



ENHANCING STUDENTS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION THROUGH PHONETIC METHODOLOGY AT MTSN 3 BANDA ACEH

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how well first-grade students at MTsN 3 Banda Aceh can pronounce English words correctly while using a phonetic approach. The study uses tests, questionnaires, and experimental instruction sessions to investigate the efficacy of the phonetic technique using a pre-experimental research design. All first-grade children at MTsN 3 Banda Aceh make up the target population, and 30 students were chosen as a sample size for the research. The data is analyzed using statistical techniques such as t-tests, percentage computations and SPSS 21. Based on the difference between pretest and posttest scores, the results show that students' pronunciation skills significantly improved after using the phonetic approach. Furthermore, both the quantitative and qualitative results show that students had positive attitudes regarding the phonetic technique.

Keywords: Challenges, Strategies, TOEFL Preparation.

1. INTRODUCTION

A common mistake made by many students studying English as a second language is not paying adequate attention to English pronunciation. This underestimation of the importance of pronunciation is mainly because students tend to think mistakenly that pronunciation is less important compared to other aspects of the English language such as grammar, lexicology and vocabulary.

Pronunciation is an essential element in language proficiency, contributing significantly to the overall communicative competence of language learners (Gilakjani, 2012). Smith (2019) defined pronunciation as a collection of habits that are developed through the repetition and correction of sound production. Poor pronunciation can hinder comprehension, impede effective communication, and lead to misinterpretations. Recognizing the importance of addressing this challenge, educators and researchers have increasingly turned their attention to methods and interventions aimed at improving students' pronunciation skills.

Pronunciation is vital to proper communication because the incorrect use of pronunciation inevitably leads to the message being misunderstood by the recipient. Pronunciation of the letter sounds in words as well as syllable emphasis on parts of words will more often than not change the words meaning and context drastically thereby irreversibly altering the meaning of the sentence being communicated. A good example of this is the word present. If one were to say, "I am present" with an emphasis on the first syllable of the word, one is referring to one's presence at a particular place or time. On the other hand, if one were to say, "I wish to present....". Then one refers to a statement or article one wishes to announce.

Effective communication in a second language encompasses various aspects, with pronunciation playing a pivotal role in conveying meaning and fostering successful interaction. In language learning contexts, pronunciation is often a challenging skill for students to master, leading to potential communication barriers and reduced linguistic confidence. This study aims to explore and implement strategies to enhance students' pronunciation, recognizing the significance of clear and accurate spoken language in effective communication.

Several studies had been conducted to identify the difficulties faced by students in English pronouncing and how to overcome them. A study by Umantari (2016) suggested that Indonesian students often have difficulties in understanding the differences between English and Indonesian phonological systems, especially consonants. Moreover, Komariah (2018), in her research, compared English sounds and students' pronunciation, finding out the consonant, vowel and diphthong mispronouncing by the students. The study suggested that students face difficulties in pronouncing the English sounds, finding the students' problems in pronouncing English sounds and



3 drawing a conclusion. Both of the studies found that Indonesian students, in the investigated areas, experienced errors in their pronunciation.

Therefore, teachers must become more innovative and creative in choosing an effective approach in teaching pronunciation. One alternative approach to teaching pronunciation, as suggested by many researchers, is the phonetic methodology. Phonetic methodology is an alternative approach to teaching pronunciation that focuses on the explicit teaching of phonetic symbols and their corresponding sounds. This method emphasizes the connection between written symbols and spoken sounds, helping learners develop accurate pronunciation and communication skills (Jaske, 1987). This study is aimed to analyze the effectiveness of using the phonetic methodology in improving students' pronunciation ability.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study used a pre- experimental methodology. Pre- test first conducted before the treatment. After treatment, a post-test was also conducted to measure if the treatment was effective. After the test was conducted the qualitative research method was used to support the finding with the deeper information. Moser & Korstjens (2017) defines Qualitative research as a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Qualitative research uses several techniques including interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and observation (Cleland, 2017).

2.2 Source of Data

The writers conducted this research in MTsN 3 Banda Aceh. The Population of this Study is the students of MTsN 3 Banda Aceh (311 students). The stratified Sampling is used to select the sample for the study. The Sample of this study is students of Class IX.1 that consists of 40 students.

2.3 Data Collection

In collecting data, this research applied a pre-experimental design (one group pretest and posttest). The pre-experimental design includes one or more than one experimental group to be observed against certain treatments (Thyer 2012). This design involved one group that is pre-test (O1), exposed to treatment (X) and post-test (O2). It aims to know whether there is significant development before and after using Phonetic Methodology and to know whether by using Phonetic Methodology can improve students' pronunciation. A preliminary test administered to determine a student's baseline knowledge or preparedness for an educational experience or course of study. At this point I will give a text of the conversation to the students, and ask the students to read the text without giving a correct reading record of the text, to see how well the students pronounce it before implementing this method.

Moreover, another test was given to students after completion of an instructional program or segment and often used in conjunction with a pre-test to measure their achievement and the effectiveness of the program. A text of the conversation is provided for the students, followed by a requirement to listen to a recording of a text conversation that has been shared. After listening, the students were asked to read back the text of the conversation they have been listening to, to see if the student's pronunciation would be better after they listen to the pronunciation first before reading it themselves.

Next, a set of questionnaires was provided for the students to obtain qualitative insights into the thoughts and feelings of the students regarding the application of Phonetic Methodology in learning pronunciation. In order to gauge participation, enjoyment, and the perceived efficacy of the Phonetic Methodology, the writers considered several closed-answered and open-answered questions. Students were invited to share their ideas, which produced insightful qualitative data for a more comprehensive understanding.



3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The data were collected through tests and questionnaires. The result of the teaching experiment shows that there is a significant improvement of the students' pronunciation by phonetic method. At the first meeting, the writer gave a pre-test, and at the last meeting, the writers gave a post-test. The lowest score of pre- test is 60 and the highest is 80. Moreover, the score of the post-test is 70 for the lowest and the highest is 85. From the result of the pre-test and post-test this proves that the post-test value is higher than the pre-test so that it can be concluded that from the result of the pre-test and post-test phonetic method is considered. The score of this t count is higher than t table 2.021. This shows that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. It means phonetic methods can improve students' pronunciation.

The purpose of the linear regression analysis is to test one of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Whether or not there is influence between one independent variable on the dependent variable. The output of the first part (coefficient) is known to be a constant value (a) of 7.000. While the phonetic method (b/regression coefficient) is 0.818. From the result of the regression equation, it can be translated that the constant is 7.000 means that the consistent value of the pronunciation variable is 7.000. Secondly, the independent variable (X) regression coefficient is 0.818 states that for each addition of 1 % phonetic method, the pronunciation value increases by 0,818. The regression coefficient is positive, so it can be said that the direction of influence of the variable X on Y is positive. Furthermore, decision making in a simple regression test. Based on the significance value of the coefficient table obtained a significance value of 0.000 smaller than the probability of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$) so that it can be concluded that the variable X affects the variable Y. In addition, decision-making based on t value is called t test. Known t value is 6.618 greater that t table 2.021 ($6.618 > 2.021$) so it can be concluded that the phonetic method variable (X) affects the pronunciation variable (Y).

The second part output (model summary) explains the value of the correlation or relationship (R) that is equal to 0.732 so that it can be said there is a relationship between the independent variable (X) against the dependent variable (Y) the total relationship is equal to 0.732. Then, from the output obtained the determination coefficient (R square) of 0.535 which implies that the effect of the independent variable (phonetic method) on the dependent variable (pronunciation) is 53.5 %. The students give positive responses toward the application of phonetic methods in improving their English pronunciation. The results of questionnaires proved the students felt more confident when they used phonetic method strategy, and they felt this method made them easier to understand the English text. Many students are happy and like learning by using the phonetic method and make them motivated and also want to try reading a text. They are also easy to understand how to correct pronunciation. After the data were analyzed the result indicated that the students' ability in pronouncing words increases. Thus, learning English by using the phonetic method makes the students motivated to read the English text.

The researcher chose phonetic methodology to be applied in the classroom because of some reason. Phonetic method is necessary to be learned because by using phonetic method, students can test themselves whether their pronunciation is correct or not. If their pronunciation is not correct, it can be corrected after they hear the pronunciation first from a recording or other app to listen. From the result of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that learning to improve the students' pronunciation by using the phonetic method is effective.

To investigate the students' improvement in pronunciation, the writer gave the students 10 questions. To make the reader easy to comprehend the explanation, the writer present the result of questionnaires by using the table below:

$$P = F/N \times 100$$

Where :

P = Percentage (%)

F = Frequency

N = Total Number of Population



Table 1. The Students Like Learning English by Using the Phonetic Method Strategy.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	18	45 %
	Agree	22	55 %
	Disagree	-	-
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

From the table above, of the total 40 correspondents, there are 22 students (55 %) who agree that they like learning English by using the phonetic strategy, and 18 students (45%) strongly agree. No one disagrees or strongly disagrees. Hence, most of the students like learning English by using the phonetic strategy. To sum up, the students like learning by using phonetic method strategy.

Table 3. The Students Prefer Learning English by Using the Phonetic Method Strategy to Discussion Technique.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
2	Strongly Agree	9	22.5 %
	Agree	26	65 %
	Disagree	5	12.5 %
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

The table above discusses that there are 26 students (65 %) who agree, 9 students (22.5 %) strongly agree, 5 students (12.5 %) disagree and no one strongly disagrees with the statement. Thus, most of the students prefer learning English text by using phonetic method to learning using discussion technique.

Table 4. Learning by Using the Phonetic Strategy Makes the Students Motivated to Read English Text.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
3	Strongly Agree	20	50 %
	Agree	20	50 %
	Disagree	-	-
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

The table above shows that 20 students (50%) agree that learning by using the phonetic method strategy makes them feel motivated to read English text. Twenty students (50%) strongly agree, and no one disagrees and strongly disagrees with the statement. Most of the students learning by using phonetic method strategy make the students motivated to read the English text. It means that the students are motivated to learn by using the phonetics method strategy.

Table 5. The Students More Easily Understand and Know Correct Pronunciation in English

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
4	Strongly Agree	18	45 %
	Agree	20	50 %
	Disagree	1	2.5 %
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.5 %
Total		40	100 %



The table above describes that, of 40 respondents, 20 students (50%) agree and 18 students (45%) strongly agree that they can have a better understanding and know how to pronounce English words correctly. One student (2.5%) disagrees and another student (2.5 %) strongly disagrees with the statement.

Table 6. The Students Prefer Listening to the English Text Reading First before Reading it Themselves.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
5	Strongly Agree	20	50 %
	Agree	18	45 %
	Disagree	2	5 %
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

The table illustrated that 20 students (50%) strongly agree, and 18 students (45 %) agree that they prefer listening to English text reading first before reading it themselves, 2 students (5%) disagree and no one strongly disagrees with the statement. Most of the students prefer to listen to English text reading first before reading it themselves.

Table 7. Applying the Phonetic Method Strategy Can Increase Students' English Achievement.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
6	Strongly Agree	12	30 %
	Agree	23	57.5 %
	Disagree	5	12.5 %
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

The table above shows that 23 students (57.5 %) agree, and 12 students (30%) strongly agree that applying the phonetic method strategy can increase students' English achievement. Five students (12.5 %) disagree, and nobody strongly disagrees with this statement. Thus, it can be summed up that the application of the phonetic method can increase students' English achievement.

Table 8. The Phonetic Method Strategy Facilitates the Students' Understanding of English Text.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
7	Strongly Agree	13	32.5 %
	Agree	24	60 %
	Disagree	3	7.5 %
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

Related to the table above, 24 students (60%) agree and 13 students (32.5%) strongly agree that the phonetic method strategy makes it easy for them to understand English text. Three students (7.5 %) disagree. Most of the students agree that the phonetic method strategy facilitates their understanding of English text.

Table 9. The Phonetic Method Strategy Increases the Students' Confidence When Asked to Read the Text.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
8	Strongly Agree	17	42.5 %
	Agree	19	47.5 %
	Disagree	2	5 %
	Strongly Disagree	2	5 %
Total		40	100 %



The table describes that 19 students (47.5 %) agree and 17 students (42.5 %) strongly agree to the statement. 2 students (5 %) disagree and 2 students (5 %) strongly disagree. Most of the students become more confident when they are asked to read the text with applying phonetic method strategy.

Table 10. The Phonetic Method Strategy Should be Applied Continuously.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
9	Strongly Agree	19	47.5 %
	Agree	17	42.5 %
	Disagree	4	10 %
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total		40	100 %

Based on the table above, 19 students (47.5%) strongly agree; 17 students (42.5 %) agree with the statement; 4 students (10%) disagree, and no one strongly disagrees. Most of the students hope this strategy will be continued to be applied in learning English. It means that applying phonetic method strategy makes them comfortable.

Table 11. The Student Pronunciation Becomes Better after the Phonetic Method Had Been Applied.

Question Number	Option	F	Percentage
10	Strongly Agree	11	27.5 %
	Agree	22	55 %
	Disagree	6	15 %
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.5 %
Total		40	100 %

The table shows that 22 students (55%) agree, 11 students (27.5%) strongly agree, 6 students (15%) disagree and 1 student (2.5%) strongly disagrees with the statement. Most of the students became better after the phonetic method had been applied. It means that this method is one of the strategies that can improve their ability in pronouncing English words.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of the test, teaching experiment, and questionnaires, there is a significant difference between the result of pretest and posttest. Therefore, the writer draws several conclusions as follow:

1. Teaching by using phonetic methodology can improve the students' pronunciation, as proven by students' posttest scores that were higher than the pretest scores.
2. The students give positive responses toward the application of the phonetic method. The students become more confident when they are asked to read the text.

Moreover, several suggestions can be given and beneficial to other from the result of learning by using phonetic method in improving students' pronunciation:

1. Teachers are recommended to use phonetic methodology as an alternative approach to improving students' pronunciation ability.
2. The students should learn English not only at the school but also in other places to improve their English quality. They also must often read the English written text such as magazines, newspapers and other authentic material.

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