

## THE ROLE OF PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS OF THE PRONUNCIATION ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH READING CONTEST FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS HELD BY SMPN SUMBER KALONG KALISAT-JEMBER

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### Abstrak

Thesis ini membahas analisis tentang variasi pelafalan bahasa Inggris berdasarkan pada realita dari pengalaman-pengalaman tiga juri lomba membaca bahasa Inggris yang diadakan oleh SMPN Sumber Kalong di Kalisat. Penulis bermaksud untuk mencari tahu masalah kesadaran yaitu ingin mengetahui faktor faktor pengalaman apa yang mempengaruhi asumsi standar bahasa Inggris untuk menilai peserta lomba dan untuk menggambarkan kriteria dari macamnya pelafalan yang benar dengan penelitian melalui interview kepada para juri. Selain itu, penulis juga bermaksud untuk mengetahui pengaruh dari variasi bahasa Inggris terhadap penilaian para juri. Penelitian ini menggunakan salah satu jenis data yaitu kualitatif data. Data diambil dari proses interview. Jenis interview dari penelitian ini adalah *semi-structured*. Data yang diperoleh berupa rekaman interview yang kemudian akan di transkripsikan. Transkripsi ini menjadi data utama dalam penelitian ini. Setelah itu, data akhir kemudian diinterpretasi untuk menarik kesimpulan. Hasil dari thesis ini menyelidiki bahwa tiga macam faktor pengalaman mempengaruhi ketiga juri tersebut dalam penguasaan pelafalan bahasa Inggris mereka. Faktor-faktor pengalaman itu adalah latar belakang pendidikan, latar belakang profesi, dan latar belakang pribadi. Untuk menilai pelafalan sempurna atau tidak, mereka memiliki pendapat yang berbeda dalam penilaian. Terakhir, semua juri dipengaruhi oleh penutur asli dan juga bukan penutur asli bahasa Inggris yang berasal dari berbagai jenis orang. Itu berarti bahwa keberagaman bahasa Inggris mempengaruhi produksi pelafalan mereka. Selain itu, ditemukan bahwa ternyata ketidaksadaran dari produksi pelafalan bahasa Inggris kita seharusnya sesuai dengan realita yang kita gunakan dalam percakapan kita.

**Kata kunci:** *pelafalan, faktor pengalaman, penilaian pelafalan, variasi bahasa Inggris*

### Abstract

This study describes analysis about the English pronunciation variation based on the reality of three judges' experiences of English Reading Contest held by SMPN Sumber Kalong in Kalisat. This study is meant to find out the awareness problem that is to know the experiential factors that influence the assumed the standardized English to assess the participants of the contest and to figure the criteria of the kind of good pronunciation by investigating in the interview to the judges. Beside that, this study tries to find out the influence of English varieties of the judges' assessment. This study uses a kind of qualitative data. The data are taken from the interview. The kind of interview is semi-structured interview. The acquired data is in the form of recording and it is then transcribed. The transcription becomes the primary data in this research. After that, the data are interpreted for drawing the conclusion. The results of this study explore that three kinds of experiential factors influence the three judges in mastering their English pronunciation. They are educational background, professional background, and also personal background. To measure which pronunciation perfect or not, they have different view to assess. The last, all of them are influenced by native speaker and also non native speaker of English who are from several kinds of people. It means that the variety of English influence the production of their pronunciation. In addition, this thesis finds out the unawareness of our production of English pronunciation should be appropriate from the reality that we used in our communication.

**Keywords:** *pronunciation, experiential factors, pronunciation assessment, English varieties*

### Introduction

In Indonesia, children could pronounce words from Indonesian text better because their national language is Indonesian language. The amount of phoneme form of each word will be similar with the amount of written form of the word. For example, <marah> means angry. It has five letters,

and five phonemes are used to represent them. Beside learning Indonesian lesson, they also learn English and different local language based on the communities that use the language in daily life. Sometimes, some Elementary Schools in Indonesia give Arabic and Mandarin lesson. However, English is the language lesson that is always available in the subject of learning schedule in every Elementary School except Indonesian lesson.

There are some difficulties when children learn English in Indonesia. One of them is reading. Their difficulty in reading English text is how to pronounce the English words which are different from the language that they pronounce in daily life. The pronunciation of English is different from the written form of the word. The Indonesian children read Indonesian text easily. But, they will get difficulties in reading English because the amount of graphemes in English words is not equal with the amount of phonemes of the word. For example, <read> has four letters, but three phonemes are used to represent them. Many children in Indonesia pronounce it as /ræd/ than /rid/. When children learn to read English, they have to acquire two different skills. They have to learn how to identify printed words, and they have to learn how to comprehend written material (Torgesen and Mathes, 1998:2). In reading English, the children must be able to know the written form of the word, the pronunciation of the word, and the meaning of the word.

Based on Share and Stanovich (1995), if children know how to use the alphabetic principle in reading words of English, they can master its use in order to become good readers. Children who understand the relationship between letters and phonemes fast can be better readers than children who get difficulty acquiring reading skills (in Torgesen and Marthes, 1998:2). Good readers do the ability to decode words. Automatically, they would understand the alphabetic principle phonemically. They would apply skills rapidly and fluently. They could possess strong vocabularies, syntactical skills, grammatical skills, and ability to relate reading to their own experiences (Beck & Juel, 1995:7).

English pronunciation is not easy. Children find difficulties to pronounce English word because they do not learn directly from the people who are using English as their first language. They learn English directly from the people who are not using English as their first language, but they use English as their second language (ESL) or their foreign language (EFL). "There are three kinds of English speaker: those who speak it as a first language, those for whom it is a second or additional language and those who learn it as a foreign language" (Graddol, 1997:10). ESL means that people who are non-native English use English in place where English is spoken by people there. For example, the speakers of English live in Nigeria, Malaysia, India and Singapore. They use English with people who can communicate competently with native speaker of English. English as a foreign language (EFL) is used for some teachers who teach the non-native language that has no status as a routine medium of communication in their place (Crystal, 1987:368). Some teachers in Indonesia in International Schools use English as a second language. Some teachers in Indonesia also use English as a foreign language. They do not use English in their communication. They use it as the need for teaching the students in school.

In Indonesia, phonemes of English are learnt by adult in the University especially in Faculty of Letters and Language Teaching Faculty. Phonemes of English are not learnt in detail to children. They know how to pronounce the word of English because their English teacher shows them how to pronounce the word. Most English teachers of Elementary

Schools in the subs district of Kalisat, Sukowono, Jelbuk and the environs who teach English language lesson often do not pay enough attention to their pronunciation.

From personal observation in 2014, it was found that the pronunciation is less important than grammar and vocabulary. It is presumably because the target of teaching the English language is just to fulfill the students' need to be a successful in sitting on the examination. Similarly, in Junior High School and Senior High School in Indonesia, the target of English is just to get the mark that is above the minimum score of National Examination. Truthfully, pronunciation is extremely important not only for scoring but also for practical communication. Many cases of misunderstanding in communication are caused by mispronouncing of words. Let us take a few examples: if someone pronounces <fog> and <fox>, <sea> and <she>, <sick> and <six> with relatively no differences, in some cases can lead to a misunderstanding.

"In the context of English language education in Indonesia, however, pronunciation has not received enough attention. As a result, there is no clear guideline of pronunciation teaching although English is one of the important compulsory subjects at secondary schools. Many Indonesian teachers of English do not know what aspects of English pronunciation to teach and how to teach them. They are fundamentally not sure which English variety they should introduce to students in their classrooms because several English varieties (e.g., American English, British English, and Australian English) exist throughout Indonesia" (Moedjito, 2008:130).

It has been obvious why pronunciation is important. In addition, good pronunciation can also give a better value to those who master it.

Generally teaching in Indonesia, four language skills of English are always be the criteria of English curriculum. Those four skills are used to improve English ability such as "reading", "writing", "speaking", and "listening". The teaching of English as a foreign language to young learners should involve those four language skills (Kurniasih, 2011:73). In Indonesian policy, the adjustment of National Education Minister Number 23 in 2006 contains of the graduated competent standard for Elementary School and Junior High School (Suyanto, 2009:5). This suggests that the standard of learning English should have those four language skills.

From those four skills, children could acquire English through exercises, texts, recordings, and others. All educators want to increase English ability among children. Therefore, "reading" skill is used in the contest held by SMPN Sumber Kalong to measure the contestant of Elementary School in reading English text. The contest is named "English Reading Contest". This contest is used to raise the skill of reading among the children of Elementary School. Like in the contest held by SMPN Sumber Kalong all participants of students in different Elementary School tried to be the winner. Those students were delegated from each Elementary School of Kalisat, Sukowono, Jelbuk, and



environs. They were delegated because they were decided and chosen based on their ability in English.

The participants who came from several Elementary Schools had varieties of their pronunciation. So, in the contest, it would appear several kinds of pronunciation style used by participants. The judges would have criteria how to assess the participants of the contest. According to the printed guideline of the English reading contest held by SMPN Sumber Kalong at SMPN Sumber Kalong in 2014, the participants would be valued based on the aspects of the assessments; the pronunciation, fluency, pauses, intonation, and voice. Pronunciation is one of the aspects that have to be used in the process of assessment. On the pronunciation aspects, the participants should use the 'right pronunciation' as well as "native-speaker like". In using the pronunciation, sometimes it is difficult to face problems of how to use 'good and right pronunciation'. Meanwhile, the assessment of the pronunciation that was used by the judges was not based on any particular standard.

The standardizations that may interfere based on Received Pronunciation (RP), General American (GA) or General Australian (GA), or others (Hewings, 2008:8). Actually, English has variety of the pronunciation. Many speakers could not pronounce the same as the native because of the awareness. The research tries to know more what the judges perceived on the pronunciation. According to this situation, the research is entitled the Role of Phonological Awareness of Pronunciation Assessment of Reading English Contest Held by SMPN Sumber Kalong in Kalisat Village of Jember City.

## Research Method

Qualitative research is applied in this research. In order to have a comprehensive view of the research findings, applying qualitative procedure is used to conduct and report the result. Qualitative research is a type of research that is focused on describing, understanding, and clarifying a human experience within a group (Polkinghorne, 2005 cited in Dornyei 2007:126). This type of research is the most appropriate for the research because it enables description, understanding, and clarification of the pronunciation assessment that was made by the judges on the contestant of English reading contest held by SMPN 1 Sumber Kalong Kalisat – Jember. To gather the data, this research uses qualitative data that consist of mixture of field notes, transcripts of various recordings as well as documents of a diverse nature and length. The data are taken from the interview. The kind of interview is semi-structured. After doing the interview, the result of the conversation on the recorder is transcribed and then filtered. After that, the relation of those data is interpreted.

## Result

### 1. Experiential Factors

To shape the teacher mastery of English language, this research considers the experiences on how they got English

language from education, profession, and personal background.

#### a. Educational Background

Judge 1 started to study English from the third class in Elementary School. The English lesson did not give her much knowledge because the time was limited. It was just once a week and it was just two hours per lesson. In her Junior High School, she learnt English from her teachers. She ever delegated to follow the English speech contest. In Senior High School, for three years she studied English with the same teacher. She continued her study in Jember University in Education Faculty especially in English. Most of her lecturer use English in class. She feels that in this University, she gets more understanding of the pronunciation of English. She said that there was a lecturer from western country who taught the pronunciation directly. She also realizes that the pronunciation of her teacher in Junior High School and Senior High School is wrong. When she was study in the university, she realizes that when she pronounces a word she should use a paper and put it in front of her mouth. If the paper moves, it means that the pronunciation of the word right. She also does not follow the way of her lecturer's pronunciation. She uses Oxford dictionary to know whether her pronunciation is right or wrong. When she did her study in different levels of school like in Elementary school, Junior High School, Senior High School and also in a university especially in English Education department, she also joined English course. She followed the English course since Elementary school. From this place, she could speak English until Junior High School.

In Elementary School, judge 2 got an English lesson from the 4<sup>th</sup> class. At that time, the English lesson was still new. The lesson was also not intensive because there was no curriculum of English lesson. The teacher just gave vocabulary. She feels that English was sometimes easy and difficult. In Junior High School, she said that the English lesson was intense. The curriculum is good, and there also are a good guideline. The curriculum was same with recent curriculum. The skills were also *listening, reading, speaking* and *writing*. In Senior High School, she said that the study focused on the theory and task completion. She ever followed the contests. But, she did not win the champion. In the university, she said that she learnt many lessons of English. Pronunciation was one of the many lessons that she learnt. The lesson focused on the intonation and also pronunciation. The lecturers of this lesson were native and also non-native. In order to help her study of English in different levels of school, she also joined a course. She started to join the course when she was in the third class of Elementary School. She gets more experience of English here. In this course, the teacher cooperated with native speaker. So, she said that she could learn directly from the native speaker. She could practice to speak English with the person who was the owner of English or the person who use English in her or his daily life.

In Elementary School, judge 3 got an English lesson from 5<sup>th</sup> class. At that time, the teacher introduced English vocabulary. So, the students firstly learnt English from

memorizing the words. In Junior High School, based on the curriculum, the target of the study was just used to fulfill the material from the government. She remembered that the teacher did not use KBK curriculum yet in the seventh class. In Senior High School, started from 10<sup>th</sup> class, she remembered that English lesson was dominant in theory and also assignments. But, she remembered in the tenth class that there were several times of practice in speaking and also practiced pronouncing the words of English. She said that the teacher never gave the right pronunciation when she and her friends felt that the pronunciation was wrong in pronouncing the English words. So, she was often helped by friends who understand whether the words are wrong or right. In the university, she graduated from Muhammadiyah University in Jember, in English Education Faculty. In the first, second and also third semester, the class intensely focused on the English. The majority of lectures that teaching the English subjects 90 percent used English language in the class. For three semesters in the beginning, she had to use English in the class. It was because of the *Intensive Course* (IC) program. The students had to use English started from 7 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock in the afternoon. For the next semester after third semester, she said that the students used English when they communicate with the lecturers like asking questions, giving the answers and others.

#### b. Professional Background

All of the three judges are teachers of English in different schools. Judge 1 works as an English teacher in one of Junior High Schools in Jember. She also works as a private teacher of English for elementary students. Judge 2 also works as an English teacher in one of Junior High School in Jember. She also works as a teacher of English in BBC course. Judge 3 works as a teacher of English in one of Junior High Schools in the northern part of Jember.

In teaching English, Judge 1 teaches the students based on the curriculum of KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) or school-based curriculum. She uses two references to assist the students to learn English. The first book is called as "Buku Paket" or *hand book*. This book is from the government. The students can borrow this book but this book should be returned when they change grade. The second book is "LKS" or students worksheet book. This worksheet book should be bought by the students. She said that she teaches not only the content in the book, but also additional theory from another book. She also develops her explanation to be easier because the material from books still make the students confused. The curriculum of KTSP has approaches to the students in learning English. They are discussion and also a kind of lecture. The assessment of KTSP curriculum based on the attitudes, knowledge, and also practices of the students. The materials are like recount text, narrative text, descriptive text, and also procedure text. The students also learn tenses like future tenses, simple present tenses, past tenses, and also perfect tenses.

Looking at the curriculum that is used by their school Judge 3 is different from Judge 1. Judge 1 said that she uses curriculum of KTSP in 2006 in her school. Judge 3 uses the

new curriculum of 2013. She teaches the students of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In Indonesia, it is called as K13. She said that K13 is easier because it needs the scientific approaches like observation, asking questions, collecting data, associations, and communication. She said that K13's assessments are many. The assessments have three aspects. They are skills, knowledge and also attitudes. The skills are from speaking and writing. The knowledges are from reading and listening. The attitudes are spiritual and also social. All of them should be balanced in the form of practice, theory and also attitude. Judge 3's students use LKS book or worksheet book and "Buku Paket" or *hand book*. Other references that Judge 3 used in her way of teaching to support her students are from internet, theories in English books and also the material from MGMP. MGMP is for the group of English teachers especially in the northern part Jember that discusses about English in theory and exam. The materials are dialogues in English such as greeting, gratitude, prohibition, apology and others. These materials should be practiced. Other materials of reading are such as announcement text, advertisement text, memo, procedure, descriptive text, narrative text, recount text and others. She always delegates some of her students to follow competitions like story telling in the north of Jember. Judge 2 also uses K13 in her teaching. She just follows the material from the book. She uses hand book and also worksheet book. As a teacher in BBC course, Judge 2 said that the material should be prepared by herself. The material is not based on the lesson in the school but the material is used to fulfill the students need in learning English. 70 percent is for communication. It focuses on the speaking ability, not for the assessment aspect in the school for example the lesson is about the tense. The students have to master its material and then they can continue to other materials because the class is designed semi-privately. There are not more than eight students in a class.

Every teacher sometimes also has difficulties in teaching English language. Judge 1 said that she teaches her students more on the reading activity than others. According to the students that she told, their English language is influenced by Madurase accent. She feels that teaching English language is sometimes difficult to change the accent that the students have. Judge 3 also faces the difficulties in teaching K13. Some of the students are not confidence because they are asked to practice more. The teacher gives the sample first to the students and then they will repeat it. Some of her students are influenced by Indonesian way of pronunciation. For example <cut>, the students mostly pronounced it as /cut/ and /kut/. Some of them pronounced it in the right way that is /kat/. The word <son>, the students mostly pronounce it as /son/ than /san/. The word <once>, the students mostly pronounce it as /once/ and /on/ than /'wɒn(t)s/. She said that not only her but the other students who have more ability will also correct wrong pronunciation directly.

#### c. Personal Background

Another experience that influences judge 1's learning of English is listening to the English song. She ever listens to the English song when she was in the college. She realizes that listening to English song is also important in her



learning of English. Listening to English songs, actually is interesting and not boring. She just repeated, and followed the music. The next experience is English movies. She started watching movies since Junior High School. She watched English movies with Indonesian subtitle. She sometimes followed the dialogue from the movies. She met foreign people for the first time when she joined Brawijaya English Course. For the first time, she was confused. It was different with her speaking. But, the way of their speaking was slower so that she could understand the meaning. The next chance, she ever met foreign people in Junior High School when she followed English Competition held by English First (EF) English course. She also met foreign people in the college where she studied. There was a western lecturer. When she communicated with western people, she sometimes did not understand them. Then she said "slower please" directly because the western people spoke too fast. She ever met American people, British people and also Australian people. She could differentiate most tourists from Australians because one of her lecturers was from Australia. She chose western people who are categorized with tall body, white skin, and the auburn hair. She also learnt English with her friends by communicating with them. She ever read English books. She read the English books from University, English novel, English article, English newspaper, and others. She does not read the English book loudly. She reads silently. Sometimes she does not understand the meaning from the English book so she directly uses dictionary to find the meaning. Now, she only uses dictionary application in her cell phone. The name of the dictionary is "Kamusku Inggris Indonesia". This is an offline dictionary application of Indonesian-English.

Another experience that Judge 2 has to make her ability in English good is listening to western songs. She also likes to watch movie like Harry Potter. Beside western movies, she also likes Hindi, Korea, and Indonesian movies. She said that those kinds of learning motivate her to learn English. From that learning, she wants her pronunciation to be like that of western people in the movies and songs. She uses it as her motivation to study English privately. Her English ability is also influenced by foreign people. She met foreign people for the first time when she joined the English course. The teacher from English course worked with native speakers of English. The native speakers were from Australia and America. So, she directly learnt English from them. She told that foreign people physically looked differently from Indonesian people in terms of height and hair color. Foreign people were taller than Indonesian people. Their hair color was auburn.

Based on individual experiences, Judge 3 told many things of her experiences. One of them is about song. She really loves to listen western song. She loves western song for the first time when she was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in her Junior High School. She likes to watch western movies. She often watches them. The most recent movie that she watched is *The Final Girl*. She also said that she ever imitated the pronunciation from the movies and used it in her speaking of English. In order to develop her ability in English, she ever memorized English word to enrich her vocabulary. She

sometimes communicates in English with her family. She enounces simple words in her house. She communicates English with her mother and her husband. When she was Junior High School, she read the English book of the English subject. In Senior High School, she ever read English articles. In University, she often read English books because almost all of the subjects in her college used English books. She also ever read English novel. When she gets difficulty in the meaning the English words, she uses dictionary. When she was at school, she used the English dictionary. When she was in University, she used Oxford dictionary. She said she has three dictionaries. They are Oxford dictionary and translated dictionary. She also uses electronic dictionary such as Alfa Link. She met western people for the first time when she was in Senior High School at the second or third grade. She also met western people when she was in the University. She told that she has characteristics of some western people that she can ask them to communicate English. Firstly, she looks at the hair. The majority of western people that she knows more from the western movie have auburn hair or reddish-brown hair. She said that English people with the black hair is rare, except they have racial mixture. And also from their face, she said that there are unique faces from western people. She can know that these people are English people. She said that all of English people are taller and sometimes she is doubt that they are English people or not.

## Discussion

After knowing the detail of their story acquiring the English language, three of the interviewees are influenced by several experiences. The first interviewee, Judge 1, is influenced by educational background, professional background and also personal background. For the educational background, she gets more knowledge of English when she joined the English course. This ability could help her to learn English in her schools. In the University, she realizes of being some kinds of standards English such as American, British and also Australian. She does not use any transcriber to check her pronunciation right or wrong. She experiences pronouncing the English word by using them many times since she was in schools, course, and also in her daily life.

It also happened to Judge 2 and Judge 3. In assessing the participants of English contest, native sounding also may influenced the judges' assessment. Judge 1, Judge 2 and Judge 3 are influenced by how to be like western. They like to listen to western songs and also watch western movies. Judge 3 said that she pronounces the lyric of the song as same as the singer pronunciation. When someone listens to the music, her mouth automatically sings and produces the sounds that similar with the music speaker. The judges even also met English people or native speaker. They experienced to communicate with them. In their communication, they had to understand each other. It means that intelligibility is also needed to make a good communication. The speakers should notice the way of their pronunciation so that the listeners do not misunderstand to catch the meaning. Judge 2 said that to pronounce the English word should be clear. For example

<see> and <she>. If the person mispronounces those words, it could make misunderstanding.

Experientially, the judges' sound did not like native speakers of English. Judge 1 realized that her pronunciation was mixed by American, Australian and also British. Although Judge 2 said that she imitates American version, her teacher version could influenced her pronunciation. She said that she joined the course. She got more experiences to pronounce English there. Although teacher from western taught her of English, the local teacher also taught them in her course. Judge 3 said that she also imitated the singer sounds when she listened western song. But she also imitated her friend who was not from abroad or western people. Her friends were local people lived in the same village like her. So, the appropriate pronunciation could be English varieties that are used to assess the participants of English reading contest held by SMPN Sumber Kalong Kalisat – Jember.

## Conclusion

There are three kinds of experiential factors that influence the respondents. They are educational background, professional background and also personal background. All of the factors influence the respondents to get their ability in mastering the English language. In respect of educational background, they learn English when they are in Elementary School, in Junior High School, in Senior High school, in the University, and also in the English Course. Related to the professional background, it shows that they have different curriculum. Two of them use K13 and the other use KTSP. Both K13 and KTSP have similar target that the students should acquire four skills in learning English. They are *speaking, listening, reading, and writing*. The last factors are from personal background. In this background, the respondents are also helped by several aspects to develop their ability of English. They are watching English movies, listening English songs, reading English books, using dictionary, learning with friends, meeting foreign people, and also learning on their own.

To measure which the pronunciation is perfect or not, actually they have different view to assess. According to the data, Via tends to be influenced by American and also British because she used Oxford dictionary to check her pronunciation. It makes her aware of her inappropriate pronunciation. Fifin tends to be influenced by American because she is motivated by her teacher in her English course that was from America. Nova tends to be influenced by her friends in senior high school and also in the University because she is motivated more by her friends. These influences are just taken from the data; it may be different if the researcher knows the life of the respondents.

The last, this research is expected to give contribution to better understanding of making teaching learning process more relevant with the situation we are exposed to. I hope this study is useful for the readers as the reference of the study in phonology which focuses on the pronunciation.

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