

## Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation Errors Produced by ELE Students in Classroom Settings

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### Abstract

Pronunciation plays important roles in making the intelligibility of a speech. In pronunciation, speech and gesture production are interrelated and coordinated. Not all language learners can pronounce English words well. Learners make errors while speaking English. It makes them not confident to pronounce other English words. Therefore, this study aims to identify students' segmental aspects of pronunciation errors in classroom setting. This study is categorized as qualitative study to understand phenomena using data such as interviews, observations, and documents reviews to identify and interpret specific characteristics of the material to learn human behavior. The population of this research is the sixth-semester students of English department at Mandalika University of Education, Mataram-Indonesia. This research used purposive sampling method that engaged 6 students as the sample of the data. The students divided by 2 criteria: Gender and pronunciation level. To make the data valid, all the students have passed 3 stages of pronunciation level. The result of this study indicated that all the subjects are difficult in pronouncing consonant /f/ sounds and still need improvisation in a short vowel sound because the student's errors are divided into 3 categories; psycholinguistic, sociolinguistics, and Epistemic sources. Furthermore, this study proves that "man smart, woman smarter".

**Keywords:** Pronunciation skills, sources of error, learning experience

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## INTRODUCTION

English pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills to acquire. Learners should spend lots of time to improve their pronunciation (García, 2007; Martínez-Flor et al. 2006; Gilakjani, 2016). Understandable pronunciation is one of the basic requirements of learners' competence, which is also one of the most important features of language instruction. Good pronunciation leads to learning while bad pronunciation promotes great difficulties in language learning (Gilakjani, 2016). Teachers should be provided with courses and materials that help students to improve their pronunciation instruction (Fraser, 2000).

In language production, many things that students should pay attention, such as intonation, dialect, rhyme/rhythm, stress, and the most important is pronunciation

(Kinasih & Olivia, 2022; Anabel & Simanjuntak, 2022). Speaking immediately conveys something about ourselves to the people around us (Gula, 2022; Lume & Hisbullah, 2022). Learners who have good English pronunciation are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in some parts of stress or rhythm, while learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand are uneasy to be understood their production, even if their grammar is perfect (Mora & leykina, 2017; Levis, 2016). Learners often judge other learners by the way they speak, and learners with poor pronunciation may be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking in knowledge, even though listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation (Pennington, 2021; Couper, 2021).

Pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects of English which is faced by adult learners, and they are needed explicit help from the teacher (Buana & Irawan, 2021). Nguyen and Newton (2021) state that students need consistently learning activities to train their pronunciation in class because practices of pronunciation in class are important (Latif & Jupri, 2021; Buana & Irawan, 2021). The goal of pronunciation instruction is not to ask learners to pronounce like native speakers. Instead, intelligible pronunciation should be the real purpose of oral communication (Messum & Young, 2021). If learners want to change the way of pronounced English words, they have to change the way they think about the sounds of those words (Latif & Jupri, 2021). This is true both for individual sounds and the bigger parts of speech such as syllables, stress patterns, and rhythm. Unfortunately, pronunciation instruction is sometimes ignored in English language teaching (Gilakjani, 2016).

Fraser (2000) states that “many adult learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from the teacher”. Moreover, many institutions do not provide enough time and place for learners to learn pronunciation widely, to integrate learning speaking and pronunciation in one class. This often results in facing difficulties in areas such as communication gaps, low self-confidence (then experience social isolation), employment difficulties, limited opportunities for further study, and preferring to be silent then much practice to speaking in English or may avoid speaking English.

Some people may not know how to pronounce the sounds or particular sounds of English in natural speech, sound combinations with putting particular sounds in particular positions. They may also have trouble differentiating two words that have slightly similar sounds (Latif & Jupri, 2021). Those difficulties faced by all English learners become mistakes or errors (Gilakjani, 2016). Making errors is natural in the learning process. Error is learners’ lack of language maturity. It may appear when learners have not acquired the foreign language rules (Buana & Irawan, 2021). Analysis of errors is very important. By error analysis, all people will know their difficulty to pronounce words correctly. They also will earlier realize their lack, so for further they will not do over again mistake on phonemes.

According to James (2010), acceptable pronunciation can be understood based on the following basic levels. In level 1, what the speaker is saying is not understandable to people. The speaker uses the wrong sounds when producing English words or uses the wrong prosodic features when producing English sentences. There is a beginning level for pronunciation. If the pronunciation of a speaker falls below this level, he/she will be not be able to communicate without paying attention to his/her knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In level 2, what the speaker is saying can be understandable to people but the speaker’s pronunciation is not acceptable to listen to because he/she has a strange and heavy accent. The researcher realizes that pronunciation is important to improve an ability to be good speaker with proper pronunciation because it is the main component in

their profession and for further education. Therefore, he wanted to analyze the segmental aspects of pronunciation errors that are produced by ELE students.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is concerned about English pronunciation skills especially among Undikma ELE learners. The researcher has some items of problems to be analyzed, which have been formulated into questions: What kinds of errors on the segmental aspect of pronunciation are produced by ELE students in reading a poem; What are the causes of error produced by ELE students in reading a poem; and what learning experiences are considered as a determinant to the students' pronunciation skill?

## METHOD

A descriptive study is selected because it is appropriate for the purpose of this study. According to Ary (2009), a descriptive study as a research design is applied to understand phenomena using data such as interviews, observations, and document reviews to identify and interpret specific characteristics of the material to learn human behavior. Research is a systematic effort to provide answers to questions. To find the answer, of course, the researcher must follow the research procedure. Applying those procedures to arrange the research, the researcher needs a research design. Depending on the basic philosophical approach of the qualitative researcher, many methods exist for analyzing data.

The population of this research is the sixth-semester students of English department in Undikma Mataram. This research used purposive sampling method that engaged of 6 students as the sample of the data. The students divided by 2 criteria: Gender, and score. The researcher used 2 criteria because the theory of Hirt (2015) which states "man smart, woman smarter", and the researcher want to prove that theory. To make the data valid, all the students has passed 3 stages of pronunciation subject.

The aim of data collection in conducting scientific research is to get materials that are needed. However, the researcher used the 2 qualitative analysis. The two commonly used qualitative research technique for collecting the data, i.e. focus group interviews, and also observation. Schostak (2006) states that an interview is an extendable conversation between partners that aims at having 'in-depth information about a certain topic or subject, and through which a phenomenon could be interpreted in terms of the meaning's interviewees bring to it. . The researcher uses a poem to observe the subject to collect the data which will be analyzed based on the original sound of the poem titled "English" by T.S. Watt which is to analyze the pronunciation error.

Data analysis refers to a systematic process to search and arrange the data sources and other materials that have been collected to enable the researcher to come up with findings. This study uses data analysis which is design by Miles and Huberman to analyze the data. Miles and Huberman state that qualitative data analysis consists of "three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (Miles and Huberman, 2014, p. 10). So, the research design is a plan and procedure to gather data based on the method and then analyze it. The qualitative method is used because the data analyzed were categorized into qualitative data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are ordered in line with the problem statements outlined in the introduction part whereas in the analysis, arguments and further interpretation of the findings are given. There are also some discussions related to the result and other research include in the elaboration of the data.

### The Students' Pronunciation Error

From the result of observation, the subject actually can speak English well but because of English is our foreign language so that they cannot pronounce it correctly in a sentence or paragraph instead of the subject has to aware the way they pronounce words. They felt hard to pronounce consonant alveolar plosive /t/, and /d/ at the end of a word. Therefore, so many errors they produced when pronouncing the word in reading a poem. There are several types of errors that all students made in reading a poem. Here are the discussions of the errors that ELE students made.

The first error is the subjects substituted English sounds that do not exist in Indonesia with Indonesian sounds. Those sounds are vowel sounds /a/, /ɛ/, consonant sounds /f/, and /θ/. As the result, the subjects substitute those sounds with the closest sounds available in Indonesian. In the data, we could see that the subjects substituted the sound /a/ with /ou/ in cough, dough, bough, thorough, and through. The students also make errors in vowel sound /ɛ/ and substituted to /ie/, /i/ in word bear, threat, dear, beard, dead, great. The data showed all subject make a same error in vowel and consonant.

The second error is the subjects substituted the English vowels into Indonesian vowel. Pronouncing the English vowel and consonant seemed to be the most difficult part for the students. Indonesian and English have different vowels. Indonesian has only five vowels, they are five letters that represent vowels in Indonesian “a, i, u, e, o,” whereas in English there are fourteen vowels. Therefore, the subjects in this research made many errors in pronouncing the vowels. The data showed that the subjects substituted the vowel /eɪ/, and /ɛ/ with vowel /i/ in great, threat, bear, pear, said, bead. Pronounced the word /bir/ instead /ber/.

The third error is word cognate cases. The subjects tended to pronounce the borrowed words from English like how they are in Indonesian. Based on the data 6, and data 5 the subject pronounced *dreadful* in Indonesia version. Two students make a same error while in 1<sup>st</sup> reading and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. pronounced /'drɪdfʊl/ instead /dredfəl/.

The fourth errors are silent consonant (unvoiced sound) or we can call this as language interference. Language interference is the effect of native language pronunciation when two or more languages cross or overlap, it involves with accurate pronunciation or proper way of describing something. Most of the subjects found difficulties in pronouncing some words that contain æ, ʌ, ɜ, v, θ, sounds, as the result of that the subject substitute the difficult sounds with Indonesia sounds. The data showed almost subjects make an error in consonant voiced and unvoiced sound. From the all data the student's difficult pronouncing /f/ in word thorough, through, cough, dough, and bough. Consonant /f/ in word thorough, through, dough, and bough are unvoiced /f/ consonant, and in cough /f/ consonant is voiced.

### **Source of Errors Produced by the ELE Students in Reading a Poem.**

Simarmata (2018) points out the source of error into four categories Psycholinguistic, Sociolinguistics, Epistemic sources, and Discourse sources. The researcher states the point in determine the student's source of error based on the theory of Simarmata (2018) and the researcher concluded that: the student's psycholinguistics sources is if the students' add more than one vowel or consonant in one word, the sociolinguistics source is if the students pronounce Indonesian vowel instead English vowel, and the epistemic source is if the students lack in vocabulary or world knowledge. After the researcher take the data by interview, the researcher got three sources of errors.

#### **Psycholinguistics**

This is reflected in the characteristics of students who lack the rules of English. The error is because the subjects are worried about making mistakes when saying certain words, they feel embarrassed in saying these words, and they become afraid that they will

be laughed at and afraid of being criticized by the other students. For example, the students pronounced /biər/ instead /ber/. The error is because the students know the word and wrong in production the pronunciation of the word, sometime the students add another vowel or consonant in one word for example: /seɪd/, /grɪt/.

### Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics sources were due to the subjects' English vowel which are affect from the social context. All six student are from Lombok and used Sasaknes as daily language. (*see interview data*). Based on the interview and observation data, the subjects made a lot of errors in pronouncing the English words, because the influence of their mother tongues and the first language acquisitions. The subjects' dialects and accents interrupt the subjects' English pronunciation. As we know that, all of the native languages and Indonesian words are spelled phonetically, it is different with the English words. English has various kinds of spelling for only one word. Therefore, it created some problems in learning the inconsistent English spelling. The data showed that subjects' interferences are the effect of native language pronunciation when two or more languages cross or overlap. It involves with accurate pronunciation or proper way of describing something. Therefore, almost the majority of subjects make mistakes due to generalization for example in the *data 2* she corrects to pronounce /ber/ but the students make an error while pronouncing English vowel /ɛ/ and substituted to vowel /e/, pronounced /berd/ instead /bird/ in word *beard*, students pronounced /'dɪdfl/ instead /'dredfəl/.

### Epistemic Sources

Epistemic sources were due to the subjects' English knowledge. It happens because the subjects have the limited knowledge of vocabulary (Latif & Jupri, 2021). As the result the subjects sometimes over generalize in pronouncing the words. As we could see in all the data, the students make errors while pronounced /'hɪkəp/, /ber/, and /θɔrəʊ/. while interview the research gave a question which are to clarify the sources of error. The question is How do you read "hiccough" and "thorough"? and Did you prounce this correctly?. All students answer "those words are rarely heard and it's a new word for me". The student can be said to did This epistemic source of error is because the students pronounce a word without know the meaning, that means the student read a word based of the syllable of the word, and some of them mixed the sound. For example: the students pronounce /'hɪkəf/ which are students voiced consonant /f/ sound. All the data has showed, almost of the subject are didn't know what time /f/ sound are voiced and /f/ sound are unvoiced.

### Learning Experience Considered as Determinant to The Students' Pronunciation Skill.

From the table interview data, the researcher has showed that the students have different learning experience. All the subject has similar academic learning experience, which are: pronunciation subject, phonetic class, and all the subject given by English department. The difference in pronunciation skill between the subjects are there are a subject has already joined external courses in English village. The data showed that they had experience learned English in Pare. The three data has a good English, and speak English fluently but sometime mispronounce the word. Then, the data didn't have any experience in Pare but students showed they have a good English because they have an experience with a native and they make it a chance to improved her pronunciation skill.

The academic learning experience actually has a great influence for students to improving the student's English skill. But from the data, all 6 subjects proved they are not applied the academic experience in their daily life. They choose learning from media rather than classroom learning (all the data showed, they are learning English from YouTube,

music, etc.), except some students. Some students have very good experience in academic English learning from elementary school. She got drama subject, and poetry. Although the student doesn't have experience in Pare but she has a good pronunciation and almost make less error like the smarter data (High).

### English Pronunciation Influence Based on Gender.

This study used a poem as a supported data which are to analyze the student's pronunciation error. The total word of the poem is 543 word. The major differences between female and male students' pronunciation are shown in the data when Female students pronounced the poem more accurate than the male (female make less error than male). If all female pronunciation errors add up, it reaches 35 errors in 1<sup>st</sup> reading, and 40 errors in 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. Meanwhile, the male pronunciation errors reach 63 errors in 1<sup>st</sup> reading, and 59 errors in 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

From description above we can concluded that, male students make more errors than female. Although, all female and male students have a same score in pronunciation subject. As from theory of Hirt (2015) "man smart, woman smarter" the researcher agrees with this theory based on the data.

### English Pronunciation Influence Based on Score

From the criteria which are divided into three such as High, middle, and low, the researcher proved the score doesn't prove whether the criteria which has a high score makes less error than middle or low score. Observation data showed that (high score) make more error than middle score which the two subject has one error difference. The analysis result proved there are no differences between 1<sup>st</sup> reading and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of two subjects, the second student still have less error than the first student. The all data showed the students score in accordance with the analysis result. High score has less error than middle, and middle score has less error than low. This analysis result support the first discussion theory from Hirt (2015).

### The Tendency of the Error

For overall result in pronunciation error analysis as shown in data, researchers can find that the pronunciation error which are students often made are consonant /θ/ in word *threat, through, thorough*, vowel /ɛ/ in word *bear, beard, pear, threat, and said*. But, the tendency in every subject are different based on their sources of error.

The tendency in the data showed that the subject makes an error in vowel /ɛ/ five times. The subject makes a same error in 1<sup>st</sup> reading, and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading which can be interpreted that the students difficult to pronounce vowel /ɛ/. Whereas, the tendency of the consonant error which are students often made is consonant /f/. this subject makes four times error in pronounced /f/ consonant. The tendency showed that the subject makes an error in vowel /ɛ/, and this subject make this error four times. There is slight difference a /ɛ/ vowel error which this subject made, the 1<sup>st</sup> reading this student correct in pronounce vowel /ɛ/ but this student makes more error in pronounced vowel /ɛ/ in 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. Whereas, this subject consistent make an error in pronounced /f/ consonant. The tendency showed that the subject makes an error in vowel /ɛ/, and this subject make this error eight times of the whole reading. Whereas, the consonant error tendency of this student is /f/ sound. Some students perform pronunciation errors as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Students Pronunciation errors on the vowel and consonant

Word	IPA	Realization		Error				Description & Sources of error	
				Vowel		Consonant			
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
Said	sed	seid	sed	/ɛɪ/	-	-	-	-Student pronounce /ɛɪ/ instead /ɛ/ which the error is long vowel. the student error in pronouncing vowel /ɛ/ showed that the source of error is psycholinguistics.	
Great	greit	grit	grit	/ɪ/	/i/	-	-	Student pronounce /ɪ/ instead /ɛɪ/ which the error is diphthong. the student error in pronouncing vowel /ɛɪ/ showed that the source of error is psycholinguistics.	
Threat	θret	θrit	θrit	/i/	/i/	-	-	Student pronounce /ɪ/ instead /ɛ/ which the error is short vowel. the student error in pronouncing vowel /ɛ/ showed that the source of error is Sociolinguistics.	
Bear	ber	biər	biər	/ɪə/	/ɪə/	-	-	Student pronounce /ɪə/ instead /ɛ/ which the error is short vowel. the student error in pronouncing vowel /ɛ/ showed that the source of error is Psycholinguistics.	
Bough	bau	bau	bauf	-	-	-	/f/	Student voiced /f/ instead unvoiced /f/ the student error in pronouncing /f/ showed that the source of error is epistemic.	
Perhaps	pər'haeps	pər'haps	pər'haeps	/a/	-	-	-	Student pronounce long vowel /a/ instead /æ/ the student error in pronouncing vowel /æ/ showed that the source of error is Sociolinguistics.	
Dreadful	'dredfəl	'dredfəl	'dridful	-	/ɪ/	-	-	Student pronounce short vowel /ɪ/ instead /ɛ/ the student error in pronouncing vowel	

Word	IPA	Realization		Error				Description & Sources of error	
				Vowel		Consonant			
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
								/ə/ showed that the source of error is Sociolinguistics.	
Debt	dət	dəbt	dəbt	-	-	/b/	/b/	Student voiced /b/ instead unvoiced /b/ sound the student error in pronouncing consonant /b/ showed that the source of error is Epistemic.	
Straight	streɪt	streɪft	streɪft	-	-	/f/	/f/	Student voiced /f/ instead unvoiced /f/ the student error in pronouncing consonant /f/ showed that the source of error is epistemic.	
Broth	brəθ	brəd	brəd	-	-	/d/	/d/	Student substituted consonant /θ/ to /d/ the student error in pronouncing consonant /θ/ showed that the source of error is Sociolinguistics.	

The error showed that the subject makes an error in vowel /e/, /eɪ/, /ʌ/, and /a/. This student makes a lot of error in every reading, and still consistent with the error. Then, the tendency of the consonant error which are this subject made are /f/, and /θ/ sound. The tendency in showed that the subject makes two error in vowel /e/, and /ɪ/ in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, and the subject makes eight error in consonant /f/, and /θ/. The tendency in last table showed that the subject always pronounce /u/ in some word like *through*, *cough*, and also the subject some error in vowel /ɛ/. Except that, the subject makes some error in consonant /f/, unvoiced /θ/ in word *threat*. From the discussion above, the researcher concluded that all the subjects tend to make error in /f/, /θ/, and /ɛ/. The researcher believed that the subjects has difference source of error in accordance with the research data obtained.

### The Effect of External Learning due to Development of Pronunciation Skill.

The learning experience is very important to improving students' skills. The experience can be got from anywhere like social environments, social media, and entertainment it can be movies, music, game, and also from academic learning experience (Hidayatullah & Haerazi, 2022; Syarifuddin et al., 2022; Jupri et al., 2022). In this discussion, the researcher has separated the students between the students who had experience in Pare, and didn't have any experience in extra learning. The students who had experience in Pare. These three students have showed the researcher they have a good English, but that doesn't mean the students which have an experience smarter rather than the student which are not following the extra learning in Pare.

Students didn't have any experience in Pare, but she has good English rather than the highest score. The other subjects which had an experience in Pare speaking more fluently than the students not join any extra learning, but the other hand the students which are didn't have an experience in Pare they are make easy to understand rather than the EX-Pare students. Researchers can conclude that the effect of external learning can really help the students in improving their English skill but it depends on your desire to learn. Because there is one subject who not interested in Pare but she can do better than the highest score.

## CONCLUSION

Based on data result and discussion, there are three points occur in the conclusions, they are: The error produced by ELE students is divided into several types: The first error is the subjects substituted English sounds that do not exist in Indonesia with Indonesian sounds. The second error is the subjects substituted the English vowels with Indonesian vowel. The third error is word cognate cases. The subjects tended to pronounce the borrowed words from English like how they are in Indonesian. The fourth errors are silent consonant (unvoiced sound) or we can call this as language interference.

The sources of student's errors have three kinds: psycholinguistic, sociolinguistics, and epistemic sources. On psycholinguistics the students difficult in pronouncing English sound because the influence of their mother tongues and the first language acquisitions. The subjects' dialects and accents interrupt the subjects' English pronunciation. On sociolinguistics, the students afraid to make an error while pronouncing word. While on epistemic sources due to the subjects' English knowledge. It happens because the subjects have the limited knowledge of vocabulary and also, they are rarely to see the word in poem "English" by T.S Watt. Based on the interview, all the students have a learning experience in English especially in pronunciation. Almost of the students have an experience learning in Pare (English village) to improve their English skill.

## RECOMMENDATION

After conducting research, discussing, and concluding the results of the research, the researcher put forward some recommendations at the end of this thesis, which are as follows: Teacher should give more chance to students for practicing speaking and how pronouncing the correct words. Students should pay the attention to the correct pronunciation whether it pronounces by the teacher or by looking at the dictionary. According to research finding, the writer suggests to another researcher or the teacher to solve the students pronounce error. For the English department, the students need some new subject to improving their English skill. The subject for example: Poetry subject, and or Drama subject. The two subject is not only improving the student's English skill, but also it can make a new activity for the students of English department such as monthly competition.

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