

PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION ON ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

Yousef Bani Ahmad

Department of English Education-Faculty of Teachers Training and Education

University of Singaperbangsa Karawang

Email: yousef.baniahmad@fkip.unsika.ac.id

Diterima: Februari 2019; Disetujui: Maret 2019; Diterbitkan: Maret 2019

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate the problems and strategies in solving incorrect pronunciation on English education students. The research used descriptive method. The subjects of this research were 6 students, department of English education. The technique of the data collection were a test recording and interview. Test was used to understand the students problems and interview was conducted to re-check the information and data obtained. Results showed English pronunciation problems were caused by the difference of language system between English and Bahasa, students had a lack of mastery of consonant and vowel in accordance with international Phonetics alphabet, the incompatibility of the placement place and manner of articulation. Strategies to overcome the problems of English pronunciation learning by using audio-visual media, the lecturer gave oral corrective feedback for those students who got the errors in pronunciation, students used the mobile phone application in supporting individually pronunciation learning and students had a lot of practicing in reading english texts were provided by lecturer.

Keywords: Pronunciation, vowel, consonant

INTRODUCTION

English is a tool of human communication when it comes to talking to people of different countries in the world. There are many ways of learning to enhance the ability to speak English by increasing the number of vocabulary, expression of English, learning grammar, up to practice it. Another factor that can support the arrival of the message well is how to pronounce each word of English correctly.

In learning English, students must learn about the relationship between the sound system and the writing system. Students sometimes make mistakes in pronouncing English. The error is caused by some differences in letters and sounds. In mastering the skills to pronounce sounds correctly, students should pay more attention to speaking and listening. One aspect that supports the students' ability to speak English in correct pronunciation. In pronunciation learning it is also important to learn about international phonetics alphabets, vowel, consonants, cluster, phoneme, and other aspect which support to quality of English pronunciation.

The thing to be aware of learning English pronunciation is our listening sensitivity to English foreign sounds. In general, Indonesian people only have two sound systems, the sound of vocals and consonant sound, while in English has more than 2 sound systems,

namely vowel (monophthong, diphthong, triphthong), consonants and clusters. In the difference of the sound system makes it difficult for someone to pronounce every word of English correctly. English pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills to learn and

learners have to spend a lot of time to enhance their pronunciation skill. Aliaga García, 2007; Martínez-Flor et al. 2006; Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). If someone can overcome the difficulties pronunciation English then it will be easy to learn English. Good pronunciation for learners will have an effect on good learning, whereas if poor pronunciation will lead to difficulties in language teaching (Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2012).

According to Harmer (2001), a lot of teachers do not pay enough attention to English pronunciation. here are different reasons for this negligence. Then, in learning English speaking that many learners are not so concerned with pronunciation. The problems why students have difficult English pronunciation caused by the teacher has less focused on English pronunciation but prioritizes greater skills of speaking. Harmer (2001) argued, The main reasons causing a lack of attention to English pronunciation are lack of high quality, lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials, and little of time for practicing pronunciation. He was also expressed that the first thing that native speakers notice during a conversation is pronunciation. Students not only learn different sounds and sound features but also improve their speaking skill through pronunciation instruction.

According to Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003), the goals of teaching pronunciation are to develop English that is easy to understand and not confusing to the listener, develop English that meets persons' needs and that results in communicative competence, help learners feel more comfortable in using English, develop a positive self-awareness as non-native speakers in oral communication, develop speech consciousness, personal speech monitoring skills and speech adjustment strategies that help learners develop in and out of the class.

Learning English pronunciation is not easy. This is experienced by students of English education in Karawang. They still do not really understand the sound system in English such as recognize the sound of vowel, consonant, intonation, or stressing in every word. This is evident when students are asked to read English stories during classroom learning. The result is still a pronunciation error of both vowel sound and consonant sound.

Based on these reasons, this research is more focused on the common problems that occur in English education students when speaking English and also what strategies can be done to overcome these problems.

METHODOLOGY

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. Research intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the subject of research by way of describing in the form of words. This research seeks to address the current problem based on the data. Data collection methods used in this study include test recording and interviews. The researcher collects the data by giving the reading text which will be read by 6 students of department of English education then recorded by using recorder and also interview with question and answer verbally unilaterally face to face, and with the direction and purpose set. The data that have been obtained will be analyzed qualitatively and described in descriptive form. The data analysis technique used in this research is using the steps as stated by Burhan Bungin (2003: 70), data collection, data reduction, data

display and verification and affirmation of conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, students were asked to read prepared texts based on their pronunciation

skills. After reading the text, the researcher notices the errors or problems that occur in every word spoken. The standard of pronunciation used in this test is based on the sounds in the International Phonetics Alphabets. The sound system follows the sounds in English. Researcher pay attention to the rules of vowel sound, consonant, intonation, stressing and also the articulation of every word spoken by the students.

Based on the data obtained from test results given to students there are some difficulties and even mistakes when speaking English. An example of the vowel sound error is in the word *forum* /fɔ:rəm/ is pronounced by /forum/, and *focus* /foukəs/ is pronounced /foukyus/. In the letter u in the Indonesian language is pronounced / u /, but when it entered in English many letters u possible sound, such as *cut*/kʌt/, *united* /ju:naitid/, *fur*/fɜr/ and *forum* /fɔ:rəm/. This is what makes students sometimes confused to think and look for the exact sound of the letter u. When they do not know the sounds they have to say they finally guess the sounds of the letters according to the experience or information that is in their mind data. This problem is also felt for lack of understanding related to the existing vowel sounds in English. So it causes frequent errors in pronunciation that match the sound rules.

The problem that occurs besides the vowel sound is the sound of consonants. Because the consonant sound system in English is different from the Indonesian sound system. Consonant sound /θ/ in English and /t/ in Indonesian. Then the error that occurs in the pronunciation of the word *thigh* /θai/ means the upper leg of human is pronounced by /tai/ which means item of clothing consisting of a strip of cloth tied around the neck, think /θiŋk/means to communicate to oneself in one's mind is pronounced by /tiŋ/ which means the sound of a small metallic bell. The fault of the sound even though one sound then the meaning is also different. In communication if this happens will make people have the wrong meaning. So the emergence of miscommunication can occur because it is not clear sounds that came out because of articulation is not clear and the wrong pronunciation because the letters are issued different letters.

In addition to the problem of lack of understanding of vowel and consonant sounds are articulations that are not clear. When students are asked to read texts, the articulation of sounds coming out of the speech organs is less clear so that the listener has to ask to open his mouth to make every sound clear. This unclear articulation turns out to be the cause of the students being embarrassed and not confident in making a mistake in English pronunciation. Not only have the shyness and lack of confidence, but also their English pronunciation is derived from what they hear when teachers or lecturers speak English. They rarely open the pronunciation dictionary to check whether the word they are saying matches the correct pronunciation.

In learning phonetics and phonology students learn how English pronunciation ranging from explanation of vowel sound, consonant sound, stressing, syllable, intonation and also articulation. Their knowledge relies only on what lecturers give. These problems

are addressed by learning strategies that can overcome the problems of students in English pronunciation.

Learning strategies by Freiberg & Driscoll (1992) can be used to achieve different objectives of subject matter at different levels, for different students, in different contexts. Learning strategy used in learning English of course also different from others. Gerlach & Ely (1980) argue that instructional strategies are the preferred means of conveying subject matter in a particular learning environment, including the nature, scope, and sequence of activities that can provide a learning experience to students. Dick & Carey (1996) argue that learning strategies are not only limited to the procedure of activity, but also include the materials or learning packages. The learning strategy consists of all the components of the subject matter and the procedures that will be used to help the student achieve certain learning goals. According to some experts argue that the strategy has a goal to perform appropriate learning procedures, methods of delivering the material properly and also material that can support the increase of one's ability.

In pronunciation learning in phonetics and phonology courses, students are provided with easy-to-understand material by using video. Students pay attention to every speech from the native speakers in the video and try to practice it. Students also perform techniques to imitate lip or mouth patterns when pronouncing words in English. Students understand the correct articulation according to the instructions in the video. When there are some words that are wrong pronunciation, then here the role of lecturer is very important to give corrective feedback on the wrong words in pronunciation.

Another learning strategy is to use the existing application media in the mobile phone to help students in learning pronunciation. Students must download the type of application required to support learning and check the English pronunciation. Students are required to download the *pronunciation checker app* (Bluebird developers), *Oxford dictionary of English* (MobiSystems), *English Phonetics Pronunciation* (Stavira VN), and *Pronunciation English daily* (MS app). In overcoming the problems of students, these applications are very helpful in reducing errors in English pronunciation. They do not only use the app in the classroom but also at home as well. Therefore, the role of motivation to students is very important. The big motivation to learn English will encourage students to solve the problem quickly in Speaking with correct pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

English learners today should pay attention to the correct pronunciation according to the rules. Different language sound systems do not make a big issue if sound rules in English are well understood. Understanding associated with vowel sound, consonant sound, speech production, stressing, and also intonation become the main capital in overcoming English pronunciation problem. There are great challenges to make English learners able to have good pronunciation skills. Students must have great motivation to improve their English pronunciation skills. Students can also take advantage of technology and applications that can help whenever and wherever they need it. In this study, the expected implications in pronunciation learning and teaching can overcome the existing problems and also know what strategies can be used to improve effective communication skills in speaking English. The results of this observation are expected to be a solution for English learners who are still looking for what strategies are appropriate and can be done to improve the quality of

English pronunciation.

REFERENCES

- Aliaga García, C. (2007). *The Role of Phonetic Training in L2 Speech Learning. Proceedings of the Phonetics Teaching and Learning Conference (PTLC2007)*. University College, London. Available at http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/ptlc/ptlc2007_web_procindex.htm
- Butler-Pascoe, M. E., & Wiburg, K. M. (2003). *Technology and Teaching English Language Learners*. MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Dick W, Carey L (1996). *The systematic design of instruction. 4th ed.*. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Freiberg. H.J. & Driscoll. A. (1992). *Universal Teaching Strategies*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and bacon.
- Gerlach, Vernon S. & Donald P. Ely. (1980). *Teaching & Media: A Systematic Approach. Second edition*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Martínez-Flor, A., Usó-Juan, E., & Alcón Soler, E. (2006). *Towards Acquiring Communicative Competence through Speaking. In Usó-Juan, E., & Martínez-Flor, A. (eds) Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the Four Language Skills*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 139-157.
- Pourhosein Gilakjani, A. (2012). *A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Pronunciation Learning and the Strategies for Instruction. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3), 119-128.
- Pourhosein Gilakjani, A. (2016). *What Factors Influence the English Pronunciation of EFL Learners?*. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)*, 6 (2), 314-326.
- Senel, Mufit. (2006). *Suggestion for Beautifying the Pronunciation of EFL Learners in Turkey*. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 2 (1), 111

