

STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING PRONUNCIATION: A CASE STUDY OF SMP ISLAM TERPADU DHUAFA MERANGIN STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study reveals about students' difficulties in English pronunciation experienced by learners whose first language is Indonesia language. The subjects of this study were the seventh grade of students at SMP Islam Terpadu Dhuafa Merangin especially class B. They were males. The instruments of this study were task, interview and recording. In analyzing the data, the researcher used descriptively and statistically. The findings of this study showed that the students had problems in pronunciation because of their had low motivation, exposure and their attitude in learning English pronunciation. It could be seen from the result of the task when the researcher asked them to pronounce the English words and the result of interview.

Keywords: English Pronunciation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengungkapkan tentang kesulitan siswa dalam pengucapan bahasa Inggris yang dialami oleh siswa yang bahasa pertamanya adalah Bahasa Indonesia. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VII SMP Islam Terpadu Dhuafa Merangin khususnya kelas B. Mereka berjenis kelamin laki-laki. Instrumen penelitian ini adalah tugas, wawancara dan rekaman. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif dan statistik. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki masalah dalam pengucapan karena motivasi mereka mempunyai motivasi yang rendah dalam belajar pengucapan bahasa Inggris. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari hasil tugas ketika peneliti meminta mereka untuk mengucapkan kata-kata bahasa Inggris dan hasil wawancara

Kata Kunci: Pelafalan Bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important language because it is an international language. As we know that, Indonesia as one of the developing countries has also set its educational which includes the teaching of English as a foreign language. Moreover, Indonesia government put English as the subject that must be learned by the students at Junior high school.

When learning the English language, the students have to be mastered in some skills and subskill. They are listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Because of this situation, learning foreign language

in early time make the students have to practice more in order to get the successful in learning.

In this case, pronunciation is very important subskill in learning English because it is the study about the sound of English. When the speaker speaks in mispronunciation it will make misunderstanding between speaker and hearer and the communication cannot run well.

When the researcher did the observation at SMP Islam Terpadu Dhuafa Merangin, she asked the students to pronounce some words in English, the researcher found that almost all the students could not pronounce the word well and made mistake in pronouncing the English words. Because of these problems, the researcher interested to conduct the research about pronunciation, especially to see the difficulties of students in learning English pronunciation.

As the components of speaking skill, pronunciation is the most important components must be having by students who want to master in speaking skill. Lynch and Anderson (2012) define that every person begins studying a foreign language with learning pronunciation, which are important to pronounce the word correctly. Related to this opinion, Varasarin (2007) says that good pronunciation may make good communication, more relax and more useful. It means that learning speaking cannot be separated with learning pronunciation. Clear pronunciation can make good communication between speaker and listener.

Learning pronunciation is not easy way because the students have to know the sound of language in order to reach the goal of learning, that is to make sounds similar with the natives. Besides that, the learners have to realize that they cannot be natives because of the local accent and it is not their mother tongue.

Then, Harmer (Low, 2009) argues that good pronunciation is the goal of language learner but to be a perfect dialect is not. It could not get by the learners who learn the language, because it is foreign language to them. They only know about how to pronounce the word well but they could not be liking the natives of the language.

After that, Qwerty (2011) emphasizes that English pronunciation in unpredictable. It means that the spelling is different from how to pronounce the

word. It can be seen from the word “but”, the pronunciation is /bʌt/. Kriedler (Varasarin, 2007) also points out that good pronunciation takes times to build up, it means that the learners have to overlook the process of learning. such as the learners should hear from the natives first. Then, they imitate and practice in order to make the sound similar with the natives. Finally, they are able to produce the sound in their communication.

In learning pronunciation, both teachers and students have to work together and know their roles each other's in order to reach the goal of learning language (Kenworthy, 1988; Fraser, 2006). In addition, Low (2009) points out there are some factors affecting in learning pronunciation, such as accent is the way when the students pronounce the word, Motivation and exposure refers to the desire of the students when they are learning the language, Intelligibility and varieties of English is the variation of English in order knowing the alphabets of English.

Furthermore, Kenworthy (1988) classifies some factors affecting in learning. for instance, the language native (Accent), Age, Amount of exposure, phonetic Ability, Attitude, identity and motivation. After students understood the elements and factors affecting in learning pronunciation, the teacher has to create the strategy in teaching.

Low (2009) point out there are instructional strategies that can be used by the teacher in teaching pronunciation. They are:

- a) Cultivate positive attitudes toward accuracy; The teacher has to create good atmosphere in the classroom. in order to make the students could practice in pronunciation.
- b) Identify specific pronunciation features that pose problems for learners; The teachers make some checklist word that students often make a mistake in pronouncing the word.
- c) Make learners aware of the prosodic features of language; The teacher can ask students to hear good stress and intonation when the native speaks.
- d) Focus on developing learner's communicative competence; The teacher should make the focus features in pronunciation (consonants, diphthongs, vowels, stress and intonation).

In summary, pronunciation is one of elements of speaking skill that must be known by students who learn language, because it helps students to gain confidence to speak. Learning pronunciation is not only learning how to pronounce the word but also learn the elements and the factors of it.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the data has been collected from 14 students at the seventh grade of SMP Islam Terpadu Dhuafa students especially class B. They were males at 12-13 years old. The researcher chose that students as the participants of this research because she saw that all the students could not pronounce the English word well. The instruments of this study were:

a. Task

Task is used to see the ability of students in pronouncing the English word when the teacher asked them to pronounce the words.

b. Recording

Recording is used to see the real situation when the students pronounce the English words.

c. Interview

Interview is used to get the data about students' difficulties in learning English.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used statically and descriptively. In statically, the researcher calculated the score of students' tasks when they pronounce the English words. For the pronunciation task, the researcher used the rubric scoring from *www.campus.com*, the scoring rubric can be described as follows:

Table 1. The Rubric Scoring for Pronunciation Task

Criteria	Value
The student has errors in pronunciation some effort in articulation in the target language	False
The student makes minor or no errors in pronunciation, great articulation in target language	True

Source: *www.campus.com*

Then, it described all the data that she found in the field from recording and interview in order to see students' difficulties in learning English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the task result, the researcher found that all the students had low score and low ability in pronunciation task, only two students could pronounce the words well from 15 words in English. it could be seen from the Table 2.

Table 2. Score of Pronunciation

No	Students' Name	Pronunciation	Score
		Total words	
1.	AS	3	20
2.	AF	5	33,3
3.	RS	3	20
4.	MN	2	13,3
5.	NF	15	100
6.	NH	6	40
7.	NR	15	100
8.	PM	5	33,3
9.	RSD	4	26,6
10.	RJ	8	53.3
11.	TK	6	40
12.	SS	6	40
13.	WR	4	26,6
14.	YNP	0	0
Average Score			39.02

From the Table 2 above, it could be seen that almost all the students could not pronounce the English words well. They did a mistake when they pronounce the English word. Only 2 students from 14 students could pronounce the words well. It is related with Kreidler (Varasarin, 2007) statement, he said that pronunciation is the hard aspect in learning English and it will take times to build up if someone to learn it, because it is not their language.

From the recording, the researcher found that the students felt difficulties in pronounce the words that distributed from the teacher. It could be seen from their expression when they pronounce the English word, they saw their friend in order to get some helping from their friends. It was happened because they did not how to

pronounce the sound of English and their knowledge about English. Qwerty (2011) said that English pronunciation is unpredictable. It means that the spelling of the word is differentiate with how to pronounce the words. it could be seen from the word “New” all the students pronounce “Neo”. In fact, the right pronunciation is “Niu”

From the result of the interview, the researcher found some information, they were:

1. The students did not like English subject.

Almost all the students or 13 students from 14 students did not like English, because it is not their language and they never used the language in their communication. It could be seen from the statements of the students, such as:

- *Aku dak suko bahaso inggris, karena aku dak ngerti*
- *Bahasa inggris bukan bahasa kito, jadi payah nian*
- *Paling malas kalo belajar bahasa inggris*

Based on the students’ statements above, it could be seen that the students did not like English because of this language is not their language. Then, they did not have high motivation to learn it. It could be seen from the attitude of students during teaching and learning process. They talked to their friend, drew something in their book and kept silent in the class. Low (2009) points out that people who want to learn a language, the first thing that they have high motivation. It means that in order to get successful in learning language, the students must have high motivation or exposure in their life. When they did not high motivation and exposure in their life, they will be difficult to reach the successful in learning.

2. The students think that pronunciation is difficult to learn

The students said that English is difficult one to learn. It could be seen from the statements of the students, such as:

- *Baco bahasa inggris tu payah*
- *Payah nian Bahasa inggris tu, lain ditulis lain dibaco*
- *Susah tuk nirukan bahasa Inggris*

From the statements above, it could be seen that the students thought that pronunciation is difficult one. They felt difficult to imitate the sound. Because of

this they never practice to learn it. As we know that, people who want to be mastered in a language, they have to practice more in order to get the successful in learning.

CONCLUSION

Pronunciation is one of important subskill that to be mastered by the students who learn a language. If they did not master in it, they will fail in making communication. After conducting the research, the researcher found that the students have difficulties in learning pronunciation because of some factors, they were they had low motivation and exposure to learn it because English is not their language. Then, they thought that pronunciation is difficult to learn. Because of these factors, the students at SMP Islam Terpadu dhuafa merangin could not pronounce the English words well.

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