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UNLOCKING ARTICULATION EXCELLENCE: IN DEPTH ANALYSIS OF PRONUNCIATION PROFICIENCY OF ENGLISH AMONG THAI PRIMARY STUDENT

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis kemampuan pengucapan bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar di Thailand, dengan penekanan khusus pada kesulitan-kesulitan khusus yang timbul dari perbedaan fonetik antara bahasa Thailand dan Inggris. Penelitian ini menggaris bawahi pentingnya mencapai kemahiran dalam pengucapan untuk tujuan memfasilitasi komunikasi yang efektif, mendorong penguasaan bahasa, meningkatkan kapasitas kognitif, dan meningkatkan keberhasilan akademis. Pentingnya kemampuan berbicara yang mahir dalam lingkungan akademis ditekankan, memungkinkan siswa untuk mengartikulasikan sudut pandang mereka dan menyampaikan informasi tanpa hambatan apa pun. Namun demikian, perbedaan fonetik yang tidak kentara antara bahasa Thailand dan bahasa Inggris menimbulkan kesulitan tersendiri bagi siswa sekolah dasar Thailand. Makalah ini menyajikan analisis komprehensif atas temuan penelitian, menyoroti contoh-contoh kesalahan pengucapan dan mengkaji pengaruh bahasa ibu siswa terhadap pengucapan bahasa Inggris mereka. Studi ini berupaya untuk mengidentifikasi bidang tantangan yang tepat dan metode pengajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan pengucapan di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar di Thailand. Metodologi penelitian menggunakan desain deskriptif dan metode kualitatif, seperti analisis isi dan observasi pengucapan siswa selama pelajaran bahasa Inggris. Populasinya adalah siswa kelas enam Sekolah Sri Aman Suksa yang dipilih berdasarkan latar belakang linguistik mereka yang beragam. Hasil dan diskusi berpusat pada evaluasi kemahiran pengucapan siswa menggunakan transkripsi dialog, analisis fonologis, penilaian tata bahasa, dan pemanfaatan kosa kata. Temuan ini menunjukkan tingkat penguasaan keterampilan bahasa Inggris verbal yang menonjol di kalangan siswa, dengan area khusus yang perlu ditingkatkan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan dampak positif terhadap praktisi pendidikan di Thailand dan berkontribusi pada percakapan akademis di bidang pembelajaran bahasa.

Kata kunci: Strategi Pengajaran yang Efektif, Perbedaan Fonetik, Tantangan Pembelajaran Bahasa, Kemahiran Pengucapan, Siswa Sekolah Dasar Thailand

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intricacies of English pronunciation aptitude among Thai elementary students, with a specific emphasis on the distinctive difficulties arising from phonetic disparities between the Thai and English languages. The research underscores the significance of attaining proficiency in pronunciation for the purpose of facilitating effective communication, fostering language acquisition, enhancing cognitive capacities, and promoting academic success. The importance of proficient speaking abilities in academic settings is emphasized, enabling students to articulate their viewpoints and convey information without any obstacles. Nevertheless, the subtle phonetic differences between Thai and English pose a distinctive difficulty for Thai elementary students. The paper presents a comprehensive analysis of research findings, highlighting examples of mispronunciation and examining the influence of students' native language on their English pronunciation. The study seeks to identify precise areas of challenge and effective teaching methods to improve pronunciation abilities among primary students in Thailand. The research methodology utilizes a descriptive design and qualitative methods, such as content analysis and observation of students' pronunciation during English lessons. The population comprises sixth-grade students at Sri Aman Suksa School, selected based on their varied linguistic backgrounds. The results and discussions center around the evaluation of students' pronunciation proficiency using dialogue transcription, phonological analysis, grammar assessment, and vocabulary utilization. The findings indicate a notable level of mastery in verbal English skills among the students, with specific areas for enhancement identified. The objective of this

research is to enhance the positive impact on educational practitioners in Thailand and contribute to academic conversations in the field of language learning.

Kata kunci: Effective Teaching Strategies, Fonetik Differences, Language Learning Challenges, Pronunciation Proficiency, Thai Primary Students

I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of global communication, linguistic competence holds paramount importance, and proficiency in English pronunciation stands as a pivotal facet in ensuring effective cross-cultural interactions. As English continues to be a lingua franca in various domains, the articulation excellence of non-native speakers, particularly among Thai primary students, has become a subject of scholarly scrutiny (Hasibuan, 2020).

Thailand, like many other nations, recognizes the significance of English as a tool for international communication, trade, and education. Consequently, English language education is integrated into the curriculum of Thai primary schools (Yusriati and Hasibuan, 2019). However, the journey towards mastering English pronunciation for Thai students is riddled with challenges. The intricate phonetic differences between the Thai language and English, along with distinct stress patterns and intonations, create a unique set of hurdles that students must navigate (Kaste and Harisma, 2023).

While Thai primary students may excel in other aspects of English language learning, such as vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation often lags behind. Despite their fairly good stock of vocabulary and grammatical structure, many students struggle with accurate pronunciation. This struggle is not merely an issue of accent; rather, it can lead to misinterpretation and hinder effective oral communication, impacting their academic and professional prospects (Irwan, 2023).

Research indicates that early exposure to accurate pronunciation can significantly contribute to language development, cognitive abilities, and academic achievement. However, the classroom environment may not always adequately address the nuanced complexities of English pronunciation. Many students may understand the rules of proper word pronunciation theoretically but find it challenging to apply them orally due to the absence of certain English sounds in their native language (Kumala and Ginting, 2023).

Thus, this study seeks to delve into the intricacies of English pronunciation proficiency among Thai primary students through a multifaceted approach. By employing rigorous linguistic analysis and state-of-the-art methodologies, we aim to uncover the underlying factors influencing articulation excellence. Our objective is not only to identify the specific areas where students encounter difficulties but also to propose effective pedagogical strategies to enhance pronunciation skills (Cakmak, 2019).

Through this evaluation, we aim to assess the degree of English pronunciation proficiency in Thai elementary school students, with a specific emphasis on identifying the underlying factors that impact their pronunciation skills. By shedding light on these factors, we hope to provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers to tailor teaching methodologies that address the unique challenges faced by Thai students in mastering English pronunciation (Marzuki, 2021).

Furthermore, this research holds significant importance as it offers a chance to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the extent of English pronunciation proficiency

among Thai elementary school students. It also provides an opportunity for researchers to enhance their analytical abilities, make significant contributions to scientific literature, and provide recommendations to enhance English language learning at the elementary level. Additionally, this study holds the potential to bring about favorable effects on educational practitioners in Thailand, while also enhancing scholarly discussions in the field of language learning Situmorang, Ginting and Saragih, 2023).

II. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research design and qualitative methods. Qualitative research methods are research that produces deep descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words from people who are the subject or object being observed (Moleong, 2018: 4). Content analysis is the part of qualitative research, which analyses content in public records, textbooks, letters, films, or other documents (Ary et al., 2016).

On the population, this can be defined as larger group to which one hopes to apply the results. The population of this research was the students at the first semester of the sixth grade of Sri Aman Suksa School, which consists of 24 students.

Table 1. The Situation of the Sixth Grade Students at Sri Aman Suksa School

No.	Class	Male	Female	Total
1.	1	22	15	37
2.	2A	17	9	26
3.	2B	18	8	26
4.	3A	16	7	23
5.	3B	17	6	23
6.	4	17	14	31
7.	5	20	9	29
8.	6	12	12	24
Total		139	80	219

Source: adapted from the primary data

The setting of the research site is especially. This location was chosen for its diverse student population, which includes students of various ethnicities, linguistic backgrounds, and abilities. For data collection, researchers used random sampling model to complete the data. Then, student voice recordings as primary data and secondary data, namely relevant documents. The researcher observed the learning activities when the teacher asked students to pronounce and speak together in.

Aside from that, there are three major steps to data collection. First, researchers select three topics (fruit names, animal names, and numbers). Then, the researcher then observed the students when the English teacher asked them to say the words together while displaying the words on the LCD projector and listening to the loudspeaker. Finally, in three sessions, the researcher recorded the students' vocal production of vocabulary. Each session included ten (10) students. Their vocabulary production was recorded and transcribed using an audio recorder.

The author employed various procedures to gather data for this research, utilizing the Miles and Huberman data analysis method:

1) Data reduction refers to researcher activities such as summarizing important information, selecting the main points, and focusing on the most important points when digging for information at the research site. Using this data reduction method, researchers obtain data from observation, interviews, and documentation based on their needs. If the data does not match, the information in this data reduction is not grouped. In this way, the reduced data will provide a clearer and easier picture for

researchers to collect additional data and search for it if necessary.

2) Data Display, the following step is to display the data. Data from qualitative research can be presented in the form of short descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flow charts, and so on. Following that, data can also take the form of graphs, matrices, networks, and charts in narrative texts. 3) Finally,

3) Withdrawal/Verification, drawing conclusions seeks to discover the essence or results of data obtained by researchers using valid data.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data obtained from students' speaking skills assessments revealed multiple noteworthy findings that emphasize their high level of proficiency in spoken English. This analysis was conducted by meticulously considering four factors:

1. Dialogue transcription has been conducted to meticulously delineate differences in word choice, syntax, and enunciation.
2. Phonological analysis is conducted to assess students' ability to articulate specific English words.
3. Grammar and sentence structure assessment evaluates the students' ability to construct sentences accurately and determine the appropriateness of their grammar usage.
4. Determine discrepancies in the students' vocabulary usage, specifically in their utilization of diverse and suitable words.

The results can be seen in the below.

1. Muhammadlutfee Langji:
   - Phonology: Accurate and precise articulation of sounds. Only a few phonological errors were observed.
   - Grammar and Sentence Structure: Sentence structure that is straightforward and concise. Then proficient application of grammatical rules.
   - Vocabulary: Use of uncomplicated terminology that is suitable for the given context.
2. Masslin Langkolo:
   - Phonology: Excellent enunciation accompanied by fluctuations in intonation. Then certain words may necessitate greater scrutiny in the field of phonology.
   - Grammar and Sentence Structure: Articulate and coherent sentences. Then excellent selection of vocabulary and mastery of grammar.
   - Vocabulary: Use of varied and suitable vocabulary.
3. Ubaidillah Mahsaman:
   - Phonology: The pronunciation is generally commendable, although there is room for improvement in certain words.
   - Grammar and Sentences: The sentence structure is commendable, albeit with a few grammatical errors. Then excellent utilization of grammatical variations.
   - Vocabulary: Excellent and diverse vocabulary choice.
4. Muhammadhaseen Limanan:
   - Phonology: Demonstrates proficient and articulate pronunciation.
   - Grammar and Sentence Structure: Sentence structure that is straightforward and concise. Excellent selection of vocabulary and mastery of grammar.
   - Vocabulary: Utilize straightforward and precise vocabulary.
5. Suren's Meeting:

- Phonology: Super and articulate enunciation. Proficient grasp of intonation.
- Grammar and Sentence Structure: The sentence structure is intricate and demonstrates proficient grammar usage. Appropriate selection of vocabulary.
- Lexicon:* - Varied and effectively organized lexicon.

6. Torikmustorfa Tumsumsu:
    - Phonology: Proficient articulation with distinct prosody.
    - Grammar and Sentence Structure: The sentence structure is commendable, although there are some noticeable grammatical errors. Selection of suitable vocabulary.
    - Vocabulary: The vocabulary used is commendable, although it could benefit from further expansion.
7. Korawit Dumpila:
    - Phonology: Demonstrates proficient pronunciation with minor fluctuations in intonation.
    - Grammar and Sentence Structure: The sentence structure is uncomplicated with minimal grammatical mistakes. Selection of appropriate terminology to align with the given context.
    - Vocabulary: Basic and adaptable lexicon.

The meticulous assessment of students' speaking skills provides a comprehensive understanding of their proficiency in spoken English, aligning with the objective of unraveling the intricacies of English pronunciation proficiency among Thai primary students. By examining dialogue transcriptions, variations in word choice, syntax, and enunciation are uncovered, offering valuable insights into the linguistic capabilities of each student. This methodological approach allows for a detailed evaluation of articulation excellence, shedding light on areas for improvement and showcasing students' strengths.

The phonological analysis, a pivotal component of this study, focuses on articulating specific English words, enabling the identification of pronunciation accuracy and areas for enhancement. Through this analysis, discrepancies in phonology among students, such as variations in enunciation or difficulty in reproducing certain sounds, are highlighted. This aspect of the assessment aids in pinpointing specific challenges faced by Thai primary students in mastering English pronunciation.

Moreover, the evaluation extends to grammar and sentence structure, essential elements in assessing overall language proficiency. By scrutinizing students' abilities to construct accurate and appropriate sentences, the study illuminates their proficiency in applying grammatical rules. This aspect of the analysis not only identifies grammatical errors but also underscores students' competence in forming coherent and grammatically sound sentences, contributing to a holistic understanding of their language skills.

Furthermore, the examination of vocabulary usage plays a crucial role in the assessment process. Identifying discrepancies in vocabulary selection emphasizes the importance of using diverse and suitable words in context, thereby enhancing students' communicative efficacy. Through this lens, the study underscores the significance of vocabulary enrichment as a means to bolster overall language proficiency.

Individual student performances serve as concrete examples to substantiate the

analysis. For instance, Muhammadlutfee Langji's demonstration of accurate phonology, straightforward sentence structures, and appropriate vocabulary usage exemplifies proficiency in spoken English. Similarly, Masslin Langkolo's excellent enunciation, coherent sentences, and mastery of grammar and vocabulary selection showcase a high level of language proficiency.

However, students like Ubaidillah Mahsaman, while commendable in phonology, exhibit areas for improvement in specific words. Nevertheless, their overall performance reflects commendable sentence structures and effective utilization of grammatical variations. Similarly, Muhammadhaseen Limanan, Suren's Meeting, Torikmustorfa Tumsumsu, and Korawit Dumpila each exhibit strengths and areas for improvement in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary usage, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the students' speaking skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

The exploration of English pronunciation proficiency among Thai primary students underscores the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and the importance of articulation excellence in fostering effective cross-cultural communication. Through meticulous assessment methodologies, including dialogue transcriptions, phonological analysis, and evaluation of grammar and vocabulary usage, a comprehensive understanding of students' speaking skills has been achieved.

The findings reveal variations in linguistic capabilities among students, with some demonstrating commendable proficiency while others exhibit areas for improvement. Concrete examples of individual student performances highlight strengths and weaknesses in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary usage, offering valuable insights for targeted intervention and development.

Overall, this study contributes to the refinement of English language education strategies by pinpointing specific challenges faced by Thai primary students in mastering pronunciation. By identifying areas for improvement and emphasizing the importance of diverse vocabulary usage, the study lays the groundwork for enhancing articulation excellence and fostering global communicative competence among young learners.

Moving forward, the insights gleaned from this analysis can inform the development of effective pedagogical strategies tailored to address the unique needs of Thai learners. By prioritizing the cultivation of pronunciation proficiency and integrating targeted interventions into language education curricula, educators can empower students to navigate cross-cultural interactions with confidence and clarity. Ultimately, this research serves as a catalyst for ongoing efforts to unlock articulation excellence and promote linguistic competence among Thai primary students in the global arena.

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