

STUDENT'S PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASS IN 11TH GRADE HUMANITIES AT SMAN 1 SIKUR

Zahratul Fitri Annapis

English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Language Art and Humanities,
Hamzanwadi University

Fyannapis@gmail.com

Abstrtact:

This descriptive study aims to investigate the pronunciation challenges faced by students during English-speaking classes. Although many students demonstrate adequate vocabulary and grammatical understanding, difficulties in producing accurate pronunciation often hinder their overall speaking performance and intelligibility. The research was conducted in an eleventh-grade classroom, where data were collected through classroom observations and questionnaire. The data were analyzed qualitatively to identify common pronunciation problems and the factors contributing to them.

The findings show that students struggle primarily with segmental features such as vowel and consonant sounds especially the distinction between long and short vowels, voiced and voiceless consonants, and sounds not found in their first language. In addition, suprasegmental features, including word stress, intonation patterns, and rhythm, also pose significant challenges, causing students to produce unclear or unnatural speech.

These difficulties are further influenced by limited exposure to native-like pronunciation models, lack of consistent practice, and feelings of anxiety or self-consciousness when speaking in front of others. The study concludes that effective pronunciation instruction should integrate explicit teaching, ample listening input, and guided speaking practice. The results are expected to help teachers design more supportive and engaging speaking activities to enhance students' pronunciation skills in the classroom.

Keywords: *English speaking class, Pronunciation challenges; segmental and suprasegmental features.*

Article History

Received: Desember 2025

Reviewed: Desember 2025

Published: Desember 2025

Plagiarism Checker No 694

Prefix DOI: Prefix DOI:

10.8734/sindoro.v1i2.360

Copyright: Author

Publish by: SINDORO



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

English is now a vital worldwide language that links individuals from different nations, cultures, and professions in the age of globalization. The need for students to have good English proficiency has grown dramatically due to the quick growth of technology, worldwide communication networks, and international cooperation. These days, English is widely utilized in commerce, science, education, digital communication, and other global platforms. Because of this, students now need to be able to communicate well in English, especially while speaking, in order to compete both academically and professionally. Pronunciation is a critical component of speaking abilities that determines whether meaningful and seamless communication is possible.

Pronouncing words correctly helps people understand each other, prevent misunderstandings, and gain confidence when speaking (Fatimah et al., 2020). Poor pronunciation can limit

students' participation in talks, presentations, and conversations even when they have a strong vocabulary and grammar. As a result, pronunciation plays a crucial role in determining students' ability to communicate in the current world and is not just a linguistic feature.

Despite its significance, many EFL students still struggle greatly to learn how to pronounce words correctly. According to (Abdalla et al., 2020) limited exposure to English, incompatibility between the learners' mother tongue and English sound systems, and inadequate pronunciation-focused instruction in schools are common causes of pronunciation problems. These difficulties are particularly noticeable in Indonesian contexts, where students' native tongues have a significant impact on how they produce English sounds.

Research conducted by (Shak et al., 2016) further supports this, showing that students frequently mispronounce vowel and consonant sounds, silent letters, and -ed endings due to low oral proficiency and inadequate practice opportunities. Such difficulties can reduce students' confidence and willingness to speak English, particularly in academic settings where speaking performance is assessed.

Similarly, studies in Indonesian schools such as the research at SMA Eka Prasetya Medan reveal that students often avoid speaking due to fear of making mistakes, shame, and lack of understanding of English intonation patterns; these emotional and psychological barriers add to the linguistic challenges they face when learning pronunciation. (*Students' Ability in Pronouncing English Words by Using ELSA Speak Application of the Second-Year Students of SMA Eka Prasetya Medan*. Pdf, n.d.) (Fatimah et al., 2020) also reports that students struggle with phonetic transcription, mother tongue interference, and differences between English and Indonesian sounds, all of which contribute to persistent pronunciation errors even after formal instruction. In the context of SMAN 1 Sikur Grade 11 students experience similar conditions limited exposure to authentic English communication, reliance on Bahasa Indonesia or local languages, and a learning environment that may not prioritize pronunciation practice. As English becomes increasingly important in higher education and future career opportunities, understanding and addressing these pronunciation challenges is crucial.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the pronunciation difficulties that 11TH Grade Humanities students at SMAN 1 Sikur encounter. The research aims to provide insights that can help improve teaching practices and support students in developing clearer, more confident spoken English skills necessary in today's globalized world by investigating students' experiences, linguistic challenges, and the factors contributing to their pronunciation issues.

METHOD

This research was conducted from October to December 2025 at SMAN 1 Sikur, East Lombok Regency, covering the preparation, data collection and data analysis stages during the English learning process for grade 11, specifically in the 11th grade Humanities English Speaking Class. In order to comprehend students' experiences with pronunciation challenges in English, this study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological perspective. Two primary methods were used to collect data; classroom observations and Google Forms questionnaires. Pronunciation mistakes, student reactions during speaking lessons, and learning scenarios that impacted their confidence in speaking were all noted through observation. In the meantime, students' impressions of the kinds of pronunciation issues they encountered and the contributing factors were investigated using questionnaires. Following the collection of data, the researcher categorized the results, compared the findings from the questionnaires

and observations, and then evaluated the patterns of pronunciation errors to obtain a better understanding.

FINDINGS

According to the survey results, a significant portion of students still struggle to pronounce English word correctly. 20% of students said English was “very difficult”. 60% said it was “quite difficult”, and only 20% said it was “easy”. These findings demonstrate that the majority of students still need extra help, especially with pronunciation.

These difficulties are also evident in the answer regarding the frequency of pronunciation difficulties. 50% of students reported having issues sometimes, 40% reported having issues “often” and only 10% reported having issues “always”. This indicate that the majority of students frequently struggle with pronunciation.

50% of students say they feel confident when asked pronounce English words or sentence, 40% say that they feel confident “sometimes”, and 10% say that they don’t feel confident all. research indicates that 40% of people have felt embarrassed or afraid of making mistakes, 20% do so occasionally, and only 40% never do, which is consistent with this lack of confidence.

These emotional factors appear to have a major impact on their ability to produce English sounds correctly. The result of (Jaya et al., 2022) which show that affective issues including anxiety, fear of mistakes, and low motivation are major reasons of lack speaking performance among students, support this varying degree of confidence. This pattern is identical to the the results reported by (Fajri & Indah, 2022), who discovered that psychological obstacles, including anxiety and nervousness, intensified during the learning process, whether conducted online or in person.

Only 10% of students had trouble speaking vowels, whereas 70% of students had trouble pronouncing consonants. Furthermore, 20% of students reported having trouble changing their intonation, suggesting that suprasegmental components were still problematic. Pronouncing words with silent letters incorrectly is also rather prevalent, with 40% of students acknowledging that they do so regularly and 20% on occasion. Similar results can be observed in (Shak et al., 2016) study, which discovered that vowel sounds, fricative consonants, plosive sounds, and sounds with silent letters were the most common mistakes produce by student with low ability, the significants of these findings is further supported by the 40% of students who frequently mispronounce terms with silent letters.

70% of students identified lack of speaking practice as the main reason when asked about the reason. Only 10% of respondents related to the influence of their mother tongue, while 20% mentioned fear of making mistakes or embarrassment. It’s interesenting to note that 50% of students said they only occasionally received pronunciation instruction in class, while 40% thought they did not receive enough practice. This supports the conclusion that most issues stem from lack of practice, and the importance of practicing to improve pronunciation (Almusharraf, n.d.).

Furthermore, there doesn’t appear to be much exposure to native speakers or English audio (Arshad et al., 2024). while up to 40% of students rarely encounter reliable sources, 20% of students only occasionally do. This issue affects their development because their pronunciation skills are greatly impacted by how often they hear the accurate examples. When it comes to

independent practice at home, the patterns that emerge vary significantly. Approximately 40% of students engage in regular practice, another 40% practice only occasionally, and 20% do not practice at all.

When faced with challenging words, the majority of students 80% search for the audio resources or utilize Google Translate, whereas merely 10% seek assistance from their teachers. This indicates that students predominantly depend on technology as their primary means of learning outside the classroom. 50% of students said that audio-based practice is the most effective way to learn pronunciation, followed by voice-based applications (30%) and teacher imitation (20%). In actuality, 70% of students admit to rarely practicing pronunciation at home, and 20% never do so, despite their enthusiasm for digital media.

In general, these results show that the main challenges are not just the difficulty of the language, but also the fact that students did not practice enough, did not hear real audio enough, and did not have enough confidence. These findings can serve as a basis for teachers to improve audio-based activities, give more frequent practice opportunities, and provide safe learning space so the students are not frightened of making mistakes when practicing English pronunciation.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that pronunciation issues among students are caused by important psychological and instructional elements in addition to linguistic complexity. 80% of students consider English to be a challenging subject, which is consistent with their frequent difficulties pronouncing words correctly.

While only 10% of respondents said they “always” had trouble pronouncing words correctly, the majority still reported having problems “often” or “sometimes”, suggesting that pronunciation issues are a regular aspect of learning.

Psychological factors, particularly confidence and fear, play a key influence in molding student's performance. 50% of students experienced low confidence when speaking English words or sentences, compared to half who felt confident.

Accordance with previous research (Fajri & Indah, 2022) which highlights how oral production is severely hampered by anxiety, shame and fear of making mistakes. (Zahro et al., 2025) also demonstrate in her study, students with low pronunciation skills frequently suffer significant levels of anxiety related to fear of being judged, further reinforce these emotional difficulties. 40% of students in the current survey said that they were embarrassed or terrified of making mistakes, indicating that confidence problems are not just emotional but also directly related to student's lack of familiarity with English sounds.

According to (Zahro et al., 2025) students become frustrated when they are unable to reproduce the target sound due to the phonological variations between Indonesian and English such as /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /θ/, or words with silent letters. As these errors accumulate, this exacerbates students' anxiety and avoidance behavior towards words or sentences whose pronunciation they do not know.

70% of learners felt that pronouncing consonants is still the most difficult part of language, followed by vowels, intonation, and silent letters. These results are consistent with Shak et al. (2016), who observed that low-proficiency learners frequently mispronounce vowel sounds,

fricatives, plosives, and silent-letter phrases. The Analysis of Pronunciation Challenges of EFL (Salsabila et al., n.d.) highlights similar tendencies and errors to mother-tongue interference, inadequate exposure to native input, and difficulty articulating complicated sounds. Students also substituted novel English sounds with those more comparable to their native phonological system, even though diphthongs were not the primary focus of this study. (Salsabila et al., n.d.) also emphasized that repeated pronunciation errors increase anxiety and reduce students' motivation to practice.

These findings are confirmed by observations made in the classroom when offered a speech in front of the class without prepared. Several students did not know how to pronounce the word correctly because of anxiety, insecurity. This indicate that psychological pressure strongly influence their ability.

Overall, these result suggest that a variety of factors including linguistics, anxiety in the classroom and limited practice contribute to pronunciation difficulties. Structured practice, providing enhancing students' pronunciation abilities and confidence.

CONCLUSION

After having been collected and analyzed data, this study demonstrates that linguistic difficulties, low self-confidence, and a lack of instructional support are the main causes of students' pronunciation issues. Due to mother language interference and new English sounds, many people still have trouble with consonants, vowel, intonation, and silent letters.

Psychological aspects are also very important. Students frequently mispronounce phrases when asked to speak abruptly because they are anxious, fear making a mistake, and lack the confidence to perform in front of others, according to observations has been done in the class, students depend greatly on digital resources since they are not exposed to enough real English audio or structured practice in the classroom. These resources are useful, but they can not take the place of regular instruction from teachers.

In general, consistent practice, deeper listening input, and an encouraging environment that minimizes anxiety and inspires students to speak confidently are all necessary for improving pronunciation.

REFERENCES

- Abdalla, M., Mohammed, A., Ali, S., & Idris, M. (2020). *Challenges of Pronunciation to EFL Learners in Spoken English*. 6(5), 193-203. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4408549>
- Almusharraf, A. (n.d.). Pronunciation instruction in the context of world English: exploring university EFL instructors' perceptions and practices. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 2024, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03365-y>
- Fajri, M., & Indah, R. N. (2022). *Student's Speaking Problems in Online Learning: A Systematic Research Review*. 10(2), 99-111.
- Jaya, H. P., Sriwijaya, U., Petrus, I., Sriwijaya, U., Pitaloka, N. L., & Sriwijaya, U. (2022). *SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS FACED BY ENGLISH*. 8(1), 105-112.
- Salsabila, B., Munawaroh, B., El-sulukiyyah, A. A., Geovanny, E., & Chuquin, P. (n.d.). *The Analysis of Pronunciation Challenges of EFL Students in Senior High School: Causes and Solutions*. 28-41.

- Shak, P., Lee, C. S., & Stephen, J. (2016). *Pronunciation Problems : A Case Study on English Pronunciation Errors of Low Proficient Students*. 04, 25-35.
-] Students" Ability in Pronouncing English Words by Using ELSA Speak Application of the Second-Year Students of SMA Eka Prasetya Medan.pdf. (n.d.).
- Arshad, W., Lecturer, A., Sarawak, K., & Lecturer, S. (2024). *ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES FACED BY*. 02(04), 2104-2111.
- Fatimah, S., Kesehatan, P., & Pertiwi, B. (2020). *Journal of English Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics*. 1(1), 15-26.
- Jaya, H. P., Sriwijaya, U., Petrus, I., Sriwijaya, U., Pitaloka, N. L., & Sriwijaya, U. (2022). *SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS FACED BY ENGLISH*. 8(1), 105-112.
- Zahro, M., Wangi, W., & Mulyati, T. (2025). *LUNAR (Language and Art)*. 9(1), 32-40.