

**A STUDY ON THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION
OF THE TENTH GRADE OF
SMA MUHAMMADIYAH SALATIGA**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

As a foreign language in Indonesia, English is seriously learned by many people to have a good prospect especially in the communication of international world. It can be seen that English is learned by children from elementary school to higher education. The result of language learning can be shown by students' communication. There are two kinds of abilities to maintain communication, namely oral communication ability and written one. One of the oral communication sub-skills is pronunciation.

According to Moulton (in Smolinski, 1985: 110), every language has its own systems. Consequently, learners will encounter many kinds of difficulties in learning foreign languages. English is very different from Indonesian in many aspects. This difference is not only on the structure, but also on the sound, spelling and pronunciation.

According to Richard (in Mahadina, 1992: 296) pronunciation is the way a certain sound is produced. Unlike articulation which refers to the actual production of speech sounds in the mouth, pronunciation stresses more on the way of sounds are produced by the hearer. Pronunciation is important in English because mispronunciations will make hearer misunderstand about the meaning of utterances. Pronunciation is clearly a central factor in peoples success in making themselves understood.

According to Kelly (2004: 1), pronunciation has two features: segmental and suprasegmental features. Suprasegmental feature studies the features which are important in English such as stress, intonation and how sounds change in connected speech while segmental feature studies the phonemes including vowels, consonants and diphthongs.

In Indonesia, the teaching of English to high school students focuses on grammar and vocabulary. The pronunciation is just as the accompaniment. So, an English teacher seldom explains the English pronunciation in detail. For instance, the pronunciation of consonant [s] in the word *sin* [sin] and sequence of consonant 'sh' in the word *shin* [ʃin] are pronounced as the same phoneme [s]. Whereas, they belong to the different phoneme; [s] is a voiceless alveolar consonant, while [ʃ] is a palato alveolar fricative consonant. These points out those Indonesian learners who have just learned English, generally, find difficulties in pronouncing English words appropriately, particularly, those which they have never heard of before. Even, those who learned it for more than three years still make errors in pronouncing certain phonemes.

For some students, English is the first foreign language to learn and they just learn simple English pattern. As the beginning of English learners, the students have a very limited knowledge of English which sometimes create problem in learning process, especially pronunciation. First, a genuine pronunciation problem exists when the learners have difficulties in making the required sounds to imitate. As the writer has observed, who tends to have problems in pronouncing the sound [ʃ] as in 'sheep', [tʃ] as in 'teacher', [ð] as

in 'than', [θ] as in 'three' in which these do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia. Secondly, a pronunciation problem occurs when the sound is not really difficult as such, but the learners are misled by the spelling. For example, the words 'up' [ʌ], 'wool' [ʊ], 'three' [i:], 'black' [æ], 'sky' [ai], and 'how' [aʊ] are not pronounced as they are written, so learning pronunciation is not easy for students.

In pronunciation we can learn phonemes. The phonemes are divided into two parts: consonant and vowel. In this chapter the writer wants to analyze the vowel sounds in English words. In phonetics, a vowel is a sound in spoken language, such as ah! [ɑ:] or oh! [əʊ], pronounced within open vocal tract so that there is no built-up of air pressure at any point above the glottis.

According to Wolfram and Johnson (1981: 27), vowel takes on their peculiar characteristics from changes in size and shape of the oral cavity as a whole. The vowel height dimension refers to the relative location of the highest point of the body of the tongue on a vertical scale. The vowel backness dimension refers to the relative location of the highest part of the body of the tongue on a horizontal scale. The area of the mouth in which vowels may be produced is divided into a grid, formed by three arbitrary divisions along the height and backness dimension. Certain vowel symbols are associated with the sounds corresponding to each section of the grid. Vowel height is generally divided into high, mid, and low; backness is generally divided into front, central, and back.

Based on the background, the writer is interested in having a study on **“A Study on the Students’ English Pronunciation of the Tenth Grade of SMA Muhammadiyah Salatiga”**.

B. Limitation of the Study

The writer emphasizes the vowel shift, and the reason of the shift vowel sounds used by the tenth grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah Salatiga.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the limitation of the study above, the writer states the problem of the study as follows:

1. What are the most frequent vowel sounds shift made by the students?
2. What are the reasons of the shift vowel sounds used by the students?

D. Objective of the Study

The writer has some objectives dealing with the problem statements above, namely:

1. determining the most frequent vowel sounds shift made by the students.
2. describing the reason of the shift vowel sounds by the students.

E. Benefit of the Study

The study has two major benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical benefit

The result of this research can be used as the input and reference especially in pronunciation practice

2. Practical benefit

For the teacher and the students particularly this study is expected to be able to extend the knowledge about the English pronunciation.

F. Research Paper Organization

The writer organizes this research paper in order to make easier to understand. This research paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter I is the introduction that consists of background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, benefit of the study and research paper organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature; it consists of previous study, notion of pronunciation, spelling problem, speech sound production, describing the English sounds, International Phonetic Alphabet, and, Error.

Chapter III is the research method. It discusses type of research, object of the research, data and data source, method of collecting data, and technique for analyzing data.

Chapter IV is the result of the study.

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion.