

Pronunciation Errors of English Teachers in Teaching Storytelling: Phonetic Analysis

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Abstract

Pronunciation errors can significantly impact the clarity and comprehension of a story, leading to misunderstandings and reduced listener engagement. By emphasizing correct pronunciation, teachers enable clearer and more confident communication, significantly enhancing the effectiveness and impact of storytelling. This study aimed to investigate how English teachers use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) during storytelling instruction to improve pronunciation accuracy. This study employed a descriptive-qualitative method. This research has been conducted through five English teachers using storytelling sessions with the same topic based on different YouTube video sources. The data will be collected through English teachers' recordings when teaching storytelling. The data will be analyzed with IPA transcriptions to identify and categorize pronunciation errors in consonants, vowels, and diphthongs. The findings reveal a total of 36 pronunciation errors, including 18 vowel errors, 14 consonant errors, and 2 diphthong errors. The researcher suggests English teachers use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for teaching pronunciation, particularly in storytelling, to improve students' understanding of phonetic nuances, reduce pronunciation errors, and enhance communication and storytelling skills.

Keywords: Error Pronunciation, Teaching Storytelling, International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

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1. Introduction

Pronunciation is a crucial aspect of communication, requiring accurate and precise pronunciations to prevent misunderstandings and effectively produce sounds while speaking. Ulfayanti and Jelimun (2018) stated that pronunciation is also one of the fundamental abilities needed to develop spoken English. Clear pronunciation not only helps the listener understand what the speaker is trying to say, but it also makes communication between the speaker and listener easier and more meaningful. Therefore, mastering pronunciation is essential to becoming fluent in English and communicating effectively.

Elvionita (2019) conducted a study examining students' errors in pronouncing English consonants. The study provided empirical evidence that students frequently mispronounced consonant letters. This underscores the persistent challenges learners face in mastering pronunciation, highlighting the need for targeted instructional strategies to address these specific errors. Improving the pronunciation of consonants is essential because it significantly affects the clarity and precision of spoken English, which in turn enhances overall communication skills. Thus, focusing on correct consonant pronunciation is a crucial aspect of developing strong spoken language abilities.

Previous research has also explored the challenges faced by Algerian EFL students in learning English pronunciation (Ghounane, 2018). These challenges stem from issues such as

accent use, consonant and vowel pronunciation, and recognizing silent letters. Additionally, Maiza (2020) identified specific difficulties students have with pronouncing English consonants such as /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/. These difficulties are influenced by factors including language interference, the differences in phonological systems, and the learners' motivation levels. Moreover, Diah Dwi Lestari (2020) investigated pronunciation errors made by EFL student teachers during speech performances, finding a total of 79 errors. The results showed 48.1% were vowel errors, 22.8% were consonant errors, and 29.1% were diphthong errors. The study identified several factors contributing to these errors: internal factors such as lack of preparation and anxiety, external factors including limited use of English, and interlingual factors like mother tongue interference. Addressing these factors is crucial for improving pronunciation and overall speech performance in EFL learners.

Storytelling is a powerful method for improving English pronunciation and reducing accents. It provides contextual practice that enhances fluency and understanding, making the learning process enjoyable and effective. Azis and Husnawadi (2020) emphasized that storytelling is a valuable technique for learning. They pointed out that students are naturally drawn to stories because of their captivating nature, which helps them remember details more easily. Engaging in storytelling activities enables students to orally communicate ideas to their peers or audience. Various studies (Chubko et al., 2020; Copeland & de Moor, 2018; Gausepohl et al., 2016) support this notion, indicating that storytelling can be utilized to convey information, messages, or simply entertain with a fairy tale. Storytelling not only grabs attention but also fosters active participation and effective communication among learners.

Balsius (2022) explored the research on "Utilizing the International Phonetic Alphabet to Improve the Pronunciation of English Education Students." The findings highlighted the significant impact of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) on phonetic acquisition and the enhancement of pronunciation skills, particularly for various consonant, vowel, and diphthong sounds. Sounds like /θ/, /dʌ/, /ð/, /ɪ:/, and /əʊ/ were specifically addressed, showcasing how students can benefit from learning the IPA to improve their pronunciation. The IPA provides a systematic way to represent sounds, allowing students to accurately understand and produce English sounds, thus contributing to better overall pronunciation proficiency.

Even though previous research has explored students' mispronunciation of English words, there is limited research on English teachers' mispronunciation, specifically in the context of storytelling teaching using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This gap leads to the question of whether English pronunciation errors in storytelling teaching align with IPA principles when instructing students. Therefore, the researcher formulated the following research questions and objectives, as follows:

1. What are the pronunciation errors made by the English teachers while teaching storytelling?
2. What are the underlying phonetic factors contributing to these pronunciation errors?

2. Method

This study employed the descriptive-qualitative method (Creswell, 2014) to investigate the errors in pronunciation of English teachers in teaching storytelling with the international phonetic alphabet (IPA). The researcher used an English teacher as primary source data to analyze the pronunciation errors in teaching storytelling entitled "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," taken from a YouTube platform.

Data collection Procedures

The data were collected in several ways. First, the researcher used the recording of a non-native English teacher when teaching storytelling. In this part, the researcher listened to and

watched the teacher's video of teaching storytelling. Second, the researcher made the transcription and phonetic analysis. In this part, the research used the transcripts that will be annotated using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to provide a detailed phonetic representation of the teacher's pronunciation. In addition, this phonetic transcription will be allowed for a systematic analysis of the teacher's pronunciation patterns and errors.

Data Analysis Procedures

There are some ways to analyze the data from this research. First, the researcher made the transcriptions of storytelling and listened to the recording of an English teacher pronouncing the storytelling topic entitled "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." The data will also be analyzed by using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to look at the errors from English teachers' pronunciation. This phonetic transcription will serve as the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

Second, the researcher identified and categorized pronunciation errors. The researcher systematically reviewed the phonetic transcripts to identify and categorize the specific pronunciation errors made by the English teachers. Then, the errors will be classified based on the type of phonetics, such as short vowels, long vowels, diphthong vowels, and consonant sounds.

3. Findings and Discussion

The following table shows the phonetic transcriptions of the storytelling entitled "The very hungry caterpillar, which can be seen in the following table 1:

Table 1. The transcription of the very hungry caterpillar

<p>"The Very Hungry Caterpillar" Meet my new friend. His name is Mr. Caterpillar. Can everybody say Hi, Mr. Caterpillar. Today story is about "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" The story is about metamorphosis. It reminds us that everything in life is beautiful. In the light of the moon, a little egg lay on a leaf One Sunday morning, the warm sun came up and pop out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar. He started to look for some food. On Monday, he ate through one apple, but he was still hungry. On Tuesday, he ate through two pears, but he was still hungry. On Wednesday, he ate through three plums, but he was still hungry. On Thursday, he ate through four strawberries. Oh, but he was still hungry. On Friday, he ate through five oranges, ooooww, but he was still hungry. Oh no. On Saturday, he ate through one piece of chocolate cake one ice cream cone, one pickle, one slice of Swiss cheese, one slice of salami, one lollipop, one cherry pie, one sausage one cupcake, one slice of watermelon that night he had stomach ache. Uh no. The next day was Sunday again, the caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf and after that she felt much better. What happened now he wasn't hungry anymore and he wasn't a little caterpillar anymore, He was so big fat caterpillar. He built the house calls the cocoon around himself He stayed inside for more than two weeks Then, he nibbled a hole in the cocoon push his way out and Wow he was beautiful butterfly The end.</p>

/ði:/ 'ver.i/ 'hʌŋ.gri/ 'kæt.ə.pil.ə/
 /mi:t/ /maɪ/ /frend/. /hɪz/ /neɪm/ /ɪz/ 'mɪs.tə/ 'kæt.ə.pil.ə/
 /kæn/ 'ev.ri.ba:.di/ /seɪ/ /haɪ/ 'mɪs.tə/ 'kæt.ə.pil.ə/
 /tə'dei/ 'stɔ:r.i/ /ɪz/ /ə'baʊt/ " /ði:/ 'ver.i/ 'hʌŋ.gri/ 'kæt.ə.pil.ə"
 /ði:/ 'stɔ:r.i/ /ɪz/ /ə'baʊt/ /,met.ə'mɔ:r.fə.sɪs/. /ɪt/ /rɪ'maɪnd/ strong /ʌs/ weak /əs/ /ðæt/
 'ev.ri.θɪŋ/ /ɪn/ /laɪf/ /ɪz/ 'bjʊ:.tə.fəl/
 /ɪn/ /ði:/ /laɪt/ /əv/ /ði:/ ðə/ /mu:n/ /eɪ/ 'lɪt.əl/ /eg/ /leɪ/ /ə/ 'lɪf/
 /wʌn/ 'sʌn.deɪ/ 'mɔ:r.nɪŋ/, /ðə/ /wɔ:rm/ /sʌn/ /kʌm/ /ʌp/
 /ænd/ /pɑ:p/ /aʊt/ /əv/ /ði:/ /eg/ /keɪm/ /eɪ/ 'taɪ.ni/ /ænd/ 'ver.i/ 'hʌŋ.gri/
 'kæt.ə.pil.ə"/ /hi/ /stɑ:rt/ /tu:/ /lʊk/ /fə:r/ /sʌm/ /fu:d/

/vɒn/ /'mʌn.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /wʌn/ /'æp.əl/, /bʌt/ /hi/ /wɑ:z/ /stɪl/
 /'hʌŋ.gri/ /vɒn/ /'tu:z.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /pɜr/, /bʌt/ /hi/ /wɑ:z/ /stɪl/
 /'hʌŋ.gri/
 /vɒn/ /'wenz.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /θri:/ /plʌm/, /bʌt/ /hi/ /wɑ:z/ /stɪl/ /'hʌŋ.gri/ /vɒn/
 /'θɜ:z.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /θri:/ /fɔ:r/ /'strɑ:ber.i/ /oʊ/ /bʌt/ /hi/ /wɑ:z/ /stɪl/ /'hʌŋ.gri/
 /vɒn/ /'fraɪ.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /faɪv/ /'vr.ɪndʒ/, /aʊ/ /bʌt/ /hi/ /wɑ:z/ /stɪl/ /'hʌŋ.gri/ /vɒn/
 /'sæt.ə.deɪ/, /hi:/ /et/ /θru:/ /wʌn/ /pi:s/ /əv/ /'tʃɑ:k.lət/ /keɪk/
 /wʌn/ /'aɪs ,kri:m/ /koʊn/, /wʌn/ /'pɪk.əl/ wʌn/ /slɑɪs /əv/ /swɪs/ /tʃi:z/, /wʌn/ /slɑɪs /əv/
 /sə'la:mi/, /wʌn/ /'lɒl.i.pɒp/, /wʌn/ /'tʃer.i/ /paɪ/, /wʌn/ /'sɑ:sɪdʒ/, /wʌn/ /'kʌp.keɪk/,
 /wʌn/ /slɑɪs /əv/ /'wɑ:tʃ.mel.ən/ /ðæt/ /naɪt/ /hi:/ /hæd/ /'stʌm.ək.eɪk/, /z:/ /noʊ/.
 /ðə/ /nekst/ /deɪ/ /wɑ:z/ /'sʌn.deɪ/ /ə'geɪm/, /ðə/ /'kæʃ.pɪl.ə/ /et/ /θru:/ /wʌn/ /naɪs/ /gri:n/
 /li:f/
 /ənd/ /'æf.tə/ /ðæt/ /fi:/ /felt/ /mʌtʃ/ /'beʃ.ə/
 /wɒt/ /'hæp.ən/ /naʊ/ /hi:/ /'wɑ:z.ənt/ /'hʌŋ.gri/ /en.i'mɔ:r/
 /ənd/ /hi:/ /'wɑ:z.ənt/ /eɪ/ /'lɪt.əl/ /'kæʃ.pɪl.ə/ /en.i'mɔ:r/
 /hi:/ /wɑ:z/ /soʊ/ /bɪg/ /fæt/ /'kæʃ.pɪl.ə/
 /hi:/ /bɪlt/ /ðə/ /haʊs/ /kɑ:l/ /ðə/ /kə'ku:n/ /ə'ʃaʊnd/ /hɪm'self/
 /hi:/ /'stɜrd/ /ɪn'saɪd/ /fə/ /'mɔ:r/ /'ðæn/ /'tu/ /'wɪks/
 /'ðen/ /hi:/ /'nɪbəld/ /ə/ /'hoʊl/ /'ɪm/ /ðə/ /kə'ku:n/ /'pɒʃ/ /'hɪz/ /'weɪ/ /'aʊt/ /ənd/ /'wɑ:z/ /hi/
 /wəz/ /'bjʊtɪfəl/ /'bətə,-flaɪ/
 /ði/ /end/

After the data were analyzed, it was found that there were 36 pronunciation errors in the teaching of the story telling “The very hungry caterpillar”. The errors cover vowels, consonants, and diphthongs. Below is the table distribution of the pronunciation errors with each description.

Table 2. The frequencies of pronunciation errors

Pronunciation Errors	Frequency Errors	Percentages
Vowels	20	5,6%
Consonants	14	3,9%
Diphthongs	2	5,6%

The results of this study revealed that the teacher made pronunciation errors in teaching storytelling, mostly in the vowels of the words. Out of 36 errors, 20 vowel errors were found. Next, for the consonant errors, it was found that 14 errors and 2 diphthong errors were found on diphthong pronunciation, which can be seen from the following explanation table for each description based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and to answer the research question.

RQ 1: What are the pronunciation errors made by the English teachers while teaching storytelling?

Table 3: Pronunciation Errors on Short Vowels Sound

Short Vowel Sound	Words	Phonetic Transcription	Produce Sound	Vowel Errors
[ɪ]	Bilt	/bɪld/	/bɛlt/	/ɪ/ /t/
[e]	Ate	/et/	/i:t/	/et/
[ɒ]	Sausage	/'sɒs.ɪdʒ/	/'s ʌ s.ɪd/	/ɒ/ /ʒ/
		/'wɒz.ənt/	/'w ʌ z.ənt/	/ɒ/
[ʊ]	Own	/əʊn/	/ɑ:n/	ʊ
[æ]	Happen	/'hæp.ən/	/'hep.ən/	/æ/
		/ænd/	/end/	/æ/

[ə]	Butterfly Better	/'bʌt̩.ə.flai/	/'bʌt̩.flai/	/ə/
	Wasn't Better	/'bet̩.ə/	/'bet̩.e/	/ə/
		/'wɒz.ənt/	/'wʌ	/ə/
		/'bet̩.ə/	z.ent/	/ə/
			/'bet̩.e/	

The teachers' pronunciation errors on long vowel sounds are seen in the table 3 above. It shows that they pronounce sounds [ɪ] on [e]. While on [e], the teacher pronounced [ɪ]. The other incorrect word is the [ʊ] sound, pronounced with the [ʌ] sound. In this study, the researcher did not find /ʌ/ and [ɜ:] sounds. The [ʊ] sound is incorrectly pronounced with the [ɑ:] sound. The [æ] sound is also incorrect with the [e] sound. The last is an incorrect sound pronounced [ə] on the [ʌ] sound.

Table 4: Pronunciation Errors on Long Vowels Sound

Long Vowel	Words	Phonetic Transcription	Produce Sound	Vowel Errors
[i:]	Leaf	/li:f/	/lif/	i:
	Feeling	/'fi:.liŋ/	/'fil.ŋ/	i:
	Week	/wi:k/	/wik/	i:
[u:]	Moon	/mu:n/	/mɒn/	/u:/ u:
	Cocoon	/kə'ku:n/	/kə'kun/	
[ɑ:]	Was	/wɑ:z/	/we:z/	/ɑ:/
	Watermelon	/'wɔ:.tə,mel.ən/	/'we:.tə,mel.ən/	
[ɔ:]	Anymore	/,en.i'mɔ:r/	/,en.i'mu:r/	/ɔ:/
[eə]	-	-	-	-
[ɜ:]	Early	/'ɜ:.li/	/ə:.li/	/ɜ:/

Table 4 shows the pronunciation errors on long vowel sounds such as [i:], [u:], [ɑ:], [ɔ:], and [ɜ:] sounds. The teacher did not pronounce the [eə] sound in this study. It was found that the teacher pronounced the [i:] sound into the [i] sound. It also found that the [u:] sound was pronounced into the [ʊ] and [ə] sounds. Furthermore, the [ɔ] sound is intended to be the [u:] sound, and the [ɜ:] is pronounced with the [ə:] sound.

Table 5: Pronunciation Errors on Diphthong Vowels Sound

Diphthong Vowels	Words	Phonetic Transcription	Produce Sound	Vowel Errors
[ɪə]	-	-	-	-
[eə]	-	-	-	-
[ʊə]	-	-	-	-
[eɪ]	Cake	/keɪk/	/kek/	/eɪ/
	Saturday	/'sæt̩.ə.deɪ/	/'sæt̩.ə.de/	/e/
[aɪ]	-	-	-	-
[ɔɪ]	-	-	-	-
[əʊ]	-	-	-	-
[aʊ]	-	-	-	-

The diphthong vowel sounds are [ɪə], [eə], [ʊə], [eɪ], [aɪ], [ɔɪ], and [aʊ]. In this study, the teachers only made the error pronunciations in the [eɪ] sound. The teacher pronounced the [eɪ] sound into the [e] and [eɪ] sounds.

Table 6: Pronunciation Errors on Consonant Sounds

Consonant Sounds	Words	Phonetic Transcription	Produce Sound	Vowel Errors
[p]	-	-	-	-
[b]	-	-	-	-
[t]	Build	/bɪld/	/bɪlt/	/t/
[d]	Food	/fu:d/	/fu:t/	/d/
[k]	-	-	-	-
[g]	egg	/eg/	/eɪt/	/g/
[f]	Leaf Five	/'lɪf/ /'faɪv/	/'lɪv'/ /'faɪf/	/f/ /f/
[v]	Very	/'ver.i/	/'fer.i/	/v/
[θ]	Thursday	/'θɜ:z.deɪ/	/'tɜ:s.deɪ/	/θ/
[ð]	This With Three	/ðɪs/ /wɪð/ /θri:/	/dɪs/ /wɪt/ /tri:/	/ð/
[s]	Is was	/'ɪz/ /wɑ:z/	/'ɪs/ /wɑ:s/	[s]
[z]	-	-	-	-
[ʃ]	-	-	-	-
[ʒ]	-	-	-	-
[h]	-	-	-	-
[tʃ]	Chocolate	/'tʃɑ:k.lət/	/cha:k.lət/	tʃ
[dʒ]	-	-	-	-
[m]	-	-	-	-
[n]	-	-	-	-
[ŋ]	Feeling	/'fi:l.ɪŋ/	/'fi:l.m/	/ŋ/

The consonant vowels not found in this study are [p], [b], [k], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [h], [dʒ], [m],

[n], [l], [r], [w], and [j]. While the other consonant vowel errors made by the teachers are [t] sound into [d] sound. The [d] sound is intended to pronounce the [t] sound. The teacher also pronounces the sound [g], which seems like the sound [t]. Two errors were also found in the [f] sound into the [v] sound, such as life ([ˈlif]) and [farv]. The [v] sound becomes a [f] sound. Next, the [θ] sound is intended to become the [t] sound. [s] sound into the [z] sound. Furthermore, [tʃ] sounds become [ch] sounds. [ŋ] sound into the [n] sound. The most consonant errors that happened in this study were the [ð] sounds that happened three times in words such as [ðis], with [wið], and three [θri:]. This study, similar to the previous findings by Balsius (2022), which highlighted specific sounds like /θ/, /dʌ/, /ð/, /F:/, and /əʊ/, underscoring the importance of understanding the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for pronunciation improvement. Additionally, Maiza (2020) identified challenges students face with English consonants, including /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/. These findings emphasize the significance of addressing pronunciation difficulties, especially with these specific sounds, in language teaching. Understanding and using IPA symbols can assist both teachers and students in overcoming pronunciation barriers and achieving clearer and more accurate spoken English.

RQ2: What are the underlying phonetic factors contributing to these pronunciation errors?

Based on the analysis of the findings above, it can be concluded that there were several phonetic factors contributing to these pronunciation errors. First, the teachers do not really pay attention and check the pronunciation of the of the words before going to teach the storytelling. In here, the teachers also had confusion between short and long vowel sounds [ɪ] into [i:] sounds and [ʊ] into [ɔ:] sounds. The English teachers are also having difficulties with the diphthong vowel sounds such as [eɪ], [aɪ], and [ɔɪ] sounds. Second, the other factors came from the consonant errors. The substitution of certain consonant sounds, for example, [θ] pronounced as [f] and [ð] pronounced as [d], Third, the stress and rhythm. The incorrect placement of primary stress within the words such as the word five [farv], the stress word here should be stressed in [farv] but the teachers were not making the stress word in [aɪ] sound, the teachers pronounced this word with the short vowel sound. Fourth, in Indonesian, there are no alphabetic sounds such as the following:

Table 7: Phonetic alphabet sounds that are not stated in Indonesian sounds

Vowels	Consonants	Diphthongs
[i:] (long high front vowel)	[θ] (voiceless dental fricative consonant)	[eɪ] (rising front diphthong)
[ʊ] (short middle back vowel)	[ð] (voiced dental fricative consonant)	[aɪ] (rising front diphthong)
[ɔ:] (long middle back vowel)	[ʒ] (voiced palatal fricative consonant)	[ɔɪ] (rising back diphthong)
[æ] (low front vowel)	[tʃ] (voiceless palatal affricate consonant)	-
	[dʒ] (voiced palatal affricate consonant)	

Based on the table above, in Indonesian alphabetic, there is no phonetic alphabet like in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Thus, the researcher suggested that using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a tool for teaching and practicing pronunciation could help address these underlying phonetic factors and improve the teacher's English pronunciation skills, especially when teaching storytelling.

4. Conclusion and suggestion

Based on the research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the pronunciation errors made by the teachers were categorized into vowels, consonants, and diphthong errors. The total number is 36 errors. The vowel errors consist of 18 errors, 14 consonant errors, and 1 diphthong error. The most frequent error with the short vowel was the [ə] sound. The teachers intended this sound to sound like [ə]. The most frequent error found on the consonant was the [i:] sound that the teachers intended into the [i] sound. Next, in the diphthong error, only one error was found with the [eɪ] sound, and the teachers made the mistake into the [e] sound. The last is the consonant sound. The most frequent errors found on consonant sounds are [f] and [ð] sounds. The teachers made the errors in the [f] sound into the [v] sound and the [ð] sound into the [d] and [t] sounds.

The study found that pronunciation errors in English teaching involve several factors. Teachers often struggle with short and long vowel sounds, diphthong sounds, consonant errors, stress and rhythm. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) could help address these issues and improve teachers' English pronunciation skills, particularly when teaching storytelling. Furthermore, the researcher suggests that English teachers incorporate the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as crucial tool for teaching and practicing pronunciation, especially in the context of storytelling. By using IPA, teachers can improve their understanding of phonetic nuances, enabling them to model accurate pronunciation for their students. This practice not only helps in reducing pronunciation errors but also enhances students' ability to grasp the correct sounds of English words, ultimately leading to more effective communication and storytelling skills.

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