

## A Descriptive Study on Pronunciation Mastery for the Eight Year Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Sempu

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### ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is the process of producing the sound of speech, including intonation, stress, and rhythm. The purpose of this study is to investigate students' pronunciation skills, particularly in pronouncing short and long vowels. Pronunciation has two main features: 1) segmental features which include individual sounds; vowels and consonant. 2) Suprasegmental features which include features sounds; such as intonation, rhythm and stress. Speech qualities such as stress, intonation, and rhythm that are blended above consonants and vowels are known as suprasegmental features. The research was descriptive quantitative in nature. The eight year Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Sempu in the academic year 2020/2021 with total of 30 students were the respondents. The result of the data analysis showed that the total of percentage of (1). /i:/ vowel was 56,67%. (2). /ɑ:/ vowel was 43,33%. (3). /u:/ vowel was 31,65%. (4) /ɛ:/ vowel was 42,21%. (5). /ɔ:/ vowel was 46,67% . (6) /ɒ/ vowel was 60%. (7). /æ/ vowel was 63, 3% . (8). /ʊ/ vowel was 36, 67%. (9). /e/ vowel was 34, 98% . (10) /ʌ/ vowel was 61, 65%. (11) /ə/ vowel was 59, 98%. (12). /ɪ/ vowel was 51, 65%. The vowel which has the highest error was /æ/ with total percentage 63,3%.

**Keywords:** *Pronunciation, Short vowel, Long Vowel.*

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### A. Introduction

Learning English has got a positive response from the public as a medium to interact with the outside world in era of globalization. It is proved by the implementation of English as a compulsory subject for students since an early age. Learning a language to dealt with learning how to communicate. In learning English, the students are expected to be fluent in communicating with others. Students learning will be most effective when teacher give each student same opportunity to speak English, either talk with the teacher or other students. Teaching English includes four skills they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill. The learners are actually expected to master all the skills equally, but there are at least one or two skills that are left behind the others for several reasons, for example because of the lack of media. Based on the four language skills, speaking constituted a difficult skill to be mastered

by the learner because it is the primary skill taught to the students. Speaking is one of most important skill that should be mastered to improve communication.

One of the most important aspects of speaking is pronunciation. In English, pronunciation is crucial because mispronunciations cause the listener to misunderstand the meaning of the statement. Pronunciation is certainly a key aspect in people's ability to communicate effectively. When it comes to pronouncing words, many students make numerous errors. It is immediately detectable when they communicate orally. Pronunciation is an important part of learning a second or foreign language's speaking skills. Pronunciation is essential for a student to become a comprehensible speaker. Foreign English learners would benefit from the ability to speak in a standard manner as well, because good pronunciation can make conversation easier and more useful. Pronunciation is way to make a meaning by producing sound. In learning pronunciation, learners are required to pronouncing English sound correctly because mispronounce can affect meaning. Pronunciation has two main features: 1) segmental features which include individual sounds; vowels and consonant. And 2) suprasegmental features which include features sounds; such as intonation, rhythm and stress.

## 1. Segmental Features

A segmental feature system is the sound that includes vowel, consonant, and diphthong. The classification is based on the difference in the function in utterance and their ways of production. They help learners in producing sounds in normal speech (Ramelan, 2004, p.22).

### a. Short Vowels

According Roach (2009:13) English short vowels are the part of large number of vowels sound that need analyzing. The pronunciation of short vowels is relatively short. Short vowels consist of [ɪ], [e], [æ], [ʌ], [ɒ], [ʊ]. These each vowel is described in relation to the cardinal vowels.

[ɪ] This vowel is in the close front position and the lips are slightly spread.  
(example word : 'pin', 'fish', 'bit')

[e] This vowel position is in front. It is between primary cardinal vowel no.2 [e] and no.3 [ɜ]. The lips are slightly spread. Example word ('men', 'yes', 'bet')

[æ] This vowel position is in the front., but not really opens as cardinal vowel no. 4 (a). The lips are slightly spread. Example words: ‘gas’, ‘bat’, ‘man’.

[ʌ] (Example words: ‘cut’, ‘come’, ‘rush’). This is a central vowel, and the diagram shows that is more open than the open-mid taught height. The lips position is neutral.

[ɒ] (example words: ‘pot’, ‘gone’, ‘cross’) .This vowel is not quite fully back, and between open-mid and open in tongue height. The lips are slightly rounded.

[ʊ] (example words: ‘put’, ‘pull’, ‘push’) .The nearest cardinal vowel is number. 8 (u), but it can be seen that ʊ is more open and nearer to central. The lips are rounded.

## b. Long Vowels

Long vowels are the vowels which tend to be longer than the short vowels. Long vowel is characterized by one vowel plus a length mark made of two dots. Long vowels consist of [i:], [u:], [ɜ:], [ɔ:], [a:].

[i:] This vowel is closer and more front than short vowel [i]. The lips are only slightly spread. (Example words: ‘beat’, ‘peace’, ‘mean’.)

[u:] The nearest cardinal vowel to this is [u], while the lips are only moderately rounded. (Example words: ‘loose’, ‘food’, ‘soon’)

[ɜ:] The middle part of tongue lifts toward the roof of the mouth in the middle. The lip position is neutral. (Example words: ‘purse’, ‘bird’, ‘fern’)

[ɔ:] The tongue height for this vowel is between [ɔ] and [o], and closer to the latter. This vowel is almost fully back and has quite strong lip-rounding. (Example words: ‘torn’, ‘horse’, ‘board’.)

[a:] This is open vowel in cardinal vowel [a], but not as back as this. The lip position is neutral. (Example word: ‘half’, ‘pass’, ‘card’.

## c. Consonant

In articulatory phonetics, a consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. Examples are [p], pronounced with the lips; [t], pronounced with the front of the tongue; [k], pronounced with the back of the tongue; [h], pronounced in the throat; [f] and [s], pronounced by forcing air through a narrow channel (fricatives); and [m] and [n], which have air flowing through the nose (nasals).

## 2. Suprasegmental Features

Speech qualities such as stress, intonation, and rhythm that are blended above consonants and vowels are known as suprasegmental features. These characteristics do not apply to a single sound, but rather to syllables, sentences, or phrases.

### a. Stress

According to Jones (1992), stress refers to the energy with which a syllable is spoken. The amount of stress changes from syllable to syllable. Stressed syllables are those that are spoken with more stress than their neighboring syllables. In fact, distinguishing merely two degrees—stressed and unstressed—is usually sufficient.

The stress on the same words and sentences is not always the same. Variations are occasionally required to clarify the concept, and they will eventually be required owing to rhythmical factors.

### b. Intonation

Intonation is a property of all languages that affects pronunciation. Stress and rhythm are two more aspects of pronunciation. In the same way that these other characteristics are about how we say something rather than what we say, intonation is about how we say it. In its most basic form, intonation might be described as "spoken music." The meaning of what we say might be influenced by changes or variations in the music (or pitch). As a result, we might think of intonation as the way we use our voice's pitch to convey specific meanings and moods.

## c. Rhythm

The concept of rhythm refers to an apparent occurrence that occurs at regular intervals of time; for example, the rhythm of a heartbeat, a flashing light, or a piece of music can be detected. The regular occurrence of stressed syllables has long been considered to indicate that English speech is rhythmical. Whether stressed syllables are separated by unstressed syllables or not, the hypothesis that English has a stress-timed rhythm indicates that stressed syllables will tend to occur at reasonably regular intervals. According to the stress-timed rhythm hypothesis, the time between each stressed syllable and the next will tend to be the same, regardless of the number of unstressed syllables between them.

## B. Research Method

Research design is accumulation and preparation data to apply and realize research purpose. The design of this research was a descriptive research. Descriptive research describes characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Depending on the research questions, the data collection methods for descriptive research can be combined in a variety of ways. A descriptive study has some characteristics, such as not controlling the treatment and not proving any hypotheses, but it describes everything that happens in real life and analyzes the problem systematically in order to describe the content (Arikuto, 2003:291).

The researcher has been conducted in SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Sempu used purposive method. The researcher used population in Eight grade students because they has been taught speaking since in the seventh grade, so they already get a lot of vocabulary as good pronounce them. The researcher use cluster random sampling to obtain research samples. The respondents are taken from the eighth grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Sempu. It has 183 students for eight grade students which it divided into six classes. The researcher takes 30 students from two classes in eight grades as respondents.

In this research the data which was needed for the students' pronunciation skill scores. They were gotten from tests which have been made by researcher with consideration of the supervisor. Based on opinion above, this research would use oral test

for collecting pronunciation score. Here the researcher use oral test. There are 12 kinds of vowels including short and long vowel. The researcher gives 25 words to analyze what kinds of vowels' error and the most vowels' error pronounced by students are.

1.1 Table of Vowel's Error

NO	INDICATOR		WORDS	NUMBER OF ITEM	TOTAL	
1	Pronouncing vowels	long	/i:/	mean, teacher	1, 13	2
			/ɑ:/	charm, mask	2, 14	2
			/u:/	beautiful, view	3, 15	2
			/ɛ:/	thirsty, work, word	4, 16, 25	3
			/ɔ:/	morning, talk	5, 17	2
2	Pronouncing vowels	short	/ɒ/	document, foreign	6, 18	2
			/æ/	glad, thank	7, 19	2
			/ʊ/	good, crook	8, 20	2
			/e/	clever, effort	9, 21	2
			/ʌ/	nothing, touch	10, 22	2
			/ə/	attention, opinion	11, 23	2
			/I/	excuse, listen	12, 24	2

The collected data from test will be analyzed quantitatively by using percentage formula:

$$P = \frac{Fq}{N} \times 100$$

Notes:

P = Percentage of students' pronunciation score

Fq = Frequency of incorrect answer

N = Number of students. Sudjono in Basri and Mulansari (2014:3)

To identify students' errors, the researcher used the following classification system established by Depdikbud (1993:37) in Mulansari and Basri (2014:3):

- 65%-100% is classified as high
- 36%-64% is classified as moderate
- 0%-35% is classified as low

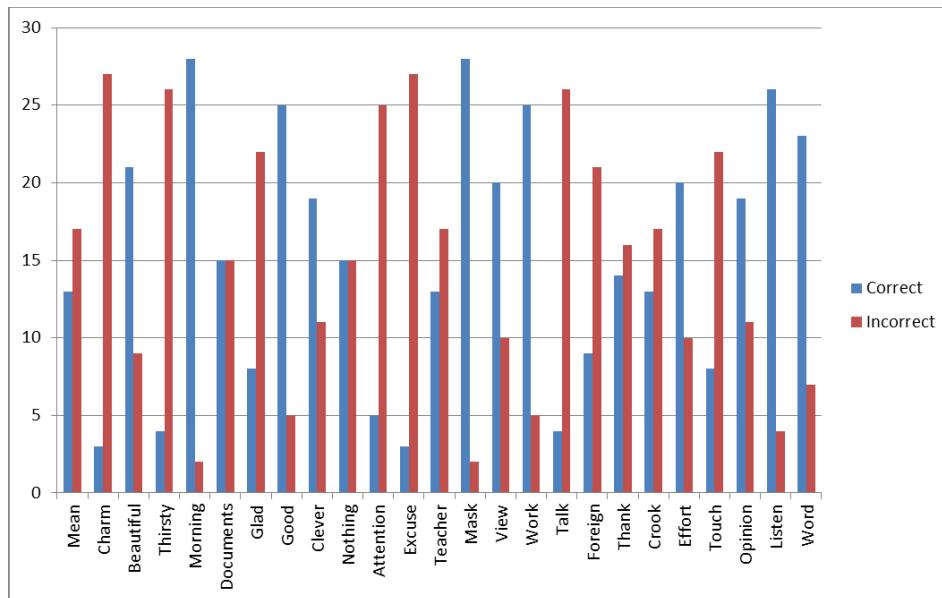
## C. Research Finding and Discussion

### 1. Research Finding

The researcher conducted this research at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Sempu on August, 16th 2021. It is located at Darungan village, Tegalarum, Sempu. The researcher took 30 students from the eighth grade students of 8C and 8D as the respondent of the

research. The results of this research were taken by using oral test with 25 words as research instrument. The result of the oral test was collected to know the students' pronunciation mastery. All the students result can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 1 students' pronunciation score



According to the chart above, has shown the result of students' pronunciation score in the oral test. Researcher has found that the students have made three types of error. There were types of error in pronouncing short vowels and long vowels were substitution, insertion and omission.

The first type of error was substitution. Instead pronouncing the word in the text, students substitutes a word that may or may not make sense in the text. For example the word 'charm', a lot of students pronounced as /ka:(r)m/. In this research, substitution is types of error that students mostly made, there were "mean", "charm", "thirsty", "morning", "document", "glad", "clever", "nothing", "excuse", "mask", "work", talk", "thank", "crook", "effort", "touch", "opinion", "word".

The next type of error was insertion. Insertion is characterized by presence of one or more element that is not needed. For example the word 'beautiful', a lot of students pronounced as /bj:utiful/. In insertion error, there were 6 words which were included; there are "beautiful", "attention", "teacher", "view", "foreign", "listen". And

the last type of error is omission. Omission is characterized by the absence of one or more elements which are needed. There were only one word in omission. It was good.

## 2. Discussion

In conducting the pronunciation test, there were five steps. The first step, the researcher helped the learner to recognize English words by modeling how to pronounce word in the text. Next, the researcher asked to the students to pronounce the text together in order to help them making correct English sounds. From this step, the researcher knew mispronunciation words that the students mostly did. The third step, researcher gave feedback to the students by giving some correction to their mispronunciation. The researcher drilled the students in order to make their familiar with the English sound by asking the students to read the text aloud. Finally, the researcher asked the students to come forward one by one to read the text aloud. When the students pronouncing the text, researcher recorded the students' voice and scored their pronunciation based on the phonetic transcription.

There the result of the data analysis that the researcher analyzed quantitatively to found percentage of students' pronunciation score. The total of percentage of /i:/ vowel was 56,67%. Secondly was /ɑ:/ vowel which got 43,33% error. Thirdly was /u:/ vowel with total percentage 31,65%. The fourth vowel was /ɛ:/ which the total percentage error were 42,21%. Next was /ɔ:/ vowel which got 46,67% error. The sixth vowel was /ɒ/ which the total percentage errors were 60%. Vowel /æ/ got 63, 3% error. For vowel /ɔ/ got total percentage 36, 67%. The ninth was /e/ vowel which got 34, 98% error. Next vowel was /ʌ/ which the total percentage errors were 61, 65%. Vowel /ə/ with total percentage was 59, 98%. The last vowel was /I/ which got 51, 65%. The vowel which has the highest error was /æ/ with total percentage 63,3%, and it was classified as moderate.(Depdikbud (1993:37) in Mulansari and Basri (2014:3).

### **Students' error in pronouncing /i:/ vowel.**

This vowel included two test item and two types of error which were 'substitution' and 'insertion'. The first error was substitution in "mean" test no.1. More than half students mispronounce this word as /mea:n/ and /mæn/, while 13 students pronounced properly as /mi:n/. no.13"teacher" was the second item. The type of error in "teacher" word was insertion. 17 students (56,67%) did error as they pronounced



/te:tʃə(r)/ and the correct pronunciation /ti:tʃə/ accomplished by 13 students with percentage (43,33%). The total percentage of error in /i:/ vowel were 56,67%.

### **Students' error in pronouncing /a:/ vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made 'substitution' error in the two test item. "charm" is the first test item no. 2, total percentage error made by students in pronouncing this word was (80%). 27 students pronounced as /ka:(r)m/. The correct pronunciation was /tʃa:m/ and 3 students were correct. "mask" is the second test item no.14. the correct pronunciation is /ma:sk/, and 28 students pronounced correctly with percentage (93,3%), while two students did error as they pronounced /mæsk/ with percentage (6,67%). The total percentage of error in this vowel were 43,33%.

### **Students' error in pronouncing /u:/ vowel.**

In this vowel, there were two tests. In pronouncing them, there was error made by students called "insertion". The first error was "beautiful" test no.3, with percentage error (30%). 9 students pronounced this word as /bjutiful/. The correct pronunciation was /'bjurɪfl/ and 21 students pronounced it correctly. Next test item was "view". There were 10 students made error pronunciation (33,3%). The correct pronunciation was /vju:/ but they pronounced as /vijju/ and inserted /i:/ vowel. The total percentage of error in /u:/ vowel were 31,65%.

### **Students' error in pronouncing /ɛ:/ vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made error on three test item. "thirsty" is the first test item. No.4, total percentage students pronounced this word was (86,67%). 26 students pronounced as /ti:rsti/. The correct pronunciation was /'θɜ:sti:/ and four students (13,3%) were correct. The second was "work". /wɜ:k/ was the correct pronunciation and 25 students got the right answer, while 5 students made error pronunciation(6,67%). The last test item was no.25 "word". 23 from 30 students (76,67%) could pronounced this vowel as /wɜ:d/, while 7 students (23,3%) did the error as they pronounced vowel as /wɔ:d/. the total percentage of error in this vowels were 42,2%.

### **Students' error in pronouncing /ɔ:/ vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made 'substitution' error in the two test item. "morning" is the first test item no. 5, total percentage error made by students in

pronouncing this word was (6,67%). 2 students pronounced as /mɔːrniŋ/. The correct pronunciation was /mɒːniŋ / and 28 students were correct. “talk” is the second test item no.17. The correct pronunciation is /t ɔːk/, and 4 students pronounced correctly with percentage (13,33%) while 26 students did error as they pronounced /tɑːlk/ with percentage (86,67%). The total percentage of error in this vowel were 46,67%.

### **Students’ error in pronouncing / ɒ / vowel.**

This vowel included two test item and two types of error which were ‘substitution’ and ‘insertion’. The first error was substitution in “document” test no.6. Half of all students mispronounce this word as /dɔːkumen/,while 15 students pronounced properly as /dɒkjumənt/. no.18“foreign” was the second item. The type of error in “foreign” word was insertion. 21 students (70%) did error as they pronounced /fɔːreɪn/ and the correct pronunciation /fɒrən/ accomplished by 9 students with percentage (30%). The total percentage of error in /i:/ vowel were 60%.

### **Students’ error in pronouncing / æ/ vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made ‘substitution’ error in the two test item. “glad” is the first test item no. 7, total percentage error made by students in pronouncing this word was (73,3%). 22 students pronounced as /glɑːd/. The correct pronunciation was /glæd / and 8 students were correct. “thank” is the second test item no.19. The correct pronunciation is / θæŋk /, and 14 students pronounced correctly with percentage (46,67%) while 16 students did error as they pronounced / θɑːŋk / with percentage (53,3%). The total percentage of error in this vowel were 63,3%.

### **Students’ error in pronouncing /ʊ/ vowel.**

This vowel included two test item and two types of error which were ‘omission’ and ‘substitution’. The first error was omission in “good” test no.8. 5 students mispronounce this word as / gɒd /, while 25 students pronounced properly as /gʊd/. no.20“crook” was the second item. The type of error in “crook” word was substitution. 17 students (56,67%) did error as they pronounced /krɔːk/ and the correct pronunciation /krʊk/ accomplished by 13 students with percentage (43,33%). The total percentage of error in /i:/ vowel were 36,67%.

## **Students' error in pronouncing /e/ vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made 'substitution' error in the two test item. "clever" is the first test item no. 9, total percentage error made by students in pronouncing this word was (36,67%). 11 students pronounced as /'kli:və(r)/. The correct pronunciation was //klevə(r)/ / and 19 students were correct. "effort" is the second test item no.21. The correct pronunciation is / efət/, and 20 students pronounced correctly with percentage (66,67%) while 10 students did error as they pronounced /i:fət/ with percentage (53,3%). The total percentage of error in this vowel were 34,9%.

## **Students' error in pronouncing /ʌ / vowel.**

In pronouncing this vowel, students made 'substitution' error in the two test item. "nothing" is the first test item no. 10, total percentage error made by students in pronouncing this word was (50%). 15 students pronounced as /nə: θɪŋ/. The correct pronunciation was /'nʌθɪŋ/ and 15 students were correct. "touch" is the second test item no.22. The correct pronunciation is /tʌtʃ /, and 8 students pronounced correctly with percentage (26,67%) while 22 students did error as they pronounced / tʌ:tʃ/ with percentage (73,3%). The total percentage of error in this vowel were 61,65%.

## **Students' error in pronouncing /ə/ vowel.**

This vowel included two test item and two types of error which were 'insertion' and 'substitution'. The first error was insertion in "attention" test no.11. 25 students mispronounce this word as / a:tenʃ(ə)n /, while 5 students pronounced properly as / ə'tenʃ(ə)n/ /. no.23"opinion" was the second item. The type of error in "opinion" word was substitution. 11 students (36,67%) did error as they pronounced /ɒ'pɪnɒn / and the correct pronunciation /ə'pɪnjən/ accomplished by 19 students with percentage (63,3%). The total percentage of error in / ə / vowel were 59,8%.

## **Students' error in pronouncing /ɪ/ vowel.**

This vowel included two test item and two types of error which were 'substitution' and 'insertion'. The first error was substitution in "excuse" test no.12. Total percentage made students in pronouncing this word was almost 100%. 27 students (90%) pronounced as /ek;skju:s/. it meant most of them made an error .While 3 students pronounced properly as /ɪk'skju:s/. no.24."listen" was the second item. The type of error in "listen" word was insertion. 4 students (13,3%) did error as they pronounced /lɪstən /

and the correct pronunciation /'ls(ə)n/ accomplished by 26 students with percentage (86,67%). The total percentage of error in /ɪ/ vowel were 51,65%.

## D. Conclusion

Many students who have difficulty pronouncing words in English are promoted by researchers. The students claim that they don't get enough pronunciation practice. As a result, students make numerous errors on the pronunciation test. Substitution, insertion, and omission were the three sorts of errors students made when pronouncing short and long vowels. The researcher evaluated the data quantitatively to find the percentage of students who scored well on pronunciation. The vowel which has the lowest error was /u:/ with total percentage 31,65%. Meanwhile, the vowel which has the highest error was /æ/ with total percentage 63,33%. The researcher was classified the difficulties as moderate.

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