

**ANALYSIS OF PRONUNCIATION IN READING TEXTS BY 11TH GRADE
STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI 1 DOLOK MERAWAN****Kartika^a, Serlindawati^b, Nopelisa^c****^a SMA Negeri 1 Balige****^{b,c} SMA 1 Dolok Merawan**Email: serlindawati.rajagukguk@student.uhn.ac.id**Abstrak**

Pengucapan memegang peranan penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam membaca nyaring, karena memengaruhi pemahaman dan komunikasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kemahiran pengucapan siswa kelas 11 di SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan saat membaca teks bahasa Inggris. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk meneliti kesalahan pengucapan yang umum, jenisnya, dan kemungkinan penyebabnya. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes membaca dan direkam untuk analisis fonetik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa umumnya kesulitan dengan bunyi vokal, gugus konsonan, dan tekanan kata, yang dipengaruhi oleh interferensi bahasa ibu mereka dan kurangnya kesadaran fonetik. Penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya instruksi dan praktik pengucapan yang eksplisit dalam kurikulum bahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan akurasi berbicara siswa. Disarankan agar guru memasukkan pelatihan fonetik dan latihan pengucapan interaktif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan pengucapan siswa.

Kata kunci: *pengucapan, membaca, fonetik, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, pendidikan menengah*

Abstract

Pronunciation plays a crucial role in English language learning, particularly in reading aloud, as it affects both comprehension and communication. This study aims to analyze the pronunciation proficiency of 11th-grade students at SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan when reading English texts. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to examine common pronunciation errors, their types, and possible causes. Data were collected through reading tests and recorded for phonetic analysis. The findings indicate that students commonly struggle with vowel sounds, consonant clusters, and word stress, which are influenced by their native language interference and lack of phonetic awareness. The study highlights the need for explicit pronunciation instruction and practice in the English curriculum to improve students' spoken accuracy. It is recommended that teachers incorporate phonetic training and interactive pronunciation exercises to enhance students' pronunciation skills.

Keywords: Pronunciation, reading, phonetic English learning, secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a crucial language skill that develops naturally in individuals and plays a significant role in communication. It is one of the four essential language skills, alongside reading, listening, and writing. As social beings, humans rely on language to interact and convey ideas effectively. The ability to speak English fluently is highly desired, especially given the growing importance of English as an international language (Hasselgren, 2002). Proficiency in English facilitates communication, broadens knowledge, and enhances career opportunities in a globalized world.

Pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of English language learning, as it directly affects students' ability to communicate effectively and comprehend spoken English. In the context of

reading aloud, proper pronunciation ensures clarity and enhances fluency, making it an essential skill for students to master. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly at the secondary education level, encounter difficulties in producing correct pronunciation due to various linguistic and environmental factors.

Previous studies on pronunciation difficulties in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts have primarily focused on phonological interference, segmental and suprasegmental aspects, and general pronunciation accuracy among learners (e.g., Hasselgren, 2002). However, limited research has been conducted on pronunciation challenges specifically in the context of reading aloud, particularly among senior high school students in Indonesia. This study differs from previous research by focusing on the specific pronunciation errors that arise during reading activities and analyzing how these errors influence students' overall fluency and confidence. Additionally, this study takes into account the sociolinguistic and instructional factors unique to students at SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan, providing localized insights that can inform more targeted teaching interventions. By bridging the gap between pronunciation instruction and reading aloud practices, this research offers a novel perspective on improving pronunciation pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

At SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan, 11th-grade students often face challenges in pronouncing English words correctly while reading texts. These challenges arise from factors such as interference from their native language, lack of exposure to native-like pronunciation models, and insufficient phonetic instruction. Mispronunciations can lead

to misunderstandings, hinder reading fluency, and negatively impact students' confidence in using English. Therefore, analyzing the specific pronunciation difficulties encountered by students is essential in developing more effective teaching strategies.

This study aims to identify and analyze the common pronunciation errors made by 11th- grade students at SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan when reading English texts. By examining the types of errors and their underlying causes, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into improving pronunciation instruction in the classroom. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the enhancement of English language teaching by recommending practical strategies for teachers to address pronunciation issues more effectively.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Pronunciation in English Language Learning

Pronunciation is a key aspect of language proficiency that influences communication clarity and fluency (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Effective pronunciation enhances intelligibility and comprehension (Morley, 1991). In reading aloud, accurate pronunciation ensures fluency and meaning clarity (Gimson, 2014).

EFL learners often struggle with pronunciation due to L1 interference (Kenworthy, 1987), limited exposure to native-like pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2005), and insufficient phonetic instruction (Corder, 1967). These factors contribute to mispronunciations that hinder fluency. Reading aloud reinforces pronunciation practice (Nation, 2009) but also reveals common errors, particularly in phoneme articulation, stress, and intonation (Goh & Burns, 2012). The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957) and Error Analysis Theory (Corder, 1967) provide frameworks for identifying and addressing these pronunciation issues. Effective pronunciation instruction includes phonetic training, technology-assisted learning, and corrective feedback (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). This study aims to analyze pronunciation errors among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Dolok Merawan to inform improved instructional strategies in EFL classrooms.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze pronunciation errors made by 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Dolok Merawan while reading English texts. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth examination of the types and causes of pronunciation errors. The participants consist of 30 11th-grade students selected through purposive sampling. These students have varying levels of English proficiency and experience difficulties in pronunciation when reading aloud. Data were collected through:

1. Reading Aloud Task – Students were asked to read selected English texts aloud, which were recorded for analysis.
2. Error Identification and Categorization – Pronunciation errors were analyzed based on Kenworthy's (1987) and Corder's (1967) frameworks, focusing on phoneme mispronunciations, stress, and intonation errors.
3. Interviews – Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of pronunciation difficulties and contributing factors.

Data were analyzed using Error Analysis Method (Corder, 1967), following these steps:

1. Transcription – Students' recordings were transcribed to identify pronunciation errors.
2. Classification – Errors were categorized based on phoneme mistakes, stress misplacement, and intonation errors.
3. Interpretation – Findings were interpreted to determine the main factors influencing pronunciation errors and their implications for teaching strategies.

DISCUSSION

Researchers used the phonetic theory proposed by Chaer (2012) to find out the problems experienced by the grade eleven students of SMA Negeri 1 Dolok Merawan in English pronunciation. Based on the results of the recorded documentation taken on February 21, 2025. The theory used to find out English pronunciation errors is from Dulay (1982:146) which stated that there are four types of errors: linguistic category, surface

strategy taxonomy, comparative analysis, and communicative effect. The types of errors used in this research are surface strategy taxonomy. There are four types of errors based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which is used to identify students' errors: Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misordering.

The Text :

"The use of artificial intelligence in our daily lives has become increasingly popular. Many people believe that AI can help us with various tasks, such as scheduling appointments, sending emails, and even driving cars. However, some people are concerned that AI may take over human jobs and cause unemployment. What do you think about the use of AI? Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing?"

Phonetic Transcription :

"ðə juːz əv ˌɑːtɪfɪʃəl ɪnˈtɛlədʒəns ɪn ˈaʊər ˈdeɪli lɪvz hæz bɪˈkʌm ɪnˈkriːsɪŋli ˈpɒpjələr. ˈmeni ˈpɪpəl bɪˈlɪv ðæt aɪ kən help əs wɪð ˈveriəs təsks, sʌŋ əz ˈskedʒʊlɪŋ əˈpɔɪntmənts, ˈsendɪŋ ɪˈmeɪlz, ən ˈɪvɪn ˈdraɪvɪŋ kɑːz. ˌhaʊˈevər, sʌm ˈpɪpəl ər kənˈsɜːnd ðæt aɪ meɪ teɪk ˈoʊvər ˈhjumən dʒəbz ænd kɑːz ˌʌnɪmˈplɔɪmənt. wɒt duː ju θɪŋk əˈbaʊt ðə juːz əv aɪ? duː ju θɪŋk ɪts ə ɡʊd θɪŋ ər ə bæd θɪŋ?"

Table 1. English Pronunciation Analysis : Elencia

Misordering			
Word	English	Student error	Evaluation
1. Think	/ θɪŋk/	/tɪŋ/	/ə/ and /t/ have the same articulation point that is
			fricative alveolar and both of them are voiceless sound. The /ə/ and /t/ are called minimal pairs. The error occurred because the student stucked her tongue out very far & pushed the tongue out full centimeter or two ; that's too much and she omitted the

			sound /k/ at the end of the word. The sound /e/ requires some air to puff out of the mouth but the tongue need to be placed just by slightly pushing out between the top and bottom teeth.
Change Consonant sound from /z/ to /s/			
2. – Lives - E-mails - Cars	/laivz/ /i'mellz/ /'ka(r)z/	/laivs/ /i'mells/ /'ka(r)s/	s / and / z / have the same articulation point that is fricative alveolar ; the difference is in the type of consonant sound / s / is voiceless and / z /, is voiced. The error occurred because the student vibrated the tongue which made / s / changed to / z /
Change Consonant sound from /s/ to /k/			
3. Concerned	/kən'sɜrnd/	/kankərnəd/	Student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of consonant 'c' which should be pronounced with the sound /s/ but student pronounces it with /k /
Change Consonant sound from /v/ to /p/			

4. Various	/ˈveriəs/	/ˈperiəs/	/v/ and /p/ have different articulation point; /v/ is a voiced sound in which the upper teeth are touching the lower lip & gives some vibration when pronouncing it. Meanwhile, /p/ is a voiceless sound ; there should be air coming out of the mouth.
Omitting consonants /j/			
1. Human	/ˈhjumən/	/ˈhuman/	A consonant sound /j/ should precede the /u/ sound but the student missed the /j/ sound. The

			/j/ sound that we make with the back of our tongue high up . It can be touching up our back teeth on the inside but the tip of our tongue is not touching our teeth at all then we move to that /u/ sound with puckered lips.
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Change Vowel sound from /ə/ to /ʊ/			
1. Popular	/ˈpəpjələ(r)/	/ˈpopʊlɜ (r)/	An error occurred in the pronunciation of vowel "u" which should be pronounced /ə/ but the student pronounced it with /ʊ/
Change Vowel sound from /ə/ to /ɜ /			

1. Popular	/ˈpəpjələ(r)/	/ˈpopʊlə(r)/	Student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of vowel "a" which should be pronounced with the sound /ə/ but the student pronounced it with / ɜ /
Change Vowel sound from /i/ to / ɜ /			
1. People	/ˈpipəl/	/ˈpɜ pəl/	An error occurred with the sound /i/ but the student pronounced it with / ɜ /
Change Vowel sound from /ə/ to /a/			
1. Concerned	/kənˈsɜrnd/	/kankərnəd/	Student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of vowel "o" which should be pronounced with the sound /ə/ but students pronounce it with / a /
2. Human	/hjumən/	/human/	An error occurred with the sound /ə/ but the student pronounced it with / a /
Change Vowel Sound from /æ/ to /ɛ/			
1. Bad	/bæd/	/bed/	Student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of vowel 'a' in word ‘bad’ which should be pronounced with the sound /æ/ but student pronounces it with /ɛ / as if it is the pronunciation of word “bed”

Change Vowel sound from /i/ to a diphthong sound/ai/			
1. Believe	/bi'liv/	/bi'laiv/	An error occurred with the sound /i/ but the student pronounced it with a diphthong/ ai /

This study examines the pronunciation errors made by 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Dolok Merawan when reading an English text aloud. The research aims to identify common pronunciation errors and analyze their causes. The findings are based on a phonetic transcription analysis and comparisons between students' pronunciation and standard English pronunciation.

Pronunciation Errors Identified

Based on the recorded pronunciation of the given text, several common pronunciation errors were identified among the students. These errors can be categorized into **consonant sound changes, vowel sound changes, consonant omissions, and vowel modifications.**

1. Consonant Substitutions

Students often substituted certain consonants with others due to similarities in articulation.

- /θ/ → /t/ (e.g., *think* → /tiŋ/)
 - The sound /θ/ is a **voiceless interdental fricative**, while /t/ is an **alveolar plosive**. The substitution happened because the student **pushed the tongue out too far**, causing an incorrect articulation.
- /v/ → /p/ (e.g., *various* → /perius/)
 - The sound /v/ requires the **upper teeth to touch the lower lip** and create a vibration. The student replaced it with /p/, a **bilabial plosive**, due to unfamiliarity with voiced fricatives.
- /s/ → /k/ (e.g., *concerned* → /kankərnəd/)
 - The student replaced the /s/ sound with /k/, which indicates **misinterpretation of spelling rules** and a lack of exposure to correct phonetic pronunciation.

- /z/ → /s/ (e.g., *lives* → /laivs/, *emails* → /i'meɪls/, *cars* → /'ka(r)s/)
 - The sounds /s/ and /z/ share the same articulation point, but the student **failed to produce the vibration required for the voiced /z/**, leading to the substitution with the voiceless /s/.

2. Consonant Omissions

Some students omitted necessary consonant sounds, particularly in **words that contain glides or final consonants**.

- **Omission of /j/** (e.g., *human* → /human/)
 - The /j/ sound was omitted before the vowel /u/, likely due to **L1 interference**, as this glide does not exist in the students' native phonetic system.
- **Omission of final /k/** (e.g., *think* → /tɪŋ/)
 - The final /k/ sound was dropped, suggesting that the student **did not apply proper stress or articulation** in the pronunciation of word endings.

3. Vowel Substitutions

Vowel sounds were commonly mispronounced due to **confusion between English and Indonesian vowel systems**.

- /ə/ → /ʊ/ (e.g., *popular* → /'popʊlɜ (r)/)
 - The student replaced the schwa /ə/ with /ʊ/, which suggests a tendency to **overemphasize vowel articulation instead of reducing it** as in natural English pronunciation.
- /ə/ → /ɜ/ (e.g., *popular* → /'popʊlɜ (r)/)
 - The substitution of /ə/ with /ɜ/ indicates a **misinterpretation of unstressed vowel pronunciation**.
- /i/ → /ɜ/ (e.g., *people* → /'pɜ pəl/)
 - The student replaced /i/ with /ɜ/, possibly because of **difficulty in maintaining a tense vowel articulation**.

- /ə/ → /a/ (e.g., *concerned* → /kənkərnəd/, *human* → /human/)
 - This error suggests **an attempt to pronounce vowels as full sounds rather than reducing them to schwa**, which is common in English speech patterns.
- /æ/ → /ɛ/ (e.g., *bad* → /bed/)
 - The student pronounced /æ/ as /ɛ/, possibly due to **similarities in Indonesian vowel pronunciation**, making it sound like *bed* instead of *bad*.
- /i/ → /aɪ/ (e.g., *believe* → /bi'laiv/)
 - The student **added a diphthong where a monophthong was needed**, indicating overcompensation in pronunciation.

The findings indicate that students' pronunciation errors are primarily caused by:

1. **Interference from L1 (First Language)** – Students apply phonetic rules from Indonesian or regional languages when pronouncing English words, leading to **incorrect sound substitutions**.
2. **Lack of Phonetic Awareness** – Many students rely on **written spelling rather than phonetic pronunciation**, causing mispronunciations, especially in vowel sounds.
3. **Limited Exposure to Native Pronunciation** – Due to minimal interaction with **native English speakers or authentic English materials**, students develop incorrect pronunciation habits.
4. **Inconsistencies in English Spelling and Pronunciation** – English has irregular spelling rules, leading students to **misinterpret the relationship between letters and sounds**.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the pronunciation errors made by 11th-grade students at SMA N 1 Dolok Merawan when reading English texts aloud. The findings indicate that students frequently struggle with vowel sounds, consonant clusters, and word stress. The most common errors include mispronunciations caused by interference from their native

language, lack of exposure to native English pronunciation, and insufficient phonetic instruction.

Errors were categorized based on surface strategy taxonomy, including omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The results show that many students substitute unfamiliar English sounds with sounds closer to their native language, leading to pronunciation inaccuracies. Additionally, the omission of crucial sounds, such as final consonants or diphthongs, significantly impacts their intelligibility. Given these challenges, this study highlights the importance of explicit pronunciation instruction in the English curriculum. Teachers should incorporate phonetic training and interactive pronunciation exercises, such as minimal pairs practice, tongue twisters, and phonemic transcription training, to enhance students' pronunciation skills. Providing students with exposure to native-like pronunciation through listening exercises and multimedia resources is also recommended. By implementing these strategies, students can improve their pronunciation accuracy, leading to better spoken English proficiency and increased confidence in communication. Future research may explore the effectiveness of different instructional approaches to pronunciation training in the classroom.

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