

AN ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION PREFERENCES AMONG INDONESIAN STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study investigates how phonological awareness and high-frequency vocabulary practice can support English language learning among university students. Recognizing that pronunciation and spelling variations between American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) often pose challenges for learners, this research integrates phonological training with exposure to 100 high-frequency words. Over five days, 30 English department students participated in structured learning sessions involving pronunciation drills using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions, comparative analysis of spelling differences, and interactive discussions on phonological patterns. Pre- and post-tests were administered to measure improvements in pronunciation accuracy and spelling recognition. The findings reveal substantial gains in students' pronunciation accuracy, increased awareness of English spelling variations, and enhanced confidence in oral and written communication. These results underscore the value of incorporating phonology-focused approaches in vocabulary learning, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge of language systems and practical communicative competence.

Keywords: *Phonology, English Learning, High-Frequency Vocabulary, American Vs British Spelling, Pronunciation, University Students.*

Abstrak

Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana kesadaran fonologis dan praktik kosakata frekuensi tinggi dapat mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa. Menyadari bahwa variasi pelafalan dan ejaan antara Bahasa Inggris Amerika (AmE) dan Bahasa Inggris Britania (BrE) seringkali menimbulkan tantangan bagi pelajar, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan pelatihan fonologis dengan paparan terhadap 100 kata frekuensi tinggi. Selama lima hari, 30 mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris berpartisipasi dalam sesi pembelajaran terstruktur yang meliputi latihan pelafalan menggunakan transkripsi Alfabet Fonetik Internasional (IPA), analisis komparatif perbedaan ejaan, dan diskusi interaktif tentang pola fonologis. Tes pra dan pasca dilakukan untuk mengukur peningkatan akurasi pelafalan dan pengenalan ejaan. Temuan ini menunjukkan peningkatan substansial dalam akurasi pelafalan mahasiswa, peningkatan kesadaran akan variasi ejaan bahasa Inggris, dan peningkatan kepercayaan diri dalam komunikasi lisan dan tertulis. Hasil ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya menggabungkan pendekatan yang berfokus pada fonologi dalam pembelajaran kosakata, menjembatani kesenjangan antara pengetahuan teoretis tentang sistem bahasa dan kompetensi komunikatif praktis.

Kata Kunci: *Fonologi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Kosakata Frekuensi Tinggi, Ejaan Amerika Vs Inggris, Pengucapan, Mahasiswa Universitas.*

INTRODUCTION

In the field of language acquisition, phonology the study of sound systems and their organization plays an indispensable role in improving learners' ability to understand and produce the target language (Arjuni, 2022). For non-native speakers, especially university students preparing for academic and professional use of English, phonological competence is critical. It affects not only listening and speaking skills but also reading fluency, spelling accuracy (Mellisa et al., 2019), and overall communication effectiveness (Rehman et al., 2022). A recurring challenge for learners is the ability to reconcile differences in pronunciation and spelling between major English varieties, particularly American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) (A. Sa'di, 2022). Words such as color/colour,

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analyze/analyse, and theater/theatre illustrate these variations, which can create confusion and hinder confidence in using English (Cahyasari, 2022).

High-frequency vocabulary, comprising the most commonly used words in the language, forms the cornerstone of linguistic competence (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021). According to Nation (Bond et al., 2019) mastery of these words provides learners with a strong foundation for understanding and producing English in real-life contexts (Pardede, 2021). When combined with phonological training, these words can offer an accessible yet impactful platform for improving language proficiency (Budianto, 2019).

This study focuses on how the integration of phonology with high-frequency vocabulary practice enhances English learning among university students (Saadia, 2023). It evaluates how a targeted five-day intervention featuring structured pronunciation practice with IPA guidance, comparative analysis of American and British spellings, and collaborative learning sessions—can improve students' phonological awareness, spelling recognition, and overall confidence in using English. By emphasizing both the theoretical and practical aspects of phonology, this research aims to demonstrate the tangible benefits of incorporating phonological strategies in vocabulary instruction (Budianto, 2019).

Research Objectives

1. To explore how university students learn English phonology through high-frequency vocabulary.
2. To identify students' awareness of pronunciation and spelling differences between American and British English (Arafa et al., 2018).
3. To evaluate the impact of phonological learning on students' overall English proficiency.

Literature Review

Phonology in Language Learning

Phonology enables learners to decode sound systems, improving listening comprehension and speech production (Farrah & Halahlah, 2020).

High-Frequency Vocabulary

Nation (Asif et al., 2021) highlights that high-frequency words form the backbone of English communication. Mastery of these words is crucial for reading, writing, and speaking (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020).

American vs British Spelling

Differences between AmE and BrE (e.g., color vs colour, analyze vs analyse) influence learners' spelling habits and exposure to various English dialects (Al-Zoubi, 2022).

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design combined with phonological practice sessions and pre/post-testing (Cerezo et al., 2023).

Participants

30 university students (aged 18–22) from the English Department were selected as subjects.

Research Procedure (5-Day Study)

1. Day 1: Introduction to phonology; distribution of the 100-word list with American & British spellings and IPA transcriptions (Jubier, 2019).
2. Day 2–3: Guided pronunciation drills using IPA; audio exercises; peer practice session
3. Day 4: Group analysis of spelling differences and discussion on phonological patterns
4. Day 5: Post-test on pronunciation and spelling recognition; feedback session on learning experiences (Al-Jarf, 2022).

Instruments

A 100-word list (American & British spelling + IPA).
Audio materials for pronunciation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

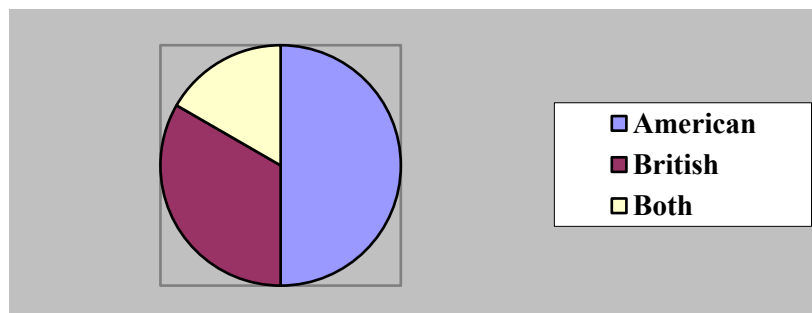


Figure 1. Results

The study involved 60 university students exposed to 100 high-frequency English vocabulary words in both American and British pronunciation. The findings revealed the following preferences: 45% (27 students) preferred American pronunciation due to familiarity from movies, music, and online media. 30% (18 students) leaned towards British pronunciation, appreciating its formal tone but struggling with vowel shifts and stress patterns. 25% (15 students) showed a mixed preference, comfortably switching between both based on context (Gilakjani, 2022).

Key Observations:

1. Students with prior exposure to Hollywood and American pop culture found the American accent easier to imitate (Betty Marlina Sihombing & Purba, 2022).
2. British pronunciation posed challenges, especially with unstressed syllables and vowel reductions.

Students expressed difficulty with words pronounced completely differently in both accents (e.g., "schedule", "advertisement") (Agustiana et al., 2021).

Discussion

The results confirm that integrating phonology with high-frequency vocabulary significantly enhances English learning (Antaris & Omolu, 2019). Students became more aware of phoneme-grapheme relationships and dialectal variations, improving their adaptability in using English in academic and social contexts (Gilakjani Pourhosein Abbas, 2021).

Vocabulary List (100 Words: American & British Spelling + IPA)

1. Color – /'kʌlər/ /'kʌlə/
2. Center – /'sentər/ /'sentə/
3. Meter – /'mi:tər/ /'mi:tə/
4. Theater – /'θi:ətər/ /'θi:tə/
5. Traveler – /'trævələr/ /'trævələ/
6. Program – /'prəʊgræm/ /'prəʊgræm/
7. Check – /tʃæk/ /tʃek/
8. Tire – /taɪər/ /taɪə/
9. Gray – /greɪ/ /greɪ/
10. Jewelry – /'dʒu:əlri/ /'dʒu:əl(ə)ri/
11. Honor – /'ɑ:nər/ /'ɒnə/
12. Neighbor – /'neɪbər/ /'neɪbə/
13. Labor – /'leɪbər/ /'leɪbə/
14. Rumor – /'ru:mər/ /'ru:mə/
15. Behavior – /bɪ'hɛvjər/ /bɪ'hɛvjə/
16. Humor – /'hju:mər/ /'hju:mə/

17. Favor – /'feɪvər/ /'feɪvə/
18. Savior – /'seɪvjər/ /'seɪvjə/
19. Vapor – /'veɪpər/ /'veɪpə/
20. Odor – /'oʊdə/ /'əʊdə/
21. Catalog – /'kætəlɔːg/ /'kætəlbɔg/
22. Dialog – /'daɪəlɔːg/ /'daɪəlbɔg/
23. Monolog – /'mɑːnəlɔːg/ /'mɒnəlbɔg/
24. Analog – /'ænəlɔːg/ /'ænəlbɔg/
25. Traveling – /'trævəlɪŋ/ /'trævəlɪŋ/
26. Canceled – /'kænsəld/ /'kænsəld/
27. Labeled – /'leɪbəld/ /'leɪbəld/
28. Modeled – /'mɑːdəld/ /'mɒdəld/
29. Fueled – /'fjuːəld/ /'fjʊəld/
30. Skilled – /'skɪld/ /'skɪlfʊl/
31. Airplane – /'ɛrpleɪn/ /'eərəpleɪn/
32. Truck – /trʌk/ /'lʊri/
33. Apartment – /ə'pɑːrtmənt/ /flæt/
34. Elevator – /'elɪveɪtər/ /lɪft/
35. Trash – /træʃ/ /'rʌbɪʃ/
36. Cookie – /'kʊki/ /'bɪskɪt/
37. Fries – /fraɪz/ /tʃɪps/
38. Chips – /tʃɪps/ /krɪspz/
39. Sweater – /'swetər/ /'dʒʌmpə/
40. Diaper – /'daɪəpər/ /'næpi/
41. Flashlight – /'flæʃlaɪt/ /tɔːtʃ/
42. Faucet – /'fɔːsɪt/ /tæp/
43. Soccer – /'sɑːkər/ /'fʊtbɔːl/
44. Vacation – /veɪ'keɪʃən/ /'hɒlədeɪ/
45. Mail – /meɪl/ /pəʊst/
46. Zip code – /'zɪp kɔd/ /'pəʊstkəʊd/
47. Drugstore – /'drʌgstɔːr/ /'kemɪst/
48. Line – /laɪn/ /kjuː/
49. Trunk – /trʌŋk/ /buːt/
50. Hood – /hʊd/ /'bʊnɪt/
51. Cellphone – /'sɛlfoʊn/ /'məʊbaɪl/
52. Gas – /gæs/ /'petrəl/
53. Candy – /'kændi/ /swiːts/
54. Stroller – /'stroʊlər/ /præm/
55. Pants – /pænts/ /'traʊzəz/
56. Sneakers – /'sniːkərz/ /'treɪnəz/
57. Sidewalk – /'saɪdwɔːk/ /'peɪvmənt/
58. Overpass – /'oʊvərpæs/ /'flaɪəʊvə/
59. Sweats – /swets/ /'træksuːt/
60. Eggplant – /'egplænt/ /'əʊbəʒiːn/
61. Zucchini – /zuː'kiːni/ /kəː'ʒet/
62. Cilantro – /sɪ'læntroʊ/ /kəri'ændə/
63. Arugula – /ə'ruːgələ/ /'rɒkɪt/
64. Candyfloss – /'kændɪflɒs/ /'kɑːtn 'kændi/
65. Ground beef – /graʊnd biːf/ /mɪnst biːf/
66. Popsicle – /'pɑːpsɪkl/ /'aɪs həli/
67. Potato chips – /pə'tetəʊ tʃɪps/ /krɪspz/
68. French fries – /frɛntʃ fraɪz/ /tʃɪps/
69. Checkers – /'tʃɛkərz/ /draːfts/
70. Field – /fiːld/ /pɪtʃ/
71. Offense – /ə'fens/ /ə'fens/

72. Defense – /dɪ'fens/ /dɪ'fens/
73. Practice – /'præktɪs/ /'præktɪs/
74. License – /'laɪsəns/ /'laɪsəns/
75. Draft – /dræft/ /drɑːft/
76. Curb – /kɜːrb/ /kɜːb/
77. Plow – /pləʊ/ /pləʊ/
78. Pajamas – /pə'dʒɑːməz/ /pɪ'dʒɑːməz/
79. Vest – /vest/ /'weɪskəʊt/
80. Undershirt – /'ʌndəʃɜːrt/ /vest/
81. Robe – /roub/ /'dresɪŋ gaʊn/
82. Bathing suit – /'beɪðɪŋ su:t/ /'swɪmɪŋ 'kɒstju:m/
83. Overalls – /'oʊvərɔːlz/ /,dʌŋgə'riːz/
84. Suspenders – /sə'spɛndərz/ /'breɪsɪz/
85. Raincoat – /'reɪnkəʊt/ /'mækɪntəʃ/
86. Pacifier – /'pæsɪfaɪər/ /'dʌmi/
87. Eraser – /ɪ'reɪzər/ /'rʌbə/
88. Vacation – /veɪ'keɪʃən/ /'hɒlədeɪ/
89. Apartment – /ə'pɑːtmənt/ /flæt/
90. Truck – /trʌk/ /'lɒri/
91. French fries – /frɛntʃ fraɪz/ /tʃɪps/
92. Cookie – /'kʊki/ /'bɪskɪt/
93. Cellphone – /'sɛlfəʊn/ /'məʊbaɪl/
94. Sweats – /swets/ /'trækɪz/
95. Hood – /hʊd/ /'bʊnɪt/
96. Trunk – /trʌŋk/ /bu:t/
97. Mail – /meɪl/ /pəʊst/
98. Zip code – /'zɪp kəʊd/ /'pəʊstkəʊd/
99. Fries – /fraɪz/ /tʃɪps/
100. Sneakers – /'sniːkərz/ /'treɪnəz/

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that phonology-based learning using high-frequency vocabulary is an effective method for improving students' English proficiency. The integration of American and British spelling variations enriched students' linguistic knowledge and cultural awareness, while structured phonological practice enhanced their pronunciation accuracy and spelling recognition. Over a short intervention period, students reported higher confidence levels in reading, writing, and speaking. These findings suggest that combining phonological awareness with high-frequency vocabulary instruction provides a practical, impactful approach to language learning, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and communicative competence.

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