STUDENTS ABILITY AND PROBLEM IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH VOWELS MADE BY THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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Article History	Abstract
	This study aimed to find out students' ability and problem at English Education of Universitas Negeri Padang. This research is designed as a descriptive qualitative research. In this study, the researcher focused on the first-year students of the English Education program in Universitas Negeri Padang in the Academic Year of 2019/2020. There are 20 students as the subject of the research. The process of data collection in this research had to be put in two activities, those are: recording and transcription. The findings of this research indicate that most vowels are pronounced well by the students. There are nine vowels classified as excellent category, they are vowels are vowel /e/ 79,5 (99.4%), vowel /i:/ 78,5 (98.12%), vowel /I/ 78 (97.5%), vowel /a:/ 77,5 (96.9%), vowel /ə/ 76 (95%), vowel /u:/ 75,5 (96.9%), vowel /ɔ:/ 72 (90%), vowel /ɛ:/ 67,5 (84.34%), and vowel /a/ 65 (81.25%). And there are three vowels classified as good category which vowels are vowel /ʌ/ 62 (77.5%), vowel /æ/ 56 (70%), and vowel /ʊ/ 55,5 (69.4%).

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation plays an important role in communication. It generally affects the meaning of communication when someone communicates with others. This is supported by Gilkajani (2012), that someone is considered to speak fluently if he can produce good pronunciation on his utterance because it directly affects his communicative competence and performance. Similarly, Fraser (2000) says that someone with good pronunciation will generally be able to speak intelligibly.

One of the elements of pronunciation is vowel. It is a speech sound produced without the significant constriction of their air flowing through the mouth (Richard, 2002); it is a sound which is made without any kind of closure to the escape of air through the mouth (Jones, 1972). In other words, vowel is a sound that is created

without blocking any sound. According to Skandera and Burleigh (2005), there are twelve English vowels. They are iː, ɛː, ɑː, ɔː, uː, ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɑ, ʊ and ə. Each one of the vowels is pronounced differently. With these differences, students often get confused and mispronounced them. They generally doubt in pronouncing them and even do not realize their mistake. This case often happens especially in Indonesia because English is a foreign language that is difficult to pronounce them well.

Vowel sound plays a major role when Indonesia native speakers try to pronounce English words. English and Bahasa Indonesia have different vowel sound libraries. They have the different number of vowels and even different properties. Indonesian people are accustomed to pronounce words the same as their spelling, which create their own vowel sound. Meanwhile, English words have different pronunciation from their spelling, which causes the vowel sounds that are used to be different too. This issue becomes a major problem for Indonesian when they are trying to pronounce English words. This problem also occurs to English students of Universitas Negeri Padang. Even though they are English major students, they still are Indonesian people which are accustomed to pronounce words the same as their spelling which causes lack accuracy of pronunciation. Mispronouncing English words can cause miscommunication, or in a worst scenario, that miscommunication can cause conflict.

Several researchers have conducted studies related to students' problem in pronouncing vowel words. Nurul Frijuniarsi (2018) analyzed vowel error pronounced by second-semester students of Informatics. She found that students were really lack of English pronouncing skill, especially vowels as 42 of 58 words containing vowels are pronounced incorrectly. Then, Eka Puspa Cahyani, Noor Eka Chandra, Dini Noor Arini (2018) also conducted an analysis about long vowels and diphthongs. They found that the students have difficulties in pronouncing long vowels and diphthongs due to students' first language and the lack of practice in speaking English.

Based on the studies above, it can be said that the researchers only focused on vowel error. The first researcher conducted a study on vowel error analysis on students of informatics, while the second researchers conducted a vowel error analysis. They similarly focused their study on vowel error that took place in Informatics major of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat and Universitas of Indraprasta. The differences are the location of the research and the major of the students as research objects. This also means that there is a similarity that there is a similarity between their studies with my study in which it similarly focused on vowel. However, In this case, the writer intended to conduct a vowel analysis research. The object of the research will be the second-semester English major students of Universitas Negeri Padang in order to measure their skill of pronunciation and to analyze their pronunciation error.

METHOD

The design of this study is descriptive qualitative research. According to Cresswell (2012), qualitative research is the suitable research method for exploration of variables and problems that has been clearly revealed. It is descriptive because the objective of this research are observing and finding

information as many as possible of the phenomenon.

The population of this research is the first year English Education students at UNP that registered in the academic year 2019/2020. There are five classes: K1-2019, K2-2019, K-3 2019, K-4 2019 and K-5 2019. The total of students of English Education students at UNP is 164.

In this research, the writer uses random sampling as the sampling technique. The sample taken were 20% of 164 first-year students of English Education at UNP that registered in the academic year 2019/2020, namely 20 students.

The research instrument of this study is an English vowel pronunciation test. The researcher asked the students to pronounce English vowels. The voice of the students was captured as data of the research by a recorder which was the tool of the instrument. The data was captured twice in order to make sure of measuring the ability of students' ability in pronouncing English vowels.

The data that already collected through the recording were analyzed by transcribing their voice into phonetic transcription. Next, the researcher made the category the students' pronunciation based on the right and wrong pronunciation using the form of the table.

Table 1. Data Analysis Table

| No | Words | Pronunciation | | Result (Correct / Wrong) |
		Correct Pronunciation	Students' Pronunciation	
1	Fish	[fɪʃ]		
	Egg	[eg]		
	Pudding	[pʊdɪŋ]		
2	You	[juː]		
	Dream	[driːm]		
	Love	[lʌv]		

Next, the researcher calculated the amount of each mispronounced vowel and got which one is the most. To know the frequency or percentage of error vowel pronunciation, the data were calculated by using this formula.

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

Then, the researcher analyzed the score of the students. To know how the pronunciation of the students, the researcher calculated the score using this formula.

$$Score = \frac{number\ of\ correct\ vowel\ words}{total\ number\ of\ vowel\ words} \times 100$$

After that, the researcher categorized the students' score by using the table below.

Table 2. Student Score Category

Score	Level of Achievement
80-100	Excellent
66-79	Good
56-65	Sufficient
40-55	Fairly Sufficient
0-39	Poor

Lastly, the researcher categorized the students' vowel pronunciation error level by using the table 3 below.

Table 3. Student Error Pronunciation Category

Categories	Number of Errors in Percentage
Very Problematic	75-100%
Problematic	50-74%
Quite Problematic	25-49%
Less Problematic	0-24%

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Vowel is a voice made by voiced air passing through different mouth-shapes, the difference in the shape of the mouth are caused by the different positions of the tongue and of the lips (O'Connor 1980). It comprises of the following types, such as: e/, /i:/, /I/, /ɑ:/, /ə/, /u:/, /ɔ:/, /ɛ:/, /ɑ/, /ʌ/, /æ/ and /ʊ/. The frequency of correct vowel pronunciation is described in the Table 4 below.

Table 4. Frequency of Correct Vowel Pronunciation

No.	Vowel	Number of Vowel	Frequency of Correct Vowel		Mean	Level/ Category
			Test 1	Test 2		
1	/e/	80	79 (98.75%)	80 (100%)	79,5 (99.4%)	Excellent
2	/i:/	80	78 (97.5%)	79 (98.75%)	78,5 (98.12%)	Excellent
3	/I/	80	76 (95%)	80 (100%)	78 (97.5%)	Excellent
4	/ɑ:/	80	75 (93.75%)	80 (100%)	77,5 (96.9%)	Excellent

5	/ə/	80	72 (90%)	80 (100%)	76 (95%)	Excellent
6	/u:/	80	73 (91.25)	78 (97.5%)	75,5 (96.9%)	Excellent
7	/ɔ:/	80	72 (90%)	72 (90%)	72 (90%)	Excellent
8	/ɛ:/	80	64 (80%)	71 (88.75%)	67,5 (84.34%)	Excellent
9	/ɑ/	80	58 (72.5%)	72 (90%)	65 (81.25%)	Excellent
10	/ʌ/	80	58 (72.5%)	66 (82.5%)	62 (77.5%)	Good
11	/æ/	80	42 (52.5%)	70 (87.5%)	56 (70%)	Good
12	/ʊ/	80	48 (60%)	63 (78.75%)	55,5 (69.4%)	Good

Based on the table 4 above, The result of the analysis shows that There are nine vowels classified as excellent category, they are vowels are vowel /e/ 79,5 (99.4%), vowel /i:/ 78,5 (98.12%), vowel /I/ 78 (97.5%), vowel /ɑ:/ 77,5 (96.9%), vowel /ə/ 76 (95%), vowel /u:/ 75,5 (96.9%), vowel /ɔ:/ 72 (90%), vowel /ɛ:/ 67,5 (84.34%), and vowel /ɑ/ 65 (81.25%). And there are three vowels classified as good category which vowels are vowel /ʌ/ 62 (77.5%), vowel /æ/ 56 (70%), and vowel /ʊ/ 55,5 (69.4%).

The results of frequency of vowel error pronunciation in both sessions of the test are then put into table of frequency of vowel error pronunciation. The results of frequency of vowel error pronunciation are presented in the table 5 below.

Table 5. Frequency of Vowel Error Pronunciation

No.	Vowel	Number of Vowel	Frequency of Error		Mean	Category
			Session 1	Session 2		
1	/ʊ/	80	32 (40%)	17 (21,25%)	24,5 (30,625%)	Quite Problematic
2	/æ/	80	38 (47,5%)	10 (12,5%)	24 (30%)	Quite Problematic
3	/ʌ/	80	22 (27,5%)	14 (17,5%)	18 (22,5%)	Less Problematic
4	/ɑ/	80	22 (27,5%)	8 (10%)	15 (18,75%)	Less Problematic
5	/ɛ:/	80	16 (20%)	9 (11,25%)	12,5 (15,625%)	Less Problematic
6	/ɔ:/	80	8 (10%)	8 (10%)	8 (10%)	Less Problematic
7	/u:/	80	7 (8,75%)	2 (2,5%)	4,5 (5,625%)	Less Problematic
8	/ə/	80	8 (10%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	Less Problematic
9	/ɑ:/	80	5 (6,25%)	0 (0%)	2,5 (3,125%)	Less Problematic
10	/I/	80	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (2,5%)	Less Problematic
11	/i:/	80	2 (2,5%)	1 (1,25%)	1,5 (1,875%)	Less Problematic
12	/e/	80	1 (1,25%)	0 (0%)	0,5 (0,625%)	Less Problematic

According to the table above, there are two categories of vowels pronunciation based on the findings of the study, quite problematic which vowels are vowel /ʊ/ and vowel /æ/, and less problematic which vowels are vowel /ʌ/, vowel /ɑ/, vowel /ɛ:/, vowel /ɔ:/, vowel /u:/, vowel /ə/, vowel /ɑ:/, vowel /I/, vowel /i:/, and vowel /e/.

Kinds of problems made by the students in pronouncing English vowels are:

1. Unrounded close front vowel [i:]
2. Unrounded half close to half open front vowel [ɛ]
3. Unrounded open to half open front vowel [æ]
4. Rounded half open back vowel [ɔ:]
5. Unrounded half close to half open central back vowel [ə]
6. Unrounded half open to half close central vowel [ə:]
7. Unopened central-back vowel [ɑ:]
8. Unclosed back vowel [u:]
9. Not mid-close-front-central vowel [I]
10. Not mid front vowel [e]
11. Not mid-open-open central vowel [ʌ]
12. Not mid-close central-back vowel [ɑ]

Based on the problems above, the researcher can conclude why these problems happen:

1. *Interference errors*

Interference errors occur as a result of the use of elements from one language while speaking another. Besides, interference errors were caused by transfer. Transfer is an error made by students' because the two language. The students' are often made errors because they non-active English speaker. These types of errors occur on each kinds of vowel produced by the students. For example, in English vowels [i:] as found in the words *bead, size* and *antique*. This is a matter caused by differences found between the learners' language and the target language.

2. *Intralingual interference*

Intralingual interference refers to items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. There are four systematic intralingual errors to involve overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and semantic errors.

The first category of intralingual error is an overgeneralization. Students still have low ability in deciding correct pronunciation. The second is the error in spelling rule confusion. The students are confused in choosing the correct pronunciation. The third is the errors of pronouncing in simplified in to the Indonesian sound. For example, in English vowels [ʊ] as found in the words *food,*

cook, good, and *push* the students pronounce [fud], [cuk], [gud] and [pus]. This is a matter of students still have low ability in deciding correct pronunciation and confuse in spelling rule.

3. Developmental errors

Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language of the basis of limited experience. For example, in English vowels [ə:] is found in the words *Further, Firm, Curb and Shirt,* students pronounce [futhər], [firm], [kəb] and [sət]. This is a matter caused by the students' lack of experience in reading English words

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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
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The findings of this research indicate that most vowels are pronounced well by the students. There are nine vowels classified as excellent category, they are vowels are vowel /e/ 79,5 (99.4%), vowel /i:/ 78,5 (98.12%), vowel /I/ 78 (97.5%), vowel /ɑ:/ 77,5 (96.9%), vowel /ə/ 76 (95%), vowel /u:/ 75,5 (96.9%), vowel /ɔ:/ 72 (90%), vowel /ɛ:/ 67,5 (84.34%), and vowel /ɑ/ 65 (81.25%). And there are three vowels classified as good category which vowels are vowel /ʌ/ 62 (77.5%), vowel /æ/ 56 (70%), and vowel /ʊ/ 55,5 (69.4%). The factors from this problem are by the interference error, intralingual errors and developmental errors. The researcher suggests helping the student; they should be given a lot of drills and practices relating to the pronunciation so that they can acquire the habit of using the correct pronunciation

Suggestions

For the teachers or lecturers, give more drills practice to the students' in pronouncing dominant error English vowels, be careful in providing and selecting pronunciation materials to improve their students' ability in pronouncing English words and give more practice in speaking English to the students to make them more fluent in speaking. For the students, look up the dictionary if they find some new vocabularies and try to pronounce it, have an English conversation either in the school or non-school like in everyday life with their friends, family, teacher or other people who can speak English, have good self-awareness in motivating themselves to pronounce English words correctly and give more attention to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation since learning English concern all of these skills. And for the next researcher, by doing research in this topic, the researcher raises suggestions for the next researchers. They should find more varied solution to minimize the error on the pronouncing English vowels.

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