



Exploring Freshman Students' Perceptions of Using IPA Symbols in English Pronunciation Class

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Abstract

Mastery of accurate English pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of learning English, especially for non-native speakers. Accurate pronunciation not only helps in communicating effectively with native speakers, but also increases confidence in speaking English. To help students understand and produce English sounds accurately, teachers often use phonetic symbols known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). IPA symbols provide a phonetic representation of sounds, which allows students to understand and produce English sounds more consistently. This present research investigates the perceptions of freshman English education students regarding the use of IPA symbols in English pronunciation classes. The selection of participants is carried out through purposive sampling. The research employs a descriptive qualitative research approach, focusing on ten students of Class C from the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The data is collected by unstructured interviews via WhatsApp and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that students encounter challenges when attempting to utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols, particularly in differentiating between similar sounds and adapting to unfamiliar symbols. However, the majority of students recognized the significant benefits of acquiring and utilizing knowledge of IPA symbols, including enhanced pronunciation accuracy, listening skills, and confidence in speaking English. This study emphasizes the value of integrating IPA symbols into language learning, which can facilitate the acquisition of accurate pronunciation and enhance language proficiency.

Keywords: *Freshman Students, IPA symbols, English, Pronunciation, Perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, the term "freshman" is used to refer to students who have recently commenced their studies at the university level, or are in their inaugural year of academic pursuits (Pane & Sanchez, 2023). In English education programs, freshman students typically enroll in introductory courses, including Basic English Grammar, Pronunciation and Dictation, as well as the four fundamental skills of Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. This is consistent with the findings of Maulida & Sofi (2024), who have demonstrated that in the English

Education Department, freshman students encounter distinct challenges in developing more sophisticated and extensive language abilities compared to those acquired during secondary education. According to Ulul Azmi et al. (2023), The acquisition of fundamental English competencies, including writing, speaking, reading, and listening, represents a crucial phase in the process of learning the language. These abilities are not only essential for academic purposes but also serve as valuable tools in everyday life. It is imperative that all skills be fully mastered, particularly in the domains of speaking and writing. English pronunciation must be more proficiently acquired to enhance the quality of public speaking, which will invariably be utilized in communication and presentations during the lecture period.

Mastery of accurate English pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of learning English, especially for non-native speakers. Accurate pronunciation not only helps in communicating effectively with native speakers, but also increases confidence in speaking English. For those engaged in the study of English, particularly those pursuing a career in English education, the mastery of correct English pronunciation is of paramount importance. In accordance with the research of Andini & Zaitun (2023), pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of the English language that all individuals engaged in the process of learning or communicating in English must comprehend. Effective communication in English is contingent upon not only a command of vocabulary and grammar, but also a clear and accurate pronunciation (Unsiyah et al., 2024). This is a crucial skill for freshman students to acquire, as it serves as a foundation for their ability to communicate in English, both within and beyond the classroom.

To help students understand and produce English sounds accurately, teachers often use phonetic symbols known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). According to Herlisya et al. (2023), the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system of phonetic notation designed by linguists to accurately and uniquely represent each variety of sound (phones or phonemes) used in spoken human language. By using IPA symbols, language students can identify and articulate English phonemes precisely, thus improving their overall pronunciation skills. Setiyono (2019) mentions that using the IPA phonemic transcript to teach pronunciation can aid students in memorizing the right pronunciation. Therefore, good pronunciation training has become one of the important aspects of English language learning in pronunciation class.

English pronunciation class has an important role in developing students' ability to produce correct English sounds. Therefore, IPA symbols are often used as an aid tool. IPA symbols provide a phonetic representation of sounds, which allows students to understand and produce English sounds more consistently. Lubis et al. (2023) states that phonetic symbols provide a visual representation of sounds, allowing students to associate certain symbols with corresponding sounds. Teachers often use IPA symbols to display phonetic transcriptions of words that are difficult or irregular in pronunciation, helping students understand how to pronounce each phoneme correctly. In this class, the teacher not only provides the phonetic symbols but also gives an example of the pronunciation of the word or phrase in English. Students are then asked to imitate the sound, allowing them to directly transmit the correct pronunciation. Through this technique, students can pay attention to mouth movements, tongue position, as well as intonation patterns used by native speakers. Based on Fitria (2023), phonetic symbols have an understanding of phonetics that will

assist students in learning about the speech organs and points of articulation required to produce correct English sounds.

Therefore, for freshman students who are typically in the initial stages of language acquisition, the use of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols provides a fundamental instrument for accurately learning the sounds of the English language. Upon commencing formal studies in English, students are confronted with a new set of sounds and pronunciation rules that diverge from those of their native language. The objective of IPA charts is to provide a comprehensive representation of the diverse range of sounds employed in the world's languages. Consequently, the charts may include a considerable number of sounds with which the students may be unfamiliar (Culpeper et al., 2023). This has resulted in a range of student perceptions regarding the use of scientific symbols in English pronunciation classes. By understanding these perceptions, teachers can enhance their ability to master English phonetics.

Furthermore, the researcher identified several sources for comparison to ascertain the discrepancies between this research and previous studies. This study contributes by focusing on freshman students' perceptions, which has not been sufficiently addressed in earlier works.

The study conducted by Dumanggas et al. (2024), evaluated the efficacy of utilizing International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols to enhance the English pronunciation abilities of grade 12 students. At the outset of the study, the students exhibited difficulties in pronunciation. However, their abilities demonstrated advancement following the integration of IPA symbols into their instructional program, as evidenced by an increase in post-test scores. The findings indicate that IPA symbols are an effective tool for enhancing pronunciation, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of English sounds, and promoting consistent practice with consonants and vowels. However, this study focused solely on quantitative outcomes related to pronunciation performance. It did not explore learners' subjective experiences or attitudes, leaving a gap in understanding how students perceive the learning process involving IPA. This research focuses on freshman students and aims to examine their perceptions of the use of IPA symbols in English pronunciation class.

In a similar study conducted by Riza & Kawakib (2021), it was observed that following the implementation of narrow phonetic transcription with eleventh grade students at MA 1 Pesantren Annuqayah Putri, there was a notable enhancement in the students' motivation to learn pronunciation, particularly when phonetic transcription effectively prevented them from making pronunciation errors. Furthermore, this study's findings indicate that phonetic transcription facilitates accurate English word pronunciation and reduces pronunciation errors.

This is evidenced by the pre-test and post-test results administered to the students. While motivation was briefly addressed, their study still concentrated primarily on **error correction and pronunciation output**, without delving into students' **personal reflections or metacognitive insights** on IPA as a learning tool. Additionally, their focus was on **senior high school students**, not university freshmen, whose needs and perspectives may differ.

In a related study by Chuzaimah et al. (2022), the researchers investigated the perceptions of the International Phonetic Alphabet held by high school students. The findings indicated that students held a favorable view of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a tool for pronunciation learning. All participants concurred that the IPA is a valuable tool for pronunciation learning, although they also acknowledged its difficulty. Five participants additionally noted that the symbols in the IPA are

challenging to memorize. It is different with this research that the subjects were freshmen students in university, whereas the subjects in the referenced study were high school students, which may have contributed to the differing perceptions of the IPA symbols.

Literature Review

IPA symbols

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system of symbols that is frequently represented using Latin characters, and provides a standardized representation of the sounds in spoken language. According to Dumanggas et al. (2024), the utilization of scientific symbols in the context of grade 12 students' pronunciation skills has been demonstrated to exert a discernible influence on the development of students' pronunciation skills which is proven by the existence of notable contrasts between the students' pronunciation abilities prior to and subsequent to the introduction of IPA symbols. In line with Trinh et al., (2022) shows that the implementation of an IPA-based approach led to a notable enhancement in the pronunciation abilities of Vietnamese EFL adult students within the experimental group. The study conducted by Suryaleksana et al. (2022), the result of English education students at Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta showed that the IPA had impacts and played an essential part in learning phonetics to enhance pronunciation, a few consonant, vowel and diphthong sounds, such as /θ/, /dʒ/, /ð/, /ɜ:/, and /əʊ/, were challenging to articulate and the causes included seldom paying attention to the IPA and missing IPA information. Based on previous research, most of the existing studies focus on the impact of IPA symbols on upper grade students or adult students, such as 12th grade students, Vietnamese EFL adult students, and English language education students at Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta. This is different from this research which focuses on examining freshman students' perceptions in using IPA symbols in English pronunciation class.

ɪ SEE	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	uː TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY		
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜː WORD	ɔː SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑː PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p FIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

Pronunciation

In English, pronunciation refers to how a word is said or pronounced. Almusharraf (2024) stated that the manner in which students communicate in English, as well as how others perceive them, is influenced by pronunciation. Inadequate pronunciation can impede students' capacity to be comprehended and communicate with proficiency, resulting in exasperation and diminished self-assurance. Mispronunciations have the potential to alter the intended signification of a word or phrase, which can lead to diplomatic incidents, business failures, and

even historical misunderstandings that can persist for decades (Mirzayev, 2025). Chuzaimah et al. (2021) stated that the students provided a favorable account of the utilization of the International Phonetic Association (IPA) symbols, positing that it could serve to augment their oral abilities and technique for acquiring pronunciation. In accordance with Dandee & Pornwiriyaakit (2022), all students' pronunciation enhancement was seen as they were able to pronounce English consonant and vowel sounds more precisely after applying the English phonetic letter set drills. As stated by Indrayadi et al. (2024), the students were of the understanding that the acquisition of correct pronunciation is a key factor in ensuring that the intended message is conveyed effectively. Prior research has demonstrated the beneficial impact of science symbols on pronunciation abilities, underscoring the significance of pronunciation in this context. Nevertheless, there remains a knowledge gap regarding how first-year students, particularly those in the early stages of learning, perceive the use of International Phonetic Association (IPA) symbols in pronunciation classes. While previous research has primarily focused on the efficacy of IPA for general pronunciation improvement, there has been limited attention paid to freshmen's distinctive attitudes, challenges, and perspectives in their initial encounters with IPA symbols. This research aims to contribute new insights into how freshman students specifically experience and respond to IPA-based pronunciation training. This research aims to explore the freshman students' perceptions of using IPA symbols in English pronunciation class. Hence, the research question is “*What are the freshman students' perceptions of using IPA symbols in English pronunciation class?*”

METHODS OF THE STUDY

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine freshman students' perceptions of the utilization of IPA symbols in classroom-based pronunciation instruction. The qualitative method was selected because it allows for the in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences and personal meanings, aligning with Sugiyono's (2008) view that qualitative research prioritizes depth of meaning over generalization. Additionally, the researcher served as the primary instrument in the study, and data were collected through triangulation to ensure validity.

The participants in this research were freshman students enrolled in the English education department at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The researcher employed purposive sampling as a sampling technique, to identify the sample or participants in this study. This approach was selected because it enables the elicitation of in-depth responses from interviews with participants. As elucidated by Tenny et al. (2022), purposive sampling entails the selection of individuals deemed most informative by the researcher. The study focused on 10 freshman students of the English education department, particularly those in Class C, as they had undergone a pronunciation course that utilized the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols.

The primary data collection method was in-depth interviews, conducted in an unstructured format via WhatsApp using both chat and voice notes. While unstructured interviews allow for open-ended questioning, in-depth interviews aim for a deeper understanding by enabling participants to elaborate on their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Oulddjaballah (2023) stated that in-depth interview, one of qualitative research methods, has been widely utilized in an assortment of disciplines in which the researcher gets point by point data directly from the

members to investigate in profundity their fundamental opinions, inspirations, beliefs, experiences, and feeling on a specific subject. These two approaches were combined to maximize flexibility and depth. The decision to conduct interviews via WhatsApp was based on practical considerations: participants were more responsive and comfortable using a familiar digital platform, especially given time constraints and varying locations. WhatsApp also allowed for extended conversations over time, thus supporting the depth required for qualitative inquiry.

The interview guideline consisted of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to reflect on their learning experiences with IPA symbols. The questions were developed based on established theories in pronunciation pedagogy, phonological awareness, and learner perception, particularly drawing from Celce-Murcia et al. (2010). To ensure content validity, the draft questions were reviewed by two experts (lecturers) in English language education. Revisions were made based on their feedback to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that allows researchers to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), thematic analysis is a flexible and rigorous approach suitable for researchers at all experience levels. Through coding and theme development, the researcher was able to construct a meaningful representation of students' perceptions, allowing for the reframing and deeper interpretation of their experiences with IPA-based pronunciation instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this research is to examine the perceptions of first-year students regarding the utilization of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in English pronunciation classes. It aims to ascertain how these students perceived the role of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in enhancing their pronunciation abilities and overall language learning experience. The results are categorized based on students' perceptions of using IPA symbols in English Pronunciation class, which comprises the challenges of using IPA symbols and the benefits of understanding IPA symbols.

The challenges of using IPA symbols

According to the result of the data collection from this research, there were some challenges faced students in using IPA symbols revealed from the interviews.

1. Unfamiliarity with IPA Symbols

A primary challenge is students' unfamiliarity with IPA symbols. Many students admitted they were not used to the symbols and found them difficult to apply correctly. For instance, S1 stated, "*As for challenges, this is a little difficult because I'm not used to it yet*" while S3 added,

"I think the main challenge of using IPA symbols in English pronunciation classes is how to write it correctly, especially since I am not familiar with phonetic symbols. It can be difficult to remember all the different symbols and their corresponding sounds. And sometimes I write it wrong"

This unfamiliarity often led to confusion and hesitation in using the symbols, especially when writing transcriptions. S7 emphasized how "*The range of sounds and*

the abstract nature of the symbols can overwhelm students, especially if they are unfamiliar with phonetic or linguistic notation” suggesting a cognitive burden caused by the symbols' complexity. S9 also noted, “The challenge is Complexity of the IPA Chart. The chart contains numerous symbols, many of which look unfamiliar or are hard to distinguish (e.g., /θ/ and /ð/).” This indicates that students struggle both with recognition and recall, which hinders their ability to internalize the IPA system effectively.

2. Difficulty Distinguishing Similar Sounds

The second challenge relates to the difficulty in distinguishing sounds that seem similar. Students expressed their confusion when different symbols appear to represent the same or nearly the same pronunciation. This is expressed through their statements:

“The challenge that I experience is the difficulty in distinguishing some symbols that I think are the same in pronunciation” (S4)

“The challenge I face is that the sounds are the same so it's hard to differentiate them” (S6)

These statements points to gaps in students' auditory discrimination skills, which are essential for phonetic accuracy. The challenge here is not only cognitive but also perceptual. These findings suggest the importance of embedding listening discrimination activities in pronunciation lessons, allowing students to hear and practice minimal pairs and contrastive sounds more frequently.

3. Influence of Native Language

Third, it is found that the students are encountered in using IPA symbols is the differences with native language. Students' first language (L1) background plays a significant role in their challenges with IPA symbols. The contrast between the phonological systems of English and their native language (e.g., Indonesian or Javanese) makes certain English sounds feel unnatural or difficult to produce. Some students also express confusion due to the visual difference between IPA symbols and the standard Latin alphabet used in Indonesian.

“I think the challenges of using IPA symbols in pronunciation class are, first time when I haven't known about IPA symbols i feel confused with the symbols because it's weird and different with usual alphabet in Indonesian alphabet” (S5)

“The challenge I face is that the sounds are the same so it's hard to differentiate them. The pronunciation is also difficult for our Javanese or Medhok tongue” (S6)

For me, personally, still struggle to connect IPA symbols to actual sounds, especially if the sounds don't exist in my native language (e.g., /ɔ:/ in "thought" or /eɪ/ in "face") (S9)

These reflections highlight the influence of first language (L1) phonology on the ability to recognize and produce English phonemes accurately.

4. Mismatch Between Letters and IPA Symbols

The fourth difficulty faced by the students relates to the visual and conceptual disconnect between English letters and their phonetic representations in IPA. Students find it confusing when a single English letter corresponds to different IPA symbols, or when an IPA symbol does not resemble the letter they expect it to represent. This

mismatch complicates the learning process and creates a barrier in transcribing or decoding IPA accurately. As mentioned by them below,

“The challenge is adjusting or matching between real letters and their symbols” (S2)

“The challenge that I experience is the difficulty in distinguishing some symbols that I think are the same in pronunciation” (S4)

“The pronunciation of each letter is different, and the pronunciation of the letter when it is pronounced is almost the same” (S8)

“For me, sometimes I have difficulty understanding new symbols, too many numbers, and difficulty connecting symbols to original sounds” (S10)

These responses reveal the students' struggle with the symbolic abstraction of IPA. Unlike regular orthography, IPA requires learners to disassociate letters from their spelling conventions and relearn them based on sound values. This is particularly challenging when learners have long relied on English spelling as their primary reference for pronunciation. Their answers suggest a need for scaffolding, starting with familiar vocabulary and gradually transitioning into IPA-based transcriptions through meaningful exercises.

The benefits of understanding IPA symbols

The interview findings revealed that students generally perceive the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a valuable tool in their English language learning process. The benefits were grouped into three main themes: (1) improved pronunciation accuracy and fluency, (2) enhanced speaking and listening abilities, and (3) increased learner confidence.

1. Improved Pronunciation Accuracy and Fluency

In the interview, students stated how IPA supports accurate and fluent pronunciation. The clarity that IPA provides in sound-symbol correspondence allows learners to pronounce words more precisely and with greater ease. Several students emphasized the usefulness of IPA in distinguishing vowel length, identifying correct stress patterns, and preventing mispronunciation due to inconsistent English spelling.

“It's very helpful in pronouncing letters, especially in recognising the short length of each letter” S1

“The use of IPA symbols can significantly improve students' pronunciation accuracy and fluency in several ways, it can improve our self-correction too, and the last is enhanced our communication skill” S3

“Using IPA symbols are very helpful for us to pronounce accurately and fluently, because we can differentiate the sounds in the word, the stress patterns and how to pronounce the word correctly with IPA symbols” S5

These student reflections demonstrate how the IPA enables learners to go beyond rote memorization of word spelling and engage with the phonological system of English. The ability to self-correct, recognize phonemic distinctions, and achieve rhythmical fluency suggests that IPA literacy can contribute significantly to students' pronunciation development.

2. Enhanced speaking and listening skills

Second, the students found it effective in enhancing their speaking and listening ability. Mastery of IPA allows learners to decode phonetic transcription in dictionaries or learning materials and apply this knowledge to both oral production and auditory comprehension. Students expressed that familiarity with IPA helps them recognize correct sounds more easily during listening activities and assists in producing clearer speech, as shown by their statement,

“By integrating IPA into language learning, I can have a clearer understanding of the phonetic symbols in English, which leads to proficiency in speaking and improving my listening skills” (S4)

“The use of IPA symbols is very helpful in making pronunciation clearer, more clearly distinguishing the same sound with different meanings. It also helps a little in speaking, but sometimes it doesn't because the sound is foreign when first heard” (S6)

“In my opinion, the use of IPA symbols is a powerful tool to enhance listening skills. Familiarity with IPA improves students' ability to recognize and replicate native-like pronunciation during listening exercise” (S9)

These responses indicate that IPA serves as a bridge between receptive and productive language skills. While initial exposure may be challenging, especially when unfamiliar sounds are encountered, consistent use of IPA aids in developing a more accurate phonological awareness that supports both understanding and production of spoken English.

3. Increased Learner Confidence

The third theme that emerged was a notable increase in learner confidence. Students reported that a better grasp of IPA reduced the uncertainty and guesswork associated with English pronunciation. As they became more accurate and fluent, they also felt more motivated to speak English and participate in oral communication. This expressed through their statement.

“It helps in reducing errors due to misspelling, builds more confidence in speaking English and can train pronunciation correctly without having to guess based on spelling”(S8)

“In my opinion, it can improve the fluency in pronouncing a sentence, can increase confidence, encourage self-learning, increase the speed of speaking well and correctly” (S10)

The development of confidence appears to be a natural outcome of increased accuracy and fluency. As students gain control over their pronunciation through IPA, they are more willing to speak and take ownership of their learning. This growth in self-assurance may also lead to more independent language learning and proactive engagement in class.

This research aims to examine the perceptions of first-year students regarding the utilization of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in English pronunciation classes. The preliminary findings indicated that some students encountered difficulties in learning the symbols due to their perceived complexity, which they found unfamiliar to the sounds they were accustomed to in pronunciation practice. However, many students found the clarity and precision provided by the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols helpful, facilitating their understanding of phonetic sounds. Overall, this study demonstrates a mixed perception of the use of IPA symbols in English pronunciation classes. While the use of these

symbols is recognized as a useful tool to improve pronunciation, there is a need for effective teaching strategies to facilitate students' understanding and increase their confidence in using these symbols in speaking practice.

According to the results of this research, it is found that students got the challenges and benefits of using IPA symbols in English pronunciation class based on their perceptions. The challenges of using IPA symbols that students face are unfamiliar with the IPA symbols because they are not used to the IPA symbols or the phonetic, difficult to remember all different symbols in the IPA chart with the sounds, so that it causes them overwhelm, get wrong when writing and distinguishing the IPA symbols such as *e.g.*, /θ/ and /ð/. The following challenge is still related to the previous one, namely their difficulty in distinguishing symbols that are different but have the same sound when pronounced. It is similar with Suryaleksana et al. (2022), it is found that two significant challenges were encountered by students, namely confusion and an inability to recall the pronunciation of consonant, long vowel, and diphthong phonetic symbols due to the unfamiliarity of the sounds in comparison to those in Indonesian and a lack of attention to or understanding of the IPA.

On other hand, the students also encounter a significant challenge that is the difference between IPA symbols with Indonesian alphabet and the difference causes the confusion, the difficulty of pronouncing because of having Javanese or Medhok tongue, and to connect with the actual sound because different with the native language such as *e.g.*, /ɔ:/ in "thought" or /eɪ/ in "face". Furthermore, the students have difficulty in adjusting the real letter with the symbols, the pronunciation of the letters is almost the same and different, understanding the new symbols and connecting to the original sound. It is caused because the students have just known the symbol for the first time so they feel it is weird and confusing. According to Dandee & Pornwiriyakit (2022) it shows that the students encountered difficulties in pronouncing voiced sounds, which were attributed to three main factors: differences in the phonological systems of the languages, mother tongue interference, and the English spelling and pronunciation system.

Furthermore, the utilisation of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols represents an invaluable tool for the practice of pronunciation. It reduces the incidence of errors resulting from misspellings, enables students to accurately and fluently pronounce words, allows a clear distinction between sounds with different meanings, and provides a transparent and standardized system for representing English sounds. The data presented in the research results above demonstrate that students perceive a positive impact from learning science symbols. This is beneficial for students in their learning process in pronunciation class, as evidenced by their perspectives. They find IPA symbols helpful for pronouncing letters, particularly in recognizing the short length of each letter. However, they occasionally experience confusion. This is an expected response from students who are new to the subject matter, as they are learning about phonetic symbols for the first time. Inline with study conducted by Anisah et al. (2023) it is indicated that students perceived a positive effect on their pronunciation and noted that learning phonetic symbols facilitated the distinction between words with similar pronunciation.

Moreover, the students concurred that the utilisation of IPA symbols enhanced their speaking and pronunciation. The students exhibited a profound comprehension of the phonetic symbols utilized in the English language, thus enabling them to achieve a greater degree of excellence in their speaking proficiency. The students additionally indicated that the use of IPA symbols enhanced fluency. Their consistent

comprehension of the IPA symbols facilitated the reinforcement of rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns in spoken English, which ultimately resulted in more fluent and natural speech. Furthermore, the students concurred that the use of IPA symbols fosters accurate pronunciation by providing a transparent and standardised system for representing English sounds. In alignment with the findings of Suryaleksana et al. (2022), it can be posited that IPA serves as an indispensable foundation for the acquisition of pronunciation skills. The participants attested to the favourable impact of IPA on their pronunciation. The use of IPA symbols can significantly enhance students' accuracy and fluency in pronunciation, facilitate self-correction, and, in turn, improve their communication skills. Consequently, this research also demonstrates that students exhibited a positive response to the benefits of IPA symbols in their pronunciation class.

Additionally, the use of IPA symbols has been demonstrated to enhance students' listening comprehension and instill a greater sense of confidence in their ability to accurately pronounce a given word. In the domain of listening skills, the comprehension of IPA symbols has been shown to enhance students' capacity to recognize and imitate native-like pronunciation during listening exercises. The integration of the IPA into the process of learning in pronunciation class led to an enhanced understanding of the phonetic symbols used in the language, which in turn led to an improvement in the students' listening skills. Furthermore, students concur that IPA symbols can enhance fluency in sentence pronunciation, instill self-assurance, facilitate independent learning, and expedite the ability to speak accurately and effectively. Furthermore, IPA symbols assist students in reducing errors resulting from misspellings, fostering confidence in their English-language abilities, and enabling them to practice accurate pronunciation without relying on spelling. Despite the acknowledged challenges associated with learning phonetic symbols, the majority of students expressed a strong conviction in the efficacy of this approach for enhancing their English communication skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, students face difficulties in utilising the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols, particularly in differentiating between similar sounds and adapting to unfamiliar symbols. However, the majority of students acknowledged the substantial advantages of acquiring and utilising knowledge of IPA symbols, including enhanced pronunciation accuracy, listening skills, and confidence in speaking English. This study highlights the value of integrating IPA symbols into language learning, which can facilitate the acquisition of accurate pronunciation and enhance language proficiency. Future research can investigate strategies to overcome the challenges associated with IPA learning, explore innovative approaches to teaching and practicing pronunciation using IPA symbols, examine broader and higher-level subjects, and employ diverse research methods such as observation. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the potential of IPA, teachers can empower learners to achieve high levels of English language proficiency.

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