EFFECT OF USING TONGUE TWISTER ON STUDENTS' VOWEL PRONUNCIATION SKILLS AT UNIVERSITASMUHAMMADIYAH BULUKUMBA; INDONESIAN VILLAGE LEARNER CONTEXT

Sri Wahyuni Thamrin[1],Andi Anugrah M[2,]Halijah[3],Haerul Mutiah[4]

[1,2,3,4] Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba
sriwahyunith@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is one of the speaking elements that must be mastered by foreign learners. However, students still found difficulties when pronouncing English words. Therefore, tongue twister was thought to be one effective technique to help students articulate the English words. The research applied pre-experimental design with only one experiment class. The class consisted of 15 participants from English Education Departement Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba and was chosen through purposive sampling technique. Statistical techniquewas applied to confirm the hypotheisis. Based on the test of significance result, it was found out that t test value is higher than the t table value (2.035>1.708). This indicates that students' pronunciation skills improved after studentslearnt with tongue twister which was combined with some other methods. Furthermore, it is also informed that therewere some kinds of pronunciation errors made and the dominant errors found is phonetic errors due to the effect of students' native language systems.

Keywords: *Pronunciation, Tongue Twister, Technique, Error.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns of English lecturers at English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba is learners' ability in pronouncing English words. The area of particular concern is the articulation of simple English words. Although whether it is worth teaching (Richards & Renandya, 2002, p.175) and the importance of teaching pronunciation to adult learners (Thompson & Gaddes, 2004) are still debatable. Teachingpronunciation has always taken part in curriculum for the reason that pronunciation is one of the central elements of speaking. Moreover, the sounds of English are complex and quite complicated to master. Thus, there is a need to teach pronuncation and it is expected that students can pronounce English words before they learn to speak.

In order to achieve the learning goal, various techniques have been implememted such as reading aloud and phonological analysis combined with other instructional methods. Nevertheless, the English pronunciation still seemshard to master by the learners, especially those learners living at villages and speaking local languages such as Buginese and Konjonese in Indonesia. In fact, the pre-observation results show that most of the students still make phonetic errors when

asked to pronounce some words. In this case, many learners vocalized the sound of words with incorrect sounds. As a consequence, they continously face speaking problems when speaking and understanding oral discourses.

Some researchers have investigated the EFL students' problems in pronouncing English words. (Hassan 2014)and (Shak, Siew Lee, and Stephen 2016) carrying out a study on problems of EFL students in pronouncing English sounds found the same research results showing that that learners studying English had problems with the articulation of vowel and some consonants for instance plosive, affricatives and fricatives. Another research results indicated thatThai students were still difficult to pronounce English phonemes at the initial position such as /ð/, /θ/, /dʒ/, /ʒ/, /v/ and /z/ and /ð/, /θ/, /v/, /f/, /s/, and /l/ sound at the final position (Plailek and Essien 2021). In relation to the research results, it can be noted that pronuniation is not easy for the EFL learners to master.

The facts above are not hardly surprising in as much as English sounds are distinctive from learners' local languages that they speak every day. This assumption is in line with contranstive hypothesis which postulates that the errors made in second language learning is caused by the exsistence of the differences between first and second language (Fries, 1945 and Lado, 1957 in Seddighi, S. 2012). In addition to the factors, teachers did not take students'psychological condition into consideration when making plans. As a consequence, they failed to choose which methods or techniques were more appropriate for the students' need. In relation to the assumptions, it is necessary tocome up with effective solution in order to cope with the problems and to improve the students' skills.

A number of studies on teaching pronunciation are constatnly providing new findings and conclusion for educators to take into account as to how to help students pronounce the English sounds more easily and accuartely with proven techniques. One such technique is tongue twister. Tongue twisters are phrases or sentences which have similar sounds but enjoyable activities at pronunciation practice (Machackova in Turumi 2016). It is also stated that the use of tongue twister when practicing was effective to increase the students' pronunciation skills as well their motivation. Other researchers have also reported the same research results. Putri (2018) and Lutfiani (2017) revealed that tongue twister effectively improved the

students' skill in articulating the sounds of English words. In accordance with the research findings, it can be assumed that tongue twister can be an alternative teachnique for English teachers and lecturers to use in overcoming students' difficulties in learning to pronounce English sounds. For this reasons, there is interest in this topic and it seems necessary to study on the use of tongue twister to improve the learners' pronunciation skills. The study was carried out at university level in an attempt to find out whether or not it was also effective in different context. The learners were those who had low proficient level at English pronuncation, lived in villages and speak traditional languages.

Conversely, the previous studies only examined and described whether or not tongue twister technique was effective by using statistical analysis results. Little research was also avaliable regarding the errors or lacks made by the learners when pronouncing the sounds. Thus, the purpose of this study focused on two research questions: (a) Are the use of tongue twister effective to improve the students' pronunciation skills? and (b) What are the pronunciation errors most often made by the students?.

Certainly, researches as to learning English sounds or English pronounciation with tongue twister gives positive impacts to the learners' ability both to listen and to speak. In case of listening, we try to understand the sounds made by speakers through so-called mental process in that we identify the sounds, after that we finally comes to comprehension level. Our listening comprehension is totally much determined on how well we recognize English sounds. As a result, the better we differentiate between one sound from other sounds, the better listening comprehension we will have. For example, the word 'bought' is pronounced 'bɔ:t'. On condition that the learners do not know the sound of the word, they will find it difficult to identify the meaning of 'bought' when articulated by a native speaker.

In contrast, when speaking, we make efforts to make the listeners understand our words by using the right artiuculation, unless the communication may fail. However, we cannot deny that speaking with good pronounciation is not easy due to the fact that the ideas coming to our mind are in form of spelling, not the phonetic symbol. Thus, when speaking, the speakers have to spontaneously change the words into phonetic symbols mentally. For this reasons, English learners have to

understand the English sounds in order that they can have better listening comprehension and be a great speaker.

In responding to the problems found and factors that may hinder and support the students' pronunciation skills, tongue twister is believed to be an effective technique to increase the students' pronunciation skills, although some research results found that tongue twister was only effective to help students memorize the sounds but not useful to assist students pronounce the English sounds accurately. Theories have deeply learned and observed the effectiveness of tongue twister technique through experiments. Harmer (2007, p. 256) cites that a teacher can apply tongue twister in teaching complex sounds. By using tongue twister, students can practice by reading or saying some words or sentences with the same complex sound pattern and it becomes more attarctive when reading it aloud together while the words have the same distribution of sounds in medium or high rate of delivery. In addition, when applying it, the students sit in group, so they can compete and evaluate their levels. For better results, the use of tongue twister is combined with other instructional methods such as reading aloud, phonological analysis, and self-recording learners' voices. Also, teachers must enggange the students to always remember their learning goals. Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to conduct a research under the title effect of using tongue twister on pronunciation skills of Muhammadiyah University Students; Indonesian village learner context. The research was conducted in order to know whether or not the tongue twister affected the students' pronunciation skills and also to identify the dominant errors made by the students as additional information to inspire other researchers who want to study the same reserach topic and create a better classroom activities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study assessed a hypothesis which cited that tongue twister affected the students' pronunciation skills as well as an answer for the first research question and additional research question about the dominant vowel errors made by the students. The effect of tongue twsiter was found after giving pre-test, treatments, and post-test based on the pre-experimental design, while the dominant errors were identified by using the theory of classification errors found by Moulton, W. G (1962) consisiting of phonetic errors, phonemic errors and allophonic erros. The

research results as to the influence of tongue twister technique were determined by comparing the students' pre-test and post- test scores and applying test of significance at the probability level of significance α = 0.05 under quantitative paradigm.

The total population of this research was 50 from two classes. Based on the research design, there was only one class selected as the research sample using purposive sampling technique. The samples chosen were those who live at villages speaking their local languages whch consisted of 25 students. The 25 students were all in the second semester who learnt English pronunciation. The samples were pretested with oral production test in that they were asked to pronounce some English words. After distributing the pre-test, they were taught English pronunciation with tongue twister in some meetings The tongue twister technique was implemented before having excercises as warming-up activity, after having noticed the discrete sounds, and at the closing section. Then, the students were posttested to measure the progress. The data about the students' pronunciation skills were analyzed in some stages: (1) Scoring the students' answer; (2) calculating the students' final score; (3) Tabulating the students' scores, (4) Calculating the mean score and standar deviation, and (5) calculating the t-test and t-table values.

DISCUSSION

Unlike consonant sounds, vowel sounds are sounds made without blocking the air, but the air is directly released through the mouth. Based on the glottis position, all the vowel sounds are voiced made with glottis in vibration. Furthermore, vowel sounds are made with raised velum, so the air comes to mouth. Thus, vowel sounds are all oral sounds. English vowel sounds also vary according to the position of tongue, the lip states, and the length of the sounds. The classification of the English vowel sounds can be seen in the following chart;

With the previous explanation and the previous diagram, we can locate vowel production and tongue position in this way:
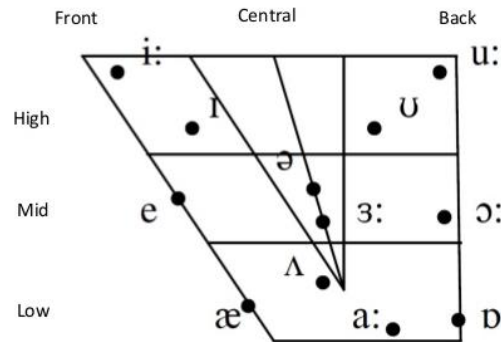
The English vowel classifications above are based on the part of the tongue that touches the roof of the mouth when producing vowel sounds. When the front of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth, English vowel sounds created are symbolized as /i:/, /e/, /æ/, /ɪ/. If the roof of the mouth is touched by the central part of the tongue, English vowel sounds made are symbolized as /ə/, /ɜ:/, /ʌ/, /ɑ:/, and if the roof of the mouth is touched by the back of the tongue, English vowel sounds made are symbolized as /u/, /u:/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/.

Beside the position of the tongue, the English vowel sounds are also classified based on the height of the tongue. The tongue is high position when producing vowel sounds such as /i:/, /u/, /u:/, and /ɪ/. The tongue is in middle position when producing /ə/, /ɔ:/, /3:/, /e/, and in low position when /ʌ/, /ɒ/, /ɑ:/, and /æ/.

Vowel sounds are also classified based on whether the lips are rounded or spread. Rounded vowels are vowels made where the lips are pushed forwards. English vowels made with rounded lips are vowels simbolized as /ɔ:/, /ɒ/, /u/, /u:/. Otherwise, spread vowels are vowels made where the lips' corners are moved away from each other. The way to make spread vowels looks like smile. The English vowels made with spread lips are simbolized as /ə/, /ʌ/, /3:/, /e/, /ɑ:/, /æ/, /i:/, /ɪ/.

RESULTS

We investigated the students' ability level in pronouncing English vowel sounds by using descriptive statisticsas data analysis technique. The techique allows the researcher to illustrate many peices of data with a small number of scores in tables (Gay, 2006). The data of the students' pre-test and post-test scores can be seen as follows;

Table 1. Students' Classification Pre-Test Scores

Score Classification	Interval Score	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	90-100	8	32%
Very good	80-89	15	60%
Good	70-79	0	0%
Average	60-69	2	8%
Bad	50-49	0	0%
Very bad	40-	0	0%
Total		25	100%

Table 2. Students' Classification Post-Test Scores

Score Classification	Interval Score	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	90-100	4	16%
Very good	80-89	21	84%
Good	70-79	0	0%
Average	60-69	0	0%
Bad	50-49	0	0%
Very bad	40-0	0	0%
Total		25	100%

After scoring, tabulating, and calculating the pretest and posttest scores in frequencyand percentage with classification as seen on the table 1 and 2 above, it is found that before the students was given treatments, 2 of 25 students were at average level, 15 students were at very good level and there are 8 students with excellent category. Otherwise, after students made effort to increase their articulation skills with tongue twister, the students with average level in pretest had reached very good

level in posttest. This indicates that the students had been able to pronounce some vowel sounds which they could not pronounce well before treament.

Furthermore, there were 17 of 25 students who got very good scores after treatment. In this category beside those students from average and excellent to very good level and, 9 students gained higher scores in posttest than in pretest. Thus, it can be implied that tongue twister could help students pronounce some difficult sounds before traetment. In excellent category, 4 students with excellent category in pretest went down to very good category. t- test for nonindependent sample was also applied because there was only one group to study, as Gay (2006, p.354) stated that to contrast groups that are formed by score type of matching or to compare a single group's performance on a pretest and posttest or on two different treatments. An alpha level of 0.05 was set for the statistical test. Results indicated that the use of tongue twister affected the students' pronunciation skills. It is proved by the findings showing that the t test value is higher than the t table value (2.035>1.708). This indicates that students' pronunciation skills improved after students learnt with tongue twister which was combined with some other methods.

Another information provided in this discussion is about the errors of English vowel articulation made by the students. English Vowel sounds are divided into short and long vowels, and some students still do not recognize the division. In comparison with consonant sounds, vowel sounds of English vary and are represented by more many various spellings, which is different from the vowel sound system of Indonesian language. In fact, the vowel sounds of Indonesian language does not refer to various spelling. In other words, the spelling system is the same as the spoken system. For these reasons, many beginner learners tend to apply the same concept when they pronounce English sounds. They read based on what is written, and find a lot of confusion when pronouncing the sounds because of the complexity of the English writing system. As a consequence, they mostly misformat the sounds as seen in the following section.

In English, one short vowel may refer to some spelling. Many students have confusion when pronouncing vowels found at some words with the same spelling. They tend to use the same sound. The table 3 and 4 describe the kinds of errors made by the students on the pronunciation of vowel phonemes as seen as follows.

Table 3. The Errors of Short Vowel Sounds in All Position

Sound	Word	Type of Errors	Errors	Correction
/ɪ/	**it**	Allophonic error of /ɪ/	i:t	ɪt
	lick	Allophonic error of	li:k	lɪk
	hobb**y**	/ɪ/	hɔbi:/hɔbbi:	hɒbɪ
		Allophonic error of /ɪ/		
/e/	**e**nter**e**d	Phonetic error of /e/	ɪntə(r)/i:ntə(r)	entə(r)
		Phonetic error of /e/	bɪd/bæd	bed
/æ/	**a**nd	-	-	ænd
	b**a**d	-	-	bæd
/ə/	**a**ttend	Phonetic error of /ə/	etɪnd/ætənd/atand	ətend
	meth**o**d	Phonetic error of /ə/	meθɔd	meθəd
	work**er**	Phonetic error of /ə/	-	wɔ:kə(r)
/ʌ/	**U**nreal	Phonetic error of /ʌ/	anri:l	ʌnri:l
	b**u**t	Phonetic error of /ʌ/	but/bat	bʌt
/ɒ/	**o**n	Phonemic of /ɒ/	ɔn	ɒn
	l**o**ck	Phonemic of /ɒ/	lɔk/luk	lɒk
/u/	c**ou**ld	Phonetic error of /u/	kould/kold	kʰud/kʰəd

Table 4. The Errors of Long Vowel Sounds in All Position

Sound	Word	Type of Errors	Errors	Correction
/i:/	eat	Phonetic error of /i:/	eat, ɪt, et	/i:t/
	sheep	Allophonic error of /i:/	ʃɪp	/ʃi:p/
	see	-	-	/si:/
/u:/	Pool	Phonetic error of /u:/	pool, pɔl	/pu:l/
	zoo	Phonetic error of /u:/	zɔ	/zu:/
/ɔ:/	or	Allophonic error of /ɔ:/	ɔr wær	/ɔ:r/
	ward	Phonetic error of /ɔ:/	-	/wɔ:rd/
	more	-	-	/mɔ:r/
/ɑ:/	arm	Phonemic error of /ɑ:/	ærm	/ɑ:rm/
	carp	Phonemic error of /ɑ:/	kærp, cærp	/kʰɑ:rp/

	far	Phonemic error of /ɑ:/	fær	/fɑ:r/
/ɜ:/	girl	Phonetic error of /ɜ:/	gɪrl, giːrl	/gɜːrl/
	sir	Phonetic error of /ɜ:/	sɪr	/sɜːr/

Based on the table 3, it is clearly seen that the dominant errors made is phonetic errors. In this case, some students tend to apply false concept in articulating almost all short vowels except the short vowel /æ/. In fact, the realisation of the sounds produced are different from the correct sounds. For example, the sound of /e/ in the initial position of a word like 'enter' is mispronounced by using /ɪ/ and /i:/, while the sound /e/ in the word 'bed' is pronounced with /ɪ/ and also /æ/ in the middle position. Another case comes from the sound of /ə/. The sound of /ə/ is represented by various letters such as –a- in the word 'attend', -o- in the word 'method' and e in the word 'worker'. In relation to the pronunciation of sound /ə/, many learners made errors by using /e/, /æ/ and /a/, not /ə/ in the initial position of the word 'attend,' using /o/ not /ə/ in the middle position of the word 'method.' In the case of short vowel /ɪ/, many learners allophonically mispronounced the short vowel /ɪ/ like long vowel /i:/ in all positions. The way to pronounce is correct but it should not be long. Otherwise, the sound of /ɒ/ is mispronounced phonemically and only found in the initial and middle positions. The findings are different from the reserach results discovered by Putri, D. S., & Rosa, R. N. (2020) and Demirezen, M. (2006) showing that the common type of error made by the students was vowel /æ/. The distinctive results show that the background of the learners that were tested do not share common background, prior knowledge, and learning experiences.

Besides the short vowel, long vowel errors were also analyzed. Like the error type made in short vowel, phonetic errors also become the dominant errors made by the students. Based on the table 4, it is found that some students articulated long vowel /i:/, /u:/, /ɔ:/, /ɑ:/ and /ɜ:/ in the wrong way. This occured due to the effect of native articulation systems where the words are pronounced like the alphabets. In the case of long vowel /i:/, some students still made errors phonetically by articulating the vowel sound unlike the correct sound /i:/ and prefer the sound like the spellings and other students used /e/ vowel in the word like *eat*. However, in the word like *sheep*, a few students made allophonic error by applying vowel /ɪ/ but it

should be long vowel /i:/. Phonetic error was also discovered in the pronunciation of long vowel /u:/, which is presented in the words like *pool* and *zoo*. In this case, the word *pool* and *zoo* were pronounced using /ɔ/, not /u:/. Also, Long vowel /ɔ:/ was mispronounced in the word like *or, ward* and *more.* In the word *or,* a few students used the short vowel /ɔ/, not allophonically the right sound of long vowel /ɔ:/. Furthermore, in the word *ward,* the alphabet 'a' was articulated like /æ/ not the right sound /ɔ:/, while /ɔ:/ in the word *more* was correctly articulated by all stduents. Phonetic error is also found in the pronunciation of the words girl and sir which use the sound of /ɜ:/. In fact, some students misarticulated the sound using short vowel /ɪ/, not the right sound of /ɜ:/. Another error found in this study is phonemic error. Phonemic error occurs in the word like arm, carp, and far which was articulated using the similiar sound as the correct one.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that English pronunciation skills of the students, living at villages and speaking local languages such as Buginese and Konjonese in Indonesia, can be improved with the use of tongue twsiter. Although some of the students with excellent scores in pre-test decreased and got very good scores in pot-test, some students in average level could reach very good scores after doing excercise with tongue twister, and the scores of some students at very good level increased, which indicate that some other sounds have been able to pronounce. Another conlcusion is that most of the phonetic errors were made in the area of complex sounds, where the vowels stand with some consonant clusters. As a consequence, the realisasition of sounds is different from the correct sounds. In relation to the conclusions, it is suggested that English teachers can teach pronunciation with tongue twister, but the excercises provided should refer not only words with simple sounds but also words with complex sounds in order that students can articulate the short and long vowels more easily in any positions.

REFERENCES

Demirezen, M. (2006). The English [æ] and [ɛ] vowel sounds as fossilized pronunciation errors for the Turkish teachers of English and solutions to the problem. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *2*(2), 161-179.

Essien, A. M. (2021). Using Project Work to Strengthen Thai Students' Learning Attitude toward English Language. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, *12*(12), 1500-1508.

Gay, L. R. (2006). Educational Reseach. Colombus, Toronto, London, Sydney: Charles E Merril Publishing Co. A Bell & Howell Company.

Harmer, Jeremy (1988). The Practice of English Language Teachings. UK: Longman.

Hassan, E. M. I. (2014). Pronunciation problems: A case study of English language students at Sudan University of Science and Technology. *English Language and Literature Studies*, *4*(4), 31. doi: 10.5539/ells.v4n4p31.

Lutfiani, D. (2017). Using tongue twister to improve students' pronunciation. *ELLITE: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, *2*(2), 110-115.

Moulton, W. G. (1962). Toward a classification of pronunciation errors. *The Modern Language Journal*, *46*(3), 101- 109.

Putri, D. S., & Rosa, R. N. (2020). An analysis of errors by the Third Year English department students in pronouncing English vowel. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(1), 202-209.

Plailek, T. (2021). Pronunciation problems and factors affecting English pronunciation of EFL students. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, *12*(12), 2026-2033.

Putri, N. S. E. (2018). EFL students' perception towards IPA symbols as pronunciation learning system (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Palangka Raya).\

Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A. (2002). Methodology in language teaching: an anthology of current practice. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press.*

Shak, P., Lee, C. S., & Stephen, J. (2016). Pronunciation problems: A case study on English pronunciation errors of low proficient students. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*. doi: https://doi.org/10.15282/ijleal.v4.483

Seddighi, S. (2012). An account of Iranian EFL pronunciation errors through L1 transfer. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *2*(2), 197-214. Doi: 10.22111/IJALS.2012.75

Thompson, T., & Gaddes, M. (2005). The importance of teaching pronunciation to adult learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, *2*(1), 1-11.

Turumi, Y. L. Using Tongue Twister to Improve the Pronunciation of Grade VIII Students. *e-Journal of ELTS (English Language Teaching Society)*, *4*(2). 2338-1841

Putri, D. S., & Rosa, R. N. (2020). An analysis of errors by the third year English department students in pronouncing English vowel. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(1), 202-209.

How to Cite (APA style):

Wahyuni Thamrin, Sri .,Anugrah,M,Andi., Halijah.,Mutiah,Haerul (2023,November). Effect of Using Tongue Twister On Students' Vowel Pronunciation Skills At Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba; Indonesian Village Learner Context. *Exposure: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, 12*(2), 339-350. https://journal.unismuh.ac.id/index.php/exposure/article/view/12762