# IMPROVING THE ABILITYOF THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTSIN PRONOUNCING VOWEL SOUNDS THROUGH TRANSCRIPTION

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**Abstract**

This research was carried out in order to prove whether the use of transcription technique was effective in improving the ability in pronouncing English vowel sounds of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu. This research applied intact research design thatused two classes. They were experimental group and control group. The research population was the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu. The sample of this research was taken by using opportunity sampling. The number of students of this research was 62 students. The data of the research were collected by giving post-test to both experimental and control groups. The data were analyzed by using statistical analysis in order to know the significant difference achievement of the students in post-test. The result of data analysis showed that there was a significant difference between post-test result in both experimental and control groups. By applying two-tailed test at 0.05 level of significance with60 degree of freedom (df) or 62-2= 60, the researcher found that t-counted (10.13) was greater than t-table (2.000). It could be concluded that the research hypothesis was accepted. In other words, the use of transcription can improve pronunciation of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu.

**Keywords**: Transcription; Pronunciation; Vowel Sounds

## INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a part of language components which supports students in developing their ability in communication.According to Staucher (2001),pronunciation is the expression of sound and dialect of word in connected language by suitable standards. From this idea, hence, the researcher comes to the conclusion that pronunciation is needed by students in developing their language in pronouncing some words correctly in communication in order to avoid difficulties in understanding the speaker utterance.

According to Yates (2002:1), “Learners with good pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to be understood will not be understood, even if their grammar is

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perfect". Based on the previous statement, pronunciation is measured as one of the most important factors in English which is used to realize a good communication.

Furthermore, relating to Yates' idea, for Indonesian students, pronunciation is usually difficult to understand. There are some factors which cause them facing the difficulty in articulating English words. It can be seen that English and Bahasa Indonesia have different sound systems. Ayub (2010:1) imparts, "The system of the sound used in English is different from those used in Bahasa Indonesia, and their differences cause difficulties for students in learning English". Bahasa Indonesia has only six vowel sounds, they are : /a/ , /i/ , /u/ , /e/ , /ə/ , and /o/ whereas English has twelve vowel sounds, they are: /iː/ , /ɪ/ , /e/ , /æ/ , /ʌ/ , /ɑː/ , /ɒ/ , /ɔː/ , /ʊ/ , /uː/ , /ɛ/ , and /ə/. It means that there are some vowel sounds which do not occur in our language. Moreover, it can be viewed that Bahasa Indonesia and English vowel sounds are also different. For examples, vowel letter /a/ which is pronounced /æ/ in word *hat;* but /ɑː/ in *are.* It is different from Bahasa Indonesia which presents every letter in a word that represents a sound.

Talking about pronunciation, it cannot be separated from sound itself. When the speaker can produce words correctly and the interlocutor can understand the goal of the speaker, it means that the communication between them is going to be understood. Gilakjani (2012:96) states, "Pronunciation instruction is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence". By this quotations above, the researcher concludes that pronunciation plays a major role in a good quality of communication. Pronunciation is also one of the aspects that supports fluent speaking skill to make the interlocutor understand what the speaker talks about and how to make the communication between them run smoothly. Since pronunciation plays a major role in communication, moreover the researcher has her own interest to make a research about the ability of the students in pronouncing English vowel sounds, especially for the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu.

Based on the researcher's experience when she taught the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu, she found a problem that most students got some difficulties in pronouncing English words. Related to the fact above, the researcher assumes that it is very important for the teacher to apply an effective technique to solve the problem. There are some ways of teaching pronunciation, but, in this study, the researcher only did a research on English pronunciation by applying transcription technique. Basri (2005:30) asserts, "Transcription is the pronunciation of words written by using phonetic symbol". The

researcher believes that transcription is an effective and suitable technique to be applied to help the students to improve their pronunciation.

Considering the importance of transcription in improving the ability of the students in pronouncing English vowel sounds, the researcher conducted the research about improving the ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu in pronouncing vowel sounds through transcription. The research question was formulated in the following "*Can the use of transcription technique improve pronunciation of vowel sounds of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu?"*It was to prove whether or notthe use of transcription technique can improve pronunciation of English vowel sounds of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu.

## METHODOLOGY

In conducting this research, the researcher applied intact group design. Intact group design used experimental group and control group. Hatch &Farhady (1982:20) asserts, "Both experimental and control groups will receive post-test, but the experimental group will receive the treatment while the control group does not". In other words, both experimental and control groups were given the same test which was only post-test. Hence, the researcher applied the treatment to the experimental group and the control group did not get any treatment. The research design used Hatch and Farhady's model (1982:21 ) as follows :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| $G_1$ | X | $T_1$ |
| $G_2$ | | $T_1$ |

Where:
$G_1$ : experimentalgroup
$G_2$ : controlgroup
X : treatment
$T_1$ : post-test

Creswell (2005:145) explains "Population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic". In this research, the population was the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu. The total number of the eleventh grade students was126.

Best (1981:9) states, "Sample is small proportion selected for observation analysis, characteristics of sample can make certain inference about the characteristics of population from which it is drawn". In selecting the sample of this research, the researcher applied opportunity sampling in order to choose experimental and control classes.

Hatch and Farhady (1982:15) define, "The dependent variable is the variable which you observe and measure to determine the effect of the independent while the independent variable is the major variable which you hope to investigate". From these statements above, the researcher comes to the conclusion that every research must have a variable. They are dependent variable and independent variable. Therefore, in this research the dependent variable was improving students ability in pronouncing vowel sounds of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu and the independent variable refers to the use of transcription.

In collecting the data, the researcher used test as the main instrument. It was used to produce the data about the students' pronunciation of English vowel sounds after treatment. It was included pronunciation in single word which consisted of 22 items. Each item scored 1 and the maximum score was 22 points.

To analyze the gained data, at the first step, the researchercomputed the individual score by using formula recommended by Purwanto (1987:102) as follows:

$$NP = \frac{R}{SM} \text{ x } 100$$

Where:
NP = percentage score
R = gained score
SM = maximum score of the test
100 = constant number

To get the mean score of students' achievement, the researcher utilized the formula as proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1982:55) as follows.

$$\overline{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:
$\overline{X}$ = mean score
$\sum x$ = total of the individual scores
N = total of students

After getting the mean score, the researcher computed individual deviation by using this formula written by Hatch and Farhady (1982:59) as follows:

$$\varkappa = \underline{X} - \overline{X}$$

Where:
$\varkappa$ = individual deviation
$\underline{X}$ = students' score
$\overline{X}$ = mean score

After getting the individual deviation, the researcher squares the standard deviation of students score in experimental and control class. The researcher compared the formula written by Hatch and Farhady(1982:59) as follows:

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2}{N-1}}$$

Where:
S = standard deviation
$\Sigma X^2$ = sum of individual deviation square
N = total of students

To get the score of t-$_{value}$, the researcher calculated the standard error by using the formula as proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1982:112) shown as follows:

$$S\bar{x}_e - \bar{x}_c = \sqrt{\left(\frac{S_e}{\sqrt{n_1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{Sc}{\sqrt{n_2}}\right)^2}$$

Where:
$S\bar{x}_e - \bar{x}_c$ = standard error differences between means
$S_e$ = standard deviation of experimental class
$Sc$ = standard deviation of control class
$n_1$ = total students of experimental class
$n_2$ = total students of control class

Finally, in order to analyze the effectiveness of the treatment, the researcher used the formula proposes by Hatch and Farhady (1982:111):

$$t_{obs} = \frac{X_e - Xc}{S(\overline{X}_e - Xc)}$$

Where:
$t_{obs}$ = significant result between experimental and control classes
$X_e$ = mean score of experimental class
$Xc$ = mean score of control group
$S(X_e - Xc)$ =standard error of differences between means

**FINDINGS**

In offering the main data, the researcher analyzed the data taken from post-test that she gave to both experimental and control groups, while the treatment was only applied in experimental group before the researcher conducted the post-test. The major differences between the results of post-test both experimental and control groups were used to measure the effectiveness of using transcription in improving the ability of the eleventh grade students

at SMA Negeri 5 Palu in pronouncing vowel sounds. The result of post-test was presented in the following table:

**Table 1**
**Students' Score on Post-test in Experimental and Control Groups**

| No. | Initials | Obtained Score (0-22) | Maximum Score (22) | Standard Score (0-100) | Initials | Obtained Score (0-22) | Maximum Score (22) | Standard Score (0-100) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ALF | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | ABB | 7 | 22 | 32 |
| 2. | ANS | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | AAN | 7 | 22 | 32 |
| 3. | ANR | 18 | 22 | 81.8 | APH | 10 | 22 | 46 |
| 4. | FRI | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | AGG | 14 | 22 | 64 |
| 5. | IWL | 20 | 22 | 90.9 | AFJ | 8 | 22 | 36.4 |
| 6. | JMR | 12 | 22 | 54.5 | CHR | 12 | 22 | 55 |
| 7. | LAF | 22 | 22 | 100 | DAR | 9 | 22 | 41 |
| 8. | MAN | 15 | 22 | 68.2 | DDD | 13 | 22 | 59 |
| 9. | MFH | 22 | 22 | 100 | ELG | 6 | 22 | 27.3 |
| 10. | MHD | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | ELV | 8 | 22 | 36.4 |
| 11. | MRU | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | ERW | 10 | 22 | 46 |
| 12. | MSH | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | FTR | 11 | 22 | 50 |
| 13. | MSY | 15 | 22 | 68.2 | FTA | 11 | 22 | 50 |
| 14. | MTS | 22 | 22 | 100 | KAK | 11 | 22 | 50 |
| 15. | MYD | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | IPR | 7 | 22 | 32 |
| 16. | NFA | 9 | 22 | 40.9 | MSF | 3 | 22 | 14 |
| 17. | NFP | 21 | 22 | 95.5 | MWD | 6 | 22 | 27.3 |
| 18. | NNA | 17 | 22 | 77.3 | MFZ | 9 | 22 | 41 |
| 19. | NOM | 20 | 22 | 90.9 | MTR | 10 | 22 | 46 |
| 20. | NRF | 17 | 22 | 77.3 | DRA | 9 | 22 | 41 |
| 21. | NRS | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | NGD | 9 | 22 | 41 |
| 22. | PPT | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | RGM | 11 | 22 | 50 |
| 23. | RMG | 18 | 22 | 81.8 | SFL | 4 | 22 | 18.2 |
| 24. | RFY | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | SHR | 16 | 22 | 73 |
| 25. | STR | 21 | 22 | 95.5 | SSN | 14 | 22 | 64 |
| 26. | WAR | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | SSA | 13 | 22 | 59 |
| 27. | WKR | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | YLH | 14 | 22 | 64 |
| 28. | YRB | 21 | 22 | 95.5 | YNN | 16 | 22 | 73 |
| 29. | YPR | 19 | 22 | 86.4 | ZLV | 11 | 22 | 50 |
| 30. | KSM | 16 | 22 | 72.7 | UYT | 9 | 22 | 41 |
| 31. | ARD | 17 | 22 | 77.3 | AND | 3 | 22 | 14 |
| | **Total** | | | **∑ x =2523** | | | | **∑ x = 1373.6** |

The researcher computed the students' mean score on post-test inexperimental and control groupsby using this formula:

$X = \frac{\sum x}{N}$ $X = \frac{\sum x}{N}$

$= \frac{2523}{31}$ $= \frac{1373.6}{31}$

**= 81.38** **= 44.30**

**Table 2**
**The Students' Score DeviationPost-test ofExperimentaland Control Groups**

| No. | Initials | Post-Test (Xx) | Mean Score (X) | Deviation (*Xx*) | Square Deviation (*x2*) | Initials | Post-Test (Xx) | Mean Score (X) | Deviation (*Xx*) | Square Deviation (*x2*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ALF | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | ABB | 32 | 44.30 | -12.3 | 151.29 |
| 2. | ANS | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | AAN | 32 | 44.30 | -12.3 | 151.29 |
| 3. | ANR | 81.8 | 81.38 | 0.42 | 0.17 | APH | 46 | 44.30 | 1.7 | 2.89 |
| 4. | FRI | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | AGG | 64 | 44.30 | 19.7 | 388.09 |
| 5. | IWL | 90.9 | 81.38 | 9.52 | 90.63 | AFJ | 36.4 | 44.30 | -8.3 | 68.89 |
| 6. | JMR | 54.5 | 81.38 | -26.88 | 722.53 | CHR | 55 | 44.30 | 10.7 | 114.49 |
| 7. | LAF | 100 | 81.38 | 18.62 | 346.70 | DAR | 41 | 44.30 | -3.3 | 10.89 |
| 8. | MAN | 68.2 | 81.38 | -13.18 | 173.71 | DDD | 59 | 44.30 | 14.7 | 216.09 |
| 9. | MFH | 100 | 81.38 | 18.62 | 346.70 | ELG | 27.3 | 44.30 | -17 | 289 |
| 10. | MHD | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | ELV | 36.4 | 44.30 | -8.3 | 68.89 |
| 11. | MRU | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | ERW | 46 | 44.30 | 1.7 | 2.89 |
| 12. | MSH | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | FTR | 50 | 44.30 | 5.7 | 32.49 |
| 13. | MSY | 68.2 | 81.38 | -13.18 | 173.71 | FTA | 50 | 44.30 | 5.7 | 32.49 |
| 14. | MTS | 100 | 81.38 | 18.62 | 346.70 | KAK | 50 | 44.30 | 5.7 | 32.49 |
| 15. | MYD | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | IPR | 32 | 44.30 | -12.3 | 151.29 |
| 16. | NFA | 40.9 | 81.38 | -40.48 | 1638.63 | MSF | 14 | 44.30 | -30.3 | 918.09 |
| 17. | NFP | 95.5 | 81.38 | 14.12 | 199.37 | MWD | 27.3 | 44.30 | -17 | 289 |
| 18. | NNA | 77.3 | 81.38 | -4.08 | 16.64 | MFZ | 41 | 44.30 | -3.3 | 10.89 |
| 19. | NOM | 90.9 | 81.38 | 9.52 | 90.63 | MTR | 46 | 44.30 | 1.7 | 2.89 |
| 20. | NRF | 77.3 | 81.38 | -4.08 | 16.64 | DRA | 41 | 44.30 | -3.3 | 10.89 |
| 21. | NRS | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | NGD | 41 | 44.30 | -3.3 | 10.89 |
| 22. | PPT | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | RGM | 50 | 44.30 | 5.7 | 32.49 |
| 23. | RMG | 81.8 | 81.38 | 0.42 | 0.17 | SFL | 18.2 | 44.30 | -26.1 | 681.21 |
| 24. | RFY | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | SHR | 73 | 44.30 | 28.7 | 823.69 |
| 25. | STR | 95.5 | 81.38 | 14.12 | 199.37 | SSN | 64 | 44.30 | 19.7 | 388.09 |
| 26. | WAR | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | SSA | 59 | 44.30 | 14.7 | 216.09 |
| 27. | WKR | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | YLH | 64 | 44.30 | 19.7 | 388.09 |
| 28. | YRB | 95.5 | 81.38 | 14.12 | 199.37 | YNN | 73 | 44.30 | 28.7 | 823.69 |
| 29. | YPR | 86.4 | 81.38 | 5.02 | 25.20 | ZLV | 50 | 44.30 | 5.7 | 32.49 |
| 30. | KSM | 72.7 | 81.38 | -8.68 | 75.34 | UYT | 41 | 44.30 | -3.3 | 10.83 |
| 31. | ARD | 77.3 | 81.38 | -4.08 | 16.64 | AND | 14 | 44.30 | -30.3 | 918.09 |
| | **Total** | | | | **$\sum x^2$ = 5206.75** | | | | | **$\sum x^2$ = 7270.87** |

Then, the researcher calculated standard deviation of post-test by using this formula:

$S = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2}{N-1}}$ $S = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2}{N-1}}$

$S = \sqrt{\frac{7270.87}{31-1}}$ $S = \sqrt{\frac{5206.75}{31-1}}$

$S = \sqrt{\frac{7270.87}{30}}$ $S = \sqrt{\frac{5206.75}{30}}$

$S = \sqrt{242.36}$ $S = \sqrt{173.55}$

S = 15.56 S = 13.17

After calculating the deviation and square deviation, the researcher counted the standard error of the difference between two means of both experimental and control groups. Counting the standard error aimed at computing the *t-counted* which functions to prove that the variables of this study had relationship and the independent variable had consequence toward the dependent variable.

$$S\bar{x}_e - \bar{x}_c = \sqrt{\left(\frac{S_e}{\sqrt{n_1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{Sc}{\sqrt{n_2}}\right)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{\left(\frac{13.17}{\sqrt{31}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{15.56}{\sqrt{31}}\right)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{\left(\frac{13.17}{5.56}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{15.56}{5.56}\right)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{(2.37)^2 + (2.79)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{(5.62) + (7.78)}$$

$$= \sqrt{13.4}$$

$$= 3.66$$

After counting the standard error, the researcher got the value was 3.66. This value was used to count *t-counted*. The computation is presented as follows:

$$t_{obs} = \frac{\bar{X}_e - \bar{X}c}{S(X_e - \bar{X}c)}$$

$$= \frac{81.38 - 44.30}{3.66}$$

$$= \frac{37.08}{3.66}$$

$$= 10.13$$

## DISCUSSION

In conducting this research, the researcher gave treatment to the students in experimental group in order to overcome their problem in pronouncing English vowel sounds.The

treatment was done for eight meetings. In teaching learning process, the researcher applied transcription as a technique as Atkielsky (2005:2) imparts, "Narrow transcription isuseful mainly when you are trying to show students their own foreign accents, or when you are contrasting accents of English or comparing pronunciation of English with pronunciation of other languages". Furthermore, by using reading passage, short dialogues and minimal pairs as media, it could support the technique. Moreover, the researcher used electronic dictionary to present the real pronunciation from native speakers, hence the students can reproduce the intended sounds directly.

After the students understand how to produce the English vowel sounds, the researcher gave post-test to the students. Based on the result of post-test in experimental group, the researcher comes to a conclusion that in experimental group, it is not quite difficult for the students to produce some English vowel sounds in some words. In contrast to experimental group, in control group which was not given the treatment, the researcher found that it was difficult for the students to pronounce English vowel sounds. It was affirmed that the individual mean score of post-test in experimental group was 81.38 while the individual mean score of post-test in control group was 44.30. It was also supported by seeing percentage of students' error in pronouncing some words. Hence, the following table shows the error percentage of the eleventh sounds both in experimental and control groups.

**Table 3**
**Percentage of Students' Error**

| No. | Sounds | Experimental Group | Control Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | /ʌ/ | 32.25% | 16.13% |
| 2. | /u:/ | 87.09% | 25.80% |
| 3. | /ɔ:/ | 100% | 43.38% |
| 4. | /ʊ/ | 48.38% | 16.13% |
| 5. | /ɒ/ | 96.77% | 16.13% |
| 6. | /ɑ:/ | 87.09% | 25.80% |
| 7. | /e/ | 38.70% | 12.90% |
| 8. | /æ/ | 100% | 74.19% |
| 9. | /ɪ/ | 38.70% | 16.13% |
| 10. | /i:/ | 83.87% | 19.35% |
| 11. | /eɪ/ | 70.96% | 43.38% |

By seeing the data percentage above, the researcher come to some conclusions about students' problem in pronouncing the eleventh English vowel sounds. Firstly, the researcher found that it was easy for the students to pronounce sound /ʌ/ in control group. The error pronunciation that the students made was lesser than the other sounds. Moreover, in

experimental group, it was easier for the students to pronounce sound */e/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɒ/, /ɪ/, /i:/, /u:/, and /a:/,* but some of them still slightly made some mistakes in pronouncing these sounds in words. Secondly, it was difficult for the students to pronounce sound */ɔ:/ and /eɪ/* in control group, while in experimental group was */ɪ/, /e/, and /ʊ/*. Thirdly, it was the most difficult for the students to pronounce seven English vowel sounds in control group. They were */u:/, /i:/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/, /a:/, /eɪ/, and /æ/*. The error pronunciation that the students made was mostly in these sounds in words. Furthermore, in experimental group it was difficult for the students to pronounce sound */æ/*.

Comparing to the result of the post-test in both group, the researcher found that the percentage deviation between both of those groups was 11.59%. Furthermore, the percentage of students' error of post-test in control group was (63.63%) and experimental group was (9.09%). This fact makes the researcher come to a conclusion that the application of transcription technique in improving the ability in pronouncing vowel sounds to the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Palu is totally accepted.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher comes to the conclusion that the use of transcription can improve pronunciation of vowel sounds of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 5 palu. It could be seen by a significant difference between the mean score of post-test of both groups. The mean score of post-test of experimental group was (81.38) while control group was (44.30). It also was proven since the $t_{counted}$ value (10.13) was greater than the $t_{table}$ value (2.000). It can be concluded that the application of transcription as a technique efficiently improved the students' ability in pronouncing English vowel sounds. In the other words, the hypothesis of this research was accepted. Additionally, by applying transcription technique in teaching pronunciation in English vowel sounds, it is easy for the researcher to make the students pronounce more than 75% the words correctly.

Talking about the importance of pronunciation in English, the researcher would like to share the following suggestions related to the teaching and learning process. Firstly, for English teachers, they should pay more attention to the teaching pronunciation by applying transcription technique in teaching pronunciation, the teachers will be able to show the students the way to produce the English sounds correctly. In addition, in teaching pronunciation, the teacher must provide some media which can support the students during the teaching learning process. i.e. electronic dictionary and figure of vowel which can guide the students to produce and to practice the English vowel sounds correctly. Secondly, for

students, transcription technique can assist them in pronouncing some words correctly without worrying the way to pronounce the words.

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