

## IDENTIFYING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT THE TENTH GRADE OF SMTK MO'ALE

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### **Abstract**

Pronunciation is the fundamental aspect in building a communication so that everyone can convey the message or ideas to other people clearly, correctly, and orally. Pronunciation will be a problem if the people who pronounced the words not as the correct pronunciation so that, will be effected on listener or hearer comments or reaction. This research was aimed to identifying students difficulties and the causes of students difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary at the tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale. This research designed by using qualitative method. The instruments of data collection were interviewed and documentation by video record. The technique of data analysis were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing verification. After analyzing the data, researcher found that students have difficulty in pronunciation such as consonants sounds [dʒ, θ, tʃ, ʃ, v, c], and vowel sounds [ə-ɑ, ɔ, e-I, ʌ], difficulty in pronouncing close consonant sounds, difficulty in pronouncing all the suffixes tion "j", and changes letter into other pronunciation. The causes of students difficulties were (1) Lack of confidence (2) Lack of practice (3) The influence of Indonesian language (4) Difference in spelling, pronunciation, and the meaning (5) Lack of vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher concluded that Identifying Students' Difficulties In Pronouncing English Vocabulary was necessary because it can be primary attention in teaching learning process after knowing the difficulty and the cause of students difficulty. It is suggested that research for all the English teachers, students, and next researcher, hopefully can be used as consideration and refereces to make students can pronounced the word correctly.

**Key Words:** *Pronunciation; vocabulary; difficulty*

### **Abstrak**

*Pengucapan merupakan aspek mendasar dalam membangun sebuah kata agar setiap orang dapat menyampaikan pesan atau gagasan kepada orang lain secara jelas, benar, dan lisan. Pengucapan akan menjadi masalah jika orang mengucapkan kata-kata tersebut tidak sesuai dengan pengucapan yang benar sehingga akan berpengaruh pada komentar ataupun reaksi pendengar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kesulitan siswa dan penyebab kesulitan siswa dalam mengucapkan kosakata bahasa Inggris di kelas sepuluh SMTK Mo'ale. Penelitian ini dirancang dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Instrumen pengumpulan data dengan menggunakan wawancara dan dokumentasi dengan rekaman video. Teknik data analisis yang digunakan adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan serta verifikasi. Setelah menganalisis data,*

peneliti menemukan bahwa siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam mengucapkan konsonan [dʒ, θ, tʃ, ʃ, v, c], dan bunyi vokal [ə-a, ɔ, e-I,ʌ], kesulitan dalam mengucapkan bunyi konsonan dekat, kesulitan dalam mengucapkan bunyi akhiran "tion", dan mengubah huruf menjadi pengucapan lain. Penyebab kesulitan siswa adalah (1) kurang percaya diri (2) kurang latihan (3) pengaruh bahasa Indonesia (4) perbedaan ejaan, pelafalan, dan artinya (5) kurang kosakata. Oleh karena itu, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa mengidentifikasi kesulitan siswa dalam mengucapkan kosakata bahasa Inggris diperlukan karena menjadi perhatian utama dalam proses belajar mengajar setelah mengetahui kesulitan dan penyebab kesulitan tersebut. Disarankan penelitian untuk semua guru bahasa Inggris, siswa, dan peneliti selanjutnya semoga dapat digunakan sebagai pertimbangan dan referensi untuk membuat siswa dapat mengucapkan kata dengan benar.

**Kata kunci:** Pengucapan; kesulitan; kosakata

## A. Introduction

Language is a tool of communication that is used by someone to do the interaction and convey message and ideas with another people. In daily life, Language cannot be separated from human life because it is used to communicate to each other. It means that, language is the important thing for human being. According to Brown (2002:60), "language is used for communication. "So, the language here is English. As the students from English department and in education field, to speak well and fluently are one of the main dreams and for students also can be said in all of the school, English is one of subject materials to learn.

In English, there are some components of skills that should be mastered by students such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing. In this research, the researcher just focus to describe the students difficulties in pronunciation as the aspect of speaking skills. Goh and Burns (2012:15) states, "speaking is accepted by everyone as an essential language communication skill, but it's

importance to language learners goes beyond just day today communication. "For beginner, especially speak English like something new and seems different on how to pronounce it clearly and correctly, but the more as often as possible to do it by practice can get increase.

Speaking is the important skill that students' have to be master in English language. According to Bailey (2005:2), "Speaking is an interactive process constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information." It means that, speaking refers to process of communication by producing verbal utterances where utterance deals with simply things people say to convey the meaning. Speaking is an activity of delivering message, it occur between speaker and listener orally

Speaking is one of the general aspect of English skills that should be mastered by students. By speak something everything can convey averything to other people.

According to Brown (2004:406-407), there are four aspects of

speaking that the students could consider as follow:

1. Pronunciation

In Oxford dictionary (2008) defined that pronunciation is way which a language or particular words or sounds is spoken. Pronunciation refers to the problem especially human sounds that we use to make meaning.

2. Grammar

Grammar is the way how to organized the word into the correct sentence.

3. Fluency

Fluency is the area of language ability which related to the speed and ease with a language learner's performance in one or four core language skill of speaking, listening, writing, reading.

4. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is talking about how someone can choose the word is used based on the topic what they are talking about.

Pronunciation is the act or manner of pronouncing words. As human being the word is produced by sound. Our voice is produced by vibration of our vocal cords with the airstream from the lungs pass the process until mouth so that created the sound, and the sound is pronounced it became a word and sentences that has the meaning. Kelly (2000:1) stated that Pronunciation is one of the important things in learning English in order to make a good communication. It means that to make a good communication need to pronounce the word correctly because sometimes the people who pronounce

the wrong sound, listener could have a wrong understanding and will be effected on their response or action to do something. Of course when someone starting to pronounce a word it can marked by sound, here pronunciation is when we use the same organs of speech to produce the sound in particular way. Sound of speech can be studied from various points of view. There is a specific course that researcher had learned previously. In this research, the researcher wants to identify what makes the students become difficult in pronouncing English vocabulary.

Pronunciation is a basic thing that cannot separated from human life in communicating to each other. Pronunciation plays an important role in delivering speech. As the act of manner of pronouncing words, usually people do communication to someone by arranged significant sound and pronounce it as the result a word. So that, the listener can be understand and answer correctly. it can be said that Pronunciation is the way to pronounce words. Hancock (2003:70), stated that Pronunciation refers the use of a sound system that important for speaking and listening. For example when they are speaking fast, many native speaker fast, many native speakers join word together in certain ways. Speech refers to the faculty or power of speaking, oral communication or ability to expression of something. So the way it by pronunciation.

In pronunciation, Kelly (2000:1) stated that there are two elements that should be studied by students. Firstly Suprasegmental features (include

stress and intonation) and phonemes (included consonants and vowel). So, the explanation from those features are:

### Suprasegmental feature

Suprasegmental is the feature that related with sounds like tone, stress and intonation. According to Kelly (2000:3), Suprasegmental feature as the name implies, are feature of speech generally apply to group of segmental phonemes. From this statement suprasegmental deals with indicator on how the sound can be produce correct or incorrect. Here is brief information:

#### 1. Stress

Stress refers to loud or weak a word is said. Kelly (2000:3) assumes that all the word has each identifiable syllable, and one of the syllables in each word will sound louder then other. From the expert statement, it's clear that in stress occurs when a sounds is spoken where each syllables are combined to produce a sound and have meaning so that other people can hear it and understand.

#### 2. Intonation

Intonation refers to the high and low of spoken sound.

### Phonemes

Phonemes are the different sounds within a language, for example when we pronounce a word from the word there are syllables that are divided, so that they are arranged into one word and have meaning. Generally this is study in phonology course. According to Carr (2008:157), "Segmental phonology is the study of segmental phenomena

such as vowel and consonants allophones." It's clear that the main concern here in segmental are vowel and consonants.

### 1. English consonants

Consonants is characterized mainly by some obstruction above the larynx, especially in the mouth cavity. Crystal (2008:103), "stated that consonant in terms of both phonetics and phonology". Phonetically, it is a sound coming from closure or narrowing in the vocal tract therefore the airflow is either completely blocked or restricted that audible friction is produce. Humans employ speech organs in producing consonants that the term "Articulation". Phonologically, consonants are those units which function at the margins of syllables, either singly in clusters.

There are 24 consonants: [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [ʔ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [m], [n], [ŋ], [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [r], [h], [w], and [j].

### 2. English Vowels

Vowel is sounds which are made without any kind of closure the escape of air through. A vowel is defined as some of the continuous voiced sounds produced without obstruction in the mouth and they are what may be called pure musical sounds unaccompanied by any friction noise. The quality of vowels is depending upon the position of the tongue and the lips because those articulators have a great role in producing the vowels. As a result, the production of most vowels is managed by tongue that

risers to the palatal ridge. Vowel classification is based on what part of tongue which is managed to produce the vowels.

Vocabulary plays important role in English. According to Linse (2005: 121), "vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. "Vocabulary is one of linguistic components in learning English. In English skill, the first step that student learned is vocabulary itself because it is the basic component to learn four skills in language. In addition, vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners listen, speak, write, and read well. It means that these four skills are talking about the words because the more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read as much as possible.

Vocabulary is the main component which is having the important role in language teaching. The step to mastering in speech is good and fluent start with mastering the words, rules, and the levels is starting from vocabulary. Furthermore, the students' who have the quality and capability to communicate the meaningful information to others and support the student to comprehend language is by vocabulary itself. Vocabulary is a group of word that has own meaning, usually there is the original word and besides that there is meaning in other language. For example in English into Indonesia.

According to Oxford dictionary (1995:322), "Difficulty is the state or quality of being difficult, the trouble or effort that still involves." Whoever it is

and any aspects, someone will definitely find a difficulty or obstacle on himself or herself to be able to know about something or be able to do it properly and correctly. According to Webster dictionary, Difficulties is a factor causing trouble in achieving a positive result or tending to produce a negative result. Difficulty also is a thing that is hard to accomplish, deal with, or understand, hard to change into a behavior quickly

However, based on preliminary research by observation and interviewed five students did by researcher at SMTK Mo'ale it was found that students have difficulties in pronouncing of English vocabulary. For example when students get a gift or get helping from someone of course the word to reply is "Thank you" so in this word the way to say it by /'θæŋkju:/, or asking them to count the number like "one"/w^ʌn/, but as the result they pronounce it the same as written form such as /thank you/, /on/. In fact, they can not to differentiate how to pronounce the word that almost have word similarity, like here/hear, /eye/I, had/hat, four/for, send/sent. For them, English word is something new because in their daily life they seldom to use it as a tool of communication, they still thick with local language. Sometimes they feel shame to pronounce English words, like teaching leaning process especially if their classmates like to gloat if they are wrong, it becomes a diffident of confidence and a desire to speak English language. In line with learning English vocabulary, English vocabulary is different from Indonesia viewed from the form, including pronunciation



and spelling. In addition, the way how to pronouncing the word is quite different from writing, therefore, people especially students who learn English often find difficulties in learning. So, this is the basic problem for students.

Based on the background above, the researcher formulated a research question as follow:

1. What are students' difficulties in pronouncing of English vocabulary at the tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale?
2. What are causes of students' difficulties in pronouncing of English vocabulary at the tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale?

Based on the explanation above, it is necessary to conduct a research entitled **Identifying Students' Difficulties In Pronouncing English Vocabulary At The Tenth Grade Of SMTK Mo'ale**

## B. Research Method

This research was conducted by using qualitative method. According to Sugiyono (2013:9), "Qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of post positivism used to examine the conditions of natural object." The data collected is gained by interviewing, documenting, and observing.

This research was conducted at SMTK (Sekolah Menengah Teologi Kristen) Mo'ale, which is located in Sondrege'asi village, Luahagundre Maniamolo Subdistrict, Nias Regency. SMTK Mo'ale was established in 31<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The total teachers in this school are 23 teachers including

the head master. The total number of the students are 79 persons.

The data in this research will be the errors, mistakes, and difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary, and the source of the data will be taken from students utterances when they pronouncing English vocabulary.

In instrument of the research, researcher using data collection techniques follows:

### 1. Interview

Interview is verbal activity to ask and answer the question to obtain information. The form of information obtained is stated in the writing, or audio recorded, visual, or visual audio.

### 2. Documentation

Documentation is the evidence provided information and ideas borrowed from others. In addition, researcher doing record of student's utterances to make the data gained from the field become trustable, where the purpose of data recording was to set in writing and assure the preservation of the data collected in the course of field or laboratory studies.

After collecting the data, the next step is analyzing the data. The researchers in this case will use qualitative descriptive analysis, namely data analysis model in the concept given by Miles and Huberman. Miles and Huberman (1994:11,12) stated that The data analysis techniques include:

### 1. Data Reduction Data

Reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the

data that appear in written-up field notes or transcription. As data collection process, episodes of data reduction occur (writing summaries, coding, and testing out themes, making cluster, making partitions, writing memos). The data reduction/transforming process continues after fieldworks, until a final report is completed.

#### 1. Data Display

A display is organized, compressed, assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. Data display discussed about matrices, graphs, charts, and networks. All are designed to assemble organized information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what happening and either draw justified conclusion or move on to the next step of analysis the display suggest maybe useful.

#### 2. Conclusion Drawing And Verification

The last analysis activity is conclusion and verification. From the start data collection, the qualitative analyst is beginning to decide what things means is nothing regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions. Conclusion are verified as the analysis process. Verification maybe as brief as a fleeting second thought crossing the analyst mind during writing.

### C. Reserch Findings and Discussion

#### a. Students Difficulties In Pronouncing English Vocabulary

Based on the results of the researchers observation and the result documentation added by video reording of students that researcher already mention previously, the result of the study indicated that the class students of SMTK Mo'ale face some difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary. In obtaining the data, researcher made observation and documentation at the same time the researcher record student utterances when they read and pronounce some vocabularies. Based on the video recording of their utterances, the researcher found many mistakes on how to pronounced corectly as the rule or standard of good pronunciation. In this study the researcher found that the students have weaknesses on using some letter to ponounce.

As the resuts students' difficulties such as:

#### 1. Consonant

##### a. Difficulty in pronouncing words that containt sound "dʒ".

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing sound English vocabulary containt "dʒ". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. For example when students are asked to pronounced word "introduce, teenegers" they pronounce it "introduk , introdus, introduce tenagre, teanangers". However, the correct pronunciation must be (Intrə'dʒu:s, Ti;neidʒərs). In

this case students' pronounced like "d" or "g". In addition, most of them are pronounced the word as written form. The detail information on this errors can be seen in the appendix.

**b. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contain sound "θ"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing words that contain sound "θ". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, students cannot use the organ of speech, where there is not combination with the tongue against or close to the superior alveolar ridge because it contains with sockets of upper teeth. For example when students are asked to pronounce words "thinking, birthday, mother tongue" they pronounce it "tiking or tingki, bridei, moter tuk or moter tong". However, the correct pronunciation must be (θɪŋkɪŋ, Bɜːθdeɪ, mæðɔː tʌŋ).

**c. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contain "tʃ"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing sound English vocabulary contain sound "tʃ". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, students cannot produce by placing the tongue front of the palate which is near the alveolar ridge. For example

when students are asked to pronounce words "future, feature, structure". As the results, they pronounce it "future, fature, fatur, struktur, fitur or feature. However, the correct pronunciation must be "fjuːtʃə, fiːtʃə, Strʌktʃə".

**d. Difficulty in pronouncing close consonant sounds**

Based on the data analysis, most of students are omitted some letter when combined with other letter. This difficulty was indicated by errors made by student in pronouncing the words, where students are not pronounced overall sounds correctly. For example when they pronounced words "excuse me, content, and reward, sport, thinking" They pronounced "eks mi, ekus me or ikus mi, centet or, conte, rewed, rewar, tiking". However, the correct pronunciation must be "Ik'skj:s mi, kən'tent, ri'wɔːd, θɪŋkɪŋ". In this case, the sounds that omitted by students are, "x", "t", "d".

**e. Difficulty in pronouncing all the suffixes tion ("ʃ")**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing sound English vocabulary contain sound "ʃ". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, students cannot produce by placing the tongue front of the palate which is near the



alveolar ridge. for example, attention, appreciation, invitation, information, celebration, congratulation, application, prediction, direction, reduction, communication, graduation, implementation.

**f. Difficulty in identifying the sound of letter "c" in certain English words.**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in identifying the sound of letter "c" in certain English words. This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, the students are not pronounced the word as the standard of pronunciation, it means that they don't know the position using letter "c" become "k or s" in a word. For example. When students are asked to pronounced words "content, courage, communication, confuse, carefull." They pronounced by begin sound letter "c" not "k or s". however, the correct pronunciation must be "kən'tent, 'keəful, kəmju:nə'keɪʃən, kən'fju:z, Seli'breɪʃən"

**g. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contain sound "v"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing that word. This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in changes using letter "V" become "F". for example

when students are asked to pronounced word "invitation" they pronounced it "infitation", however, the correct pronunciation must be "invə'teɪʃən"

**2. vowel**

**a. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contain sound "ə".**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing sound English vocabulary contain "ə". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, students pronounced the words like letter "a" not "ə". know For example when students are asked to pronounced word "achievement, awareness, aprovement, amazing, accompany, attention", they pronounce it "Aktivemen, aprovemen, amazing, akompani or akompeni". However, the correct pronunciation must be (ə'tʃi:vmənt, ə'weərnəs, ə'pru:vmənt, ə'meɪzɪŋ, ə'kʌmpəni). The detail information on this errors can be seen in the appendix.

**b. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contains sound "ɔ"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in pronouncing sound English vocabulary contain "ɔ". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, the way to pronounced this sound included in long

vowel, where it is almost fully back it has quite strong lip rounding or can be said half "o". For example when students are asked to pronounce word "sport , morning" they pronounce it "spor , morning". However, the correct pronunciation must be (Spɔ:t, mɔ:nɪŋ).

**c. Difficulty to distinguish words that contain sound "e" and "i"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in distinguishing sound English vocabulary contain "e" and "i". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. In this case, students cannot distinguish the position of using "e" or "i" in a word. For example when students are asked to pronounce word "excuse me, reward", they pronounce it "Eks mi or Es kusi mi, Rewar". However, the correct pronunciation must be Ik'skj:s mi (ri'wɔ:d).

**d. Difficulty in pronouncing words that contain sound "ʌ"**

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students got difficulty in distinguishing sound English vocabulary contain "e" and "i". This difficulty was indicated by errors made by students in pronouncing the words. For example when students are asked to pronounce word "lunch", they pronounce it "lunch or luc" However, the

correct pronunciation must be (lʌntl).

**b. Causes of Students Difficulties in Pronouncing English Vocabulary.**

Based on the result of interview, the researcher found the causes of students difficulty in pronouncing of English vocabulary at the tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale. Therefore, to know the reason of the students difficulties, the researcher interviewed the students and transcription on interview were analyzed. the cause of the students difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary as follows:

**a. Lack of confidence**

In this case, the students have difficulty because this lesson are foreign language means that different with other lesson make them afraid of making mistake, shy from other friends because there is no basic knowledge

R : *Ragu, gugup, dan malu-malu karena diejek teman teman pak..*

R: *Perasaan kaku, dan bimbang pak, kurang yakin apa benar caranya.*

R: *Saya coba-coba saja pak.*

based on there answer above means that pronunciation of English word was main problem in their personality.

**b. Lack of practice**

Based on the result that cause of students diffiultiy in pronouncing English words because rare of practice, this

thing happend because they seldom to use english at home or use english at the classroom as media of communciation as often as possible. this also happend because there is partner who motivated and ask to use english in comunication.

R: *Saya hanya belajar bahasa inggris ketika masuk sekolah saja pak dan dirumah tidak belajar bahasa Inggris*

R: *Saya kurang latihan pak. sulit jadi saya gak ada inisiatif untuk ingin tahu jadi saya terhambat disitu.*

**c. The influence of Indonesian language**

Based on the result that cause of student students difficulty in pronunciation were the influence of Indonesian language. This thing happend because the students position were in the village and far from the city of little influent on the ability and introducing of English in their activity every day especially in communication. so that when they try to use english to communicate to someone seems difficult because always carried the regional accent that effected on how they pronounced it in Indonesian language because same with written form.

R: *Tidak pak ,tidak ada yang ajarin.. karena kata orang tua bukan bahasa nenek moyang saya .*

**d. Difference in spelling, pronunciation, and the meaning**

Based on the result based on the result that cause of students difficulty in pronunciation were differ in how to write, how to read, and the meaning. this is the Most of the respondends answer so that indirectly lower their intention to want to know and there is assumption that english is not the language of my ancestors.

R : *Karena cara membaca dan menulisnya beda pak, ditambah artinya.*

R : *Beda cara membaca, menulis, dan artinya pak. Dan saya tidak bisa mengucapkan beberapa huruf bahasa Inggris*

**e. Lack of vocabulary**

Based on the result,cause of students difficulty in pronunciation were lack of vocabulary, in this case mostof the students did not have basic knowledge, because limited of motivation, way to learn, and inisiative.

R:*Hanya sampai disitu kemampuan saya pak*

**D. Closing**

After the researcher conducted and analyzed the data from the school, it can be concluded that: first, students from the tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale have difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary which consists of phonemes (English consonants and English Vowel). While Pronunciation is the wayin which a language or sound is spoken. Students cannot pronounced each word correctly based on the standard of good pronunciation so students should study hard and give attention

on how to pronounced English correctly.

Therefore, it can be concluded that all the difficulties and causes of difficulties can influence the ability to pronounce the words correctly, especially for tenth grade of SMTK Mo'ale. A careful analysis of the four causes of students' difficulties is needed to improve students into the correct pronunciation.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher hopes that this research can give benefits for all parties as follow:

1. For students. This research suggested to improve their ability to mastery good pronunciation
2. For teachers. This research suggested to increase their knowledge and experience about students' actual difficulties in pronouncing English vocabulary and determine the appropriate teaching variation method in the classroom.

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