

## A PHONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND ERRORS OF STUDENTS PRONUNCIATION IN READING ENGLISH TEXT AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITY HKBP NOMMENSEN

Silvina Yuliana L. Tobing<sup>1</sup>, Kammer Sipayung<sup>2</sup>, Carolina Pakpahan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
University HKBP Nommensen Medan

*e-mail:* silvina.tobing@student.uhn.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, kammer.sipayung@uhn.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, carolina.pakpahan@uhn.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

"A Phonological Problems and Errors of Students Pronunciation in Reading English Text at English Department of University HKBP Nommensen". English Language Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. HKBP Nommensen University Medan. This study aims to find out the pronunciation problems and pronunciation errors made by students semester sixth group B at English Department of University HKBP Nommensen Medan. Researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. The data of this study are transcript of students pronunciation recording in English short story text. There were 15 students at English Department who were taken randomly. The data were analyzed based on (Ladefogeds, 2001) theory to look for types of pronunciation errors using phonetic transcript, data collection was done through voice recordings and the Elsa speak application. The results showed that students made the following muel pronunciation mistakes [ə, ʊ, ʌ, ɔ:,]. The total pronunciation errors in vowel sounds are 40 errors. The errors consist of 18 omission errors, 6 addition errors and 16 msinformation errors. Vowel pronunciation mistakes made by students can be caused by several factors, for example the influence of the first mother tongue (interference), the influence of the second language learned (overgeneralization), and the influence of developmental errors.

**Keywords :** Pronunciation Problems, Pronunciation Errors, Vowels

### Abstrak

"Masalah Pelafalan dan Kesalahan Pengucapan dalam Membaca Teks Bahasa Inggris di Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas HKBP Nommensen". Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan. Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui masalah pengucapan dan kesalahan pengucapan yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa semester enam kelompok B Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data penelitian ini adalah transkrip rekaman pengucapan siswa dalam teks cerita pendek bahasa Inggris. Ada 15 mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris yang diambil secara acak. Data dianalisis berdasarkan (Ladefogeds, 2001) teori untuk mencari jenis kesalahan pengucapan menggunakan transkrip fonetik, pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui rekaman suara dan aplikasi Elsa speak. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa melakukan kesalahan pengucapan muel berikut [ə, ʊ, ʌ, ɔ:,]. Total kesalahan pengucapan bunyi vokal sebanyak 40 kesalahan. Kesalahan tersebut terdiri dari 18 kesalahan penghilangan, 6 kesalahan penambahan, dan 16 kesalahan informasi. Kesalahan pengucapan vokal yang dilakukan siswa dapat disebabkan oleh beberapa faktor, misalnya pengaruh bahasa ibu pertama (interferensi), pengaruh bahasa kedua yang dipelajari (overgeneralization), dan pengaruh kesalahan perkembangan.

**Kata Kunci :** Masalah Pengucapan, Kesalahan Pengucapan, Vokal

### INTRODUCTION

English pronunciation is one of the important skills to acquire and learn English pronunciation which is quite difficult for Indonesian students because they have been using their mother tongue since childhood. In addition, English is very different from Indonesian in its pronunciation, even students majoring in English must learn about the relationship between the sound system and the writing system. However, some students English Department sometimes make pronunciation mistakes when reading English texts. The difficulty between sound and writing is caused by several differences in letters and sounds. Meanwhile, it will cause the listener to misunderstand what is being conveyed through the short story text which can cause misunderstandings for the listener.

In fact, students also have problems in pronouncing some English sounds, and for example, the word *leave* contains the sounds [l], [i:] and [v], if the sound [i:] is pronounced [ɪ] which finally produces /liv/, the meaning changes because /liv/ will be interpreted as a living word, it causes students to be unable to distinguish the sound of words so that listeners will misunderstand the text of the short story. The researcher find problems in their English pronunciation students English department semester sixth. For example, the problem difference between the spelling and pronunciation of words. One problem is that when students want to say English words like "heed" [hi:d] and "ask" [æsk], they tend to say [hed] and [ak-s].

According to Dewi & Astriyanti (2021:100) the problem of pronunciation is that the problem of native pronunciation exists when students have difficulty making the sounds needed to imitate. However, some students English Department still have English pronunciation problems and pronunciation errors in English pronunciation appear among students English Department in the sixth semester. According to Prashant (2018:16) in introducing phonology, On the International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA, the English language consists of twenty eight vowels and fifty eight consonants. The vowels themselves are divided into monophthongs or pure vowels and diphthongs. Among the pure vowels in English, six pairs of vowels are also known as Short Vowels and Long Vowels, namely: [ɪ], [e], [æ], [ʌ], [ɒ], [ʊ] also known as short vowels and [i], [ɜ], [ɑ], [ɔ], [u], [ə] for long vowels. Characteristics of vocal quality are determined by the height of the tongue in the mouth, the part of the tongue that is raised (front, middle, or back), the configuration of the lips and the tension of the muscles of the oral tract.

The problem of lack of understanding of vowel sounds is unclear articulation when English students are asked to read texts and speak in English, the articulation of sounds that come out of the mouth, speaking is not clear so the listener must ask to open his mouth so that every sound becomes clear. This unclear articulation actually causes students to become less confident when they make mistakes in English pronunciation. According to Maiza (2020:18) Pronunciation is encouraged from what they hear when they speak English in college, they rarely open the pronunciation dictionary to check whether the words they say match the correct pronunciation. Students English Department sometimes just guess the pronunciation by looking at the spelling of a word and that leads to guessing the wrong pronunciation. Good pronunciation increases the confidence of students majoring in English because they participate more in speaking classes and interact with classmates.

Based on observations that have been made, researchers are interested in analyzing pronunciation when reading conversational texts in English by recording the voice and using the Elsa Speak application to find out pronunciation errors in English Department students at HKBP Nommensen University. Researchers found that the types of pronunciation errors that often occur are namely types of errors of omission, addition and misinformation in English students. In fact, they often experience difficulties in pronunciation such as a lack of understanding of phonetic transcription symbols and also do not like looking for a dictionary on how to pronounce words clearly. Meanwhile, phonetic transcription aims to provide clear information to students regarding the correct pronunciation of the language in English. currently, every dictionary has a phonetic transcription.

Based on the description above, the researcher interested in finding out the above problem into a study entitled "A Phonological Problems an Errors of Students Pronunciation in Reading English Text at English Department of University HKBP Nommensen". Therefore, students majoring in English know about errors in their pronunciation.

## METHOD

In conducting this research, the researcher was used descriptive qualitative with semester sixth students of English Department at HKBP Nommensen University Medan to collect data. The subjects of this study were sixth semester students of the English Department group B. The researcher chose 20 students because they were looking for problems from several students to study and the researchers were also students of the English Department at HKBP Nommenses University to collect data. In conducting research it is necessary to carry out several stages in a clear chronological order, in conducting research it is necessary to carry out several stages in a clear chronological order. In this study several steps were taken to collect data:

1. Asking students to read short story texts one by one
2. Recording the students voices while reading the story text

**RESULT AND DICCUSSION**

Pronunciation problems and pronunciation errors of the sixth semester students of the Department of English at HKBP Nommensen University in reading English short story texts. In analyzing the data the researcher took data from 2 sources, the first source was an oral test and the second source was a voice recording. The research oral test presented the results of short story texts to find out the problems and pronunciation errors of the speakers pronunciation from the voice recording, based on the pronunciation that was spoken. The second part contains a discussion of mistakes made by students in the phonetic transcript.

**a. The problems with English Vowels**

The following are the phonological problems in pronouncing faced by the sixth semester students at HKBP Nommensen University English Department in reading English Text vowel sounds that were pronounced incorrectly by a member of the English education student group on a recorded test, accuracy determined by the phonetic transcription provided from the Elsa speak app. Unnatural vowel production will be explained through vowel phonetics theory and a focus on phonological and pronunciation.

1. The sound [ə]

The table shows some of the words with the sound [ə], which was alternate with the sound [e] by the students at English department.

Table 1 The Problem of Sound [ə]

Position	Word	The Correct Pronunciation	The Students Pronunciation
Initial	Away Around	/ə'wei/ /ə'raund/	/e'wei/ /e'raund/
Medial	Immediately	/i'mi.di.ət.li/	/i'mi.di.et.li/

The sound [ə] The sound [ə] is a mid vowel. It was produced by the central part of the tongue is raised a half between the close and open area of vowel sound quality. The sound [ə] is also described as a schwa. It means that the sound [ə] can happen in a week syllable, and it is often deletion. The problem that was faced by the student semester sixth of University HKBP Nommensen suitability with the schwa [ə].

2. The sound [ʊ]

The sound [ʊ] is located near the back vowel. This means that the sound ʊ is produced using the back of the tongue, and is raised to the roof of the mouth. The sound production [ʊ] does not use the back of the tongue. Somehow, the back of the tongue is closer to the middle of the tongue. The tongue is slightly retracted and closes the position of the close-mid vowel sound quality. The lips are rounded to produce the sound [ʊ]. The table shows the wrong pronunciation of sound [ʊ] faced by students semester sixth at English Department.

Table 2 The problem of Sound [ʊ]

Position	Word	The Correct Pronunciation	The Students Pronunciation
Medial	Could Moment Ground	/kʊd/ /mʊmənt/ /graʊnd/	/kud/ /moumənt/ /graund/

The problem is the students used the back of the tongue to try the production of the sound [ʊ]. Then raised back part of tongue higher than what is necessary to produce the sound [ʊ]. Even, the students produced the sound [ʊ] and pronounced a bit longer to be [u:] for example, it happened in word 'could' /kʊd/ 'ground' /graʊnd/ but the students pronounced /ku:d/ /grau:nd/.

3. The sound [ʌ]

The sound [ʌ] is an open middle vowel. Producing the sound [ʌ] involves the middle part of the tongue. However, the sound /ʌ/ is not a fully open vowel. The middle part of the tongue is a little bit raised near the position of the open-mid vowel sound quality. The table shows the sound [ʌ] detected incorrectly produced by the students semester sixth at English Department

Table 3 The problem of Sound [ʌ]

Position	Word	The Correct Pronunciation	The Students Pronunciation
Initial	Unintentionally	/ʌnɪn'ten.ʃə.nə.li/	/ʌnɪn'tenʃəneli/
Medial	Struggling	/strʌŋ.gə.lɪŋ/	/straŋ.ge.lɪŋ/

When the students producing [ʌ], some of the students have experience in error pronunciation. The sound [ʌ] was made fully open by the students. The students dropped the middle part of their tongues in the lower position. The sound [ʌ] needs the tongue to be slightly raised near the position of the open-mid vowel sound. The students substituted the sound [ʌ] with the sound [a] or [u]. It happened in the medial position; for example, the word 'struggling' /strʌŋ.gə.lɪŋ/ and the students pronounced the word 'Unintentionally' must be /ʌnɪn'ten.ʃə.nə.li/.

4. The sound [ɔ:]

The sound [ɔ:] is a long mid-back vowel. To produce a [ɔ] sound, the part of the back tongue that is raised halfway between opening and closing is the quality of the vowel sound. The position of the lips when making the sound [ɔ] is complete. Sounds are made slightly longer than short vowels. The table shows [ɔ:], which is exchanged for [ɒ] and [u] produced by sixth semester students in the English Department.

Table 4 The problem of Sound [ɔ:]

Position	Word	The Correct Pronunciation	The Students Pronunciation
Initial	Towards Water	<u>tɔ:rdz</u> wɔ:tər	tuwords wɔtər

The problem pronunciations are with two vowels faced by the student of PBI-4C. They have exchanged vowel with other vowels. When they have to produce the sound [ɔ:], they produced the sound [ɔ:], which was lengthened to be [ɒ] and [u]. For example, it was happened in the words 'Towards' and water.' They were pronounced /wɔtər/ and /tuwords/ as the sound [ɒ].

**b. The Errors with English Vowels**

The following the types of pronunciation errors in reading English texts are most often made by students in English Department at HKBP Nommensen University. In doing this research the researcher used the theory of Ladefoged, 2001 to analyze the data. They are Omission, Addition, Misinformation and Misordering After analyzing and counting the errors made by the students, the writer found some significant results excited to known. The errors are described in percentage in table below.

Table 5 Data Analysis of Types of Errors

No	Students Name	Word Transcription	Students Pronunciation	Phonetic Transcription	Types of Errors
1.	JS	Ant Water Trouble Struggling Immediately Throwing Quickly	En wɔtər trabel strungling imedietseli throwiŋ krikli	Ænt wɔ:tər trʌbəl strʌgəlɪŋ ɪ'midiətli θruuɪŋ kwɪkli	Omission

		Blade Put Soon	Bled pʌt sɔ:n	bleɪd pʊt sun	Misinformation
		Near	Nier	nɪr	Addition
2.	ASS	Of	ɔ:v	ʌv	Misinformation
		Near	Nier	nɪr	Addition
		Hoping	Hopiŋ	hoʊpiŋ	Omission
3.	RL	Moment Around	momen aroun	mʊmɪmənt ə'raʊnd	Omission
		Of	ɔ:v	ʌv	Misinformation
		Flew	Fliu	flu:	Addition
4.	AK	Blade  unintentionall y Put	Bled  <u>ɪnɪn'tɛnfənəli</u>  pat	bleɪd  <u>ʌnɪn'tɛnfənəli</u>  pʊt	Misinformation
		Nearby	Nerbi	nɪr'baɪ	Omission
		Hoping	Hupiŋ	hoʊpiŋ	
		Flew	Fiu	flu:	
		Near	Nier	nɪr	Addition
5.	RK	Walking Flew	Walkiŋ Flue	wɔ:kɪŋ flu:	Addition
		Came Hoping	kam hopiŋ	keɪm hoʊpiŋ	Omission
		Unintentionall y From	<u>ʌnɪn'tɛnsɛneli</u>  frɔ:m	<u>ʌnɪn'tɛnfənəli</u>  <u>frʌm</u>	Misinformation
6.	AL	Flew	Fliu	flu:	Addition
		Moment	Momen	mʊmɪmənt	Omission
		Climbed	Klem	klaɪmd	
7.	DMS	Moment	Momen	mʊmɪmənt	Ommision
		Nearby	nɪr'bi	nɪr'baɪ	
		Hoping	huping	hoʊpiŋ	
		Way	wi	wei	
		Guessing		ɡɛsiŋ	

			guising		
		Sunk	senk	sɔŋk	Misinformation
		From	from	<u>frʌm</u>	
		Leaf	lef	lif	
		Heel	Helt	Hil	Addition
		Flew	Fliu	flu:	
8.	DSS	unintentionally	<u>ʌinn'tɛnfənəli</u>	<u>ʌnin'tɛnfənəli</u>	Addition
		Nearby	Nerbi	nɪr'baɪ	Omission
		Safely	sefli	sefli	
		Feeling	filing	filɪŋ	
		From	From	<u>frʌm</u>	Misinformation
		Flew	Fley	flu:	
9.	WM	Blade	Bleind	bleɪd	Addition
		While	Weil	waɪl	Misinformation
		From	frɔ:m	<u>frʌm</u>	
		Flew	fli	flu:	
		Nearby	Nerbi	nɪr'baɪ	Omission
10.	VP	Water	Weter	wɔ:tər	Omission
		Moment	momen	moʊmənt	
		Blade	bled	bleɪd	
		Nearby	nerbi	nɪr'baɪ	
		Hoping	houping	hoʊpɪŋ	
		Feeling	filing	filɪŋ	
		Climb	Klim	klaɪm	Misinformation
		Hunter	hanter	hʌntər	
11.	SD	Nearby	nirbɪ	nɪr'baɪ	Omission
		Flew	Fle	flu:	Misinformation
12.	YD	Nearby	nerbar	nɪr'baɪ	Misinformation
		Ground	graɔ:nd	graʊnd	
		Flew	Flui	flu:	Addition

13.	ADS	Walking Nearby	walkɪŋ nerbaɪ	wɔkɪŋ nɪr'baɪ	Misinformation
		Safely	Sefli	sefli	Omission
		Flew	flu:e	flu:	
14	SF	Sunk  Near	sʊ:nk  ner	sʌŋk  nɪr	Misinformation
		Flew	Fley	flu:	Addition
15.	ED	Ground  From	grʊ:nd  frɔ:m	graʊnd  <u>frʌm</u>	Misinformation
		Flew	Flue	flu:	Adittion

In the table above it can be seen that the errors and correctness made by students. It is shown that the number of errors and correct made by students are:

Table 6 The total wrong

No	Students Initial	Wrong Pronunciation
1	JS	11
2	ASS	3
3	RL	4
4	AK	7
5	RK	7
6	AL	3
7	DMS	10
8	DSS	6
9	WM	5

10	VP	8
11	SD	2
12	YD	3
13	ADS	4
14	SF	3
15	ED	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>79</b>

### c. Discussion

In the discussion session, the researcher found answers to the first problem, namely what are the phonological problems in pronunciation faced by sixth semester students at the English Department of HKBP Nommensen University in reading English texts. And the second question, namely what types of pronunciation errors in reading English texts are most often made by students of the English Department at HKBP Nommensen University. As seen in the findings, the results of the oral test and recording show that students still often have pronunciation problems from pronunciation errors. This can be seen from the data that has been made by researchers. What are the phonological problems in pronunciation faced by sixth semester students at the English Department of HKBP Nommensen University in reading English texts, from previous research by Marlina, 2020). Data from research results reveal that students pronunciation errors from speech performance to get a more naturalistic pronunciation as the data. Once completed, errors are measured and interpreted against frequent errors. These sounds are replaced by several voices. Therefore, it is suggested that this pronunciation problem should be considered when reading English texts to students. Because students consider English pronunciation difficult because they rarely practice speaking. Then the researcher conducted research related to different samples through the Elsa speak application. Based on these findings it has been shown that there are several pronunciation problems from pronunciation errors made by students, by using the results of the voices spoken by students from the Elsa speak application more accurately to correct and improve pronunciation by Correct.

Types of pronunciation errors made by sixth semester students majoring in English at HKBP Nommensen University based on their performance in reading English short story texts. From previous research by (Sugiarto, 2013). In his research he recorded the class and then transcribed it to find out that they were pronouncing the wrong utterances. The steps for collecting pronunciation errors are presenting, identifying, describing and discussing, and concluding. He found that there are seven types of errors of tongue namely anticipation, perseveration, exchange, mix, substitution, addition, and deletion. Then the researcher found that there were three types of errors in the study namely addition, omission and misinformation. By taking different samples through the application, students can practice and correct their pronunciation mistakes from the application. But as an illustration, some students don't often practice through the application to find out the wrong pronunciation, resulting in different pronunciation.

### CONCLUSION

In line with the results of data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. English pronunciation problems faced by students majoring in English at HKBP Nommensen University, students change vowel sounds in the form of substitution of [ə] to [e], substitution of [ʊ] to [u:], substitution of the sound [ʌ] to [a ] and [u], the sound [ɔ:] changes to [u], [ɒ].
2. Pronunciation errors that can affect students' pronunciation problems and look for types of errors, namely types of pronunciation errors such as omissions, additions and misinformation which often occur when students read short story texts.



## SUGGESTION

From the results of this study, there are several suggestion that can be made to reduce English pronunciation problems at University HKBP Nommensen Medan. Therefore, it needs to be repaired so that the problem is reduced.

- a. For Lecturers: it is suggested that lecturers be more creative in teaching English pronunciation and start paying attention when teaching English to help students improve and understand their English pronunciation so that they are more likely to become native speakers. Trained on phonetics to help students improve their pronunciation and lecturers should also pay attention and correct students pronunciation errors during teaching because that will make them accustomed speak with good pronunciation. even though the purpose of speaking is to convey meaning regardless of pronunciation.
- b. For the students: the current education system attaches great importance to pronunciation, so the authorities should introduce courses from the beginning of the student level to gradually improve students pronunciation. On the other hand, students should have more exposure to the target language which incorporates listening to real life situations.
- c. For future researchers to examine the handling of pronunciation problems so that students can minimize pronunciation mistakes and also suggest to future researchers to look for ways to teach pronunciation.

## REFERENCES

- Ambalegin, A. (2021). Phonological Analysis Of English Vowel Pronunciation. *Kne Social Sciences*, 2021, 28–45. <https://doi.org/10.18502/Kss.V5i4.8665>
- Afifah, L. (2012) An Analysis Of Student's Pronunciation Errors In Reading Texts At The Sixth Grade Students Of Sdn 3 Cisaueun Bandung Barat. A Thesis. Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Stkip) Siliwangi Bandung, 6-62.
- Dewi, D. C., & Astriyanti, D. (2021). An Analysis Of Using Minimal Pairs In Pronouncing Consonants And Vowels. 2(2), 99–117.
- Ladefoged, P. (2001). *A Course In Phonetics*, 4th Ed., Heinle And Heinle. Los Angeles: University Of California.
- Maiza, M. (2020). An Analysis Of Students' Pronunciation Errors. *Joel: Journal Of English Education And Literature*, 1(1), 18–23. <https://doi.org/10.38114/Joel.V1i1.27>
- Murdiyanto, E. (2020). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Sistematika Penelitian Kualitatif). In Bandung: Rosda Karya. [http://www.academia.edu/download/35360663/Metode\\_Penelitian\\_Kualitaif.Docx](http://www.academia.edu/download/35360663/Metode_Penelitian_Kualitaif.Docx)
- Prashant, P. D. (2018). Importance Of Pronunciation In English Language Communication. *Research Papers In Economics*, 7(2), 15–20. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/vor/issues/2018-27-05.html>
- Sugiarto, A.T. (2013). Pronunciation Error Made By The Fourth Semester Students (A Case Study In English Department, Dian Nuswanto University In The Academic Year Of 2009/2010). Semarang: Dian Nuswanto University Semarang. 1-12