

# **A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU IN PRONOUNCING PURE VOWEL SOUNDS**

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**Abstract:** This descriptive research is aim to find out the ability of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in pronouncing pure vowel sounds. The sample of this research is one of the three class of the third semester studentsof English Study Program which are chosoe by using cluster sampling technique. The number of sample is 36 students. The data were collected by giving a pronunciation test to the student individually. The test asked the students to read a text and the researcher record it. The students' score were analyzed by using Harris' scoring system which concerned with eleven sounds of English pure vowel, they are vowel /i:/, vowel /ɪ/, vowel /ʊ/, vowel /u:/, vowel /e/, vowel /ə/, vowel /ɜ:/, vowel /ɔ:/, vowel /æ/, vowel /ʌ/, and vowel /ɑ:/ The findings show that the students' mean score for each sounds of English pure vowel was in "good" level where the students' ability in terms pronouncing vowel /ɪ/ was the highest among the other aspects with the mean score 91, while pronouncing vowel /ə/ was the lowest one, with the mean score 67. Based on the results obtained, it can be inferred that the students are able to pronounce pure vowel sounds and their level of ability is in "good" level with the mean score 77. By lookng to the aspect the students mostly weak, that is pronouncing vowel /ə/, this study recommended the students to more practice in pronouncing vowel /ə/ to improve their ability in pronunciation.

**Key Words:** Study, Ability, Pronunciation, Pure Vowel

# **PENELITIAN TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MAHASISWA SEMESTER DUA FKIP PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU DALAM MENULIS SEBUAH PARAGRAF**

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui level kemampuan mahasiswa semester tiga FKIP Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau dalam pengucapan vocal murni. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah satu dari tiga kelas semester tiga Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang dipilih menggunakan teknik pengambilan acak. Jumlah sampel adalah 36 siswa. Data didapatkan dengan memberikan tes pengucapan kepada mahasiswa secara individual. Tesnya meminta mahasiswa untuk membaca sebuah teks dan peneliti merekam pengucapan mahasiswa tersebut. Skor para mahasiswa dianalisa dengan menggunakan sistem penilaian Harris yang menyangkut kepada 11 komponen dalam bunyi vocal murni yaitu *vokal /i:/*, *vokal /ɪ/*, *vokal /ʊ/*, *vokal /u:/*, *vokal /e/*, *vokal /ə/*, *vokal /ɜ:/*, *vokal /ɔ:/*, *vokal /æ/*, *vokal /ʌ/*, dan *vokal /ɑ:/*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata mahasiswa untuk masing-masing bunyi berada di level “bagus” dengan kemampuan mahasiswa pada pengucapan *vokal /ɪ/*, merupakan yang tertinggi dari semua aspek dengan nilai rata-rata 91, sedangkan pengucapan *vokal /ə/*, merupakan yang terendah, dengan nilai rata-rata 67. Berdasarkan hasil yang didapatkan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa mampu mengucapkan vocal murni dan kemampuan mereka berada pada level “bagus” dengan nilai rata-rata 77. Dengan melihat pada aspek mahasiswa yang terlemah, yaitu pengucapan *vokal /ə/*, penelitian ini merekomendasikan mahasiswa untuk melakukan lebih banyak praktek dan latihan dalam pengucapan *vokal /ə/*, untuk meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam pengucapan bahasa Inggris.

**Kata Kunci:** Penelitian, Kemampuan, Pengucapan, Vokal Murni

## INTRODUCTION

Language is means of human communication. Language can be used through spoken and written. Umami (2007) states that language is a unitary activity, people speak and write, and understand what is spoken and written in their language without necessarily being aware of such things as grammar and pronunciation. There are some languages that people use, such as mother tongue, lingua franca, international language, etc. English is one of the most learned languages by people around the world as this language acts as an international language.

In learning English, Harmer (2007) states there are four skills that are needed to learn; they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are also classified into two kinds of skill; receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills mean that the students receive and process the information but do not need to produce a language while productive skills require the production, for instance, a speech. Listening and reading are receptive while speaking and writing are productive. Besides these four language skills, pronunciation is one of the three important aspects of language skills, together with grammar and vocabulary that learners should be mastered in learning English. To possess skill in this international language, people need to learn how to pronounce, how to spell and how to understand the meaning of the words.

Pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of communicating with other people. Celce-Murcia (2006) states that pronunciation is the language feature, which most readily identifies the speaker as native or not. If speaker make an error when pronouncing a word, the communication will not run well, it will cause misunderstanding. For example, when a speaker says /kən/ for the word "can't", sometimes the listener think it means that the person can do something but in reverse the person can not do something.

Based on the information gained from the interview with some students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau, to be a good English speaker who should communicate and speak directly to their friends in English is not easy. Learning words, phrase and grammatical features of language is not enough. The students are expected be able to speak English accurately and fluently. In order to be understood by others, the students pay attention to their pronunciation. Good pronunciation make the students confidently in communicate with other people.

Crystal (2003) states, in learning pronunciation students learn about consonant and vowel. Consonant sounds consist of sound /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /w/, /j/, /l/, /r/ while vowel sounds consist of pure vowel sounds; /i:/, /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /e/, /ə/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɑ:/ and diphthongs (/ɪə/, /ʊə/, /eə/, /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/). Consonant and vowel in a word can affect pronunciation, as well as its meaning. For instance, the /s/ in 'soar' distinguishes it from /r/ in 'roar', and then "bit" /ɪ/ and "beat" /i:/, almost has the same sound in pronunciation but different in meaning.

Based on explanation above, the researcher wants to analyze the vowel sounds in English words and find out the level of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in pronouncing pure vowel sounds. The researcher conducted a research which is entitled A Study on the Ability of the Third Semester Students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in Pronouncing Pure Vowel Sounds.

## METHODHOLOGY

This is a descriptive research. According to Gay (2000), a descriptive research involves collecting the data by answering questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. In addition, Williams (2007) states that a descriptive research design is used to examine the situation involving identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis. This type of research is used to describe and interpret the data being studied. Therefore, the aim of this research is to find out how is the ability of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in pronouncing pure vowel sounds.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), research instrument is general method used by the researcher for obtaining information in collecting the data. In obtaining the data, the students were given a pronunciation test where the students read a text and the researcher recorded the students' pronunciation. The students' pronouncing pure vowel sounds test was being analyzed by three raters.

Furthermore, the population of this research was the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau. There are 3 classes of the third semester students of English Study Program, Class A (36 students), Class B (39 students), Class C (36 students). The total number of the population are 111 students.

Arikunto (2010) states that sample are representative of population in research. Sampling is the process of selecting member of population for the study. The sample of this research was selected by using cluster sampling. Gay (1987) states that cluster sampling selects groups not individuals and all the members of selected groups have similar characteristic. Cluster sampling is useful in situations where the population members are naturally grouped in units that can be used simply as clusters. To choose the class to be the sample, the researcher prepared 3 pieces of paper. One paper was written "sample" and the rests were blank. The chairmen of each class were asked to take one piece of paper. The chairman who got "sample" paper, his class was chosen as a sample of research.

Based on the cluster sampling that was conducted by researcher, class A was chosen as the sample of this research. The number students of class A is 36, so the number of sample in this research is 36 students.

The the researcher used classification of students' score by Harris (1974). The level of students' score in pronouncing pure vowel sounds can be classified into five levels of mastery. The classification can be seen in this following table:

**Table 1. The Classification of Students' Ability**

No.	Test Score	Classification
1.	80 – 100	Excellent
2.	60 – 79	Good
3.	50 – 59	Average
4.	0 – 49	Poor

(Adopted from Harris, 1974)

## RESULT AND DISSCUSION

To find out the students individual score, the researcher divided the number of the prounciation pure vowel sounds score with the total number of items and then multiplied it by one hundred (100) that can be seen in appendix 3. To find out the mean score of the students' scores, the writer calculated by using Microsoft Excel.

**Table 2. Percentage of the Students' Ability in Pronouncing Pure Vowel Sounds**

No	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Ability	Mean Score
1	80 – 100	9	25	Excellent	76
2	60 – 79	25	69	Good	
3	50 – 59	2	6	Average	
4	0 – 49	0	0	Poor	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>		

The result shows that almost all of the students got score in good level with the score range of 60-79. There were 25 students (69 %) are in good ability level. It was more than 50% of the total students. After that, 9 students (25%) are in excellent level, 2 students (6%) are in average level, and none of students are in poor level. It can be inferred that overall, the ability of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in pronouncing pure vowel sounds is in good level.

**Table 3. The Classification of Students' Mean Score**

No	The Component Of Pure Vowel	Mean Score	Level of Ability
1	Pronouncing vowel /i:/	78	Good
2	Pronouncing vowel /ɪ/,	91	Excellent
3	Pronouncing vowel /ʊ/,	81	Excellent
4	Pronouncing vowel /u:/,	73	Good
5	Pronouncing vowel /e/,	81	Excellent
6	Pronouncing vowel /ə/,	67	Good
7	Pronouncing vowel /ɜ:/,	72	Good
8	Pronouncing vowel /ɔ:/,	71	Good
9	Pronouncing vowel /æ/,	71	Good
10	Pronouncing vowel /ʌ/,	84	Excellent
11	Pronouncing vowel /ɑ:/	70	Good
Mean Score of The Whole Test		77	Good

From the table above it can be inferred that the students' ability in pronouncing pure vowel sounds of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau is in good level with the number mean score of the whole of test is 77.

The students' mean scores from 11 components of pure vowel sounds are varied. There are 7 components that lie to good level, they are vowel /i:/, vowel /u:/, vowel /ə/, vowel /ɜ:/, vowel /æ/, and vowel /ɑ:/ with the highest mean score is in pronouncing vowel /i/, that is 91. Then, the 4 other components belong to excellent level, it is vowel /ʌ/, vowel /ʊ/, vowel /e/, vowel /ʌ/. In good level categories, the lowest score is in pronouncing vowel /ə/ with the number of mean score is 67.

The detail of students' ability in pronouncing pure vowel sounds in terms of the highest and lowest score of pure vowel sounds as follows

#### 1. The Students' Ability in Pronouncing Vowel /i/.

**Table 4. Students' Scores and Level of Ability in Pronouncing Vowel /i/**

No	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Ability	Mean Score
1	80 -100	34	94	Excellent	91
2	60 – 79	2	6	Good	
3	50 – 59	0	0	Average	
4	0 – 49	0	0	Poor	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>		

Table 4 shows that there are 34 students (94%) in range of 80-100 (excellent level). Then there are none of the students in average and poor level. The rest of 2 students (6%) are in good ability level.

The students' mean score in pronouncing vowel/i/ is 91. It can be concluded that the ability of the third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in pronouncing pure vowel sounds, in the term of pronouncing vowel /i/ is in excellent level.

#### 2. The Students' Ability in Pronouncing Vowel /ə/

**Table 5. Students' Scores and Level of Ability in Pronouncing Vowel /ə/**

No	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Ability	Mean Score
1	80 100	4	11	Excellent	67
2	60 – 79	23	64	Good	
3	50 – 59	9	25	Average	
4	0 – 49	0	0	Poor	
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>		

Table 5 shows the students' score in the excellent level is 4 students (11%). In another case, 9 students (25%) lies in average level. In the good level there are 23 students (64%). However, there is no student lies in the poor level.

The researcher finds out that the students' mean score in pronouncing vowel /ə/ is 67. It means that the students' ability in pronouncing vowel /ə/ is in good level.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

After conducting research entitled "A Study on the Ability of the Third Semester Students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau in Pronouncing pure vowel sounds". The objective of this study is to find out the third semester students' ability in pronouncing pure vowel sounds (pure vowel; vowel /i:/, vowel /ɪ/, vowel /ʊ/, vowel /u:/, vowel /e/, vowel /ə/, vowel /ɜ:/, vowel /ɔ:/, vowel /æ/, vowel /ʌ/, and vowel /ɑ:/) at English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau.

Based on the result of the data analysis for students' scores, it is obtained that the students' ability in pronouncing pure vowel sounds in pure vowel is categorized into **good** level. The most difficult components of the pronouncing pure vowel sounds are pronouncing vowel /ə/, and its score is 67. Meanwhile, the highest aspects of pronouncing pure vowel sounds is pronouncing vowel /ɪ/ with the mean score 91. Then, the other aspect such as pronouncing vowel /i:/ 78, pronouncing vowel /ʊ/ 81, pronouncing vowel /u:/ 73, pronouncing vowel /e/ 81, pronouncing vowel /ɜ:/ 72, pronouncing vowel /ɔ:/ 71, pronouncing vowel /æ/ 71, pronouncing vowel /ʌ/ 84, and pronouncing vowel /ɑ:/ is 70.

### Suggestion

The writer realizes that this research still has a lot of weakness even though the students' pronouncing pure vowel sounds ability is already in good level. However, from these research findings, the researcher would like to suggested that third semester students of English Study Program FKIP Universitas Riau need to improve their ability in pronouncing English sounds and it is important for the students to know the components of pronunciation that will help them in increasing pronunciation ability. The students should study more about the aspects of pronunciation to help them distinguish the English sounds. They also need to listen more and to more practice in pronouncing English sounds to improve their ability in pronunciation.

For the next researcher, the researcher suggested conducting research in different designs such as action research, experimental research, and etc.



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