

## Fostering Students' Pronunciation of /ð/ and /θ/ Sounds by Utilising Tongue Twister

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to find out whether or not the improvement of the students' pronunciation skill of /ð/ and /θ/ sounds, the population of the research was the third semester of English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba in academic year of 2018/2019 consist of 2 classes they were English 18A and B, the sample chosen by using purposive sampling technique where the sample was English 18A and the total number of the sample were 21 students. This research was conducted by using Pre-Experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The result of this research shows that T-test value was 14,89 and t-table value was 1,703. Based on the statistic analysis results it was found that T-value was higher than T-table. It can be concluded that application of tongue twister improves the students' pronunciation skill of /ð/ and /θ/ sounds.

### 1. Introduction

One of language that is very important to learn is English. It because English has become an international language, which is used by most communities in the world. Many countries use English as their second language. In spite of the difficulties in studying English, it is worthwhile to study the language because it plays a very important role in almost all fields of life such as communication, commerce, economy, politics, education, science, technology and so on.

Speaking English seem to be the most prominent skill to be mastered by most people all over the world because of some reasons first allows you to actually broaden your world, second makes people to be able to interact and communicate easier with other people even thought come from different countries it means that add more relation with many people, and makes people be more confident.

However, learn to speak English is not an easy task; one of the major reason is that speaking involves sound production and related to the pronunciation which makes it difficult to learn.

Pronunciation is a fundamental thing in speaking. Pronunciation becomes one of important parts to be taught to the learners besides grammar and vocabulary. Macháčková (2012: 8) states that "pronunciation as an inseparable aspect of the language has a great influence on our successful communication but it is still overlooked by a large number of teachers, who would rather pay attention to teaching lexis and grammar as they feel more certain about them." Having good pronunciation is better than having best grammar but cannot express it correctly in speaking. However, pronunciation is still ignored in daily teaching. It

is only taught as an additional part by teachers and mentioned partially in many course books. Teachers might only be concerned with lexis and grammar because of some reasons.

Pronunciation has been a crucial thing to talk about. It is important for learners who want to speak English properly and correctly. However, the curriculum in Indonesia does not mention pronunciation as one of parts that should be taught to learners. Furthermore, there is insufficient media to teach pronunciation. In Indonesia, English is regarded as the first foreign language that is learned by the students from primary school until university. It means, English is a very important subject at every level of education.

As foreign learners of English, students have been facing many problems in learning process. The problems are on the lexis, grammar, and especially pronunciation. Pronunciation problems are caused by many factors; those factors are the non existence of particular English sounds in their mother tongue, pronouncing Indonesian Language words is different than pronouncing English Language words, pronouncing words in Bahasa Indonesia is easier than saying words in English.

Moreover, based on the observation in the first year students in Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba, the students are difficult to say some English words because of mother tongue. Let see English learners' habitual pronunciation in English, people might say "I have /θri:/ books" as "I have /tri:/ books" or say "He is my /'brʌð.ə/" as "He is my /broder/". Those things absolutely will be problems for the listeners. In addition when learning pronunciation in the classroom the lecturer still use method which makes students are not enthusiastic such as; too

much explanation in that the lecturer rarely give the students chance to practice their English.

Because of sounds production is a part of habits in students life and sounds in English such as /θ/ (voiceless dental fricative) and /ð/ (voiced dental fricative) do not exist either in Indonesian or in Buginese, thus Indonesian have difficulty in pronouncing those sounds. To solve the problem the researcher will apply Tongue Twister in teaching and learning pronunciation especially /θ/ and /ð/ sounds.

According to Well-Smith Partners, 2012 as cited in Tri Iryani 2015 “Tongue twisters have been used by teachers in several countries in which English is second language for the citizen. This method is also popular as it is fun and interesting not only for young but also adult learners” Even though some people think that using Tongue Twister requires a lot of patience and repetition and even can be time-consuming and impractical in the classroom, Tongue Twisters have some advantages. Those advantages such as; helping students gain awareness of their pronunciation problems, helping students focus on and tackle the problems which lead to quick improvement, helping students build a new muscle memory, improving their listening, relieving the monotony of the lesson, and allowing students to practice the language without fear of making mistakes.

Thus, the researcher believe that using Tongue Twisters might be one of good methods that work better on learners of English as a foreign language and it can be taught in several ways such as using cards, pictures and videos and will conduct research entitled “Fostering Students’ Pronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/ Sounds by using Tongue Twister (Pre-Experimental Research in The Third Semester Student of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba)”

Based on the explanation above the problem of the research can be formulated as follows; “Does the use of Tongue Twister improve the students’ pronunciation of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds?”. This research is conducted in order to find out how effective Tongue Twisters in helping students improving their pronunciation of /ð/ and /θ/ sounds.

## 2. Method

This research used a pre-experimental design with Pretest and Posttest, involving one sample class. The class was taught by using Tongue Twister. The research design can be seen as follows:

$$E = O_1 \times O_2$$

E = Experimental Class

O<sub>1</sub> = Students oral pretest of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds before taught by using Tongue Twister Technique

x = Tongue Twister

O<sub>2</sub> = Students oral pretest of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds after taught by using Tongue Twister Technique

(Gay, 1987, p.225)

### 2.1 Variables of the Research

In pre-experimental research, there are two variables that have correlation each other. Variable is an object of study that becomes important elements in research. In this research has two variables, they were;

1) Independent variable

In this research, the independent variable is the use of Tongue Twister.

2) Dependent Variable is the students’ pronunciation improvement.

### 2.2 Population and Sample

1). Population

The population of this research was the third semester students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba in academic year 2018/2019. There were two classes; 18 A and 18 B and consisted of 46 students.

2). Sample

The researcher used purposive sampling to choose one class that as sample of this research. Purposive sampling technique is a technique which takes a sample by not based on the random, or strata, but for the consideration focusing on a particular (Arikunto, 2010: 183). The researcher chose the English 18A Class as ample of the research where the total numbers of sample were 21 students.

### 2.3 Instrument of the Research

The instrument of this research was an oral test consisting of pre-test and post-test. The pre-test aimed to know the ability of the students. Therefore, the post-test was to know the students’ improvement after giving treatment used Tongue Twister in teaching Pronunciation.

### 2.4 Procedure of Collecting Data

The procedures in collecting data in this research were:

1). Pre-test

Before giving treatment, the researcher distributed a pre-test to sample. The aim of the pre-test was intended to know the students’ ability to pronounce /θ/ and /ð/ sounds before giving the treatment. In this case, the student were given a number of words to be pronounced. Those words consisted of 20 items which divided into 8 of /θ/ sounds and 12 /ð/ sounds.

2). Treatment

After giving pre-test the researcher gave several treatment to the students by using Tongue Twister, the procedures of the treatment done based on the meetings:

a) In the first meeting, the researcher introduced the material of pronunciation especially /θ/ and /ð/ sounds and showed them how to pronounce them by giving examples.

b) The second meeting, the researcher explained about Tongue Twister and gave some examples. After that the researcher gave the students a paper about the example of Tongue Twister, then practiced all the words.

c) The third meeting, the researcher discussed the Tongue Twister with the students and instructed the student to practice their pronunciation one by one.

d) The fourth meeting, the researcher gave a clear explanation and asked question that relate with the Tongue Twister material.

3) Post-Test

After giving the treatments, the post-test distributed to the students'. It aimed to know the effectiveness of implementation Tongue Twister to improve students' pronunciation.

**2.5 Technique of Data Analysis**

All the data obtain during this research analyzed in order to meet the objective. As mentioned by Phillips and Carr (2010: 101), "the data collected should be organized and then to be engaged in data interpretation to bring them into a confluence of learning and transformation."

In technique of data analysis, the researcher used descriptive statistic. It used to determine the data in high, middle and low. Quantitative methods involve the processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study. In this research, the researcher used t-test to test the hypothesis. The function of t-test is to evaluate whether the mean value of the pretest differs significantly from mean value of the posttest.

**1. Pre Test and Post Test Analysis**

There were 20 words that students should pronounce correctly. There were ten words containing voiced dental fricative and ten words containing voiceless dental fricative. The scores of the test were gained through the following calculation:

**Scoring Criteria:**

Items	Score
Correct Pronunciation	1
Incorrect Pronunciation	0

**Score calculation:**

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{the total of correct pronunciation} \times 1 \text{ point}}{\text{total of items}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Maximum score} = \frac{20 \times 1}{20} \times 100 = 100$$

(Twi Iryani, 2015)

**a. Classifying the students' score into five levels**

Score	Classification
86 – 100	Very Good
71 – 85	Good
56 – 70	Fair
41- 55	Poor
0-40	Very Poor

(Depdiknas, 2008)

**3. Results**

The findings of the research deal with the descriptive statistics analysis result and inferential statistics analysis result of students' pre-test and post-test scores, the rate percentage of the students' scores, mean score, standard deviation, test of significance and hypothesis testing. These findings are described as follows :

**1) Descriptive Statistics Analysis Result**

Descriptive statistics analysis result consist of scoring classification, the rate percentage of the pre-test and post-test scores, which can be seen in the following tables.

**a. The Frequency and Rate Percentage of the Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores**

**Table 2.** Frequency and Rate Percentage of the Student's Pre-test Scores

No.	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	86-100	-	-
2	Good	71-85	1	4,80%
3	Fair	56-70	2	9,60%
4	Poor	41-55	2	9,60%
5	Very Poor	0-40	16	76%
Total			21	100%

The table above shows the frequency and rate percentage of students' pre-test scores from 21 students. Based on the table above, it can be seen the result of the students' percentage that there were 16 students (76,%) who obtained very poor score, 2 students (9,6%) who gain poor score, 2 students (9,6%) who obtained fair score, 1 student (4,8%) who got good score and none of the students got very good score.

**Table 2.** Frequency and Rate Percentage of Students' Score in Post-Test

No.	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	86-100	-	-
2	Good	71-85	3	14,30%
3	Fair	56-70	6	28,60%

4	Poor	41-55	9	42,80%
5	Very Poor	0-40	3	14,30%
Total			21	100%

The table 4.2 above shows the frequency and rate percentage of students' post-test scores from 21 students. Based on the table above, it can be seen that there were 3 students (14,3%) who obtained very poor score, 9 students (42,8%) who got poor score, 6 students (28,6%) who gain fair score, 3 students (14,3%) who obtained good score and none of the student who got very good.

**b. The Mean and Gain Score of Pre-test and Post-test**

**Table 3.** The Students' Mean Score

Component	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain
Mean score	38,33	55,24	17,14

The table 4.3 above shows that the mean score of pre-test is 38,33 and the mean score of post-test is 55,24. In addition, the gain score is 17,14. it can be concluded that there is significance improvement for each students after treatment.

**c. Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Score**

**Table 4.** Standard Deviation

Component	Pre-test	Post-test
Standard Deviation	17,52	13,73

The table 4.4 above shows standard deviation of the students' pre-test score is 17,52 and standard deviation of the students' in post test score is 13,73.

**2) Inferential Statistics Analysis Result**

In order to know whether the null hypothesis is accepted or not, inferential statistics was used. The inferential statistics analysis result can be seen in the following table below:

**Table 5.** Inferential Statistics Analysis Result

T-test value	T-table value
8,57	1,725

The table 4.5 above shows the inferential statistics analysis result, based on the table it is seen that the t-test value is 8,57 and the t-table value is 1,725. Otherwise by applying the level of significance at 0,05%, it was found that the t-test value was higher than t-table value it means that Ho is rejected and H1 is accepted. So, the researcher

concludes there was a significance different between the result of the students' pre-test and post-test after treatment trough Tongue Twister.

**4. Discussion**

The discussion of this study is presented based on the Statistic analysis result and also discusses the review of related theory and analysis of the data to interpret the statistic analysis result.

Based on the statistical analysis results regarding to improving the students pronunciation skill at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba. It was found out that the students' pronunciation skill before conducting the treatment by using tongue twister was still categorized as low. The assumption is approved by the results of the pre-test score showing that there were many more students who got very poor scores than those who got good score.

This is not questionable because based on the observation result the researcher found out that there were some factors that cause the results of the pre-test such as the students' confidence in learning, in that the students were not confident to practice their English specially the /ð/ and /θ/ sounds, the lecturer still use conventional method in teaching pronunciation as consequence the students are still found that pronunciation practice difficult to do.

Otherwise in the post-test result it was found out that the students pronunciation improved due to the results of the post-test score showing that there were many more students who got good score and only three students who got very poor score. The improvement was certainly caused by the treatment that was conducted by the researcher. During teaching process, in fact the researcher assumed that the students were very interested to the material that the researcher presented, moreover the assumption is supported by in which the students' pronunciation skill improved.

The researcher assumes that teaching Pronunciation through Tongue Twister really helpful and useful to improve students' in teaching vocabulary because it was supported by the frequency and the rate percentage of the result of the students' score of pre-test and post-test. In addition, teaching pronunciation through this method was very enjoyable to develop their ability in English pronunciation. The value of the t-test was greater than t-table (8,5>1.725). Based on the t-test, the researcher finds that was a improvement between in the result of pretest and posttest.

This research is in line with the previous study by Tri Iriani under the title "Improving Fifth Graders' Pronunciation Of "Th" By Using Tongue Twisters" in 2015. The result of the research that Tongue twister is the useful methods for teaching pronunciation skill.

From Miftahul Rohman entitled The Use of Tongue Twister Technique to Improve EFL Students' Pronunciation. In her research, she used Tongue Twister as

technique to improve EFL students' pronunciation and by using this technique can make the students more enthusiastic and easier to master pronunciation of English especially on segmental features and some parts of supra segmental features (word stress and sentence stress). The result of the study showed that there was improvement of students' pronunciation after being taught by using tongue twister.

Tongue twister very interesting because they consist of many similar sounds but usually different in their written form and meaning, as in "the thirty thousand thieves thought they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday" Tongue twisters have various levels of difficulty. So that, a teacher should select an appropriate type of tongue twister based on the age and ability of his or her students. In this research, had used all the above types using various techniques.

Based on the discussion above the researcher concluded that by using Tongue Twister can be applied in teaching pronunciation and makes students are interested in following the learning process which can improve students' pronunciation.

## 5. Conclusion

Although the value of teaching pronunciation still becomes a debatable issue among some experts, in this case teaching pronunciation specifically using tongue twisters still works well and is needed by the third semester students of English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba. Tongue twisters are implemented in various activities such as run to the board and warming-up. The advantages of using tongue twisters are improvement of students' motivation, class condition, and pronunciation. However, there are also disadvantages of using tongue twisters due to the speed constraint and time consuming. This study can answer the research question that Tongue Twister Technique improves students pronunciation of /ð/ and /θ/ sounds.

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