

## Error Analysis on Mispronunciation of Spoken Language

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research is to find out: (1) the types of errors on pronunciation (2) the highest error frequency in pronouncing spoken English (3) the causes of the error. The method used in this research was descriptive method. From the population, there were 20 students of class A taken as the sample by using random sampling. In collecting the data, the writer used pronunciation test of spoken language. Then, the data were analyzed by using error analysis procedure which consists of: (1) collecting the data, (2) identifying students' errors, (3) classifying errors, (4) explaining errors based on their sources, (5) describing students' error, (6) evaluating errors. The result of the study shows that there are 894 total errors consisting of: (1) 538 or 60.18% errors in vowel, (2) 155 or 17.34% errors in consonant, (3) 57 or 6.37% errors in stress, (4) 47 or 5.26% errors in linking, and (5) 97 or 10.85% error in assimilation. The factors causing errors are: (1) interlingual transfer which is caused by the interference of their mother tongue, and (2) intralingual transfer which is a negative transfer within the target language (English). Thus, the teacher should minimize the cause of errors by considering those causes and try to overcome students' problem in pronunciation.

**Keywords:** *error analysis, pronunciation, spoken language.*

### INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four skills that should be mastered, namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. Those skills are divided into two kinds; receptive skills which include listening and reading, and productive skills which include speaking and writing. Yet, speaking skill is often regarded to be more important nowadays (Kormos, 2006: xvii). There is a theory assumed that spoken language is learned before written, because there are people that have speech without writing, and

there are no people have their writing skill without speaking (Dulay et al, 1982).

One of the most important that should be concerned in speaking is pronunciation. Pronunciation is the way to produce sounds and process of achieving meaning by sound of speech in order to be understood (Kristina et al, 2006: 1). People with good English pronunciation are likely to be understood even if they make errors in other parts, whereas people with bad pronunciation will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect. Sometimes,

people underestimate the role of pronunciation. In fact, pronunciation can not be ignored in learning foreign language. It is because mispronunciation can cause misunderstanding between the speakers. If people do not know how to pronounce some words and yet they pronounce their own way at the beginning of their learning, then they will keep on pronouncing those words in the wrong way and the message will not be received correctly by the hearer. As Morley in Gilakjani (2012) noted, "When a speaker's pronunciation performance is heavily accented, it can affect how the speaker is perceived".

Many learners may believe pronunciation as one of the most difficult aspects of English to be mastered. Pronunciation is felt hard enough for them, because of their habit in using their first language and learning foreign language building up the new pronunciation habit (Cook in Gilakjani, 2012). Therefore, the learners need big help from the teacher to master pronunciation. However, one thing that should be emphasized by the teacher is that a good pronunciation does not mean that the students should be the same like native speaker's accent (Gilakjani, 2012). Therefore, it should be formulated that pronunciation teacher need to grind the theoretical knowledge, to manage the classroom in practical, and having a good idea of classroom activity.

In pronunciation, there are two kinds of phonemes that is observed by the reasearcher: segmental phonemes and suprasegmental phonemes. Sound is regarded as segmental phonemes which consist of consonant and vowel sound, and suprasegmental is other features that is larger that segmental, such as stress, linking, intonation, etc (Cruttenden, 1997). For example, there is a conversation between native learner and foreign speaker who talk

about the learner's child. "He swallowed a pill," she says. "What kind of peel?" the English native speaker says. "An Aspirin," she answers. "Oh, pill! I thought you said peel,". In the same case, there is an important difference in English between "s" and "sh" (phonetically written /s/ and /ʃ/ and furthermore people can not distinguish between the two, he will not know how to react if someone asks him "bring the seat" or was it the „sheet“?. The previous example indicates the failure of using segmental phoneme. This situation does not seem very serious, but it could be.

Error can occur in learners' speech or writing. Those errors may still be made frequently by the indonesian students' speaking. The use of correct articulation in any occasions is highly recommended. It has a big role in making proper communicaiton, but unfortunately it is still a problem for students of english department. They often make several errors when they are having conversation. In English, as in other languages, there are sounds which are unknown or unfamiliar to foreign listeners, and which they may fail to distinguish from other similar sound or even fail to hear at all. Learners may have difficulty with sounds of English and need practices in distinguishing between them e.g. „sit/seat“; „foot/food“. The conversation shows that mispronunciation occurs because of the lack of someone knowledge and it causes misunderstanding in speaking english. For some learners, the consonant clusters are confusing as some of the sounds seem to be lost e.g. „exactly“, where /t/ sound is rarely heard in native speaker speech. Or sometimes they have a confusion to decide the word stress (suprasegmental phoneme), for example: in the word „national“. The word „national“ is stressed in the first syllable („national). But when the word „national“ is added by suffix „-ize“ and“-ation“ the stress will change to

the third and the fifth syllable (natio“nali“zation). So, someone has to be able to distinguish and to detect which part of the word that has to be stressed.

Sometimes, the teacher regards mistake as a sign of failure. However, the teachers should be aware between mistake and error. Yang (2010) identified a language error as “an unsuccessful bit of language”. Meanwhile, when he is aware that he make it and is able to correct it, it is regarded as mistake (Ellis, 1997). Chomsky in Dulay et al (1982) summarized that error is indicated with the failure of competence, then mistake comes from the failure of performance. Therefore, teachers should be aware of students“ errors in order to measure weather students used the strategy successfully or the errors are the failure that is caused by the teacher in teaching.

Besides, these errors may occur because of many things. Richard and Brown have a different opinion about that. According to Richards (1974), there are three causes of error: Interference errors, Intralingual errors, and Developmental error, yet Brown (2000) devided it into four major sources of learners“ errors they are: inter lingual transfer, intra lingual transfer, context learning, and communication strategies. In this research, the researcher focused on Interference errors and Intralingual errors in explaining the causes of erros.

According to Richards (1974: 35) “Interlingual errors are errors which are caused by interference from the native language to the target language they learn”. It means that the errors made by language learner are influenced by their mother tongue. It is sometimes not easy to categorize error sources into inter lingual or intra lingual. Whereas, intralingual errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization,

incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply (Richards, 1974). It can be logically understood that errors may be categorized as either inter lingual or intra lingual errors.

Although indonesian government decides 6 years for students to learn English, the result of the teaching of that language is still considered unsatisfactory. It can be seen from the graduated students of Senior High School who are still very poor at using the language. This tendency may be caused by several factors, internally or externally. The internal factors come from the background of the students themselves such as their intelligence and motivation. Meanwhile, the external factors may come from the teachers“ capability, students“ environment and facilities.

Because of the unsatisfaction, the researcher focuses on the college student. The researcher choosed English Department of Sebelas Maret University students because she still found mispronunciation that was made by English Department of Sebelas Maret University students when they try to speak English. Pronunciation is expected to be mastered by English Department students, but in fact the students still make many mistakes in pronouncing English word frequently. So, the researcher trys to analyze those errors and the causes. The result of the analysis is expected to help students reduce their errors in pronunciation. Besides, teachers can measure how far their goal has been achieved.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the researcher used 20 out of the students“ number of first semester English Department of one state university in Surakarta as the sample of the research.

According to Barreiro Albandos (2001: 4) there are three ways of choosing sample: (1) probability sampling (2)

purposive sampling (3) no-rule sampling. Based on the theory, probability sampling has five different sampling, one of them is random sampling. Random sampling is “a sampling, in which all individuals of the population have equal chances to be selected as sample” (Barreiro Albandos, 2001: 4). In this research, the researcher choosed random sampling.

Meanwhile, the technique of collecting data that was used in this research is using a test. The test was used as an instrument of collecting data. According to Brown (2004: 3) “test is a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain”. The researcher developed test as production test. Production test is important because it reflects people’s ability in producing sounds (Jamilah, 2009). The production test is conducted with the help of a tape recorder. Each student was given a test sheet containing the words, phrases, and sentences that should be read and it recorded by using a tape.

There are several kinds of research method which can be used in carrying out the research. The method used in this study is descriptive method. Descriptive method is a procedure of solving problem by describing the condition of the objects of the study at present based on the appearing facts (Nawawi, 1996: 73).

Based on the descriptive method applied in this research, in analyzing the data of this research, the researcher collected the data of errors then identified the data of errors that conducted with determining which one is error and which one is mistake. After identifying those errors, the researcher described the frequency of errors that was done with classifying the errors into types. In this case, the type of error were devided into five: error in vowel, error in consonant, error in stress, error in linking, and error in assimilation. The next section is explained

the errors and evaluated them. In explaining the errors, the reseacher tried to explain more about the cause of errors that was made by the students if it is because of intra lingual factor or inter lingual factor. The last is evaluated them that was aimed to overcome the students’ problem in pronouncing English words by viewing the causes, the type of error that is made frequently, et cetera.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

After collecting the data, the researcher identified students’ errors occurred on their pronunciation. Errors reflect gaps in a learner’s knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct, then mistake reflects occasional lapses in performance, they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows (Ellis, 1997: 17). In this research, the researcher did not correct the students’ errors directly when they pronounced the words incorectly. When the students incorectly pronounced the words frequently without realizing it, it means that they make an error; on the other hand, when the students are aware that they pronounced the word wongly and they directly correct it, so the researcher regarded this as mistake. In this research, the researcher focused on two aspects of pronunciation namely segmental phonemes and suprasegmental phonemes.

In this research, the reseacher found 894 errors. The students’ errors can be classified into vowel, consonant, stress, linking, and assimilation. The vowel type takes the highest percentage; 60.18% or 538 errors. Consonatant type has 17.34% or 155 errors that is much lower that vowel type and the second highest of percentage. The error of assimilation has 97 errors or 10.85% of 894 total number of errors then followed

dy stress error, it has 57 errors or 6.37%. For Linking error, it is the lowest percentage of all. It has 47 of 894 total number of error or 5.26%. From the result, It can be included that vowel is the main problem of the pronunciation for students rather than consonant or any other types of error.

There are four sub-types of errors in the distribution of error in vowels. They are short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs. The highest percentage of error occurs in short vowel: 192 errors or 21.48%. The sound /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ dominate the error of short vowels. The students are still not aware the difference between /ɪ/ sound with /i:/ sound or /ʊ/ sound with /u:/ sound. It might be caused by the habit of using their first language, so it affects their pronunciation of foreign language. The second highest of error occurs in triphthong. It is 143 errors or 15.99% of 894 total number of error which is different 49 points or lower than error in vowel. Error in diphthong has 118 or 13.20%. Then the lowest percentage is long vowel. It gets 85 errors or 9.51%. It can be seen that students have a problem with short vowels, especially in /ɪ/ sound and /ʊ/ sound.

Meanwhile, there are 155 errors in consonant or 17.34% of error total number. the researcher only discusses five types of consonants namely plosive, affricative, fricative, nasal and approximant. Error in fricative is the highest percentage of all. It is 11.86% or 106 of 894 total number of error. Then it is followed by affricative and nasal. Each of them got 39 errors and 10 errors or 4.36% and 1.19%. It can be assumed that for consonant, the most difficult to pronounce is the sound of fricative, especially /f/ with /v/ sound and /θ/ with /ð/ sound.

There are several kinds of different elements in sound system between the native and the foreign language. One of them is the

existence of a given sound in the latter, which is not found in the former. The foreign sound is completely new to the students, such as the first sound of the English word „thigh“ that consist of /θ/ sound, an Indonesian students will find it difficult to pronounce that sound since his speech organs have never been trained or moved to produce it. The chances are that he will replace it with another sound of his own that closely resembles it like /t/ or /s/; so, instead of pronouncing /θaɪ/ he would say /taɪ/ or /saɪ/. Another example, there are words „Vault“, „Favour“, „Vowel“, „Voice“, „Valance“, which should be pronounced as /vɔʊlt/, /feɪvə/, /vəʊəl/, /vɔɪs/, /vælənts/ that consist of /v/ sound. Whereas the students tend to pronounce it as /fɔʊlt/, /feɪfə/, /fəʊəl/, /fɔɪs/, /fælənts/ where /f/ sound is included. In this case, the students are influenced by their mother tongue or their first language, indonesia. As known, indonesian language does not have /v/ sound as english. In fact, when someone speaks english, the thing that should be concerned is about pronunciation.

Suprasegmental aspect has lower percentage than segmental aspect. The highest percentage of suprasegmental error is assimilation. It has 97 errors or 10.85% of 894 total number of errors. Coalescent Assimilation has 81 point or 9.06% that is so much higher than anticipatory assimilation. Anticipatory assimilation got 16 points or 1.79%. From the such a great difference, it can be assumed that the students have problem in coalescent assimilation more than in anticipatory assimilation.

Error in stress takes the second highest of suprasegmental error. Stress is divided into two types. They are word stress and sentence stress. For word stress, it has 32 errors or 3.58%. Compared with sentence stress, it is little bit high point. For sentence stress, it got 25 errors of 894 total errors or

2.79% in percentage. So, the point is the students do not have big problem in stress.

There are two type of linking that is observed by the researcher. They are consonant to vowel linking and vowel to consonant linking. It can be seen that error in consonant to vowel linking has the higher point that error in vowel to consonant linking. Error in consonant to vowel linking has 28 point or 3.13%. For error in vowel to consonant linking, it has 19 point or 2.13 %. It can be included that students do not have many problem in linking.

In the process of acquiring foreign language, students use strategies in producing the target language. During the process, they might have difficulties to transfer their mother tongue (Indonesian) into the target language (English) in which those difficulties may cause errors.

The researcher focused on interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer only. The major factor of the learners' errors is interlingual interference. It happens because there is a different system between Indonesian and English, in this case is pronunciation. Habit also belongs to interlingual transfer. For Indonesian students, they speak Indonesian as their mother tongue or first language and become their habit. The movement of the speech organs have been set to produce the speech sound of their own language; it will, of course, be difficult for them to change the habit of moving his speech organs in such a way as produce the foreign language sounds. It occurs in many times when people „mix“ between their first language and foreign language in their daily conversation or it is called code-mixing. When people mix their first language with foreign language, it will not be balanced. The real pronunciation of the foreign language that is spoken, will be affected by the first language pronunciation

because the people use the sound of their own language more frequently than those of the foreign language.

Besides, the next factor is intralingual transfer. Intralingual transfer is a negative transfer of items within the target language (English) itself. Intralingual errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply. It can be seen in the example of error that was made by the student; Chamber and channel. Those words should be pronounced as /tʃeɪmbə/, /tʃænəl/ but the student pronounced it as /keɪmbə/ and /keɪnəl/. As described before, the students might be confused because in English, or in this case, the consonant letter „c“ or „ch“ have several different pronunciation that might possibly made the misunderstanding of the students. The error occurs because of the student's lack of pronunciation skill. Because of that, the student pronounce it with /k/ sound, not /tʃ/ sound.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the finding of the analysis, it can be concluded that students made error of either segmental and suprasegmental phonemes. Segmental phonemes are classified into two types: vowel and consonant, then suprasegmental classified into stress, linking and assimilation.

The writer found 894 total errors consisting of 538 or 60.18% errors in vowel, 155 or 17.34% errors in consonant, 57 or 6.37% errors in stress, 47 or 5.26% errors in linking, and 97 or 10.85% error in assimilation. Error of vowels is the most frequent errors made by the students. It is followed by error in consonant, error in assimilation, error in stress and the last is error in linking.

The factors causing errors made by the first semester students of English department are: (1) Interlingual transfer which is caused by the interference of their mother tongue. It happens because there is a different system between Indonesian and English, in this case is pronunciation. Habit also belongs to interlingual transfer. (2) Intralingual transfer which is a negative transfer within the target language (English). It reflects the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

For the teacher, in teaching English pronunciation, the teachers should pay attention to all errors made by the students, but they are expected to emphasize properly in giving extra explanation and exercise on errors which mostly occur such as: Vowel (short vowel, /ɪ/ sound/ and /ʊ/ sound), consonant (fricative) especially /f/ with /v/, /ð/ with /θ/ sound, stress (word stress), linking (consonant to vowel), assimilation (coalescent assimilation) and when giving explanation to the students, the teachers should explain clearly about the differences between Indonesian and English rules to reduce students' errors influenced by interlingual factors.

For the students, the students are suggested to pay more attention to their study of English in order to improve their competence in speaking especially pronunciation. They are expected to study or practice more about pronunciation components. The students should enrich their vocabulary by reading a lot or studying by themselves, also should be aware of their errors and try to overcome their problem or difficulties in studying English, especially in speaking.

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