**ABSTRACT**

The main problem of this study formulated as follows: “Was there any significant correlation between the mastery of English fricatives pronunciation and the students’ English speaking achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Talang Kelapa?” The objective of the study was to find out whether or not English fricatives pronunciation mastery had a correlation and contribution to the students’ speaking achievement. The population was all the students of SMP Negeri 1 Talang Kelapa. The samples were 100 students from population. The study was correlational study and the data were collected by testing the students and having their report card. Since it was the correlational study, the data were analyzed by *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula* and *Regression.* Pearson was used to find the relation between the two variables meanwhile the regression was used to find the contribution of fricatives pronunciation mastery to speaking achievement. The *r* gotten was .692 at the significance level *P<0.05* in two tailed testing with the degree of freedom (df) 98, the r-table value was 0.1946. Since r-statistics was higher than r-table, it meant there was a significance correlation between English fricatives pronunciation mastery and the students’ speaking achievement. Furthermore, the R2 found was .478. it meant that the contribution of English fricatives pronunciation mastery was 47.8% (.478 x 100%) to the students’ speaking achievement.

**Key words**: English Fricatives, Pronunciation, correlational study, and Speaking

Achievement.

**Background**

*‘Whatever else people do when they come together – whether they play, fight, make love or make automobiles – they talk.’ (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998: 3)*. From the statement above, it is obviously seen that language is eternally attached to human being except the human is not alive. Furthermore, *‘talk’* means sharing something and communicating either in symbol, body movement, or sounds.

To talk everybody must have, at least, a language to be mastered. Then, he or she uses the language to communicate with each other. Therefore, many people learn a language. They learn it with one main aim. It is to be able to communicate on it. Learning a language also means to be able to use it in oral or written communication. According to Halliwell (1992: 9), “We (teachers) want our learners to want to and dare to use language for their own purposes”.

Communication means conveying ideas or thought to other people through many ways by means of language. Every nation has their own language as their medium to communicate but world has *Lingua Franca* which is widely used by all people. As Holmes (1997) suggested that the term Lingua Franca describes a language serving as a regular means of communication between different linguistics groups in multilingual speech communities. English is one of them.

Therefore, someone has to be able to use the four language skills to communicate well. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening refers to the understanding of the spoken language. Speaking means using the language orally. Reading is concerned with understanding the main and supporting ideas of the written language. Writing refers to expressing oneself in written language in order to make people understand him or her. These four skills are the skills that should be mastered if someone would like to have communication orally and written in one language. These four skills support one another in producing and receiving the language. In fact, there are so many languages in the world but English is the international language which is mostly and widely used all over the world. Therefore, English is taught as a compulsory subject in Indonesia for junior, senior, and university students but not for primary pupils. English is still as a foreign language for Indonesians as well. The four skills are learned by Indonesians since not all Indonesians know and capable to use English.

In addition, human’s life cannot be separated from sharing opinions and ideas. It makes speaking mostly used in daily life. Therefore, the writer has curiosity to do an observation in speaking, specifically about pronunciation. Robinett as cited in Sukmarini (2000:5) states “One of the most important aspects of learning a second language is the effort to master the sound system, to pronounce the language”. It means when we learn a second language, we have to learn how to have a good pronunciation. Wahba, as well, (1998:30) describes “Pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features (and what they mean), but can also improve their speaking immeasurably”. It can be concluded that pronunciation is one of the aspects that has to be considered in order to make a good speech. And the ability to pronounce the sounds correctly is very important for the language users.

As it is previously stated, English is the international language and one of the most widely used languages all over the world, many people learn it, and so do Indonesians. Indonesians must master the four language skills in order to reach their aim. Since the writer focuses on speaking and pronunciation, it means this study will only talk about them.

In English speaking, the students should be able to pronounce the sounds that could be discriminated by others. However, pronouncing English sound for Indonesians is not always easy. These problems are due to some reasons. Firstly, there are some sounds of English that do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia, such as phonemes [θ] as in “thin” and [ð] as in “that”. Secondly, some examples of sounds are represented by unfamiliar symbols to the Indonesian students (Sulaiman, 2004: 3), such as:

[θ] as in nothing

[Š] as in machine

[č] as in match

[ð] as in father

[ž] as in vision

[j] as in judge

[j] as in you

Next, in English, most of the words are not pronounced as they are spelled. In addition, every language has various and different sounds.

Concerning the difficulties of pronunciation, Kenworthy (1987: 4-8) highlights there are six factors that affect pronunciation learning; (1) native language, (2) age factor, (3) amount of exposure, (4) phonetic ability, (5) attitude and identity, and (6) motivation and concern for good communication.

Those reasons make learning pronunciation become a very complex task. Actually, the learning process could be facilitated if the learner is aware of what exactly involved. It is obviously difficult for the learners to do this for themselves. So, it is the teachers’ job to help the learners’ pronouncing the words correctly. Unfortunately, the teachers, as well as the students, tend to neglect the pronunciation. There is also a paradigm that pronunciation would be picked up along the learning process and it does not need special instruction in the classroom activity. Finally, it could cause misunderstanding between the speakers and learners. That is why the ability to pronounce the English words correctly is very important for the English language users.

In addition, Simanjuntak (2000: 18) in her study states “……so out of the 24 sounds pronounced with errors include /t, f, v, θ, z, ð/ …..” And also, Asnita (1999: 33), in her study says “consonants which are difficult to pronounce and recognize were [ð], [θ], [ž], [č], [j], [j]” From the two studies above, the writer see that most of the fricatives are the problem for Indonesian students. There are many errors made in pronouncing them. For example, the sound [θ] is pronounced [t] or [s] such as *‘thing’* is pronounced [tiŋ] and [siŋ] and the sound [ð] is pronounced [d] such as *‘that’* is pronounced [dæt]. In addition, [Š] and [ž] sounds are also pronounced incorrectly by the students. For example, [ž] is pronounced [s] such as *‘measure’* is pronounced [‘mesə(r)] instead of [‘mežə(r)] and [š] is pronounced [s] such as *‘she’* is pronounced [si:]. Moreover, it is the writer’s own experience that English fricatives are difficult to pronounce and during the writer’s teaching experience fricatives are mostly difficult to pronounce by the students. However, every learner should know that a good pronunciation is one of the requirements to have a good and smooth communication in oral language, or to have a good speaking skill. Of course, that skill could be measured by seeing its elements. According to Harmer (2001: 269), there are four elements of speaking, the first is Connected Speech. It concerns to the fluency of the speaker in pronouncing the words and also modifying, omitting, and adding the sounds. The second is Expressive Devices. It deals with the intonation, pitch, and stress. The third is Lexis and Grammar. It refers to the arrangement of words. And the fourth is Negotiation Language. It deals with the way we communicate with a language. It is that pronunciation is included as the important elements in speaking. Then, it is the purpose of this paper to find out whether there is any significant correlation between the students’ mastery of English fricatives pronunciation and their English speaking achievement. The problem of this paper is formulated as “is there any significant correlation between the mastery of English fricatives pronunciation and the students’ speaking achievement?”. Finally, the writer hopes that the result which are presented in this paper would help English teachers, especially in SMPN 1 Talang Kelapa, describe and interpret their students’ ability or mastery in pronunciation in order to improve their students’ pronunciation and help the students improve their English speaking achievement by building their students confidence by having good communication through an adequate pronunciation.

**English Fricatives**

Fricatives are the sounds which are included in consonants and they are called as fricatives because of the manner of articulation. Consonant is defined as the one which is produced when the mouth passage is obstructed. Meanwhile, fricatives are produced when the air stream is not completely stopped and is obstructed from flowing freely. Fromkin and Rodman (1998: 225) classified sound based on manner of articulation - in which the important parts of the vocal tracts which are used in making the sound, this includes the lips, various parts of tongue, the teeth, the alveolar ridge (the ridge of gum behind the upper teeth), the soft palate, the hard palate, the vocal cords, and the glottis - into some classification as (1) voiced and voiceless; (2) aspirated and unaspirated sounds; (3) nasal sounds; (4) stops; (5) fricatives; (6) affricates; (7) liquid; and (8) glides.

Furthermore, fricatives are classified into certain types due to the point or place of articulation. It is the kind of sound being produced in the mouth or the kind of impedance which air undergoes. Air may be completely or partially stopped. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1998: 223), the sounds can be separated into some types based on the point or place of articulation as (1) bilabials; (2) labiodentals; (3) interdental; (4) alveolars; (5) palatals; (6) velars; (7) uvulars; (8) glottal. Since the title of this study is about fricatives, the writer will only focus on fricatives. Fricatives can be seen obviously in this following table.

Table 1. Phonetic Symbols for American English Fricatives Consonants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Labiodental | Interdental | Alveolar | Alveopalatal | Glottal |
| Fricative | f v | Θ ð | s z | Š ž | h |

***(taken from An Introduction to Language by Fromkin and Rodman, 1998: 233)***

**Pronunciation**

According to Hornby (1995: 331), pronunciation is a way in which a language is spoken. Pronunciation could be said as how the written words are spoken to be understood. Pronunciation could be the key for someone in learning to communicate in target language. However, pronunciation may include: (1) vowels and consonants, (2) stress, (3) length or rhythm, (4) intonation (Abdullah, 2004: 10). In addition, pronunciation can be interpreted in at least three different ways. The first is as a description (or prescription) of the sound system of a given language. The second is as a description of the relation between the oral and written forms of a language. And the third is as a set of prescriptive rules for the manner in which any given graphic representation is to be rendered in speech, and or the manner in which any oral form is to be rendered in writing. Those reasons make the pronunciation becomes important. Therefore, a learner should have the skill in pronouncing the words of the target language.

**Students’ Speaking Achievement**

It is obvious that speaking is one of the four skills to master in learning a language. Speaking means sharing about something to others orally. Furthermore, Anwar Sofyanda as cited in Herlina (1997: 14) said that speaking focuses on the ability to express feeling, ideas, and action. In expressing the feeling, of course, we talk and share something orally. According to Hornby (1995: 10), achievement is a thing done successfully, especially with effort and skill. To know the students’ achievement, teacher usually gives a test to the students. Actually, the word achievement refers to the knowledge and skills that the students have learned and acquired. In conclusion, the speaking achievement, of course, is the knowledge and skills that the students obtain during their study in the field of their oral ability. It is the ability of someone on how they convey some messages to their listeners. In speaking, a language is spoken.

**Previous Notes on Speaking Class**

There are some studies which are related to the writer’s present study. The first is the study of Jiang Xia. In her study, ‘*conversation classes’* (1998: 30) she states that ‘…. These students are good at doing multiple choice exercises but are poor at doing exercises in which they are asked to produce and create in the language’. From the statement above, it shows us that students have no good ability in speaking. It can be influenced by many factors one of them could be pronunciation problem or the students do not know how to pronounce the word adequately and understandable. However, we know that in daily life speaking has an important role. People produce sounds in talking.

Moreover, Wahba in her study *‘Teaching Pronunciation – Why?’* (1998: 32) stated that

“Another difficulty that teachers of English to Arabic-speaking students usually encounter is the absence of certain English sounds in Arabic, like /p/ and /v/. This makes it difficult for students to pronounce correctly words containing such words.”

This finding shows us that the pronunciation of a word can also be the difficulties of the students. Moreover, for those sounds which are not included in the student’s native language. As being stated before, one of the factors that makes pronunciation a problem is the sounds which do not exist in the students’ native language. As it is known that some of English fricatives sounds do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia such as Θ and ð. This can also cause mispronunciation. Meanwhile, we know that mispronunciation can make the conversation and communication problem.

Then, a study by Trager and Handerson (1983) found a list of areas of difficulty of pronunciation. They state that the areas of difficulty for Indonesian are as follows:

/i/ - /iy/, /e/ - /ey/

/u/ - /uw/

/θ/ - /ð/

/j/,/z/,/ž/

/f/ - /v/, /w/ - /v/

/š/ - /ž/

*Consonant Clusters*

Relate to my study, those three studies show that pronunciation can make problems. The problems of pronunciation can be different to each student. Furthermore, by seeing those areas of difficulty of Indonesian in pronouncing English sounds, most of the sounds are fricatives. Therefore, the writer tried to find out whether those sounds are really difficult for Indonesian students. In addition, if it is related to Wahba (1998) and Xia’s (1998) studies, those areas of difficulty can have more influences such as decreasing the students’ confidence to study English and making the students become less motivated. Sometimes a good pronunciation will have an influence to the students. The students could be more confident in speaking and learning English if they have a good pronunciation. Relate to the problem presents by the three studies above, a question arises whether the mastery of pronunciation can contribute to speaking achievement. Since it is believed that everyone must have something in mind and he or she must share it to others. The effective way of sharing is communicate it orally. It means someone must tell words by pronouncing them. In conclusion, both pronunciation mastery and speaking achievement relate each other.

**Method**

The writer conducted a correlation research in this study. It means the scores of the subjects on two or more different measures are correlated. The aim is to determine the degree of relationship that exists between variables involved. In this study, there were two variables. They were the English fricatives pronunciation mastery (independent variable) and the students’ speaking achievement (dependent variable). This current study is operationally defined as the relationship between the students’ competence and performance knowledge of pronouncing the words or sentences in a language and also the ability of the students in saying and expressing the English fricatives by the students of SMP Negeri 1 Talang Kelapa.

The population of this study was all of the students of SMP N 1 Talang Kelapa. In SMP N 1 Talang Kelapa, there were eighteen classes. Six classes were the seventh class. Six classes were the eighth class. And the other six classes were the ninth class. The total of the population of this study was about 739 students. A hundred samples were taken by the use of purposive sampling technique. The writer tried to find students who were interested in English. At first the writer classified the students based on their interest by giving simple questionnaire. Secondly the writer only chose the sample from the seventh and the eighth class randomly.

To collect the data for this study, the writer made use of tests and use recording technique. To know the students’ mastery in pronouncing the words, the writer tested the samples directly by using pronunciation test. In the test, all samples were asked to pronounced fricative words in isolation, in minimal pairs, in sentences, and in paragraphs. The writer prepared 100 questions about fricatives pronunciation. However, the writer used the students’ report card to obtain the data for the students’ speaking achievement as the writer achievement data.

The score was distributed into *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coeffcient* formula since the aim of this study was to find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between the English fricatives pronunciation mastery and the students’ speaking achievement at SMP Negeri 1 Talang Kelapa. Then, the correlation coefficient was classified into some degrees of correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient was distributed into the correlation value by seeing the correlation interval. 0. 0 – 0. 20 are considered as very poor value. 0. 20 – 0. 40 are poor. 0. 40 – 0. 60 are categorized as average value. 0. 60 – 0. 80 are good. 0. 80 – 1. 00 are excellent value. Arikunto, (2002)

As the additional analysis, the writer also distributed the data into regression analysis to look for the contribution of mastery of English fricatives to the students’ speaking achievement. Regression can be defined as the analysis which is used to study relationships between measurable variables (see Oktarina, 2006 and Wonnacott, 1981). However, all those two analysis categories will be calculated by the use of SPSS.

**Findings and Discussions**

From the scores obtained, it was found that the lowest score in the test given was 21, the highest score was 88, the mean score was 61.85 with a number of students are 100. Then, 7 percent of the students were classified in very good category, 52 percent of the students were in good category, 32 percent of the students were in fair category, 9 percent of the students were in poor category, and none of the students were in very poor category. Meanwhile, the scores from the students’ speaking achievement showed that the lowest score was 50, the highest score was 90, and the mean score was 66.01 with N=100. 3 percent of the students were in very good category, 61 percent of the students were in good category, 36 percent of the students were in fair category and none of the students were in poor and very poor category.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Fricatives Tests and Speaking Achievement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| English Fricatives Mastery | 61.85 | 14.801 | 100 |
| Students’ Speaking Achievement | 66.01 | 7.682 | 100 |

The table tells us that the students’ English fricatives mastery is lower than students’ speaking achievement. We can see it from the mean of those two variables. In addition, the English fricatives scores have a high standard deviation. It means that the scores among the students have a high difference from the mean or we can say that there is a very high score and a very low score for English fricatives mastery. In contrast, the students’ speaking achievement has a small standard deviation. It means that the students’ score do not have high difference from the mean. In other words, we could say that the students’ score are not too far from one to another.

The findings show that the students’ mastery in pronouncing fricatives was really related to the students’ speaking achievement. After the data were analyzed, it was found that the correlation coefficient was +0.692. It was considered as strong correlation. It proved us that there is a significant correlation between the students’ mastery in pronouncing the English fricatives and their speaking achievement. To see the percentage of the relation of each variable, the regression analysis was used. The R square or the coefficient determination was 0.478. it meant that the contribution of the students’ English fricatives pronunciation mastery on their speaking achievement was 47.8% (0.478 x 100%). This percentage could be used as the prediction because it is at the significant level of the F-statistics was 89.877. The distribution of the findings could be clearly seen in this table 2 below.

Table 3. The Summary of the Statistical Analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Independent variable | Dependent Variable | R | R2 | F | Significance |
| Students’ English Fricatives Mastery | Students’ Speaking Achievement | .692 | .478 | 89.877 | .000 |

From the findings above, the writer considered that fricatives are difficult for junior high school students, especially for the students of SMP Negeri 1 Talang Kelapa. Since the mean obtained was 61.85 with standard deviation of 14.801. It is in line with what already found by Trager and Handerson (1983) that is most of fricatives are problems for Indonesian. This is probably caused by the fact that in Bahasa Indonesia we have no fricatives and if the fricatives are still pronounced, it will not change the meaning of the word. *‘siapa’* will also be the same if it is pronounced *‘šiapa’.* In contrast, it will be so different in English. The word *‘sipping’,* for example, means drink in small amount of water and *‘shipping’* means transport or send by a ship. Someone might misunderstand us if we mispronounce them. The listeners will be confused whether we say *I’m sipping my coffee* or *I’m shipping my coffee.* It can make our communication runs badly. From the example above and the findings, the writer assumes that to have a good speaking ability or achievement, someone should pronounce English sounds well, including fricatives, either in isolation or in context, because pronunciation and speaking are closely correlated to one another.

From the result of pronunciation test and students’ speaking achievement report card, it is found that there were still some students who were categorized in fair category and even in poor category. This might be caused by many factors, such as the students themselves, parents, teachers, friend, and government. From the students’ part, there is a possibility that the students themselves are not active in practicing English and or they are not interested in English subject. For example, the students sometimes think English class is a nightmare for them to attend. Moreover, the students’ parents’ economic background could also be one of the factors for the students’ pronunciation mastery and speaking ability. For instance, the students could not get into some English courses and practice their English speaking there due to no financial support. The next is English teachers’ teaching styles which might not match to the students learning styles could be the factor as well. Moreover, teachers are likely to use monotonous teaching styles which really neglect the English pronunciation for example grammar-translation method. Friends could also influence the students’ pronunciation and speaking ability by giving some bad comments or even mocking their friends when their friends practice to pronounce words or speak in English. Furthermore from the point of view of government, curriculum has the role for the students’ achievement. Our curriculum focuses more on the students’ receptive ability but not productive ability. Therefore, it sometimes makes the teacher ignore speaking ability.

In addition, since the contribution of fricatives pronunciation mastery is quite a lot, then teachers should not neglect pronunciation, especially in global era where oral communication is badly needed as well as written one. Government, teachers, parents, and even students must support each other to create very effective English teaching and learning for communication purposes.

**Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the analysis on the data gathered during the study, it can be concluded that (1) English fricatives pronunciation mastery has significant correlation to the students’ speaking achievement. It could be interpreted that if a student is good at fricatives pronunciation, it can be predicted that his or her speaking achievement is good. But, if the English fricatives pronunciation of a student is merely poor, his or her speaking achievement is categorized poor too; (2) English fricatives pronunciation mastery has contribution to speaking achievement of the students. As previously stated that fricatives mastery pronunciation is predicted 47.8% influencing someone’s speaking achievement; (3) English fricatives are included as the sounds which are difficult to pronounce. Most students got difficulties in pronouncing those sounds and this causes their speaking achievement low. Firstly, the students are afraid to make mistakes. Secondly, the students are not confident to use their productive skills. Lastly, there were no supports from teachers, parents, and government.

The writer tried to give some suggestions to the teachers. It is suggested to give more attention to those sounds and teach their students how to pronounce them well and focus to the pronunciation mastery in order to make the students’ speaking ability better. The other one is the teacher should be a good model for their students. Finally, suggestions for students are they should improve their pronunciation ability, because in learning a language, including English, pronunciation is one of the aspects to master in order to have effective oral communication. In addition, by having good pronunciation misunderstandings can be eliminated if not all prevented. The last is the students are badly suggested to have good productive skills in addition to their receptive skills by practicing a lot. However, this study is only the descriptive analysis on how the fricatives pronunciation mastery of the students could influence their speaking achievement. Therefore, the writer hopes that there will be further research about pronunciation mastery and speaking achievement.

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