

## **THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH VOICED AND VOICELESS CONSONANTS BY USING MINIMAL PAIRS**

**Herlina, Dewi Novita, Urai Salam**

English Education Study Program, Language and Art Education Department,  
FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak

Email: [andi\\_herlina25@yahoo.com](mailto:andi_herlina25@yahoo.com)

**Abstract :** The purpose of this research is to investigate how well is the ability of the Third Semester Regular A Students of the English Education Study Program in Academic Year 2012/2013 in pronouncing voiced and voiceless consonants. Method of this research is descriptive study by holding three time of test using minimal pairs. Subject of this research is all of the Third Semester Regular A Students of the English Education Study Program in Academic Year 2012/2013. Data of the research was collected by using pronouncing practice oral test of minimal pairs. Result of this research is the main score of students' pronouncing ability at the first test was 91.37, the second test was 89.40 and the last test was 91.48 which was categorized as good to excellent. The result of the students' mean score had shown their significant ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants.

**Key word :** Pronouncing Voiced and Voiceless Consonants, minimal Pairs.

**Abstrak :** Tujuan dari Penelitian ini adalah untuk mennyelidiki seberapa baik kemampuan mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Reguler A semester ketiga tahun pelajaran 2012/2013 dalam melafalkan konsonan *voiced* dan *voiceless* Bahasa Inggris menggunakan minimal pairs. Metode penelitian ini adalah studi deskriptif dengan melakukan tiga kali test menggunakan minimal pairs. Subjek penelitian adalah seluruh mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Reguler A Semester ketiga tahun pelajaran 2012/2013. Data penelitian didapatkan dengan menggunakan test lisan praktek pelafalan minimal pairs. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah nilai rata-rata yang diperoleh mahasiswa pada test pertama adalah 91,37, test kedua 89,40 dan test terakhir 91,48 yang dikategorikan baik sampai dengan luar biasa. Hasil nilai rata-rata mahasiswa ini telah menunjukkan kemampuan signifikan mereka dalam melafalkan konsonan *voiced* dan *voiceless* Bahasa Inggris.

**Kata Kunci :** Pelafalan *Voiced* dan *Voiceless* Konsonan, Minimal Pairs

Language is a tool used by human to communicate each other. It is a system for expression meaning as a tool of communication. According to Brown (2001: 34), language is a system for the expressions of meaning; primary function, interaction and communication.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. Teacher teaches English to students to enable the students to acquire this language and can communicate in this language. According to Rod Ellis (1985: 6), “in the process of acquiring English through teaching learning process in the classroom, students learn through subs-conscious or conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or setting”. this means that students as the learners are able to acquire language consciously.

English as foreign language (EFL) indicates the use of English in a non-English-speaking region. Braine (1999: 39) explains that “foreign language is used by people in certain countries in the world to communicate to other in that language to academic purposes and office requirements”.

Mastering communicative competence means that the students as the foreign language learners should be able to communicate effectively and use the language as their need, not only focuses on grammatical aspect but also use that language fluently. Brown (2001: 77) said “we are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has consumed our historical journey”.

In interaction and communication purpose, speaking is one of the language skills which is very important in learning English as a foreign language besides reading, writing and listening. Speaking is the ability to use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities. In addition, it is a process of uttering word, phrases and sentences meaningfully to share ideas, information and feelings.

Pronunciation is one of linguistic terms that is considered basic to develop in speaking skill. It is the way in which sounds are produced. The correct pronunciation of English is very important to make the recipients easy to understand the message delivered by the speakers.

English is one of foreign languages that the students in Indonesia learn. In learning English, students may face difficulties for the students have different culture. One of the difficulties faced by the students is to produce good pronunciation. The difficulty to produce good pronunciation is faced by the students who practice to pronounce English pronunciation rarely.

Concerning pronunciation, English has sounds like voiced and voiceless which may be difficult take pronounced especially for Indonesian Learner whose native language does not have those sounds. It is therefore, the learners may

pronounce the sounds almost same and sometimes they pronounce them in correctly.

Besides the voice consonants, there is also voiceless consonants which do not use the voice. They are percussive and use hard sounds. Once again, you can test if a consonant is voiceless by putting your finger on your throat, you will feel no vibration in your throat, just a short explosion of air as you pronounce. Pronounce each of these consonants, /p/, /t/, /k/, /s/, /sh/, /ch/, and /th/ (as in *thing*), sounds and feel no vibration in your throat.

The writer had observed the students and ask a sight about voiced and voiceless. Some of them said that they have problem in pronouncing voiced and voiceless and the others said they have no problem to the same matter. Mean while, mastering of these sounds is important because the meaning be ambigue. For example, **she** and **sea** if they are pronounced with wrong sound, the meaning will be ambigue.

Based on the data, the writer have assumption that students' ability in pronouncing important to be conducted in order to know more about students' ability in the pronouncing for the researcher to learn a lot more and also to describe the voiced and voiceless sounds that are problematic to students and making recomendation for the research.

The writer wants to do a research because of the reason. That is the writer want to describe the ability to pronounce voiced and voiceless consonants of the Third Semester Regular A Students of the English Education Study Programs in Academic Year 2012/2013.

## **METHOD**

In conducting a research, it is necessary to put forward the method that is used to achieve the goal of the research. The goal of the research is to solve the research problems. In solving the problems, there are various kinds of methods which could be applied depending on what sort of research it is. The appropriate method which used in this research is descriptive method.

The descriptive method is appropriate method applied in this study as the writer intends to investigate whether or not the second year Regular A students of the English Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University have been able to pronounce voiced and voiceless consonants or not. The form of this research is quantitative research, because the researcher describes or interprets the students' ability in pronouncing voiced and voiceless consonants.

In this research, the technique to collect the data was measurement technique. The measurement was administered three times in testing to the students because this research to know the students' ability, not to give treatment or the other purposes. The test is held, in order to know the students' ability in

pronouncing voiced and voiceless consonants. The result of test was measured in order to figure out the students' ability in score of percentage.

Furthermore, the procedures of data collecting were as follows:

### **Preparation**

Preparation consists of 1) Selecting the words containing voiced and voiceless to be written down as a list of words in minimal pairs; 2) Constructing the test containing 20 items as test that the students have to pronounce.

### **Testing**

Testing consists of 1) Explaining the rule of test; 2) Sharing the minimal pairs sheet to each student; 3) Make sure the classroom is quiet; 4) Asking the students to pronounce the list of pairs of English words one by one.

### **Scoring**

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In order to know the students' ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants of the third semester students in English Education Study Program of Tanjungpura University in academic year 2012/2013, the researcher count the mean score of students' ability.

This part contains the discussion about analysis of mean score based on the data. The result of this research showed that in three times of doing analysis of students' ability in pronouncing the English voiced and voiceless consonants, most of the time, the students are able to achieve high score.

There are two steps applied by the researcher to know the students ability. They are the analysis of the students' achievement and the testing hypothesis. In doing the analysis of the students' achievement, the researcher give a test to the students. The test was given using minimal pairs. After that, the next step is the researcher making the calculation of students' score as testing hypothesis.

### *1. The analysis of the students' achievement*

To know exactly the ability of students in pronouncing the English voiced and voiceless consonants, the researcher gave a minimal pair test for three times.

The first test was done on April 23, 2013, the second test was done on April 30, 2013 and the last test was done on 7 May, 2013. The researcher put the students' result in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants into a table in every test so, there would be the following table.

| <b>Result of Students' Ability at the Tests</b> |              |                      |
|---|--------------|----------------------|
| <b>Test</b>                                     | <b>Score</b> | <b>Qualification</b> |
| <b>1</b>  | 91.37        | Good to Excelent     |
| <b>2</b>  | 89.49        | Good to Excelent     |
| <b>3</b>  | 91.48        | Good to Excelent     |

At the first test, the result shows that the total score of students is 3837.5 and the mean score is 91.37. The researcher was surprised because the students' score in the first test was so high, almost of the students got the score up to 91. To make sure about the result in this first test, the researcher will conduct the second test using minimal pairs to the same subject of research.

Based on the students' score in the second test, the total score of the students is 3775 and the mean score is 89.40. It is still showed the high score of students' ability in pronouncing the English voiced and voiceless consonants. The researcher decided to do the last test to get the more certainly of the result of the test.

Based on the students' score in this last test that show total score of students is 3842 and the mean score is 91.48, the researcher should say that the students in the third semester of English Education Study Program in academic year 2012/2013 has good quality in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants.

## *2. Testing hypothesis*

After making the calculation of students' score of the test, the researcher calculates the mean of students' score by using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum S}{N}$$

Interpretation: Based on description above where at the first test,  $\sum S$  (3837.5) and  $N$  (42), the computation is 91.37. At the second test  $\sum S$  (3775) and  $N$  (42), the computation is 89.40. At the last test,  $\sum S$  (3842) and  $N$  (42), the computation is 91.48.

Based on the result, in the first test, the students got 91.37, it decreased a little in the second test where the students' score was 89.40 and it increased again in the last test become 91.48. It is quite clear to the researcher that the measurement of the students' score in the three tests was stable.

According to the table of qualification criteria, the result is good to excellent, its score percentage is between 80 – 100. So, the students have good ability and able to pronounce voiced and voiceless consonants.

The researcher was conducted to investigate the ability of students in English Education Study Program in academic year 2012/2013 to pronounce English voiced and voiceless consonants through minimal pairs. In order to answer the questions, the researcher applied minimal pairs. In analyzing the students' ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants. Minimal pair is used as a model applied. This model is widely used in other activities of teaching pronunciation.

Therefore with a consideration that this is the most appropriate model among the others to be used in this research, the researcher started to measure the students' score in three times. During the analysis, the researcher found that the result of students' ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants have good quality. It is really different with the fact stated in the background of the research about the low ability of students to pronounce English voiced and voiceless consonants.

This fact was shown from three times of the mean of students' score of the test. After the researcher calculates the mean of students' score by using the formula where the mean score is from the sum of students' score divided by the sum of the students itself. It is described that in the first mean score, the students' ability was 91.37. In the second mean score, it was 89.40 and finally in the third mean score the researcher calculated the students' ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants became 91.48.

When the tests were held, some words in minimal pairs that often be pronounced incorrect because they have sound almost same. At the first test, the words are **sea – she, fan – van, hat – had, back – bag, loose – lose, three – tree**. For the second test, the words are **shave – save, cell – shell, sign – shine, card – guard, toe – thought, sock – shock**. And the last test the words are **pie – pipe, pack – page, post – pose, pail – veil, wind – wind, lamb – lamp**.

That is why the words are often pronounced incorrect because they have voiced and voiceless consonants that have sounds almost same. The words that often pronounced incorrect more at the second test because the words are at minimal pairs have more complex voiced and voiceless consonant so that the students are little difficult to pronounce them.

Having analyzed the data collected, the researcher found at the third semester regular A students of the English Education Study Program in academic year 2012/2013 have mastered the English voiced and voiceless consonants. It is different with the statement stated first in the research background. The statement that derived from the researcher that the students have low ability in pronouncing the English voiced and voiceless consonants.

The fact that the result is so high, while the background says the opposite condition due to the test is used minimal pairs. This tools of data collecting have never tested before. Although the subjects of research are the same people, the result show different thing.

Based on the reality above, it is clear that the third semester students regular A of English Education Study Program in academic year 2012/2013 are able to pronounce English voiced and voiceless consonants through minimal pairs. Therefore, it is recommended to use minimal pairs in teaching English voiced and voiceless consonants.

It is also important to care about the students' pronunciation ability even in the level of college students. Pronunciation that involves the ability of physical speech organ that produce sounds. It is a must in English communication to master the speech organ a lot of pronounce the English sounds where many English sounds are not found in their mother tongue.

As Jones (1978) states "The students must be able to listen to the differences between the various sounds of their mother tongue. Eventhough their speech organs can potentially produce the English sounds, the students need to produce the sounds correctly and clearly." If the students can produce English voiced and voiceless consonants, the communication in English will be meaningful and easier to get the message in conversation.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

According to the data analysis of the students' test result, the researcher draw some conclusions and suggestions as follow. The result of data analysis show that the students' mean score when having three tests are 91.37 at the first test, 89.40 at the second test and 91.48 at the last test. From these result, it is concluded that the students' achievement is good to excellent because they can get score of percentage 80 – 100. It means that the students have good ability in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants.

The result of three test shows that the obtained mean score of the students are 91.37 at the first test, 89.40 at the second test and 91.48 at the last test. It is higher than average of criteria. It means that the null hypothesis is rejected but alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Having analyzed the data collected, the researcher found at the third semester regular A students of the English Education Study Program in academic year 2012/2013 have mastered the English voiced and voiceless consonants. It is different with the statement stated first in the research background. The statement that derived from the researcher that the students have low ability in pronouncing the English voiced and voiceless consonants.

The measurement of using minimal pairs in pronouncing English voiced and voiceless consonants help the researcher to collect the data.

There is significant ability of students in pronunciation English voiced and voiceless consonants to the third semester regular A students of the English Education Study Program in Academic year 2012/2013.

### **Suggestion**

The students have to improve their ability in pronouncing English, especially voiced and voiceless consonants by practicing more. Minimal pairs can be used by the teacher to practice English pronunciation in teaching learning process.

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