

## IMPROVING STUDENT PRONUNCIATION SKILL THROUGH READING ALOUD AT 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP WIDURI JAYA JAKARTA

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh membaca nyaring terhadap pelafalan Bahasa Inggris pada siswa kelas delapan di SMP Widuri Jaya tahun ajaran 2022/2023. Penelitian ini bersifat eksperimental yang terdiri dari 3 tahap yaitu Pre-Test, tindakan kelas, dan Post-Test. Sebanyak 17 siswa dilibatkan untuk penilaian pelafalan 9 konsonan frikatif. Hasil pre-test dan post-test diklasifikasikan ke dalam beberapa kriteria dan dianalisa untuk memperoleh perbandingan statistikal sebelum dan sesudah tindakan kelas. Saat Pre-Test, nilai pelafalan Bahasa Inggris para siswa dikategorikan sangat rendah. Setelah tindakan kelas, nilai rata-rata siswa telah meningkat sebanyak 90% dibandingkan hasil penilaian saat Pre-Test. Berdasarkan uji hipotesis penelitian dengan Teknik Paired Sample T-Test, dapat disimpulkan terdapat pengaruh yang signifikan antara Teknik membaca para siswa dengan peningkatan kemampuan mereka dalam pelafalan Bahasa Inggris. Dengan mempraktekkan membaca nyaring secara konsisten, kemampuan pelafalan Bahasa Inggris para siswa dapat meningkat.

**Kata Kunci:** membaca nyaring; pelafalan; SMP.

### ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to describe the impact of reading aloud against the English pronunciation skill of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in SMP Widuri Jaya for academic year 2022/2023. The research used pre-experimental method consists of pre-test, treatment, and post-test. There are 17 students involved in pronunciation assessment of 9 fricative consonants. The score of Pre-Test and Post-Test classified into several criteria and analyzed to get the statistical comparison of prior treatment against after treatment. In the Pre-Test, students' pronunciation was very poor classified. After treatment, the mean score of the students increases for about 90% compared to the pre-test score. According to the Paired Sample t-test that used to validate the hypotheses of the research, it can be concluded that there is significant impact between reading technique against the student's improvement of English pronunciation. By consistently practicing reading aloud, the students' English pronunciation can be improved.

**Keywords:** pronunciation; reading aloud; SMP.

### INTRODUCTION

English is an important language all over the world, it becomes an international language. We have to master this language because it has so many benefits for us. English is used when doing international communication, when we read a foreign book or news, when we travel or study abroad, and learn something new about technology. In addition, when we browse through the internet, we can see that many sources of information are served in English. Day after day people who are studying English is increasing. As stated by Ilyosovna (2020), learning English is important and people all over the world decide to study it as a second language. Many countries include English as a second language in their school syllabus and children start learning English at a young age. Moreover, English is the language of science, of aviation, computers, diplomacy and tourism. Knowing English increases your chances of getting a good job in a multinational company.

In Indonesia, we start studying English since elementary school. Lately, some of preschool have include English as their major subject too. Although most of students are studying English in school since early age, they still having difficulty to mastered the language. English is still a strange language for most of students in Indonesia. We love our first language, we speak Indonesian every day in the house, at school, public place, as long as we are in Indonesia, we can speak Bahasa Indonesia. The first language might have an influence over foreign language learning, either by acting as a source for the learner to understand how the language works when the first language and the foreign language are similar, or by being a factor of interference if the two languages are very different.

English Pronunciation is important aspects in teaching and learning the language. It also has to be mastered by the beginner so they will be familiar to pronounce words. According to (Gilakjani, 2012), pronunciation is an integral part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance. When we start learning pronunciation, first we are listening, then we repeat and practice. We use our lips, tongue, teeth, hard and soft palates, and alveolar ridge to produce sound (Kelly 2004:4). In learning process, students may face many difficulties which is crucial to be described and analyzed. One of them is difficulty in pronouncing English sound correctly so the listener would understand the meaning. According to Renukadevi (2014), listening play the vital role, as it helps the language learner to acquire pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, syntax and the comprehension of messages conveyed can be based on tone of voice, pitch, and accent. We may miss the sound of v and f that sounds similar in pronouncing the word 'have' and 'very'.

It is very normal for the teachers and students to face difficulties in teaching and learning activity. That's why the writer started to observe the students at SMP Widuri Jaya since January 2023, in which asking some questions to their English teacher, Mr. Djamingan Tarmizi. He told the writer that most student are lazy to read, so they are lack of vocabulary and cannot do some simple conversation in English. After got that information, the writer's assumption is the students must be bad in their pronunciation because they are lazy to read. However, in the teaching process at school, mostly the teachers just read the text, explain the material and ask students to do the exercise in individual or workgroup without learning about how to pronounce it well. So, when the teacher asks them to read the text the students felt shy and worry about their pronunciation so they prefer to read in whisper.

Shem Macdonald (2003:3) stated that pronunciation is a key element of the oral skills in a second language. By learning pronunciation, the students are expected to have knowledge about the English sounds system, in order they can pronounce English phonemes correctly so that misunderstanding in communication can be reduced. In daily activities, the easier way to improve pronunciation skill is reading aloud. Tarigan (2008:23) stated reading aloud is an activity or activity which is an instrument for teachers, students, or the reader together with others or listeners to get and understand information, thoughts, and writer's feelings. Huang (2010:149) said that reading aloud is a kind of comprehensive practice of pronunciation. According to Gibson (2008), the advantages of reading aloud are: (1) reading aloud can improve reading fluency, (2) reading aloud can monitor pronunciation, (3) reading aloud can reduce speaking anxiety as it is controlled, (4) reading aloud is indirectly connected to writing via intonation, (5) it is a useful proofreading tool, (6) it can be done outside the school, and (7) being able to read aloud is part of being proficient in a language. Reading aloud is one of the good methods to improve students' pronunciation, because the students will practice to pronounce the English sound loudly and make their tongue get used to with its sounds better than if they read silently. Students' habit of reading aloud can develop their pronunciation skill on their memory and involve it in foreign language learning. There are so many research that discussed about improving pronunciation through a certain method, such as Dr. Stephen

Krashen (2004) in his book (*The Power of Reading*) stated “those who say they read more, read and write better and reading can improve spelling.

According to the background described above, the writer tries to gain more theory and relevant research from the internet and literatures. Pronunciation skill has to be owned by teacher and students, while reading aloud could facilitate the students in acquiring and comprehending pronunciation and new vocabularies. In “*The Application of Reading Aloud Technique to Increase Students’ Pronunciation*” by Mantali (2009), it was found that there were improvements in students’ pronunciation from pretest to post-test. Mantali conducted the research at 7 grade students in Gorontalo, she applied experimental instrument to the students and used quantitative research method to count the data. The writer takes these variables to conduct the research because the writer eager to know whether this method can improve students’ pronunciation skills in SMP Widuri Jaya, especially grade 8 students. The different of the writer’s research and Mantali’s is the scope of problem, where the writer only focuses fricatives consonant phonemes which is consist of 9 sound: [f], [v], [θ], [ ð], [s], [z], [ʃ],[ʒ] and [h].

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research the writer uses quantitative research methodology with experimental design. Quantitative method is a classic way or traditional way, because it has been used since long time ago to conduct research. This method also called positivistic method because it is according to positivism philosophy. This is scientific method because it has fulfilled the terms and condition that must be exists in the research like empirical, objective, measurable, rational and systematic. In experimental design we test an idea or practice to find out whether the independent variable influences the dependent variable. So does in this research, the writer would like to find out whether the students’ reading aloud habit influences the pronunciation improvement.

**Table 1. Experimental Research Design**

O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
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Note:

O <sub>1</sub>	: Pre-test
X	: Treatment
O <sub>2</sub>	: Post-Test

The population of the research is all of the students of SMP Widuri Jaya Jakarta while the sample of research is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of SMP Widuri Jaya Jakarta. According to the English teacher of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, there is no excellent student in the class, so the writer assumed that the average of students’ English score are quite the same. Then, the writer chooses all of the students from the class which consists of 17 students.

**Table 2. Sample in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Class	Male	Female	Total
VIII	11	6	17

There are two hypotheses in this research, namely null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>). The description of the hypotheses is:

- H<sub>0</sub>: students’ habit of reading aloud cannot improve their pronunciation skill
- H<sub>1</sub>: students’ habit of reading aloud can improve their pronunciation skill

The data is collected by conducting pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The writer collects the data by recording the reading test. Pretest contains short text to be read by the students one by one while the writer records the process and assess the pre-test. After pretest, still in the first meeting, the writer gives some explanation about pronunciation and explain about reading aloud. The writer gives some examples of reading the fricative sound, then the students practice to pronounce the words. In the second meeting, the writer takes several procedures in treatment. First, the writer shares text and vocabulary to the students into the classroom, then asks them to pay attention and listen carefully while the writer reads and they repeat after the writer. After that, the writer asks them to read aloud by themselves for 15 minutes. In the third meeting, the writer gives the students pronunciation post-test. The students read the text which was given in the pre-test and the writer records it. This method is applied to analyze the improvement of the students' pronunciation.

In the research, there are several steps taken by the writer to conduct the data analysis. First, the writer gives individual score. After that, the individual score was classified into five levels using certain criteria as described in Table 3. Last, the writer will be using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to analyze and interpret the data. SPSS (Statistical package for the social sciences) is a suite of software programs that support quantitative data analysis.

**Table 3. Score Classification**

<b>Range Score</b>	<b>Classification</b>
80-100	Excellent
70-79	Good
60-69	Fair
50-59	Poor
0-49	Very Poor

The score classification will be explained as follows. If the students can pronounce the phonemes 80-100% with spelling, word stress or emphasis and intonation appropriately, the students will be classifying in "excellent". In addition, if the students can pronounce the phoneme with word stress or emphasis and intonation appropriately, but less precise on spelling, it included in "good" categories. Furthermore, if the students can pronounce the phonemes 60-69% with good spelling, but misplacing the stress of the words, the students included in "fair". Instead, if the students pronounce the words vaguely, sometimes they can pronounce the phonemes 50-59% clearly and precisely, and this is categorized "poor".

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The pretest is conducted to find out the pronunciation ability before the writer gives the treatment while the purpose of post-test is to find out the improvement of the student's pronunciation after the reading aloud treatment. Pretest and post-test designs are widely used in behavioral research, primarily for the purpose of comparing groups and/or measuring change resulting from experimental treatments (Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003).

**Table 4. Result of Pre-Test**

Classification	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent (80-100)	0	0%
Good (70-79)	0	0%
Fair (60-69)	1	5.88%
Poor (50-59)	3	17.65%
Very Poor (0-49)	13	76.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5. Result of Post-Test**

Classification	Number of Students	Percentage
Excellent (80-100)	8	47.06%
Good (70-79)	5	29.41%
Fair (60-69)	3	17.65%
Poor (50-59)	1	5.88%
Very Poor (0-49)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

After reviewing the pre-test and post-test result, the writer input the data into IBM SPSS 26 to run the analysis. According to George and Mallery (2022: vii), IBM SPSS is a powerful tool that is capable of conducting just about any type of data analysis used in the social sciences, the natural sciences, or in the business world.

The statistical description resulted by IBM SPSS 26 presented in the following tables:

**Table 6. The Statistical Description of Pre-Test and Post-Test**

Score	Pre-Test	Post-Test
<b>Mean</b>	42	80
<b>Median</b>	40	78
<b>Mode</b>	40	78
<b>Minimum Score</b>	21	60
<b>Maximum Score</b>	63	100
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	11.88	11.94

The writer also utilizes IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to run the paired samples t-test formula to find out whether null or alternative hypothesis that accepted in this research. Paired t-test determines whether the mean change for these pairs is significantly different from zero (Frost, 2021). The test variables (pre-test and post-test) are statistically different on alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, at the degree of freedom (df)  $n-1 = 16$  to see the difference.

**Table 7. Calculation of t-test**

Variables	t-test value	t-table value
Post-Pre	33.913	2.1199

The criteria of testing as follows:

If  $t\text{-test} \geq t\text{-table}$ , it means that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected;

If  $t\text{-test} \leq t\text{-table}$ , it means that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is received.



According to Table 7, the value of t-test (33.913) was greater than the value of t-table (2.1199) which means that below hypothesis is rejected:

H<sub>0</sub>: students' habit of reading aloud cannot improve their pronunciation skill

## **Discussion**

Pronunciation is one of important element in learning language, especially in speaking and reading. Keep learning and practicing reading aloud can help to acquire a better pronunciation, so that listener will get easier to understand what is spoken by the speaker. More advance style of reading aloud is to read aloud and then discussed the text itself. Reading aloud that verbally mediated and interactional are more effective for vocabulary acquisition rather than just reading aloud with no discussion (Brabham & Brown, 2002).

Some problems that cause bad pronunciation are level of confidence, age, motivation, and exposure. Younger learners are able to learn the sound system more effectively, while the learning process of adult learners may be more likely to be hindered because of their age (Zhang & Yin, 2009). From the exposure side, the more someone frequently interacts in English, the more chances he/she will get improved his/her pronunciation. The learner's motivation for learning the language and the cultural group that the learner identifies and spends time determine whether the learner will develop native-like pronunciation (Gilakjani, 2012).

At the beginning of the research, the writer arranges and gives pre-test to 17 students (grade eight) at SMP Widuri Jaya Jakarta based on the learning program of academic year 2022/2023 which prepared by their English teacher. The pre-test is given in short text which consists of 67 fricative sound words. The students are asked to practice reading the short text with loud voice one by one.

During the pre-test, the writer realize that many students feel shy and hesitate when reading the text and this makes their voice's volume up and down inconsistently from the first until the end of the text. The writer find out they cannot differentiate /f/ and /v/ sound like /ɒv/ in "of" and /hæv/ "have". They pronounce it wrong (of and hæf). Most of them also pronounce wrong for "geographic" /dʒɪə'græfɪk/ and "elephant" /ɛlɪfənt/ because their pronounce the ph (/f/) sound become p. The overall mean score of pre-tests itself was 41.70.

After conduct the pre-test, the writer begins the first treatment by explaining about the pronunciation briefly. Then the writer read the text for the students and repeat on the words that most students pronounce wrong, such as the /f/ and /v/ sound words, /ʃ/ , /ʒ/ , /θ/ and ð. Most of students thought those sounds are same. After the writer explains, they accept and pay attention. The writer requests the student to repeat reading the text aloud. Before the writer ends the class because the limited time and the treatment will be continued to next week, the writer asks the students to keep practicing reading aloud in classroom and at home.

Reading aloud itself is a skill that the teachers and the students must grasp. In order to read well in teaching, the teacher's role is deciding. The teacher should comprehend the importance of reading aloud; have necessary knowledge, technique and method; know how to guide the students; be able to demonstrate; and be good at finding out the students' mistakes of reading, then analyze and correct them. Meanwhile, the students should attach importance to pronunciation knowledge and reading skill; have the patience and courage to read aloud; and imitate the foreigner's accent in class. (Huang, 2010:150)

In the second meeting for treatment, the writer continues to gives the pronunciation material which consists of text from the pre-test and some new words consist of fricative sounds. The writer read the new words and the student follow after the writers. Then the writer asks them to read aloud on their own. Some students still confused to distinguish the /s/ and /z/ sounds. So, the writer explains and give more examples and ask them to read aloud so the writer interrupt immediately if the students pronounce wrong and soon, they fix it. This kind of

method, also recognized as interactive reading. There is another research related reading aloud to middle school science students by Braun (2010): The interactive read-aloud strategies are short, simple, and require no elaborate assessment, but it can improve students' motivation. Though the subject is different but the concept of reading aloud bring positivity in students' motivation and could increase vocabulary acquisition.

In the last meeting the writer gives post-test. The material of the post test is given at the pre-test too. The writer uses the pre-test text to find out is there any progress after the treatment done? And the result is better than pre-test. This is showed by the result of the test. The mean score of the post-test is 79,81 which almost reach 80. The paired sample t-test compares the means of two measurement taken from the same individual and it can represent the measurement taken at two different time, in this case, pre-test and post-test score with treatment administered between the two time points (Herhyanto, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Reading aloud can improve the pronunciation skills of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of SMP Widuri Jaya. It can be proven by the mean score of the post-test which is increased 90% after the treatment compared to the pre-test. The result of paired sample t-test also validate the hypothesis of the research.

The alternative hypothesis was accepted regarding the calculation showed the value of t-test (33.913) was greater than the value of t-table (2.1199) with the level of significance 0.05 (5%). There is a positive impact of practicing reading aloud against the pronunciation skills of the grade eight student of SMP Widuri Jaya Jakarta.

From the data and relevant research gathered in this study, it is suggested to consistently practicing reading aloud in the class room, involving the full attention both by teacher and the students. Teachers also should encourage students to speak English outside the classroom and improve them with exercises or assignments that required those interaction to improve their exposure of English.

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