

## IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION OF GRADE VIII STUDENTS THROUGH RECORDINGS

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### ABSTRACT

Objective of this research is to find out that application of recording as a teaching technique can improve students' pronunciation at SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar. Its problem focused on the students' difficulties in stress placement in term of bi-syllabic noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. The researcher used quasi experimental research design in conducting this research. Students of two classes which VIII B and VIII C became the samples of this research, they were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The researcher only used test as procedure of data collection. In analyzing the data, he used 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (df) was 55, then  $t_{counted}$  (6.03) is higher than  $t_{table}$  (2.0041). Thistly the application of recordings as a teaching technique can improve the students' pronunciation.

**Key words:**Improving, Pronunciation, Recordings, Stress placement

*Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan bahwa penerapan rekaman sebagai teknik pengajaran dapat memperbaiki pengucapan siswa di SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar. Masalahnya berfokus pada kesulitan siswa dalam penempatan tekanan kata benda bi-syllabic, kata kerja, kata sifat, dan kata keterangan. Peneliti menggunakan desain penelitian eksperimental semu dalam melakukan penelitian ini. Siswa VIII B dan VIII C yang menjadi sampel penelitian ini, dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Peneliti hanya menggunakan tes sebagai procedure pengumpulan data .Dalam menganalisis data, dia menggunakan tingkat signifikansi 0,05 dan derajat kebebasan (df) adalah 55, kemudiant<sub>hitung</sub> (6,03) lebih baik dari pada<sub>tabel</sub> (2,0041). Dengan demikian, penerapan rekaman sebagai teknik pengajaran dapat memperbaiki pengucapan siswa itu.*

**Kata kunci:** Pengucapan; Rekaman; Penempatanstres

### INTRODUCTION

English words have their own ways to be pronounced. The spelling of a word does not determine the way the word is pronounced. It differs from Bahasa Indonesia in which a word is pronounced as its spelling. In English, each letter of a word can represent two or more sounds. It becomes a confusing item for learners of English. That is why teaching pronunciation needs to be involved in teaching English.

In Indonesia, English is a subject that must be taught for three years in both junior high school and senior high school. It means that during learning English in these education levels, students would be expected to be able to communicate both verbally and nonverbally.

Based on the Kurikulum 2013, students must have communication ability in which they understand language skills; namely

listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order to create good communication, they must have good pronunciation to convey what they are talking about.

Teaching pronunciation in English has a goal to create intelligibility. Intelligibility is needed when someone speaks a certain language. His speaking must be understandable so that a listener understands what he is talking about. Speaker must have good pronunciation in his speaking, and the communication is built between the speaker and listener. To generate intelligibility in learners' speech when they are speaking, students must know features of pronunciation.

In this research, the grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar would have two activities in learning. First, they listened to the recording carefully, then, they imitated to pronounce the words in appropriate stress like the native speaker said. Afterwards,

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the researcher taught the students to recognize the stress placement of bi-syllabic words which are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in writing. That technique aims at helping the students deeply understand and easily identify the stresses in both oral and visual tasks.

The recording as a medium is to facilitate the grade VIII students to create good pronunciation. Through this medium they are expected to be able to differentiate the stress placement of bi-syllabic words which are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They are accustomed to listen to the way a speaker pronounced the bi-syllabic words in appropriate stress placement. It helps them to recognize and place the stress placement of words. Gilakjani (2012:1) states, "Learners with bad pronunciation will not be understood even if their grammar is perfect." Although a learner has collection of vocabulary and perfect grammar, it does not guarantee them to have intelligible speaking without having good pronunciation in oral communication. Kenworthy (1987:13) informs "the more a listener is able to identify accurately when said by a particular speaker, the more intelligible that speaker is." If a speaker pronounces a word clearly, it means that his speech is intelligible and a listener will be able to understand more what the speaker means.

Learning pronunciation is important because people can understand what you say and easy to know what they say. Learning language means learning pronunciation of the language because in used the language we always utter the words of the language. Pronouncing properly is needed in order to use the language well. The students who master the elements of pronunciation can perform their speaking easily. According to Kenworthy (1988:28), "If a non-native speaker produces a word with the wrong stress pattern, an English listener may have great difficulties in understanding the word, even if most of individual sounds have been well pronounced". It is important to study stress in order to acquire a good pronunciation in English, because wrong placement of stress can cause misunderstanding.

The term syllable is not to be confused with the term morpheme. Kreidler (1985) points out that a syllable is a unit of speech, while a morpheme is a unit of

language. The basic difference between the two lies in the notion of meaning and/or grammatical function. A morpheme is the smallest unit that has a meaning or a grammatical function out of which a (bigger) word can be formed, while a syllable is a unit of speech that has no meanings or grammatical functions. The syllable word may coincide with the morpheme boundary, but there is no one relation between the two. As such, a syllable boundary may or may not be aligned with a morpheme boundary. A word may contain two morphemes (bimorphemic), but it consists only one syllable (i.e. monosyllabic), for example: books, looked, speaks, etc. Similarly, a word may consist of two syllables (bisyllabic), but there is only one morpheme (monomorphemic), for example: student, gather, after, etc., in the same way as a word can be bi-syllabic and bimorphemic at same time, for example: students, gathers, bigger wanted, etc.

Kager (1999) expresses that there are at least four properties of stress; they are culminative property, demarcative property, rhythmic property, and quantity sensitivity. We will discuss these properties briefly one by one in this section. When we utter a sequence of syllables in a polysyllabic word we feel that we use different amount of energy to produce each of those syllables. In pronouncing a polysyllabic word there is always a syllable that needs more energy than the rest of the syllables, and therefore our chest's muscles are more stretched in producing this syllable compared to its state in the production of the other syllables.

In terms of perception, we feel that the syllable which is produced with the most amount of energy sounds louder and usually (but not always) longer than the other syllables in the word. In short, this syllable is more prominent than the rest of the syllables in the word, and therefore it is called the stressed syllable, or syllable that carries the primary stress. The stressed syllables are usually called strong syllables (or tonic syllables) and the unstressed syllables are weak syllables (or atonic syllables). The fact that in every polysyllabic word there is always a syllable that is more prominent than the others is called the culminative property of stress. This culminative property is particularly more

apparent in content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs and less apparent in function words: pronouns, articles, prepositions, conjunctions etc. This is because in actual communication, emphasis is more commonly placed on content words, rather than on function words. The first question that springs to mind with the introduction of the culminative property of stress is: On which syllable does the stress fall? As a matter of fact, stress does not fall on syllables at random. Rather, it is governed by several phonological constraints.

There are some variations across world's languages as to what syllable carries the stress in a polysyllabic word. Some languages place the stress on the initial syllable, other languages place it on the second-to-the last (i.e. penultimate) syllable, and still other languages put it on the final (i.e. ultimate) syllable. The question of which syllable is stressed in a language is part of the phonological system of the language. One thing is clear, that is the stressed syllable is, usually the edge syllable or the one next to the edge syllable. This phenomenon is called the demarcative property of stress. This demarcative property of stress suggests that stress normally falls on the initial syllable, the second to the final (i.e. the penultimate) syllable, or the final (ultimate) syllable.

In spite of the fact that English stress pattern is complicated, it does not mean that it is totally unpredictable. There is a way of predicting the location of stress in this language. In this section we will explore the stress pattern of English to figure out how it works. The discussion will cover only stress of the major syntactic categories: nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

As a starting point, let us take this basic point; verbs and nouns behave differently with respect to stress. Adjectives behave like verbs when they are un-suffixed, and behave like nouns when they are suffixed (Spencer 1996). In what way do verbs and nouns behave differently with respect to stress? The general tendency is that the choice of stress for verbs is either ultimate or penultimate syllable, depending on which one is heavy, while the choice of stress for nouns is either penultimate or antepenultimate syllable, depending on which one is heavy. This means that if a verb has a heavy ult,

stress will fall on the ult, but if the ult is light, stress will fall on the penult. Basri (2004:24) states that ultimate syllable is the same as final syllable, penultimate syllable is the second to the last syllable, ante-penultimate is the third to last syllable, pre ante-penultimate is the fourth to last syllable, and pre-pre-ante-penultimate is the fifth to last syllable. Hewings (2007) explains that the rule for verb is opposite to rule for noun. If a noun has stress on the first syllable, a verb lies on the second syllable or ultimate syllable. Even though, the identical nouns and verbs are grammatically different but semantically related.

According to Geoffrey (2008) states that adjectives have a phonological stress rule of their own. Majority of them are stressed like nouns. Phonologies differ in how they classify adjectives with regard to stress placement. However, he justified that the adjective is placed on the first syllable. Kreidler (2001) states that the adverb has stress that put on the first syllable. It is the same as the noun stress placement. It means that if the adverb formed by ending -ly, the stress will be on the one syllable adjective.

Audio-Lingual Method consists of two meaningful words; 'audio' and 'lingual'. 'Audio' is related to 'sound', meanwhile, 'lingual' is similar to language. By looking at the meaning for the whole phrase, it means that learning language is not visual learning only but audio learning also. Providing audio recording for students is a premise of this method.

This method, Audio-Lingual Method, is to help learners to develop their foreign language. Through this method, learners are expected to be able to produce good speaking, in writing. It is a basic understanding of this method. Zainuddin (2011:65) reinforces, "the basic premises on which the method was based were that language is speech, not writing, and language is a set of habits." Language itself is a habit and by forming the habit a speaker can express his idea.

This study has firm relationship with this method in which the researcher still use recordings as a medium when teaching pronunciation particularly in differentiating stress of identical nouns and verbs. Using recordings in classroom provides students good model for teaching pronunciation.

Through recordings, they will imitate the pronunciation of native speaker and the teacher can repeat the recordings to have the students imitate and understand the pronunciation. Larsen (2000:42) presents, "one of the language teacher's major roles is that of the target language. Teachers should provide students with a good model. By listening to how it is supposed to sound, students should be able to mimic the model." Otherwise, before the students listen some words, the teacher must provide a good model. Therefore, the students will easily mimic or follow what the model said.

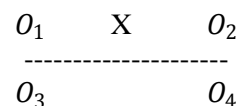
The statement above is one of principles of the Audio-Lingual Method. Listening and imitating are the activities that are often applied in classroom. Imitating from the recordings once and again will form a habit of students to pronounce the meant word.

By using recording, the students would be accustomed to listening to the pronunciation of words. The more they listen to the recording, the more they get accustomed to listening to English words. It provides good sample of native speaker that she or he pronounces the words more clearly. Allen, ED.(1977) cites that recording has roles in instructional program; to provide a model, to provide cues for oral drill, to provide speech samples, to give instructions, to test, and for enjoyment. On another hand, this medium has drawbacks for students. It considers for the highest level of students. For intermediate students, they might feel difficulty to identify words which the native speaker says. If a word is hard to identify, it means those are also hard to understand. Those disadvantages are also supported by Ur (1984:23) States, "The use of recordings of authentic unrehearsed discourse has two main drawbacks. First, being authentic, the speech used in such recordings is ungraded and the language is often very difficult, suitable only for the highest levels. Second, anyone who has listened to recordings of natural conversation knows how difficult they are to understand.

## METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Quasi-experimental research design was used in conducting this research. There were an experimental class and one class as a control class that would not choose randomly.

Both were taken from the existing classes by looking at the same condition. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007:214) express those quasi experimental situations as 'compromise designs', an appropriate description when applied too much educational research where the random selection or random assignment of schools and classrooms is quite impracticable. The following of this research is adapted from Cohen(2007:283):



Where:

- O1: pretest of experimental class
- O2: posttest of experimental class
- O3: pretest of control class
- O4: posttest of control class
- X: treatment of experimental class
- : there is no random of subject

Population is subject of the research. It is very important for the research because it could be a tool to support a research. The population of this research was 140 grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar which was five parallel classes. They were classes VIII A, VIII B, VIII C, VIII D, and VIII E. Looked at the whole number of the population can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1: Population**

No	Class	Students
1.	VIII A	28
2.	VIII B	27
3.	VIII C	30
4.	VIII D	27
5.	VIII E	28
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>140</b>

The sample of the research was drawn from the population. Cohen et al (2007:100) state, "A sample is a small group of the total population." Therefore, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to choose the samples. They were students of SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar decided purposively VIII C as the experimental class and VIII B as the control class. Each research has its variables that influence each other. Namely dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is pronunciation whereas independent variable is recordings.

The researcher used test as instrument. The test instrument was in form of oral test which consisted of pretest and posttest. A pretest was conducted to both experimental class and control class in order to find out prior knowledge of the students in speaking before they get treatment by the implementation of recording technique. Before doing the posttest for the two classes, the experimental class was given a treatment by using recording technique. Finally, posttest was conducted to both class after the treatment. For the experimental class, the posttest was used as a measurement to find out how far the students' progress after doing treatment. Moreover, the posttest was conducted in order to find out whether the treatment was effective or not.

As stated in the previous chapter, this research focused on pronunciation. Furthermore, students' scores were determined by the following scoring adapted from Aguswuryanto (2011):

**Table 2:** Scoring System

Aspect	Score	Description
Pronunciation	1	Easy to understand even with certain accents
	0	Serious pronunciation problems so they cannot be understood

Source: adapted from Aguswuryanto (2011)

## FINDINGS

The researcher examined the students in experimental class before and after the treatment while the students in control class were examined without treatment. After computing the scores, he found some differences between the results of two classes. The results indicate that the experimental class has higher score than the control class. By looking at the result, he can measure that the using of recordings as the teaching media can improve the students' pronunciation.

In the tests, the students of VIII C and VIII B were asked to know about bi-syllabic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Then,

the researcher assessed them by using the scoring rubric on table 1, during this study; there were 30 students of experimental group and 27 students of control group who joined the test. The result of the pretest and posttest of experimental group is presented on table 3.

**Table 3:** Result of Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

No	Score			Deviation
	Initial	Pretest	Posttest	
1.	IR	70.83	95.83	25.00
2.	JI	29.16	83.33	54.17
3.	JN	20.83	75.00	54.17
4.	JS	20.83	79.16	58.33
5.	JT	29.16	75.00	45.84
6.	JU	12.5	70.83	58.33
7.	KA	70.83	87.5	16.67
8.	KH	70.83	95.83	25.00
9.	LN	75.00	95.83	20.83
10.	MD	70.83	87.5	16.67
11.	ME	75.00	87.5	12.5
12.	MF	16.66	79.16	62.5
13.	MG	70.83	87.5	16.67
14.	MH	20.83	79.16	58.33
15.	MI	33.33	91.66	58.33
16.	MI	75.00	75.00	0
17.	MK	79.16	87.5	8.34
18.	ML	16.66	83.33	66.67
19.	MM	29.16	83.33	54.17
20.	MN	12.5	79.16	66.66
21.	MO	4.16	83.33	79.17
22.	MP	12.5	91.66	79.16
23.	MQ	70.83	83.33	12.5
24.	MR	4.16	79.16	75.00
25.	MS	20.83	83.33	62.5
26.	MT	4.16	83.33	79.17
27.	MU	8.33	70.83	62.5
28.	MV	20.83	83.33	62.5
29.	MY	4.16	75.00	70.84
30.	Mz	20.83	83.33	62.5
Total		1070.72	2495.74	1425.02
Mean		35.69	83.19	47.50

The table 3 indicates that the pretest score of the experimental class, it found out that the mean score is 35.69. Its highest score is 70.83 and its lowest score is 4.16. The highest score of the posttest of the experimental class is 95.83 and its lowest score is 70.83. Furthermore, its mean score is 83.19. It means that there was improvement of the result of the experimental class. Its mean increased from 35.69 to 83.19. Result of

the pretest and posttest of control class is pretest

the following table 4:

**Table 4:** Result of Pretest and Posttest of the Control class

Score				
No	Initial	Pretest	Posttest	Deviation
1.	AD	20.83	33.33	12.5
2.	FN	79.16	50.00	-29.16
3.	FR	4.16	8.33	4.17
4.	GT	29.16	33.33	4.17
5.	GW	16.66	16.66	0
6.	HA	12.5	16.66	4.16
7.	HI	37.5	41.66	4.16
8.	HN	70.83	79.16	8.33
9.	HS	75.00	50.00	-25.00
10.	HT	16.66	50.00	33.34
11.	IA	25.00	29.16	4.16
12.	IB	8.33	8.33	0
13.	ID	12.5	20.83	8.33
14.	IE	25.00	25.00	0
15.	IF	16.66	20.83	12.5
16.	IJ	41.66	41.66	29.16
17.	IK	25.00	58.33	33.33
18.	IL	8.33	16.66	8.33
19.	IM	8.33	29.16	20.83
20.	IN	12.5	29.16	16.66
21.	IR	25.00	33.33	8.33
22.	IS	16.66	33.33	16.67
23.	IV	16.66	33.33	16.67
24.	IW	20.83	12.5	-8.33
25.	JP	16.66	12.5	-4.16
26.	NH	16.66	4.16	12.5
27.	OT	20.83	20.8	0
Total		679.07	808.23	129.16
Mean		25.15	29.93	4.78

The table 3 indicates that the mean score of pretest of control group is 25.15. Its highest score is 79.16 and its lowest score is 4.16. After calculating the score of pretest, the score of posttest is counted. Its highest score of the posttest of control class is 58.33 and its lowest score is 4.16. Furthermore, the mean score of the posttest of the control class is 29.93. There is also improvement of the result of the control class. The improvement of the control class is 4.78. It increases from 25.15 to 29.93.

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this research is related to the use of recordings as a technique in teaching pronunciation which focused on stress placement in terms of two syllabic

nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. After conducting the pretest, the researcher found that the error in the experimental class was 79.23% or 20 students, while the error in control group was 77.48% or 24 students. Based on the result of the pretest in the experimental class, there were 19 students (63.33%) making error in pronouncing verb. In pronouncing adjective the student who made error were 16 students (53.33) who made error. Furthermore, in pronouncing nouns there were 15 students (50%) who made error, and in pronouncing adverbs, there were 11 students (36.66%) who made error. Moreover, the result of the pretest in the control class indicates that there were 20 students (74.07%) making error in pronouncing verbs. In pronouncing adjectives, the students who made error were 17 students (62.96%) whereas in pronouncing nouns, the students who made error were 16 students (59.25%) and in pronouncing adverbs the students who made error were 14 students (51.85%)

After giving the pretest, the researcher continued giving treatment to the students in the experimental class for eight meetings. During the eight meetings, the researcher introduced stress placement in terms of two syllabic noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. He then gave the example of the pronunciation of two syllabic words. Firstly, some students were hard to understand the pronunciation because they do not know how to place appropriate pronunciation of stress placement. Next, the researcher played the recordings containing bi-syllabic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverb. He also showed the way to pronounce bi-syllabic words. By listening to the recordings and practicing repeatedly, the students slowly can pronounce those bi-syllabic words correctly.

After giving the treatment, lastly the researcher gave the post-test to the both experimental class and control class in order to know whether the treatment given is effective or not in improving the students' pronunciation. Based on the result of the post-test in the experimental class, there were 10 students (33.33%) making error in pronouncing verb, 9 students (30%) in pronouncing adjectives. In pronouncing noun, the student who made error were 7 students (23.33%) while in pronouncing adverbs there

were 6 students (20%). Based on those error percentages, it can be said that for the students, the most difficult pronouncing is verbs. Moreover, the result of the students the control class who did not receive the treatment was lower than the experimental class. It can be proved by looking at the percentage of the students' error in pronouncing verb which were 21 students (77.77%), whereas the student who made error in pronouncing adjectives were 19 students (70.37). In pronouncing nouns, there were 16 students (59.25%) who made error and in pronouncing adverbs the error percentage was done by 15 students (55.55%). In order to know the treatment was acceptable or not, the researcher calculated the general percentage of both class posttest. The result of the posttest in the experimental class indicates that 28 students (93.33%) could pass the test while the result of the post-test in the control class is that 1 student (3.7%) could pass the test. Thirstily, the use of recordings as a technique in teaching English pronunciation is effective in improving the students' pronunciation especially appropriateness of stress placement, in term of bi-syllabic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

The researcher relates the findings it to the previous studies. The first is a research which was conducted by Wiska (2013) which has the same technique as this research. Moreover, Ur (1984) states, "It is a good idea to use recording rather than live speech alone, it also gives the teacher greater scope in the use of different voices and accents. "The result of her research indicates that the application of recordings as technique can improve pronunciation. Thus the use of recordings as a teaching technique can improve the student's pronunciation especially in stress placement in terms of two syllabic nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

## CONCLUSION

Concerning to the research problem and the research hypothesis, the researcher finally concludes that the use of recordings can improve the pronunciation of the year eight student of SMP Negeri 1 Kasimbar. It means that this research hypothesis is accepted. It can be proved by seeing the result of  $t_{\text{counted}}$  value (6.03) that is higher than the result of  $t_{\text{table}}$  value (2.006).

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