THE ANALYSIS OF PRONOUNCING POST-ALVEOLAR FRICATIVE FACED BY THE ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS OF TANJUNGPURA UNIVERSITY

(A Descriptive Study on Sixth Semester English Education Students at Tanjungpura University in the academic year of 2022/2023)

A THESIS

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LANGUAGES AND ARTS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to describe the percentage of post-alveolar fricative sound pronunciation acceptability among the English Language Education students in their sixth semester at the University of Tanjungpura. The scope of the study will be constrained to the comparison of the first and second formants of the participants with those of the native speaker, whose formants were evaluated utilising the PRAAT software. The data was gathered from a pronunciation performance test that was conducted via an audio recording procedure. The study involved a total of 15 participants who were categorised into three distinct ethnic groups, including Indonesian Tionghoa, Dayak, and Malay is based on purposive quota sampling. The three are classified based on the fact that 5 participants from every ethnicity have family backgrounds and grew up in all three ethnic communities and passed the Introduction to Linguistics course in semester 4. Each participant pronouncing a set of 20 words, consisting of both voiceless and voiced post-alveolar fricatives. According to the findings of the study, 1) the percentage of voiceless post-alveolar fricative sounds that were considered 'Acceptable' was 40.5%, whereas the percentage of those that were considered 'Not Acceptable' was 59.5%., 2) the percentage of 'Acceptable' pronunciation of voiced post-alveolar fricative sounds was 42%, while the percentage of those that were 'Not Acceptable' was 58%. The inference that can be drawn is that students encounter challenges i.e. differentiate sounds when attempting to articulate post-alveolar fricative sounds.

Keywords: pronunciation, acoustic phonetic, post-alveolar fricative

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Pontianak, 4 June 2023

Andra Sunata Pratama
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS viii
LIST OF TABLES x
LIST OF FIGURES xi
LIST OF APPENDICES xii
CHAPTER 1 1
1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND 1
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 7
1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE 7
1.4 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE 7
1.5 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH 8
1.6 RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY 9
CHAPTER 2 10
2.1 Language Transfer 10
2.1.1 Influence of L1 Mother Tongue to the Target Language 10
2.2 Pronunciation 11
2.2.1 Nature of Pronunciation 11
2.2.2 Feature of Pronunciation 12
2.2.3 Difficulties of pronunciation 13
2.2.4 English and Indonesian Speech Sounds 14
2.3 Phonetics 15
2.3.1 Definition of Phonetics 15
2.3.2 Articulatory Phonetic 16
2.3.3 Post-Alveolar Fricative 21
2.3.4 Acoustic Phonetic 23
2.3.5 Phonetics Transcription 27
2.4 Acceptability 28
CHAPTER 3 30
3.1 Research Design 30

3.2 Research Participants 31
3.3 Technique of Data Collection 33
3.4 Tools of Data Collection 33
3.5 Data Analysis 36
CHAPTER 4 41
4.1 Findings 41
4.2 Discussions 48
CHAPTER 5 51
5.1 Conclusions 51
5.2 Suggestions 52
BIBLIOGRAPHY 54
APPENDICES 57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Rating Scale 35

Table 2 - Range Value Native Speaker (Voiceless) 37

Table 3 - Range Value Native Speaker (Voiced) 37

Table 4 - Standard Formant Value Voiceless Post-Alveolar Fricative 42

Table 5 - Standard Formant Value Voiced Post-Alveolar Fricative 43

Table 6 - Z-Score Category 44

Table 7 - Category Accumulation Voiceless 46

Table 8 - Total Percentage Voiceless 46

Table 9 - Category Accumulation Voiced 47

Table 10 - Total Percentage Voiced 47

Table 11 - Acceptability (Voiceless) 50

Table 12 - Acceptability (Voiced) 50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Features of Pronunciation (Kelly, 2001, p.1) 12

Figure 2 - The International Phonetic Alphabet of English Consonants 20

Figure 3 - Sound wave (top) and Spectrogram (bottom) in PRAAT 26

Figure 4 - Red dots that represent the formant in the spectrogram 27

Figure 5 - The info about the frequencies of the formants in PRAAT 27

Figure 6 - The International Phonetic Alphabet 28

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Pronunciation Performance Test List of Words 57

Appendix 2 - Indonesian Tionghoa Voiceless Pronunciation Formants (in Hz) .. 59

Appendix 3 - Indonesian Tionghoa Voiced Pronunciation Formants (in Hz) 62

Appendix 4 - Dayaknese Voiceless Pronunciation Formants (in Hz)..... 65

Appendix 5 - Dayaknese Voiced Pronunciation Formants (in Hz)..... 68

Appendix 6 - Malay Voiceless Pronunciation Formants (in Hz) 71

Appendix 7 - Malay Voiced Pronunciation Formants (in Hz) 74

Appendix 8 - Native Speaker Voiced Pronunciation 77

Appendix 9 - Native Speaker Voiceless Pronunciation 84

Appendix 10 - Acceptability Voiceless..... 91

Appendix 11 - Acceptability Voiced..... 108

Appendix 12 - Surat Tugas Riset 125

Appendix 13 - SK Pembimbing Skripsi..... 126

Appendix 14 - SK Pembimbing Penulisan Artikel 127

Appendix 15 - SK Penguji Skripsi 128

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Speaking ability is very important in English. Mastering speaking helps practise patterns of a language and for supporting good communication. There are many essential aspects in speaking that must be known and applied to communication, one of which is pronunciation. Good pronunciation is the key to success in communication, without exception in English. International students who study English are required to be able to pronounce English well in order to communicate efficiently. In addition, using proper pronunciation in a variety of circumstances may help enhance English language abilities across the board, including all of the aspects that pertain to it (Tabula et al., 2020, p. 194). After acquiring greater understanding regarding the proper pronunciation of words, one will finally be able to experience this impact.

Nevertheless, in reality, the students still have difficulty in learning to pronounce English words well. This can be caused by not being familiar with sounds in English. By not being familiar with sounds in English, students will find it more difficult to pronounce a word. When learners interact, they may make certain errors in their pronunciation (Silfiani et al., 2017, p. 4). The pronunciation of English words is strongly affected by individuals who are native to the language. In this particular scenario, the English pronunciation of native speakers is widely applied as such an indicator that will be followed by students who wish to learn English (Tabula et al., 2020, p. 195). Since of this,

when communicating, students frequently make pronunciation errors that are not spoken in the same way as words by individuals who were born and raised in the English-speaking country. The fact that they actually communicate in a manner that is difficult to comprehend further contributes to this difficulty.

According to Richard cited in Komariah (2019, p. 2), pronunciation can mean the formation of sounds in the mouth, which means that pronunciation is the sound produced by movements in the mouth. In this case, pronunciation has a vital role because if the students mispronounce a word, there will be a misunderstanding between the speakers. Learning pronunciation is not an easy thing, especially for EFL students. Pronunciation is a skill that must be considered by students who study English as EFL students. By mastering pronunciation, little by little, students will also form good communication. Silfiani et al. (2017, p. 3) states that many students are confused that, though their identical forms, words may not always sound the same.

Because they are not native speakers, there are still many mistakes made by students, especially students who are already in university. A common mistake that is often faced is the wrong pronunciation of sounds in English. Tabula et al. (2020, p. 196), explain this particular pronunciation mistake can be attributed to a number of different causes, one of which is an individual's level of awareness of the correct pronunciation. This competence has a considerable impact on such a person's pronunciation skills (Tabula et al., 2020, p. 196). This capability is meant to be related to the capacity of individuals who are able to differentiate between two sounds more precisely than other people

and who can likewise reproduce the proper sound or pronunciation greater than the others. Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that deals with speech sound (Fromkin et al., 2011, p. 190).

Phonetics is intimately connected to phonology. Phonology is a subfield of linguistics that investigates the fundamental components of speech, or phonological patterns. To put it another way, phonology is the study of how the sounds of speech work together to communicate meaning. This is confirmed by the perspective of Carr (2013, p. 89), who argues that the study of phonology is the study of how people interpret the sounds spoken speech. According to Roach, who is cited by Andi-Pallawa & Alam (2013, p. 104) and Savitri & Andrianto (2021, p. 52), phonology will describe language patterns, but phonetics is the actual application of these patterns. Variations in the pronunciation of a word may result from differences in the articulation of a sound (Gut, 2009). As a result, the way in which a sound is pronounced can vary from one person to another. This distinction is what gives rise to the term's consonants and vowels. Consonants and vowels combine to form the components of phonemes, which are features of pronunciation. An individual phoneme is the smallest unit of a language capable of distinguishing between the sounds that are produced (Kelly, 2001, p. 1). According to Kelly (2001, p. 2), a voiced or voiceless sound can emerge. Voiced sounds are generated as air is drawn through the vocal folds, which causes the folds to vibrate and results in the production of a sound. Voiceless sounds, on the other hand, are produced when the breath is unable to flow through the vocal folds, which means that the

vocal folds do not vibrate and hence no sound is produced. It is absolutely necessary, in order to have appropriate pronunciation and fluency in speaking using the English language, to have an understanding of the differences that exist between these two categories of consonant sounds.

Researcher discovered that numerous types of sounds are often mispronounced, particularly among Indonesian students, using a variety of possible resources (Dwi Adeline, 2020; Frijuniarsi, 2018; Ganie et al., 2019; Juliardi et al., 2019; Marpaung et al., 2021; Puspita et al., 2017; Untoro & Rustipa, 2020). This mistake is, of course, due to variances in their mother tongues. There are instances when it can be challenging for Indonesian students to differentiate between the sounds of Indonesian and English. One of the most common mistakes is the pronunciation of post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/). According to Marpaung et al. (2021, p. 377), an example of a voiced post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/) that is frequently mispronounced is the following: genre (/ˈʒɒnrə/), beige (/beɪʒ/), measure (/ˈmeʒə(r)/), massage (/ˈmæsɑːʒ/), and disclosure (/dɪsˈkləʊʒə(r)/). Meanwhile, according to Ambalegin & Arianto (2018, pp. 115–119), voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʃ/) that is frequently mispronounced is the following: show (/ʃəʊ/), fisherman (/ˈfɪʃəmən/), push (/pʊʃ/), finish (/ˈfɪnɪʃ/), leadership (/ˈliːdəʃɪp/), and crash (/kræʃ/).

To explore the topic more deeply, the researcher was conducted a research at Tanjungpura University. As stated in the English Education *Capaian Pembelajaran Lulusan* (CPL) in academic manual book of FKIP *Universitas Tanjungpura* (p. 128), students are required to be able to follow

developments and improve their speaking skills in daily communication, academically and at work environment. In fact, there are still many students who have not understood the context of speaking, which is a bit complicated, especially in learning phonetics. The subjects in this research are Tanjungpura University sixth-semester English language education study program students for the 2022/2023 academic year. The phonetic issues specified in the Introduction to Linguistics course in fourth semester are being used to select sixth-semester students for this study. The study was examined the post-alveolar fricative pronunciation of sixth-semester students in the English education department at Tanjungpura University.

Several studies discuss sounds. In the context of pronouncing consonant sounds, the first is a study conducted by Untoro & Rustipa (2020), who found many English fricative pronunciation errors from English students. The results obtained were errors in the pronunciation of labiodental fricative (/f/ and /v/), dental fricative (/θ/ and /ð/), and post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) which were the most common. Puspita et al. (2017) furthermore conducted research pertaining to pronunciation, which seeks to determine how students with a Sambas Malay background pronounce English fricatives, including post-alveolar fricatives. In terms of acoustic phonetics, there is an additional study by Wulandari et al. (2018) that discusses the analysis of acoustic properties, specifically formants. Through application, the acoustic properties of a sound are contrasted using the differences between participant formants and native speaker formants as standards. This analysis was conducted with

PRAAT Software. This is similar to the study conducted by Rahmatunisa & Syarifudin (2021), which used PRAAT to study intonation and stress characteristics in pronunciation.

Although the research about sounds has been conducted by many researcher, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. Based on this, the difference lies in discussing specific sounds pronunciation problems that were not discussed in detail in the previous studies which is post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/). This discussion is premised here on students' basic competence of pronouncing post-alveolar fricative sounds, which are notoriously challenging to pronounce appropriately. This is also demonstrated by the research that Untoro & Rustipa (2020) conducted about the number of students that incorrectly pronounce post-alveolar fricative sounds. Research involving post-alveolar fricative becomes one of the rare topics to be one of the considerations for conducting this research, considering that post-alveolar fricative is also found in many English words. Another consideration for filling the gaps is that there are rarely topics related to linguistics, especially phonetics, which English Language Education students carry out at the University of Tanjungpura. In addition, topics related to acoustic phonetic analysis, which will use PRAAT software, have never been carried out within the scope of the Tanjungpura University English Education study program.

The researcher would analyse the post-alveolar fricative pronunciation of English department students. In his analysis, the researcher focused on the phonemes of the consonant features, specifically voiced and voiceless of post-

alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/). Based on the results of the analysis in PRAAT software, the researcher compared the participants' formant to the native speaker's formant and concluded how many percentages of students' acceptability of pronouncing the voiced and voiceless of post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/). This issue is needed considering the post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) can be found in a great number of words that are frequently used and knowing the pronunciation of the post-alveolar fricative is intended to increase students' awareness of the acceptable pronunciation of the post-alveolar fricative, especially in communicating to avoid misunderstandings. To conclude, this study focused on the pronunciation of post-alveolar fricative sounds, a descriptive study on the sixth-semester English education students at Tanjungpura University in the 2022/2023 academic year.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research was conducted to answer a research question. The research question is what percentage for acceptability of pronouncing voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) of sixth-semester English education students in Tanjungpura University?

1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purposes of this study to find out the percentage for acceptability of pronouncing voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) of sixth-semester English education students in Tanjungpura University.

1.4 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

As the completion of this study, the researcher hopes that this study will make positive contributions as follows:

a. This study will help students find out the mistakes in pronouncing voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/).
b. This study will help lecturers identify the voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) pronunciation problems in students.
c. This study will be useful for other researcher to examine similar cases of pronouncing the voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) and use it as a reference in their investigations.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Researcher would focus on the pronunciation of voiced consonants and voiceless post-alveolar fricative phonemes pronounced by selected participants of sixth-semester English education students at Tanjungpura University for the purpose of this study. In this particular study, descriptive research was chosen because it would describe how the pronunciation of voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricatives will be discovered. More specifically, it would explain how it will be defined how many students would pronounce it better (based on the native speaker's standard value) in the form of a percentage. After carrying out a more in-depth analysis, which will be carried out by researcher using the procedure of transcribing, PRAAT analysis, coding, sorting, and calculating, the results were acquired. Purposive sampling, in which the researcher chooses participants based on factors that are relevant to the topic at issue, would be utilised as the procedure for identifying participants for the study. In this

particular study, the researcher chose participants from among students who had previously completed the Introduction to Linguistics course as well as students who lacked a comprehension of the correct pronunciation of English consonants, particularly voiced and voiceless post-alveolar fricative consonants. Following the completion of the analysis, the findings were subsequently be discussed after being analysed down in detail.

1.6 RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY

To avoid confusion with unfamiliar terms in this research, the researcher lists the following specific terms.

a. Phonetics alphabets/symbols refer to the pronunciation of the sounds represented by a symbol/transcription.
b. Sixth Semester English Education Students at Tanjungpura University in the Academic Year 2022/2023 refer to the participants of this study.
c. Fricative refer to a speech sound made by forcing the breath out through a narrow space in the mouth with the lips, teeth or tongue in a certain position.
d. Post-alveolar fricative (/ʒ/, and /ʃ/) are the varieties of consonant sounds employed in numerous languages, including English.
e. A spectrogram refers to a visual representation of a speech signal broken down into its frequency components.
f. PRAAT refers to speech signal analysis software developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenink since 1992.
g. Formant refers to the frequencies that resonate in the vocal tract area.