

STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION ERRORS IN ENGLISH SILENT LETTERS AT SMA SWASTA ADVENT SIMBOLON

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Abstrak

Pelafalan kata bahasa Inggris memiliki perbedaan yang signifikan dengan bahasa Indonesia, dalam bahasa Inggris terdapat huruf yang tidak diucapkan, sementara pada bahasa Indonesia tidak memiliki aturan yang demikian. Hal ini menyebabkan pembelajar mengalami kesulitan dalam melafalkan kata kata bahasa Inggris. Sehingga, akan berpengaruh terhadap kualitas berbicara dan dapat menyulitkan pendengar untuk memahami arti dari kata yang diucapkan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis kesalahan pengucapan, kesalahan yang paling umum, dan faktor yang menyebabkan siswa melakukan kesalahan saat mengucapkan huruf diam bahasa Inggris pada siswakeselas 3 SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat dua jenis kesalahan: kesalahan pre-sistematis dengan jumlah 142 (69%) dan Sistematis dengan jumlah 64 (31%). Jumlah kesalahan terbanyak terdapat pada kategori pre-sistematis sebesar 69%. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan beberapa faktor yang menyebabkan siswa kesulitan mengucapkan kata-kata yang mengandung huruf diam: kurangnya paparan kosa kata bahasa Inggris, kurangnya motivasi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, dan kurang maksimalnya peran guru mengajar pengucapan pada siswa. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat dua jenis kesalahan yang dilakukan oleh siswa dalam mengucapkan huruf diam: Pre-Systematis dan Sistematis, yang mana jenis kesalahan yang paling dominan adalah pre-systematis. Hal tersebut disebabkan oleh beberapa faktor yang berasal dari siswa dan guru.

Keywords: Pengucapan, Kesalahan, Huruf Diam, Advent Simbolon

Abstract

The pronunciation of English words is significantly different from that of Indonesian; in English, some letters are not pronounced, while in Indonesian, there are no such rules. This causes students to need help pronouncing English words. So, it will affect the speaking quality and make it difficult for listeners to understand the words meaning. This research aims to determine the types of pronunciation errors, the most common errors, and the factors that cause students to make errors when pronouncing English silent letters in grade 3 students at the Simbolon Adventist Private High School. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The research results showed two types of errors: pre-systematic errors, with 142 (69%), and Systematic errors, with 64 (31%). The highest number of errors was in the pre-systematic category at 69%. The research results also show several factors that cause students to have difficulty pronouncing words containing silent letters: lack of exposure to English vocabulary, lack of vocabulary, and Lack of Emphasis on Pronunciation in Learning. Students make two types of errors when pronouncing silent letters: Pre-systematic and systematic, where the most dominant type of error is pre-systematic. This is caused by several factors originating from students and teachers.

Kata Kunci: Pronunciation, Error, Silent Letter, Advent Simbolon

INTRODUCTION

In delving into the intricacies of human complexity, an in-depth examination of language serves as the primary gateway to gaining deeper insights into social and cultural interactions. Linguistics, as the scientific study that maps out the structure and dynamics of language, provides a robust foundation for unraveling the essence of human communication. Linguistics explores language as the fundamental mode of human interaction, encompassing its complexities and characteristics. Based on the aspects of language studied, linguistics can be categorized into two main groups: micro and macro linguistics. Microlinguistics focuses on exploring the internal structure or

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system of language and includes various subdisciplines such as Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Lexicology, as stated by Siminto (2013).

Phonology, as a field of linguistics, plays a crucial role in comprehending the organization and patterns of pronunciation in English. It involves studying how sounds are analyzed and their role in creating meaning within language. Specifically, phonology investigates the structure of sounds within a linguistic system, including the rules and patterns governing their pronunciation. The primary objective of phonology is to explore the organization and interactions of sounds, as well as how various sounds can impact meaning within a linguistic context. Phonology aims to analyze and discuss the sounds produced through human speech (Chaer, 2013), examining their function as meaningful differentiators within a language.

Learning English presents a considerable challenge, particularly due to its pronunciation being vastly different from Indonesian. English, being a foreign language to Indonesians, neither serves as their primary nor their second language. Hence, Indonesians often require assistance in mastering English pronunciation. Students encountering difficulties in learning English face obstacles not only with vocabulary but also in effectively communicating their thoughts. However, this task is challenging because their native language differs significantly in terms of words and pronunciation, leading to feelings of insecurity when conversing in English.

In addition to these factors, English words differ in their characteristics compared to Indonesian. Generally, Indonesian words are pronounced as they are spelled, which is not always the case in English. English has phonetic characteristics where the pronunciation of words can differ from their spelling. English also includes many words that have similar pronunciations but distinct spellings and meanings. For example, consider the words "taught" (/tɑ:t/) and "thought" (/θɑ:t/); despite the similar pronunciation, they differ in meaning due to their initial consonants. Therefore, understanding correct pronunciation becomes crucial. English is rich in pronunciation conventions and word structures, including the presence of silent letters in many words. These silent letters are present in the spelling of words but are not pronounced when spoken (Carney, 2012). This feature poses challenges for English language learners, particularly in mastering accurate pronunciation. Mispronouncing words with silent letters can lead to confusion in comprehension and using the word correctly in context. Thus, mastering the correct pronunciation of words with silent letters requires not only understanding the word's structure but also awareness of when these silent letters are and are not pronounced. Discriminating when to pronounce these silent letters is a vital skill in mastering English pronunciation.

However, the presence of silent letters continues to pose significant challenges in the pronunciation abilities of language learners, particularly students. Silent letters, which are not pronounced in spoken words, add layers of complexity to phonetic structures. In terms of pronunciation, students often struggle to articulate words correctly when silent letters are involved. Omitting or mispronouncing these letters can lead to substantial errors in verbal communication. This issue requires attention because it not only impacts the accurate pronunciation of individual words but also affects the overall clarity and fluency of the learner's spoken language. Therefore, addressing the difficulties posed by silent letters in pronunciation is crucial for enhancing students' communicative competence and refining their oral language skills.

This occurred at one of the schools examined in this research. Practical issues related to the pronunciation of English silent letters are also evident at SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon, a formal educational institution located in SimbolonPurba, Palipi district, Samosir Regency. English is one of the foreign language skills taught at this secondary school. Previous research involving second-grade students at the school revealed that students still struggle and require assistance in pronouncing English words, particularly those with silent letters, leading to numerous mispronunciations. During

initial assessments, students were tasked with articulating three specific words. For instance, when pronouncing "knowledge" (with a silent 'k'), most students pronounced /knɒlɪdʒ/ instead of the correct /ˈnɒːlɪdʒ/. Similarly, the word "wrest," which includes a silent 'w,' was pronounced /wrest/ rather than /rest/, and the word "castle," containing a silent 't,' was pronounced /ˈkestel/ instead of /ˈkæsl/.

Based on the aforementioned challenges, numerous students need to enhance their pronunciation skills, particularly concerning English silent letters. This difficulty poses a significant barrier as it hampers comprehension during conversations or reading, affecting the understanding of meaning. Understanding these issues is crucial for research purposes. Therefore, it is essential to identify common pronunciation errors and their origins to effectively address them. Many researchers have investigated errors in pronouncing English words containing silent letters. However, there remains a need to explore pronunciation errors specifically among university students majoring in English, as noted in studies by Kurniawan et al. (2022) and Rumbardi & Lestari (2022). Previous studies primarily focused on establishing relationships, differences, comparisons, and causes in analyzing pronunciation errors among students. This indicates that the topic remains a prevalent phenomenon and ongoing issue among students in current research.

Based on the phenomena mentioned earlier, the researcher aims to explore the following issues: types of pronunciation errors, the most prevalent pronunciation errors, and factors contributing to students' errors in pronouncing words with English silent letters.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. As (Creswell, 2007) stated, that qualitative research is a method to investigate and comprehend an individual or group's significance in social situations. As(Kumar, 2011) stated, descriptive research systematically depicts a situation, problem, phenomenon, service, or program. It aims to offer information about various aspects, such as the living conditions of a community or attitudes towards a particular issue. This study recognized the mispronunciations among third-grade students at SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon. The researcher used several instruments to collect data.(Sugiyono, 2017) mentioned that research instruments are tools to gauge observed natural and social phenomena. Researchers will use several methods to obtain data, test, and interview. The test, namely the pronunciation test. The source of this text is an article from the Jakarta Post newspaper titled "Scientists Make Way for Gene-Edited Tomatoes as Vegan Source Of Vitamin D," written by Natalie Grover on 24 May 2022. The researcher follows specific procedures to address the issues raised by the research being undertaken to collect data:

1. Observation: The observation technique is a data collection by directly observing data objects. The stages of observation carried out by the researcher are:
 - a. Ask for permission from the school and related teacher to conduct this research
 - b. The researcher distributed the prepared reading text to each student.
 - c. One by one, the students read the text while the researcher recorded their voices
 - d. After recording the data, the researcher listens and phonetically transcribes based on the Oxford Learner's Dictionary at <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>
2. Interview: In this case, the researcher interviewed five students in Class XII-IPA of SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon. The stages of the interview that were carried out are:
 - a. Ask permission from the teacher concerned to request time and carry out an interview.
 - b. Ask questions that have been prepared based on the guidelines.

- c. Record activities during the interview using a mobile phone.
- d. The researcher transcribes the conversation in the interview to make it easier for the researcher to select data that suits the research objectives.

The researcher used steps to analyze the data (Miles et al., 2014). There are three interactive steps: data condensation, data display, and drawing/verifying conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

This section will present the data in two parts: firstly, the outcomes of the student pronunciation test, and secondly, the findings from the interviews.

Table 1. Students' Pronunciation Test

Students' Initial	Students Pronunciation							
	Scientist	Gene	Bones	Could	Sunlight	Fruit	Hour	Enough
YS	/skmtsts/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
VS	/skmtsts/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
CS	/skmtsts/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
FS	/skmtsts/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
MS	/skmtsts/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
SS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
LS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
BS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
ST	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
SB	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
ES	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
YS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
JS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
YS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
WS	/skentist/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
AS	/skentis/	/dʒi:n	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlait/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enaw/
ABS	/skentis/	/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enug/
MS	/skentis/	/dʒi:n	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enog/
YS	/skentis/	/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/
MRS	/skentis/	/gen/	/bones/	/kold/	/sʌnlaik/	/fruit/	/hor/	/enoug/

Table 2. Interview Question 1

Question 1	
<p><i>Bagaimana pendapat anda tentang pentingnya nyapengetahuan English Silent Letters dan mempelajari kata Bahasa Inggris? (What do you think about the importance of knowing English Silent Letters when pronouncing English words?)</i></p>	
LS	<p><i>Menurut saya itu penting, karena akan berpengaruh juga terhadap kata yang kita ucapkan (I think it is important because it will also affect the words we say)</i></p>
CS	<p><i>Tentu, sangat penting, karena itu memungkinkan komunikasi yang efektif. Jika pelafalan nyatidaktepat, orang akan kesulitan memahami apa yang kita sampaikan. (Yes, it is very important, because through this we can communicate well, if the pronunciation is not good, of course people will find it difficult to understand what we say)</i></p>
YS	<p><i>Menurut saya sangat penting, karena akan mempengaruhi kualitas bicara (In my opinion, it is very important, because it will affect the quality of speech)</i></p>
JS	<p><i>Tentu penting. Pengetahuan tentang silent letters dalam kata-kata itu penting dalam cara kita mengucapkan kata-kata. Ini membantu kita untuk mengucapkan kata-kata dengan benar dan menghindari kesalahan. (Of course, it is important. Knowledge of the silent letters in words is important in the way we pronounce words. It helps us to pronounce words correctly and avoid mistakes.)</i></p>
BS	<p><i>Sangat penting. Mengetahui huruf bis membantu kita berbicara lebih jelas. Itu membantu kita bisa lebih dipahami oleh orang lain tanpa kesulitan. (Very importantly, knowing silent letters helps us speak more clearly. It allows us to be better understood by others without difficulty)</i></p>

Based on the first question above, researchers can conclude that all students realize that knowledge of Silent Letters in English is important. It can also be seen from each

word that the researcher has marked regarding students' interview answers regarding whether understanding English Silent Letters is important.

Table 3. Interview Question 2

Question 2	
Menurut anda apa yang menjadi faktor atau penyebab hingga anda merasa kesulitan pada saat melafalkan kata bahasa Inggris khususnya yang mengandung silent Letters (What factors or causes make you feel difficult when pronouncing English words, especially those containing silent letters?)	
LS	Menurut saya pribadi faktor yang membuat kami lemah dalam melafalkan kata bahasa Inggris adalah <u>kurangnya kebisaaan kami dalam membaca atau mengucapkan dan mendengar bahasa Inggris sehari-hari</u> . Jadi kemampuan kami dalam mengucapkan bahasa Inggris menjadi tidak terbiasa (In my opinion, the factor that makes us weak in pronouncing English words is our inability to read, pronounce, and hear every day English. So, our ability to pronounce English becomes stiff or unfamiliar)
CS	Menurut saya, hal yang menyebabkan adalah karena <u>kurangnya pemahaman terhadap kosakata bahasa Inggris secara keseluruhan</u> . Keterbatasan dalam kosakata bisa membuat saya kesulitan mengidentifikasi kata-kata yang mengandung silent letters dan memahaminya. Sehingga, meskipun saya tahu huruf-hurufnya, tetapi saya tidak yakin bagaimana mengucapkannya karena <u>kurangnya kosakata</u> (In my opinion, the cause is a lack of understanding of English vocabulary. Limitations in vocabulary can make it difficult for me to identify words that contain silent letters and understand how to pronounce them. So, even though I know the letters, I'm not sure how to pronounce them due to lack of vocabulary)
YS	Menurut saya itu dikarenakan <u>kurangnya vocabulary</u> , sehingga ketika menemukan kata baru atau kata yang ada silent lettersnya menyebabkan saya susah untuk melafalkannya. (I think it's due to a lack of vocabulary, so when I encounter new words or words that have silent letters it makes it difficult for me to pronounce them)
JS	<u>Karena tidak terbiasa melafalkan dan mendengarkan</u> . (Because I'm not used to pronouncing and hearing it. I'm also less interested in learning English. Because English is difficult)
BS	<u>Karena menurut saya hal tersebut dikarenakan kurangnya atau pendepnyapengetahuan akan bahasa Inggris kami. Guru hanya mengajarkan kami caramembentuk kalimat atau paragraf dengan cara tertentu namun tidak dengan cara mengucapkan atau bisadikatakan untuk keperluan, tidak terlalu di perhatikan kecuali kami bertanya sendiri</u> . (Because in my opinion, this is due to our lack of knowledge of English. The teacher only taught us how to form sentences or paragraphs in a certain way but not how to pronounce or say. As for the way of pronunciation, we don't pay much attention unless we ask ourselves)

Table 4. Classification of Types of Error

No	Words	Types of Errors		
		Pre-Systematic	Systematic	Post-Systematic
1	Scientists	19	-	-
2	Gene	18	-	-
3	Bones	20	-	-
4	Could	6	13	-
5	Sunlight	14	6	-
6	Fruit	-	17	-
7	Hour	20	-	-
8	Enough	20	-	-

In the table above, 2 types of errors were made by class XII-IPA students, namely Pre-Systematic and Systematic errors. On the "Scientists," 19 students incorrectly pronounced the word with the pre-systematic type. The word "Gene" was found in 18 people who mispronounced it in the pre-systematic category. Furthermore, for the word "Bones," 20 students who mispronounced it were classified into the pre-systematic error type. The following words, which are mispronounced and belong to the pre-semantic category, are the words "Could," "Sunlight," "Building," and also the words "Hour" and "Enough." Students mispronounced three words, namely the pronunciation of the words "Fruit," "Could," and "Sunlight."

Table 5. Percentage based on the types of error

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	P pre-systematic	142	69%
2	Systematic	64	31%
3	P PostSystematic	0	0
Total		206	100%

There were 206 total errors made by students when pronouncing words containing English silent letters. Based on the table above, it was found that 69% of the errors were in the pre-systematic type, and 31% of the errors were in the systematic type. From

these results, the researcher found that the most dominant pronunciation errors made by students were pre-systematic errors.

Factors Students Make Errors in Pronouncing Words Containing English Silent Letters

From the results of the data analysis, the researcher found three factors that caused students to make mistakes in pronouncing words that contained silent letters. These factors are: 1) Lack of exposure to English vocabulary, 2) Lack of Vocabulary, and 3) Lack of Emphasis on Pronunciation in Learning.

B. Discussion

1. Types of Errors

One of the objectives of this research was to discover the types of errors in pronouncing English Silent Letters made by the third-grade students at SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon. In the discussion of the findings section, the researcher found two types of errors: Pre-systematic and Systematic.

The first discussion in this research is Pre-Systematic error, according to (Corder, 1974). Pre-systematic errors occur when students are not aware of the existence of a systematic order for rules. This is characterized by students producing significant errors in each pattern due to random guessing and a lack of knowledge of each pronunciation in the target language. In the word "Scientists," 19 pronunciation errors were made by students. They pronounce this word as /skɪntɪst/, /skəntɪst/, /skəntɪk/, /Skamntɪs/, /Sicən/, /Seken/, /Sisansien/, /Sentik/, and /Sitientis/ instead of the correct pronunciation /'saɪəntɪst/. Then, in the word "Gene," 18 pronunciation errors were found in this research. Students pronounced it with various pronunciations, namely /gen/ and /gene/, where the correct pronunciation was /dʒi:n/. In the word "Bones," there were 20 errors; this means that all students pronounced this word with the wrong pronunciation. Most say /tomeito/, and some even say /tomas/.

Then, the word "could" have 2 students' pronunciation errors; they pronounced this word as /kold/ and /Kol/ where it should be /kʊd/. The next word containing the English Silent letter is "Sunlight." The word that should be pronounced with the pronunciation /'sʌnlɑɪt/ where they pronounce this word as /sʌnlik/ and /Sʌŋlik/. Then, identify the word "Hour"; 20 or all students mispronounce this word. The word that should be pronounced with /'aʊər/ differs from students who pronounce this word as /hor/. Students found 20 errors when pronouncing the word "enough." Words that should be pronounced with /ɪ'naʊf/ differ from students who all pronounce /enog/.

Besides pre-systematic errors, there are also systematic errors. The error in question is identifying with much greater learner consistency in patterns or rules. Systematic errors occur when the learner has discovered a rule, but it is the wrong one. Several errors of this type were found in the students' pronunciation when pronouncing words containing English Silent Letters, including in the word "Could," the students said /kold/. In the word "fruit," most students pronounce 't' clearly. The correct pronunciation is /fru:t/, while students pronounce this word as /fruit/. The same error was also found in the word "light." The word should be pronounced /laɪt/, But in this case, the student pronounces it as /Laɪk/.

2. The Most Dominant Pronunciation Errors

There were 206 total errors made by students when pronouncing words containing English silent letters. In the findings, researchers calculated the percentage of each type of error found from the pronunciation results of students pronouncing words containing the English Silent Letter. The rate of each type of error based on the table above shows that the mistake pre-systematic was 69 %, and the error post-systematic was 31 %. This means that the most dominant error was pre-systematic in pronouncing English silent letters by the third graders of SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon.

3. Factor Students Make Errors in Pronouncing Words Containing Silent Letters

The following are several factors that cause the students of the SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon in second grade to lack in pronouncing words containing English Silent Letters:

- a. Lack of exposure to English Vocabulary: Limited exposure to English vocabulary can result in students need to understand the use of silent letters in words. When someone has little exposure to English, they are unfamiliar with common pronunciation patterns, including words with silent letters. Unfamiliarity with these words can cause difficulty in pronouncing them correctly. Therefore, lack of exposure to English vocabulary through listening may contribute to students' difficulty in pronouncing words containing silent letters.
- b. Lack of Vocabulary: This leads to a lack of practice necessary to master accurate pronunciation. On the other hand, motivated students interested in learning English tend to pay more attention to minor aspects and practice diligently. Therefore, a lack of motivation and interest in learning English can be a barrier for students to pronounce words that contain silent letters correctly.
- c. Lack of Emphasis on Pronunciation in Learning: Teachers only focus on the material and rarely invite students to pronounce English words. This makes students very weak in understanding English words and makes them accustomed to saying the wrong words because teachers rarely teach them the correct pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapter, the researcher delved into the data findings and drew significant conclusions from the analysis results: The study focused on XII-IPA students at SMA Swasta Advent Simbolon, identifying two distinct types of pronunciation errors as per Corder's theory: Pre-systematic and systematic errors. Specifically, the analysis centered around the English Silent Letters pronunciation test, uncovering 206 errors. A notable observation was the prevalence of pre-systematic errors among the students, constituting 142 errors in total, or 69%. This high occurrence suggests a pronounced difficulty among students in effectively pronouncing words containing English Silent Letters. Several factors were identified as contributing to this challenge. These factors encompass insufficient English vocabulary exposure, a vocabulary deficiency, and a notable lack of Emphasis on Pronunciation in Learning.

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