



An Analysis of Students' Error in Pronouncing Dental Fricative Consonant [/ð/, /θ/]

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Abstract

This research was conducted to measure the students' ability, to find out the types of error and its cause in pronouncing English dental fricative consonants produced by students' of 2020 class at the English education program of Universitas Negeri Padang. This research was design using descriptive quantitative method. In this study, the researcher focused on the second-year English education students from K2-K5 class who had taken phonetic and phonology class. There are 30 students as the sample of this study. To collect the data, pronunciation test and Stimulated Recall Interview were used as the instrument where students' voices were being recorded and being transcript. The findings of this study were students' ability in pronouncing dental fricative consonants was fair with the percentage of 60%. The dominant type of error that happened in this study was misformation with 89,21% or 645 error out of 723 error. While for the cause of pronunciation error, based on the interview, the dominant reason was ineffectiveness of online learning due to Covid-19 pandemic.

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INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language used by many people worldwide to communicate. This statement is approved by Richards & Rodgers (2014) that English has been the most widely studied foreign language since five hundred years ago. The importance of English has become one of the reasons why people around the world learn it. As an English learner, English has four skills that should be mastered. They are speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Students are required with the purpose to use the language as its function, particularly as a device to communicate.

In communication, a human cannot be separated from speaking activities because speaking seems like the perfect device and can convey thoughts and feelings about things that are concrete or abstract. This is supported by

(Alimuddin, n.d.) who stated that one skill of language that students need to master is to speak, because it supports other skills. A person with adequate speaking skills will more easily absorb and convey information orally and in writing.

One aspect of speaking that is commonly noted about the person's speaking ability is pronunciation. Pronunciation is one of the fundamental aspects of speaking that help learners of English to communicate in English. Tussa'adah (2018) mentioned that pronunciation consists of organized sounds produced by air passing through the articulation organs. Every language has different speech sounds, and due to this difference, people commonly make mistakes when they speak a foreign language. This is similar with Fauzi (2014) said that features of first language phonological system are usually carried over to the second pronunciation when learning a foreign language. Another cause of pronunciation error is the phoneme difference in each language around the world. In learning English pronunciation there are English phonemes (speech sounds) and graphemes (written symbols) different from Bahasa Indonesia. Many spelling rules are distinct from Bahasa Indonesia's spelling rules. This can be the reason that often makes Indonesian learners tend to fail to pronounce English words correctly.

One of the phonemes in English that the second language learner often mispronounces is English dental fricatives. The dental consonants [θ] and [ð] as in *thistle* and *this*, are articulated with the tongue touching the back of the teeth, and the air is allowed to flow out of the mouth, but there is some friction which result in a hissing sound (Minkova & Stockwell, 2009). These consonants rarely exist in the majority of languages. As a result, they are likely to bring up difficulties for EFL learners (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996).

The problem in pronunciation can also be caused by the lack of attention from the teachers to the learners. Teachers tend to focus on grammar instead of pronunciation. Teachers should have good pronunciation and understanding of it because they will be role models in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers are also expected to be more sensitive to students' pronunciation errors and be able to correct the error.

As teacher candidates, English department students from Universitas Negeri Padang are also equipped with pronunciation knowledge that they will use when teaching in the classroom. This thing makes English department students are required to have good pronunciation. However, according to the observation during lectures at the English department of Universitas Negeri Padang, the researcher realised that pronunciation is one of the students' obstacles in communicating in English. Students tend not to pay attention to their pronunciation and focus more on grammar. Pronunciation is supposed to get the attention of the English department students because they will be a teacher that should have a good pronunciation.

There are many methods that can be used to figure out the reasons behind the causes of students' pronunciation errors. One of the methods that can be used to determine the cause of students' pronunciation errors is stimulated recall interview. Lyle (2013) defined that a stimulated recall interview (SRI) is a part of an introspective technique that can be investigated by inviting participants to recall when prompted by a video sequence of their concurrent thinking during that event.

This method uses audio or video recordings as a stimulus to stimulate participants' memory so that they can remember the reasons and thoughts behind the actions they have taken during the recording. The use of this method can make it easier for researchers to get more concrete reasons about the reasons behind students' pronunciation errors.

Several researchers have conducted study about pronunciation. Poetry (2019); the research attempts to figure out the level of the students' mastery in perceiving and pronouncing English dental fricative consonant sounds at SMP Negeri 1 Tegal. The findings were percentage of the students' mastery in perceiving the English dental fricative consonant sounds ([θ] and [ð]) was 83%, categorized as excellent. Then, pronouncing the sounds ([θ] and [ð]) was 44% and considered as fair. Kurniawan (2016) did research on students' pronunciation mastery of dental fricative and alveolar plosive sounds conducted in Tanjungpura University. The objective of his research was to know which sound is the most mispronounced by the students, and the result is that voiced dental fricative sound [ð] is the most mispronounced, with a score of 278 of incorrect pronunciations out of 300 (92.67%). He added that it is because dental fricative sounds do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia.

Based on the statement above, the writer feels that students in Indonesia face many problems in pronouncing sentences in English, especially on words with phonemes that are not in their mother tongue. Therefore, the author chose to do a students' error analysis in the English department of Universitas Negeri Padang on the pronunciation of phonemes /θ/ and /ð/ that do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher uses a descriptive quantitative research method that was conducted to analyze students' errors in pronunciation. By using this type of method, students' pronunciation errors, types of error and the causes of the error are described.

Based on the purpose and other considerations, the researcher took students' of 2020 class in the English department of Universitas Negeri Padang, which consist of five classes, namely International Class, K2, K3, K4, and K5. However, to get fairer data, the researcher excluded the international class in this research. So, the researcher only took classes K2 to K5 as participants in this study because these are homogenous class. The total number of the population is 120 students. They were chosen because they have learned phonetics and phonology on the 3rd semester.

For the sample, researcher took 25% of the population. As a result, the total sample for this research is 30 students.

The instrument for this study was pronunciation test using voice recording and interview as an instrument. The pronunciation test consists of 40 sentences where in each sentence have one word with English dental fricative consonants. It is divided as; 20 words of voiced dental fricative [ð] and 20 words of voiceless dental fricative [θ]. While for the stimulated recall interview, it was conducted by listening students' voice recording and showing their phonetic transcription. Students were asked two questions (1) "what are the causes of your pronunciation

error?” (2) “what difficulties do you have in pronunciation?”

The data from the recording were analyzed by transcribing it into phonetic transcription. Next, the researcher made the category based on right or wrong of students’ pronunciation

Table 1. The example of students' pronunciation error

No.	Students' name	Words	Correct phonetic transcription	Students' phonetic transcription	Result (Right/Wrong)	Percentage of error
1.		Smooth	/smu:ð/	/smu:t/		
2.		Faith	/feɪθ/	/feɪd/		

The researcher used the formula below to calculate the percentage:

$$x = \frac{\Sigma Er}{\Sigma w} \times 100$$

Which:

- X = the percentage of students’ error
- ΣEr = the total of errors made by the participants
- Σw = the total of words tested

Next, researcher grouped the result of students’ pronunciation errors by using Tinambunan’s criterion

Table 2. Tinambunan's Criterion

Number of errors in percentage	Level of ability
0-25%	Excellent
26-50%	Good
51-75%	Fair
76-100%	Poor

After analysing the students’ error, the researcher categorized the error based on types of error according to surface strategy taxonomy stated by Dulay 1982 (omission, addition, misformation and misordering). This was used to know what the most types of error made by the students

Before conducting stimulated recall interview, researcher choose the students with the percentage of pronunciation error above 60% to be the samples. Students who take part in stimulated recall interviews were asked two questions (1) “what are the causes of your pronunciation error?” (2) “what difficulties do you have in pronunciation?” by showing their recording as a stimulus so they can remember what they said. The collections of students’ answers were analysed and grouped by theme to know the dominant reasons for their pronunciation error.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research and discussions were answer three research questions, “What is the students’ ability to pronounce dental fricative words?”, “What are the types of errors made by the students?”, and “What is the cause of students’ pronunciation errors in pronouncing English dental fricative consonants?”. The detailed will be explained in subchapters, as follows:

Research Finding

1. Students’ ability in pronouncing dental fricative consonants

From a total of 40 words, each of which was spoken by 30 samples, so that the number of words analyzed was 1200 words. As many as 477 was correctly pronounced and 723 was incorrectly pronounced

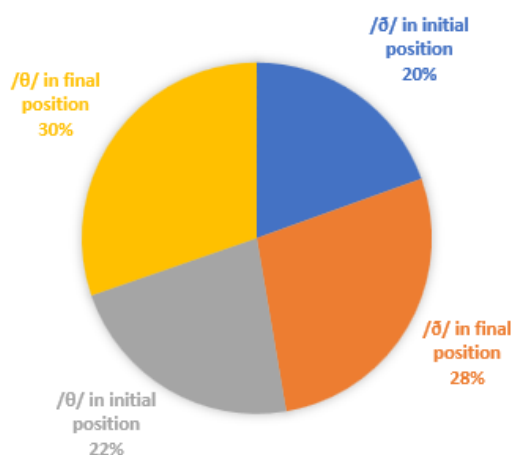


Diagram 1. Percentage of Students' Pronunciation Error

From the diagram above, it was found that the highest percentage of students’ pronunciation error was on the voiceless dental fricative consonants in the final position with the percentage 30%.

The table below is the percentage of pronunciation error for each student. After being calculated, the average of students’ pronunciation was 60% and based on Tinambunan’s criterion it was categorized as FAIR.

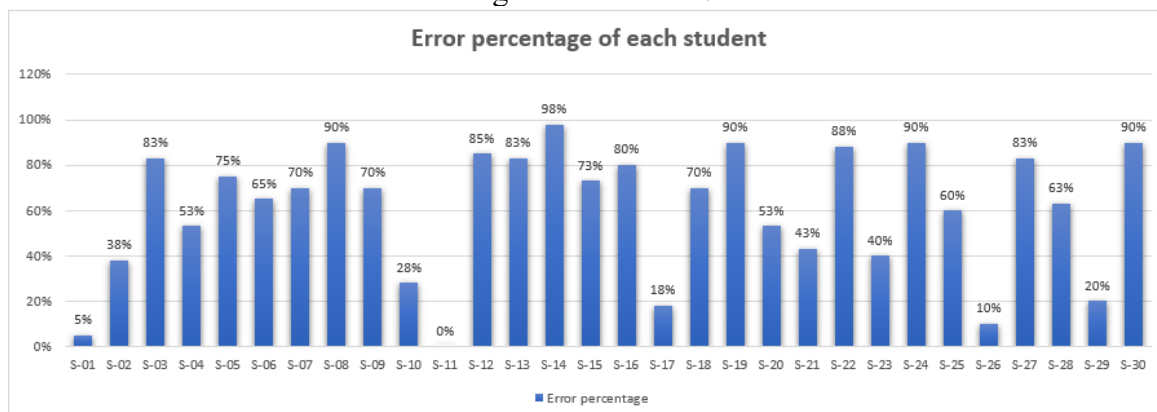


Diagram 2. Error Percentage of Each Students

2. *Types of students' error in dental fricative consonants*

From a total of 723 errors made by 30 students it was found that the type of error that the students made was omission, misformation, and misordering, see the table below:

Table 3. Types of Students Error

Types of error	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	77	10,65%
Misformation	645	89,21%
Misordering	1	0,14%

The table shows that the type of error that was mostly made by students was misformation as much as 645 times or 89.21%. Meanwhile, omission errors occurred 77 times or 10.65%, for the least type of error, namely misordering which only occurred once or 0.14%

3. *The causes of students' error in pronouncing dental fricative consonants*

From the diagram 2, the researchers took students who had a percentage of pronunciation errors above 60%, that was 18 people to take part in the stimulated recall interview. After conducting stimulated recall interview, several reasons were found as the cause of student's pronunciation error. The following table contains a summary of the factors that cause pronunciation errors and their difficulties in pronunciation.

Table 4. Cause of Pronunciation Error

	Cause of error	Freq.	Percentage
1.	Online learning due to covid 19 pandemic	15	83%
2.	Lack of practice	13	72%
3.	Unfamiliar words/New vocabularies	12	67%
4.	Mother tongue	11	61%
5.	Environment	8	44%
6.	Nervous/Unconfident	6	33%
7.	Long sentence	3	17%

In stimulated recall interview, the researcher asked two questions: (1) "what are the causes of your pronunciation error?" (2) "what difficulties do you have in pronunciation?" Through these two questions, the researcher got several answers.

The factor with the highest percentage as the reason for the pronunciation error experienced by students from the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang was online learning due to the covid 19 pandemic, where this reason had a percentage of 83%. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that causing learning to be done online, some students felt that learning process was ineffective. Students felt that the problems in pronunciation were related to the lack of detail the lecturer explained during online learning.

While for the least factors caused pronunciation error felt by students was that the sentence tested was too long. A total of 17% said the same thing. They admitted that sentences were too long prevented them from speaking English

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis, the average percentage of students' ability in pronouncing English dental fricative consonants was 60% and was categorized as fair. Based on the findings, the researcher found that the most mispronounced consonants by English Department students at Universitas Negeri Padang was voiceless dental fricative /θ/, and the final position had the highest percentage of 30%. While for the types of error, in this research the findings showed that students made 3 out of 4 types of pronunciation error based on surface strategy taxonomy stated by Dulay 1982. The researcher also found several reasons that caused the pronunciation error based on the result of stimulated recall interview. These include online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic which become the dominant factor that caused students pronunciation error.

The findings in this study were different from the research conducted by (Juliardi et al., n.d.), where the findings were that the most pronunciation errors were in the voiced dental fricative sound /ð/, where there were 278 errors out of 300 words. He also found that participants tended to replace dental fricative consonants to alveolar stop /d/ and /t/ which was the closest equivalent of the consonants in Bahasa Indonesia.

However, the finding of this research was related with research that had been conducted by Sembiring & Fiber (2016) which found that the most error that the students make was voiceless dental fricative consonants /θ/ which had 506 error and the causes of mispronounced were unfamiliarity words, lack of practice, and lack of understanding phonetics subject. The findings from the study by Elvionita (2019) also showed similar results that the highest pronunciation error occurred on voiceless dental fricative consonants /θ/ with 21,70%, while for the voiced dental fricative consonants /ð/ was 16,28%.

The factors that caused the pronunciation error stated by Toçi (2020) were lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, bad teaching experiences, lack of direct contact with the language, and lack of self-confidence. This was in line with the findings where bad teaching experiences were experienced by students from the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang where they had to learn phonetics and phonology through online learning and resulted in the ineffectiveness of the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions above, the students of the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang had pronunciation problems in English dental fricative consonants, especially voiceless dental fricative consonants in the final position and their ability in pronouncing dental fricative consonants was categorized as fair. From the pronunciation errors that occurred, it was found that there were three out of four types of pronunciation errors based on the surface taxonomy, namely misformation, omission, and misordering. The cause of this

pronunciation error occurs due to several factors, both internal and external. These factors were first, the lack of students' understanding in phonetic learning due to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, lack of practicing pronunciation. Third, in the words tested there were many new vocabularies for students. Fourth, the influence of mother tongue where students were accustomed to using Indonesian and regional languages in daily communication. Fifth, environmental problems that do not allow them to speak English every day. Sixth, lack of confidence when speaking in English. Last, the words being tested were too long, making it difficult for students to pronounce it.

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