

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, researcher would like to discuss about the research context which presents the phenomena and the reason why this research is done, research focus which presents the problem or question of this research, the research objective which presents about the aims of researcher doing this research, significance of study which presents the benefits of this research, definition of key term to avoid the lack of clarity of meaning, and the study of previous research which presents the similar researches which have done by other researcher previously.

A. Research Context

English is one of international language in the world. Because of that predicate, English is learnt by people of many countries. People could learn English by watching movie, listen to someone's conversation, moreover people learn from their son and daughter's English lesson. People learn English whenever and wherever with many manners although just little. Considering that fact, many people use English when they visit other country or if they meet with foreign people. It means that English is needed by people to communicate in order to deliver what they would like to speak.

Pronouncing English word well is important to make the interlocutor understand what the speaker's mean. Some of people think that as long as the interlocutor could understand what they mean, it has no problem to speak with bad pronunciation. This statement is ever touched by Harmer where he stated

that because of the wasting time, good pronunciation is ignored to teach by many teachers to their students. They stated that being able to communicate and understandable was enough when someone studied the language.¹ In fact, pronunciation is one of English lesson that the role should be realized by teachers and learners. Important point of pronunciation is that mispronunciation could make interlocutor misunderstand to what the speaker's mean. If someone pronounces the word show as /sɔ/, interlocutor might misunderstand with the speaker's mean. Sentence that have meaning "we show a box" might be misunderstood as "we saw a box" because sound /sɔ/ is the correct pronunciation of word "saw" and sound /ʃoʊ/ is the correct pronunciation of the word "show".

Singh stated that knowing grammar and vocabulary is important, but it will be useless if the student cannot produce and pronounce those structures and vocabularies correctly.² According to this Singh statement, knowing how to use structures and vocabulary would be vain if people could not practice their English knowledge. As we know that the goal to learn a language is to be able to communicate each other. If someone has learnt a language but he/she could not practice it, the lesson and knowledge that he/she have learnt would not get released well. His/her goal to be able to pronounce English well would not be reached.

¹ Yusriati Yusriati and Selamat Husni Hasibuan, "The Analysis of English Pronunciation Errors by English Education Students of FKIP UMSU," *Journal of English Education and Teaching* 3, no. 2 (August 24, 2019): 230–48, <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.3.2.230-248>.

² Yon Visoni and Leni Marlina, "Students' Pronunciation Errors on Vowels at Spoken English Activities (Speech) Class at English Department Universitas Negeri Padang." *Journal of English Language Teaching*, no. 3 (September, 2020): 489.

In the other side, Harmer also said that there are some reasons about why learners think could speak English easily (bad pronunciation) to their teachers and other students. Firstly, teachers can understand their students easily than an average people because their ears are usually hear 'bad English'. It means that teacher often hear bad pronunciation of English words made by students. Secondly, other students are the speakers of the same language. They have same pronunciation patterns and make the same mistakes too. Because of that, it is easy for them to understand each other. Thirdly, the classroom is not a real situation and it just takes place at school. Students do not have any opportunity to talk to native speaker.³

From Harmer's statement, it could be concluded that the accurateness in pronouncing correct sound of English word is very important to master English speaking skill. Although using bad English pronunciation could be understood by teachers and other students, it still important to learn how to speak by using correct pronunciation because learning how to produce correct English pronunciation is a necessity to talk and speak in a real situation with English native speaker. Teacher and other students could understand to what speaker's mean because they have accustomed to speaker's bad pronunciation. It is different with English native speaker who has accustomed to hear correct English pronunciation in his/her circle.

Non-native speakers of English might find difficulty to pronounce English words because of the inconsistency of sounding English letters. It means that it could be different to pronounce between the first sound and the

³ Abbas Pourhosein Gilakjani, "English Pronunciation Instruction: A Literature Review." *International Journal of Research in English Education*, no. 1 (November, 2016): 3.

second sound of one letter. For example is the word “bag” and “ball”. Both words use “a” vowel letter but the how to pronounce those words are different. The vowel “a” in word “bag” is pronounced as “æ” and the vowel “a” in the word “ball” is pronounced as “ɔ”. Another example of the inconsistency of sounding English letters is in the word “fill” and “file”. Both of them use “i” vowel letter but the way in pronouncing “i” letter in those words are different. The vowel “i” in the word “fill” should be pronounced as /ɪ/ but the vowel “i” in the word “file” should be pronounced as /aɪ/. This condition is different with Indonesia where the written word and how to pronounce it is same. In the other words, Indonesian unit of letter have consistent/constant sound. The word “baca” and “kaca” have same vowel and same way to pronounce the vowel.

How to speak word correctly is presented in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). International Phonetic Alphabet is usually used as standard in transcribing different unit of sounds and phonemes.⁴ By knowing International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), speakers would know how to utter word correctly. It makes the learner of English become easier to understand the differences of each word pronunciation. This could become a reason why reading IPA is important in order to check the correct way to sound English words.

The way human utters a word is produced by their organs. Their organs work together to produce sound. Senbay divides these organs into three parts called vocal means, they are: the organs in which the sound occurs (larynx), air pipe with a pair of bellows (lungs and trachea), then mouth, throat, and nose

⁴ Mas Sulis Setiyono, “USING INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (IPA) IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION: LINGUISTICS IN PRESENT CENTURY,” *International Journal of English Linguistics, Literature, and Education (IJELLE)* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.32585/ijelle.v1i1.353>.

which can enlarge the same sound with resonance spaces.⁵ By the work of their organs means human sounds are produced and could be heard.

Non-native English speaker might be difficult to hear the correct unit of sound in a word. This condition might occur because non-native English does not use English in their circle or daily life. They are not accustomed to hear and speak in English. Knowing that fact, researcher realizes that to know and differentiate one sound and the other sounds in a word, people should know the measurement of that unit of sound. It is about the information of sound unit values. Information about the size and maturation in vocal tract is presented by formant frequencies.⁶

Vowels has big role in English accent because O'Connor have said that English accent were differentiate by vowel sound. He said that:

“Native speaker of English from different parts of the world have different accents, the differences of accents are mainly the result of differences in sound of vowels; the consonants are produced in very much the same way where English is spoken.”⁷

From O'Connor's statement, it could be concluded that how to pronounce the consonants sound is almost same. In contrast, vowels are the most affecting sound in determining the differences of English accents. There are several sounds of vowels in English. They are /i/, /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /a/, /u/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ɔ/.

⁵ Mehmet Kurudayioglu, “Speaking and Speaking Education as Physical Process in Turkish Education.” *Educational Research and Reviews*, no. 2 (2011): 225.

⁶ Jessica E. Huber et al., “Formants of Children, Women, and Men: The Effects of Vocal Intensity Variation,” *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 106, no. 3 (September 1999): 1532–42, <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.427150>.

⁷ Dewi Setiorini, “Acoustic Analysis of Vowels Produced by EFL Students in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2015), x.

Al-Qur'an also hints about the sound itself as follows.

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاجِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ

“They do not wait but one scream (sound) which will destroy them when they are fighting.” (Q.S. Yasin 36:49)

The Qur'an describes the sound with the word *shoihah*. The word (*صيحة*) *shoihah* originally meant a loud sound that came out of the throat to ask for help or to rebuke. The Qur'an uses the word in the sense of the sound caused by an earthquake or lightning. While the scholars understand this word in the sense of the cry of the angel Israfil, when he blew the trumpet, which at that time.⁸

Based on those facts, researcher is interested to conduct study about vowel formant value produced by the 8th semester of English Department of State Islamic Institute of Madura based on English native speaker formant value using Praat software. In conclusion, researcher decides to do research entitled “**English Vowels Formant Values of the 8th Semester of English Department of State Islamic Institute of Madura: A Vowel Quality Study Using Praat**”.

B. Research Focus

Research Focus is the educational issues, controversies, or concerns that guide the need for conducting a study.⁹ In this research, the research problems are as follows.

1. What are the vowel formant values spoken by the 8th semester of English department of State Islamic Institute of Madura?

⁸ Achmad Hanif Ulinuha, “Bunyi dalam Prespektif Al Qur'an dan Sains.” no. 1 (February, 2018), 113.

⁹ John E. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (Baston: Pearson Education, 2012), 59.

2. How is the vowel quality of the 8th semester of English department of State Islamic Institute of Madura based on English native speaker formant value?

C. Research Objective

Research objective reveals about the target to be achieved in a study.¹⁰

In this research, the objectives of study are as follows.

1. To know the vowel formant values spoken by the 8th semester of English Department of State Islamic Institute of Madura.
2. To know the vowel quality of the 8th semester of English Department of State Islamic Institute of Madura based on English native speaker formant value.

D. Significance of Research

Significance of study describes the usefulness or urgency of research, both scientific (theoretical) and social (practical).¹¹ Therefore, the significances of this research are:

a. Theoretical Significance

With this research, the researcher hopes that all of us could increase our knowledge, especially in saying English pronunciation well and we also could provide example of using good pronunciation for young learner.

b. Practical Significance

1. For English Lecturer

Researcher hopes that by this research, English teacher could improve or evaluate their teaching method or strategy to increase the student pronunciation ability.

¹⁰ Tim Penyusun et al., "Pedoman Penulisan Karya Ilmiah," n.d., 131.

¹¹ Ibid, 19.

2. For College Student

Researcher hopes that by this research, student knows how close their pronunciation ability with native speaker's pronunciation and also could evaluate and increase their pronunciation ability.

3. For Researcher

The researcher could get more knowledge and understanding about saying English word in native speaker accent.

4. For the Other Researcher

Researcher hopes that this research could support other new research related to this research.

E. Definition of Key Term

Definition of key terms or operational definitions are required for avoiding differences in meaning or lack of clarity of meaning. The terms that need to be explained are terms related to the main concepts contained in thesis.¹² In the other word, definition of key term is used to avoid ambiguity for readers. So, the main concept of thesis should be explained in this part.

1. Formant value is the frequency of natural resonance produced from various oral and throat cavities.
2. Vowel quality is one vowel sound consideration that concern with tongue and lip position.
3. Praat is a software which is used to know the formant value of human's pronunciation.

¹² Ibid, 20.

F. The Study of Previous Research

First previous study is from Widya and Erika Agustiana's research entitled "English Vowel Pronunciation Accuracy: an Acoustic Phonetics Study with PRAAT". This research discusses the pronunciation accuracy by analyzing speech production acoustically using PRAAT software and by taking minimal pairs research data. The object of this research is 4 participants at the 3rd semester students majoring English education. The result shows that from four participants, there is only one participant who can distinguish front and back vowels correctly while the other three participants fail to distinguish the certain vowel sounds. The most common mistake is at long and short vowels ([i]:[ɪ], and [u]:[ʊ]). Furthermore, the problems of pronouncing [æ], [ɔ], and [ɒ] varied across the participants. The first language interference, attitude toward English, and lack of motivation are indicated to be the factors affecting pronunciation.¹³

Second previous study that similar with this research is done by Dewi Setiorini. This research discusses the formant value of college student entitled "Acoustic Analysis of Vowels Produced by EFL Students in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya". Setiorini uses Praat as her research instrument and limit her research participants by using 16 participants of EFL Student in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. This research only focuses on the quality of English vowel [æ] and [ɛ]. The result of this research is that the timbre of EFL university

¹³ Widya Widya and Erika Agustiana, "ENGLISH VOWELS PRONUNCIATION ACCURACY: AN ACOUSTIC PHONETICS STUDY WITH PRAAT," *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching* 4, no. 2 (June 27, 2020): 114, <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v4i2.6229>.

students of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya vowel (vowel quality) [ɛ] is same as [æ]. Most of them make large jaw opening with F1 around 700 Hz like [æ].¹⁴

This research discusses the formant value of the 8th semester of English department of State Islamic Institute of Madura. This formant value is also analyzed based on English native speaker formant value. This research title is “English Vowels Formant Values of the 8th Semester of English Department of State Islamic Institute of Madura: A Vowel Quality Study Using Praat”. The similarity between this research and those two researches are all of the researches aims to find the value of formants. The difference between those researches is that Widya and Erika use 4 participants at the 3rd semester student majoring English Education, Setiorini’s research uses 16 students who are in the 8th semester EFL university students of UIN Sunan Ampel while this research use 20 participants of the 8th semester of English department of State Islamic Institute of Madura as the research object. Besides, Widya and Erika’s research focus in analyzing the formant value of minimal pairs while this research focus on vowel quality based on English native speaker’s formant value. Other differences between those researches is that Setiorini’s research only focuses on the quality of English vowel [æ] and [ɛ], Widya and Erika’s research focuses on the minimal pairs of vowel sound (front vowels and back vowels) while this research focuses on vowel sounds [i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [æ].

¹⁴ Dewi Setiorini, “Acoustic Analysis of Vowels Produced by EFL Students in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya (Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, 2015), x.

Table 1.1 the differences of research between previous study and this research

Widya and Erika Agustiana's research	Dewi Setiorini's Research	Camilia Febriani's Research
Focuses on the minimal pairs of vowel sound (front vowels and back vowels)	Focuses on the quality of English vowel [æ] and [ɛ]	Focuses on the vowel quality of vowel sound [i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [æ]
4 participants at the 3 rd semester student majoring English Education	16 participants who are in the 8 th semester EFL university	20 participants of the 8 th semester of English department
Descriptive Qualitative	Descriptive Qualitative	Mixed Method