reading paragraphs that contain several vowels and consonants. Based on the Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary, the researcher made a phonetic transcription of the student recordings to get the results as above.

The table above shows that the sounds /'sætər,deɪ/ and /wɜrk/, have the most errors. Aisyah et al (2024) also stated that errors that often occur are pronunciation of phonemes that do not exist in Indonesian. (For example, /i:/, /u:/, /ʌ/, /æ/, /ei/, /ou/, and /au/). In this case, the correct pronunciation of the word Saturday is /'sætə r,deɪ/ but some students pronounce it /sa-tur de ɪ /. On the sound /w ɜ rk/, many students agree that it is like writing in Indonesian words. It can be concluded that out of 15 students, 12 students made phoneme errors that do not exist in Indonesian.

In the word perhaps which should be pronounced /pər'hæps/, 8 out of 15 students mostly pronounce /per'haps/. In the word most which should be pronounced / moust/, highly which should be pronounced 'haili, regarded which should be pronounced / rɪ'gɑrdɪd/ most students pronounce with the same case as the pronunciation of the word / wɜrk/ which is pronounced according to the writing in Indonesian. In the word because which should be pronounced / bɪ'kɔz/ 9 out of 15 students on average pronounce /bɪ'kaʊz/. In the word presumably 10 out of 15 students did not pronounce /prə'zʊməbli/ but on average pronounced /prə-sumabli/.

Furthermore, in the word attend which should be pronounced / ə'tend/ and the word individuals which should be pronounced / ɪndə'vɪdʒwəlz/ the average student repeats the mistake of reading according to the writing in Indonesian. In the word everyone which should be pronounced / 'ɛvri,wʌn/, 7 out of 15 students pronounce / 'ɛvri on/. In the pronunciation of the word having, no errors occurred. In the word plans which should be pronounced /plænz/, 6 out of 15 students pronounced /plans/. In the word other which should be pronounced /'ʌðər/, 7 out of 15 students pronounced /oðər/. On the word leisure which should be pronounced /'leɪʒər/, the average student pronounced /'lei-sur/. In the word related, the average student pronounced /re lat/. In the words activities and generally, students repeat many of the same mistakes, namely reading in Indonesian writing.

Moreover, in the word thought which should be pronounced / θɔt/, 10 out of 15 students on average pronounced /toɪh/. In the word partake, the average student pronounces it as written in Indonesian. On the word hobbies which should be pronounced / 'hɒbɪz/, the average student pronounces / 'hɒbɪz/. On the word couldn't 10 out of 15 students did not pronounce /'kʊdənt/. On the word otherwise which should be pronounced /'ʌðərwaɪz/ but the average student pronounces /'oðərwaɪz/. On the word during, the average student reads /'dʌrɪŋ/. On the word week which should be pronounced /wi:k/ 6 out of 15 students pronounce /wek/.

Errors when learning a foreign language by students are a common thing. Errors are deviations from the truth. Errors in language acquisition are typical among second and foreign language learners who are learning new or advanced pronunciations. When we talk about

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errors, we should also think about mistakes. Many people believe that mistakes and errors are synonymous, however this is not the case. Hubbard et al. (1983), as reported in Andrian (2015), argued that errors are produced by a lack of information about the target language or a false hypothesis about the language, whereas mistakes are caused by transitory memory loss, confusion, or incorrect speech. Another approach to tell the difference between errors and mistakes is that if the student can fix himself/herself, it is most likely a mistake, however if the learner cannot, it is most likely errors.

Based on Mutiana & Ikeu (2019) there are various forms of pronunciation errors made by the subjects, namely replacing sounds that are not found in Indonesian, replacing English vowels with Indonesian vowels, synonym errors that occur when someone pronounces loanwords from English as in Indonesian and deleting or eliminating some consonants that appear at the end of syllables. In the results of the data analysis above, there are several forms of errors that occurred in this research, the form of error that was most frequently made was replacing English vowels with Indonesian vowels.

Donal (2016) discovered that one of the challenges for Indonesian learners in learning English is the pronunciation of English sounds. Students' pronunciation challenges can be attributed to a variety of characteristics, including motivation, interest, attitude, and intelligence, as well as the environment in which they live. The fact that Indonesian is their mother tongue has a significant impact on how they pronounce English sentences. In general, the spelling of letters and the pronunciation of sounds are identical in Indonesian. Diphthongs are one of the most difficult English sounds to pronounce.

Vowels are an important part of the English sound system. They are the basis of the majority of spoken words in a language. English vowels and Indonesian vowels are not the same. In Indonesian, there are just five vowels: a, i, u, e, and o, whereas English has two types of vowels: five long vowels and six short vowels. The extended sound is created by saying the letter's name as it would sound when reciting the alphabet. The short sound is produced by saying the letter sound. Each long vowel has a distinct sound quality that is dictated by the placement of the tongue, lips, and oral cavity when the vowel is spoken. The five basic long vowel sounds are /ɑ:/, /i:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/, and /u:/. The variation in the duration of long and short vowels affects not only pronunciation but also word meaning. Short vowels are vowel sounds that require less time to pronounce than long vowels. In English, short vowels are typically represented by a single phonetic symbol, such as /ɪ/, /æ/, and /ʌ/. The primary feature of short vowels is that they are pronounced significantly longer than long vowels. According to Fazira et al. (2023), while pronouncing short vowels, the time necessary to create the vowel sound is reduced, resulting in a shorter vowel sound duration.

## CONCLUSIONS

Researchers have identified several types of errors, many errors occur with phonemes that do not exist in Indonesian, where a sound usually only has one phoneme, whereas in English there are several very similar sounds, each of which has its own phoneme. Students already know the similarities of the following phonemes: /i/ as /i:/, /i/ and /e/ as /æ/, /ʌ/ as /ɑ:/, /ə/ as /ɜ:/, /ɒ/ as /ɔ:/, /e/ as /æ/, and /u/ as /ʊ/, /u:/. The causes of students' pronunciation errors are their mother tongue, lack of practice, and students' lack of knowledge. Based on the type of error, the most frequent pronunciation error made by class XI students at SMK Swadaya Semarang is replacing English vowels with Indonesian vowels. Factors that influence student pronunciation include motivation, attitude, and learning environment.

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