

# Phonology and Pronunciation Improvement (Students' Perspective)

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# Phonology and Pronunciation Improvement (Students' Perspective)

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## ABSTRACT

Speaking English fluently and correctly is very important and needed in this globalization era. This is a great opportunity for a student of literature and English education to play a role in the development and improvement of the community's ability to speak English. English Education students as prospective educators are required to always provide knowledge and corrections for their students. To achieve these competencies, the faculty, especially the English education study program, ensures that students receive the best quality supporting knowledge, one of which is pronunciation and phonology. Researchers as lecturers of this course have obtained data related to students' responses to these two sciences. It was found that during the learning period, most of the students faced learning difficulties, especially related to phonetic symbols. However, they still realize that success in this study is very important. This research is qualitative research that aims to determine the perspective of students on the understanding of phonology and pronunciation improvement.

**Keywords:** *Phonology, Pronunciation Improvement, Students' Perspective.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubting that English has been used by persons from all over the world and has been in the spotlight. People attempt to improve their English skills in order to communicate in everyday situations. One of the most highlighted and focused subjects is English communication abilities. International entrepreneurs require their staff to learn to understand and use English fluently and efficiently in order to start a firm [1]. [2]discovered that persons who use English as a second language face difficulties in the near future because their mother tongue influences their foreign language, particularly in adulthood. In Indonesia, students are more focused with grammar and structure than with speaking and listening.

Sound that's what gives spoken language its life, and sound is what gives grammar and vocabulary their vitality. Other languages cannot be animated without sound (phonology, or pronunciation). Listening, speaking, reading, and writing behaviors are all dependent on the three domains of knowledge at the heart of language: phonology, vocabulary (lexis), and

structure, and these behaviors are all dependent on the three domains of knowledge at the heart of language: phonology, vocabulary (lexis), and structure. Every language, including sign language, contains these elements. This explanation accurately implies that phonology is inextricably linked to other languages, and that phonology is just as important as vocabulary and organization in the four abilities.

In this regard, it is contradictory that, despite its widespread recognition as a critical skill, pronunciation does not receive the same level of emphasis in language classes. Today, the assumption that the learner will pick it up on his own and that pronunciation does not need to be taught (although this belief survives in some circles) is no longer the basis for the fringe status in many language curricula; instead, a number of factors contribute to this prolonged situation.

In performing teaching English phonology, it is impossible to separate teaching and building communicative and language competency toward pupils in order to produce learning motivation. Lecturers would be able to more easily employ learning and teaching

simulations, such as describing or simulating the creation of speech sounds and the interpretation of speech sound patterns, if they were equipped with technology. Grammatical knowledge or a "deep seated mental state below the level of language" is what language competency is [3] The capacity to employ grammatically features of a language in arranging correct phrases and knowing when, where, and to whom those words are uttered for is referred to as communicative competence. Learners could deliver and interpret a message or negotiate meaning interpersonally in a specific situation if they have such skills.

The difficult and comprehensive material of phonology causes a number of issues in teaching and learning. Students of English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo complain about not being able to grasp every element of the phonological material. Despite their strong pronunciation, the majority of students claim to not understanding the phonology content, which is at the heart of pronunciation. Researchers also discovered a consequence of this issue, namely a decline in pupils' commitment to studying. This has a significant impact on their learning outcomes.

In addition to the previously mentioned issues, this study aims to determine the level of knowledge among English Education Department students who are aspiring teachers about the relevance of studying phonology in depth as well as the urgency of doing so.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Any language, including English, may develop a native or near-native accent with the right method. In one way or another, everyone in the student community is learning a language with an international reach. A teacher or guide who is aware of the barriers in the minds of EFL/ESL learners in the form of beliefs or assumptions such as age factor, exposure to the language, influence of native language, and other negative theories of the like removes and disproves these myths to encourage students to take the first step toward learning the sounds of the language. There are numerous methods for obtaining the perfect pronunciation. One of the direct observation strategies is to listen to and imitate the speaker's or teacher's mouth motions. The following activity is reading aloud after the teacher. Another option is to listen to a sound model that has been recorded. In the classroom, a teacher facilitates discourse and role-playing exercises among learners. Correct pronunciation raises the speaker's acceptability among language speakers. The right pronunciation of English language kick starts the smooth sailing of the speaker whether he is a student, teacher, businessman, politician or whoever he is as English language is an international medium in many ways. It is explicitly clear that learning quality pronunciation of English is a prioritized area for a learner.

Pronunciation is described as "the manner in which spoken sounds, particularly related sequences, are articulated by individual speakers or by speakers generally" in broad terms. Trask is a term that refers to. In light of this definition, it appears that pronunciation is inextricably tied to the science of phonetics, which entails the scientific study and description of speech sounds. [4] define pronunciation as follows: "For most language teachers, pronunciation is largely identified with the articulation of individual sounds and, to a lesser extent, with the target language's stress and intonation patterns." In this regard, the second definition does not confine pronunciation to the manner in which sounds are articulated, but also includes additional articulatory features such as stress and intonation patterns.

There has been a lot of discussion on what strategies can be utilized to effectively teach pronunciation. One of the most contentious issues is whether to teach pronunciation by imitation or through awareness-raising. [5] emphasizes the necessity of habit building and imitation in teaching pronunciation, especially after the rise of Communicative language teaching. The use of phonemes and minimum pairings is one of the most used strategies for teaching pronunciation. The notions of phoneme and minimal pair, according to [6], have been useful in organizing information for teaching pronunciation.

Teachers have spent a long time trying to figure out how to teach the sounds of a foreign language that are distinct from the original language without utilizing the orthographic alphabet. The usage of the International Phonetic Alphabet is one of the most useful alternatives that has been recommended (IPA). The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) strives to give visually distinct symbols for all speech sounds that are phonologically distinct in any linguistic [7]. Different variants of the IPA have been adopted by teachers to be included in textbooks for teaching pronunciation since its invention.

In a similar line, phonetics has provided fresh insights into pronunciation instruction. Phonetics is a tool that is used in the teaching of pronunciation. It is concerned with "the study of the physical properties of sounds and their place and manner of articulation in the vocal tract" [8]. For example, spoken sounds are classified into consonants and vowels in any description of the English sound system. Consonants can be classified according to the movements of the mouth during articulation (bilabial, dental, alveolar, palatal, velar), the nature of the airstream, the location and movement of the tongue, and whether or not the voice is used, according to [6] (voiced, voiceless, plosive, affricate, fricative, nasal, lateral). Vowels, on the other hand, are mostly defined by the location of the tongue and the rounding of the lips. These comprehensive phonetic descriptions are not random because they are crucial in the training of pronunciation. According to [6],

"Awareness of this is useful because many mistakes made by learners are due to tiny variances in sound production."

[9] define phonology as "the study or description of a language's characteristic sound units (phonemes) and their relationship to one another". The operation of phonemes 2 and their allophones 3 in various phonological systems is the subject of this branch of linguistics. The fundamental areas of speech sounds in any language are phonics, phonology, and phonetics. It can be mastered at any time and in any location; the only difference is the way of learning that allows you to do it. The causes and difficulties of deviating word pronunciation are examined, and solutions for overcoming the issues and practicing proper speech sounds in the English language are explored. Because English language learners come from diverse parts of the world and have varied cultural backgrounds, their issues are not all the same. The approach to solving the challenge varies as well.

### 3. METHODS

This study aims to determine the level of knowledge among English Education Department students who are aspiring teachers about the relevance of studying phonology in depth as well as the urgency of doing so.

The researchers employed descriptive qualitative research in this study, where a qualitative technique should be used to help explain any little-understood phenomena, according to Strauss and [10] This study was carried out at Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo's Department of English Education, with the participation of 12 students from the Department of English Education.

The researchers used surveys and observations to acquire information about the importance of learning phonology in developing pronunciation skills for this study. The sorts of data sources considered in this analysis are called primary data sources. Because the data was gathered from course lecturers through post-learning evaluations, primary data sources were employed in this research.

The qualitative data collecting methodology is the collection of descriptive data, comprehending the data in the form of classified events or other ways such as photos, notes, and regional notes, when conducting the analysis. In this strategy, the researcher conducts a survey and distributes a questionnaire including data from the study. While the people being tested will fill out or reply based on their abilities and knowledge. The researcher gathered the data by picking an existing sample based on the number of pupils in the class.

Field notes, when identical activities occur in the field based on observational data, are used to evaluate the results of researchers who locate researchers.

Observations were made during the learning period and were complemented with relevant data.

The data analysis approach is used to explain the impact of data from questionnaires and observations on student competency assessment in this study. The respondents' awareness of the importance of learning phonology and its effect on improving pronunciation by students at the Department of English Education will be assessed using the instrument employed in this study.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sixty percent of the data collected stated that they acknowledged the need of mastering phonology since they anticipate adequate interpretation from listeners when they pronounce words. This is due to a variety of factors, including the fact that students and resource individuals recognize that they will not be able to increase the quality of their pronunciation unless they understand the fundamentals of phonology.

Other statistics suggested that 15% of people were aware of the importance of phonology because of the influence of their social environment on their pronunciation. In other situations, the interviewees believed that phonology may assist them in learning and improving their reading and speaking abilities. There are also individuals who believe that phonology can help them understand linguistics.

According to the rest of the data, the informants believed that the importance of comprehending this phonology should be emphasized because the objective of students taking this class is to meet their knowledge demands. They learn not just about pronunciation but also about the symbols that are used in appropriate pronunciation in phonology. Students also don't have to be concerned if they are ever asked the question, "Can someone have native-like pronunciation without learning phonology?" They're attempting to express themselves and find a solution.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the data, it can be concluded that phonology is very important to be learnt by English Education students in order to improve their pronunciation and correct their future students' mistakes in pronouncing English words.

Students and resource individuals recognize that they will not be able to increase the quality of their pronunciation unless they understand the fundamentals of phonology. Sixty percent of the data collected stated that they acknowledged the need of mastering phonology since they anticipate adequate interpretation from listeners when they pronounce words. This is due to a variety of factors, including the influence of their social environment on their pronunciation. In other situations,

the interviewees believed that phonology may assist them in improving their reading and speaking abilities.

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