

PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IN A LOCAL LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

(A Case Study in Fourth Semester Students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu)

THESIS



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THESIS

Submitted as Partial Requirements
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MOTTO

“Allah does not burden anyone beyond their capacity”
(Qur'an, Surah Albaqarah 2:286)

“Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change
what is within themselves”
(Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rad 13:11)

“What we know is a drop, what we don't know is an ocean”
(Isaac Newton)

“the important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own
reason for existing”
(Albert Einstein)

“Look up, take pride in the achievements you've made, and bow your
head so that you remain humble, not someone who lacks self-confidence”
(Fithrya Zuhri)

DEDICATION

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise and thanks be to Allah SWT for His infinite mercy, compassion, guidance, and strength, which have accompanied the author at every step of this journey. To Him belong every prayer uttered in silence, every hope cherished during difficult times, and every strength found in moments of weakness. Only with His permission has the author finally been able to complete this thesis as an important milestone in the long journey of pursuing knowledge and understanding the true meaning of perseverance. May peace and blessings always be upon the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him the greatest example, the light of civilization, and the messenger who brought knowledge, goodness, and guidance to all of humanity. With love, respect, and sincere gratitude, this humble work is dedicated to:

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 10. In the end, what matters most is not how quickly someone reaches the finish line, but how resilient they are in facing every challenge along the way.

ABSTRACT

Fithrya Zuhri, SRN: 2223230034. Tittle of Thesis:
“PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING
ACTIVITIES IN A LOCAL LINGUISTIC CONTEXT (A Case Study
in Fourth Semester Students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu)”.

Thesis, Study Program of Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Faculty of Tarbiyah and
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Pronunciation plays a critical role in oral communication, yet foreign language learners often face complex phonetic challenges in local linguistic environments. This research investigates the pronunciation challenges faced by fourth-semester English Education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu during English speaking activities. It aims to analyze students' phonetic difficulties, examine the influence of the local linguistic context (mother tongue and linguistic transfer), and evaluate the impact of social and psychological factors on speaking performance. Utilizing a qualitative case study design based on Spradley's ethnographic framework, data were collected through semi-structured interviews (35 students), classroom observations, video recordings, and documentation. The sample comprised students representing five local ethnic groups: Pekal, Rejang, Pasemah, Lembak, and Serawai. The findings reveal that students experience significant segmental and suprasegmental obstacles, including distinguishing long/short vowels (e.g., /i:/ vs /ɪ/), articulating dental fricatives (/θ/, /ð/), simplifying consonant clusters, placing incorrect word stress, and using flat intonation. These difficulties stem from strong mother-tongue interference (L1) and negative linguistic transfer, leading to sound substitution, elision, and vowel insertion. Furthermore, psychological barriers like speaking anxiety, fear of negative peer evaluation, and low exposure to native models severely impair speech fluency and intelligibility. In conclusion, local linguistic backgrounds and affective factors interactively shape students' English pronunciation patterns. Pedagogically, lecturers should implement contextual phonetic training and contrastive analysis, while designing supportive learning environments to reduce speaking anxiety and optimize students' communicative competence.

Keywords: *Pronunciation Challenges, English Speaking Activities, Local Linguistic Context.*

ABSTRAK

Fithrya Zuhri, SRN: 2223230034. Judul Skripsi:
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Pelafalan memainkan peran penting dalam komunikasi lisan, namun para pembelajar bahasa asing sering menghadapi tantangan fonetik yang kompleks dalam lingkungan linguistik setempat. Penelitian ini menyelidiki tantangan pengucapan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa semester empat Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu selama kegiatan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesulitan fonetik siswa, meneliti pengaruh konteks linguistik lokal (bahasa ibu dan transfer linguistik), dan mengevaluasi dampak faktor sosial dan psikologis terhadap kemampuan berbicara. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif berdasarkan kerangka kerja etnografi Spradley, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur (35 siswa), observasi kelas, rekaman video, dan dokumentasi. Sampel tersebut diambil dari mahasiswa yang mewakili 5 kelompok etnis setempat: Pekal, Rejang, Pasemah, Lembak, and Serawai. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami hambatan segmental dan suprasegmental yang signifikan, termasuk membedakan vokal panjang/pendek (misalnya, /i:/ vs /ɪ/), mengartikulasikan frikatif dental (/θ/, /ð/), menyederhanakan gugusan konsonan, menempatkan tekanan kata yang salah, dan menggunakan intonasi datar. Kesulitan-kesulitan ini timbul dari interferensi bahasa ibu (L1) yang kuat dan transfer linguistik negatif, yang menyebabkan substitusi bunyi, elisi, dan penyisipan vokal. Selain itu, hambatan psikologis seperti kecemasan berbicara, takut akan evaluasi negatif dari teman sebaya, dan kurangnya paparan terhadap model penutur asli sangat mengganggu kelancaran dan kejelasan berbicara. Kesimpulannya, latar belakang linguistik lokal dan faktor afektif secara interaktif membentuk pola pengucapan bahasa Inggris siswa. Secara pedagogis, dosen harus menerapkan pelatihan fonetik kontekstual dan analisis kontrastif, sambil merancang lingkungan pembelajaran yang mendukung untuk mengurangi kecemasan berbicara dan mengoptimalkan kompetensi komunikatif siswa.

Kata kunci: *Tantangan Pelafalan, Aktivitas Berbicara Bahasa Inggris, Konteks Linguistik Lokal.*

PREFACE

The author of this thesis, titled “Pronunciation Challenges In English Speaking Activities In A Local Linguistic Context (A Case Study of Fourth-Semester Students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu),” expresses gratitude to Allah SWT, the Almighty and Most Merciful, for His blessings and guidance. This thesis is submitted as one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in the English Language Education Program.

This project aims to analyze students’ phonetic difficulties, examine the influence of the local linguistic context (native language and linguistic transfer), and evaluate the impact of social and psychological factors on speaking ability.

The author sincerely thanks all faculty members, especially the advisors, for their insightful advice, encouragement, and recommendations during the writing of this thesis. We also thank the Sociolinguistics faculty members and fourth-semester English Education students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu for their invaluable assistance. It is hoped that future research and improvements in the teaching of English pronunciation in university courses can benefit from this approach.

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August 2026

Fithrya Zuhri

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