

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH CONSONANTS AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF BUNG HATTA UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to describe the students' problem in pronouncing English consonants at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The researcher used descriptive design in this research. The population of this research was the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University. The total number of population was 59. They were distributed into two classes; Class A and B. In selecting the sample, the researcher used cluster random sampling technique. The number of sample was 28 students. The instrument used to collect the data was an oral test in pronouncing English consonants. The researcher found the reliability of the test by using Pearson Product Moment formula. It was found that the reliability index of this test was .76 so that the test can be considered reliable. The result of the data analysis showed that most of the second year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing English consonants. It was proved by the fact that 71% students had problem and only 29% students had no problem in pronouncing them. Specifically, they had problem in pronouncing English voiceless fricative alveopalatal, voiced fricative alveopalatal, voiceless fricative interdental, and voiced fricative labiodental. Based on those findings, it could be concluded that the second year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University had problems in pronouncing English consonants. In line with the conclusion of this research, the students are suggested to learn how to produce consonants and to do more practices for producing them, to improve their ability in pronunciation by doing more exercises. Besides, the lecturers who teach English should explain to the students the ways of produce fricative sounds, especially the unfamiliar one such as /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /ð/ sounds. In additions, they should give more exercises and practices for them to improve their ability to pronounce English fricative consonant sounds.

**Key words:** Pronunciation, English Consonants.

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## Introduction

Pronunciation is the act or result of producing the sounds of speech consisting of consonants, vowels, and diphthongs. In

addition, it also deals with such other aspects as pitch, stress, juncture, and intonation.

Correct pronunciation will help speaker and listener in communication because it is related to speaking and listening. The ability to pronounce an English language also needs to be supported by having good listening ability because they are integrated to each other. In order to have a good pronunciation, someone should know the sounds, how to produce the sound, and the spelling of the words. Each sound is represented by one symbol, and one symbol is always used to represent a given sound.

In learning pronunciation, students should know the English segmental phonemes that consists of consonants, vowels and diphthongs. Consonants are sounds produced by obstructing the stream of air coming out from the lungs by organs of speech somewhere in the mouth or nose (HRL,1995:16).

Based on the result of the informal interview the researcher did towards some of students on 8 September 2014 she assumed that many students had problems in producing or pronouncing English consonant sounds. For example in pronouncing the word “*clothes*”, they pronounce with /klouz/ instead of /kləʊðz/ and the word “*measure*” they pronounce as /mezə/ instead of /meʒə/.

Consonants sounds are produced by having obstruction, while vowels are produced without having obstruction. According to Hornby (2010), in the production of consonants, the parts of mouth involved are tongue, the lips, the teeth, the tooth ridge, the palate, the toe, the velum and the uvula.

Consonants can be classified into certain categorise. Firstly, it is based on the vocal cord, consonants can be classified into voiced consonants and voiceless consonants. Secondly, based on the point of articulation, consonants can be categorized into bilabial consonants, labio dental consonants, interdental consonants, alveolar consonants, palatal consonants, velar consonants, and Glottal Consonant. Thirdly, based on the manner of articulation, consonants can be categorized into stops/plosive, affricative, fricative, nasal, lateral and glides.

Fricative consonants are formed by a narrowing the air-passage at some point so that, when air is expelled by pressure from the lung, it escapes with a kind of hissing sound (Jones, 1987:179). Fricatives are produced by obstructing the air in such a way that some sorts of friction are heard. Fricative consonants consist /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/, /ð/, /θ/, and /h/. Some of them exist in Indonesian Language (/f/, /v/, /s/, /z/), and

some others do not exist in Indonesian Language.

In general, the purpose of this study was to describe the students' problems in pronouncing English fricative consonants. In more specific, the purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To find out whether the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have problems in pronouncing voiceless fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʃ/.
2. To find out whether the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have problems in pronouncing voiced fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʒ/.
3. To find out whether the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have problems in pronouncing voiceless fricative interdental consonant sound /θ/.
4. To find out whether the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University have problems in pronouncing voiced fricative interdental consonant sound /ð/.

## **Research Method**

This research was descriptive in nature. It is to find out the students' problems in pronouncing English fricative consonant sounds. Gay (1987: 189) states that descriptive research determines and describes the way things are. She adds that it involves collecting data in order to answer question concerning the current status of the subject of the study. In this study, the researcher described the problem faced by the second year students in pronouncing English consonant sounds at English Department of Bung Hatta University.

Gay (1987:102) states that population is a group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be generalized. The population of this study was the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University in academic year 2014/2015. The total number of the population was 59 students. Because the members of population were distributed into two two class, the researcher took a sample of students for her research. Sampling is the process of selecting a number of populations for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 1987: 101). Sampling is the process of

selecting sample. Sample is a part of the population. She also says that a good sample is representative of the population from which it is selected. She also says that the minimum sample of the descriptive is 10% of the population. It means that more than 10% is better.

In this research, the researcher used cluster random sampling. The researcher used cluster random sampling because the students were divided into two class; A and B. Besides that, the researcher chose cluster random sampling because they had the same syllabus, teaching materials and time allocation.

In selecting the sample, the researcher wrote the name of each class from the exact science and social classes in a small piece of paper and put them into two different boxes. Then the researcher mixed them, she took out one piece of each box and the classes that chosen be the sample of this research. In this study, the chosen classes were class B. The number of the sample was 28 students.

The instrument of this research was an oral pronunciation test. In this test, she used 40 words containing the four fricative unfamiliar consonants; 10 words containing voiceless fricative alveopalatal consonant

sounds /š/, 10 words containing voiced fricative alveopalatal consonant sounds /ž/, 10 words containing voiceless fricative interdental consonant sounds /θ/, 10 words containing voiced fricative interdental consonant sounds /ð/.

In giving a good test, the test should be valid and reliable. For the validity of a test, the researcher used the content validity. It is supported by Gay (1987: 129) who says that content validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended content area. To have valid test, the researcher constructed a test based on material of the subjects which is stated in syllabus.

Gay (1987: 135) states that reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures. For the reliability of the test, the researcher used inter-rater technique. In inter-rater technique, there were two scorers to assess the students' writing. In this research, the researcher was the first scorer and the second scorer was Riko Chandra Putra. The researcher chose Rico Chandra Putra to be the second scorer because in pronunciation class he has a good grade. He got an A grade in that class. The use of two scorers was needed to minimize the subjectivity.

To find out the reliability index of the test, the researcher calculated coefficient correlation between scores given by the first scorer and the second scorer by using the Pearson Product Moment Formula as suggested by Arikunto (2012: 87) as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x) (\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Then the researcher used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's idea (2012: 89):

- .81 – 1.00 = very reliable
- .61 – .80 = reliable
- .41 – .60 = reliable enough
- .21 – .40 = low reliable
- .00 – .20 = very low reliable

Based on the result of analysis data, it was found coefficient correlation of the test was .76 which means that the test was reliable.

## Findings

### 1. Students' Problem in Pronouncing English Fricative Consonants

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found that the highest score was 29 and the lowest score was 13. Then she calculated the mean and standard deviation of the test. Such calculation

revealed the mean and standard deviation were 19.95 and 4.01 respectively. The result of data analysis shown that 8 out of 28 students (29%) had no problem in pronouncing English fricative consonants, and 20 out of 28 students (71%) had problem in pronouncing English fricative consonants. In order to be clear, the problems in pronouncing English fricative consonants (š, ž, θ, ð).

### 2. Students' Problem in Pronouncing

/š/

The result of data analysis revealed that the highest score was 6.5, and the lowest score was 2, and Mean and Standard Deviation were 4.92 and 1.24. It also shown that 9 out of 28 students had no problem in pronouncing /š/. In contrast, 19 out of 28 students had problem in pronouncing /š/. In order to be clear, the percentage of students who had and had no problem in pronouncing /š/ was shown in Table 1:

**Table 1**

**The Percentage of Students Who Had and Had no Problem in Pronouncing**

*/s/*

NO	Classification	F	N
1	Had Problem	18	64 %
2	Had No Problem	10	36 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**3. Students' Problem in Pronouncing**

*/z/*

Based on the result of the data analysis, it was found that the highest score the students got was 7.5 and the lowest score was 3. It also revealed that Mean and Standard Deviation were 4.89 and 1,29. It also demonstrated that 22 students (68%) had problem in pronouncing */z/* and students (32%) had no problem in pronouncing */z/*. In order to be clear, the percentage of students who had and had no problems in pronouncing */z/* was shown in Table 2:

**Table 2**

**The Distribution of Students Who Had an Had No Problem in Pronouncing**

*/θ/*

NO	Classification	F	N
1	Had Problem	19	68 %
2	Had No Problem	9	32 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**4. Students' Problem in Pronouncing**

*/θ/*

Based on the result of the data analysis, it was found that the highest score the students got was 7 and the lowest score was 3. It also revealed that Mean and Standard Deviation were 5.05 and 1.58. It also demonstrated that 20 students (71%) had problem in pronouncing */θ/* and 8 students (29%) had no problem in pronouncing */θ/*. In order to be clear, the percentage of students who had and had no problems in pronouncing */θ/* was shown in Table 3:

**Table 3**

**The Distribution of Students  
Problem Who Had And Had No in  
Pronouncing /θ/**

NO	Classification	F	N
1	Had Problem	20	71 %
2	Had No Problem	8	29 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**5. Students' Problem in Pronouncing /ð/**

The result of the data analysis was found that the highest score was 8.5 and the lowest score was 2.5, Mean and Standard Deviation were 5.11 and 1.47. There were 7 students out of 28 students had no problem in pronouncing /ð/. In contrast, 21 students out of 28 students had problem in pronouncing /ð/ (see Appendix 6). In order to be clear, the problems in pronouncing /ð/ were shown in Table 4:

**Table 4**

**The Distribution of Students  
Problem Who Had And Had No in  
Pronouncing /ð/**

NO	Classification	F	N
1	Had Problem	21	75 %
2	Had No Problem	7	25 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**Discussions**

**1. Students' Problem in Pronouncing English Fricative Consonant**

The result of data analysis showed that most second year students (71%) at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing English fricative consonant sounds /ʃ, ʒ, θ, ð/. The students who had difficulties were difficult pronounce English fricative consonants correctly.

**2. Students' Problem in Pronouncing /ʃ/**

After doing research, the researcher found some students had problem in pronouncing voiceless fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʃ/. It was proved by the result of data analysis that showed 19 out of

28 students (68%) had problem in pronouncing voiceless fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʃ/. For example in pronouncing word “*she*” they pronounce it with /si:/ instead of /ši:/, word “*brush*” they pronounce as /brass/ instead of /brʌʃ/ and word “*English*” they pronounce as /englis/ instead of /ɪŋgliʃ/.

This problem probably was caused by the English fricative consonant /ʃ/ was not familiar to Indonesian students since this sound does not exist in Indonesian Language. Consequently, they are not accustomed to producing that sound.

### **3. Students’ Problem in Pronouncing /ʒ/**

Another finding of this research was that the Second Year Students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing voiced fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʒ/. It was proved by the result of data analysis that shown 22 out of 28 students (79%) had problem in pronouncing voiced fricative alveopalatal consonant sound /ʒ/. For example in pronouncing word “*pleasure*” they pronounce with /plezə/ instead of /pleʒə(r)/, word “*garage*” they pronounce it with /garaj/ instead of /gæra:ʒ/, and word

“*leisure*” they pronounce with /leisur/ instead of /leʒə(r)/.

This problem probably was caused by the English fricative consonant /ʒ/ was not familiar to Indonesian students and the limited knowledge about place of articulation and manner of articulation in pronouncing sound /ʒ/.

### **4. Students’ Problem in Pronouncing /θ/**

The result of data analysis also showed that 71% students had problem in pronouncing voiceless fricative interdental consonant sound. The data showed that 20 out of 28 students had problem in pronouncing voiceless fricative interdental consonant sound. For example in pronouncing word “*with*” they pronounce as /wit/ instead of /wiθ/ and word “*method*” they pronounce as /metod/ instead of /meθəd/.

As already discussed above, English is a language that has bad orthography, it means that there is no exact correlation between letter and sounds. It probably was caused the students problem in pronouncing English fricative consonant /θ/.

## 5. Students' Problem in Pronouncing /ð/

The last finding of this research was that 75% students had problem in pronouncing voiced fricative interdental consonant sound. The data showed that 21 of 28 students had problem in pronouncing voiced fricative interdental consonant sound. For example in pronouncing word "weather" they pronounce as /weder/ instead of /weðə(r)/ and word "clothe" with /klots/ instead of /kləʊð/.

This problem probably was caused by the English fricative consonant /ð/ was not familiar to Indonesian students and the limited knowledge about place of articulation and manner of articulation in pronouncing sound /ð/.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher had some conclusions as the following:

in general, second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problems in pronouncing English fricative consonant sound /ʃ, ʒ, θ, ð/. It was indicated by majority of students (71%) had problem in pronouncing English fricative consonants.

Another simple conclusion could also be drawn that the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing /ʃ/. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem was 64%.

Another conclusion of this study was that the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing /ʒ/. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of the number of the students who had problem was (68%).

The next conclusion was the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing /θ/. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem was 71%.

The last conclusion is the second year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University had problem in pronouncing /ð/. It was proved by the fact that the percentage of students who had problem was (75%).

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