



READING ALOUD ANECDOTES: INVESTIGATING THE PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SEVENTH-GRADE EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on phonology is uttered by the students grade 7. Phonology refers to study how sounds are organized and used in natural languages. It also expands about the abstract system and patterns of those sounds within a specific language. It looks at the "rules" of how sounds interact and change when put together. To make it clear, this study reveals that the sample, specially for students in grade 7 taking by randomly and they have to read the anecdote story. Most of them still lack in the word of *countries* [k ʌntrɪs], *wearing* [w ærɪn], *same* [seɪm], *clothes* [kl ədʒ], *difficult* [dɪːfɪk əlt], *whether* [w ədeːr], *gentleman* [dʒ əntlm ən], *Washington* [Wasin tən], *tired* [t ærd], *down* [daun]. It happens because they are rarely to practice and applied in daily activity. Phonology research proves that these speech patterns are highly structured, rule-governed, and logical systems. This shifts the educational paradigm. Teachers learn to view a student's speech not as "broken English," but as a highly organized linguistic system transferring rules from one language/dialect to another.

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INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language for Indonesian people because there are two languages are used before it. Those languages are local language and Bahasa Indonesia. As a foreign language, English is difficult for Indonesian people who learn it. The learners' difficulty in pronouncing then many of them make phonological errors or mispronunciations occur when English is used.

According to Lanteigne (2006) confirms that difficulties in learning English occur due to the fact that some of English sounds do not exist in the mother tongue of the learners. For instance in Indonesia example can be seen in Indonesian language; English sounds such as [v], [θ], [ð], [ʒ], [dʒ], and [tʃ], cannot be found either (Moeliono & Dardjowidjojo, 2003). Furthermore, the way of pronouncing one particular sound may be different based on "the position of the sound in the word."



While, pronunciation is important in communicating in order to make a well conversation among speaker and hearer. According to Brown (2005) as cited in Lanteigne (2006), the goal of the language learners is to make sure that they can communicate what they have in mind effectively; they have to be understood when they are uttering the words.

In phonological errors the sounds were produced not proper with the native sound of English should be. It is because there are many different sounds in English that change based on the word and its change syntactically or phonologically.

In Indonesia, the students have been introduced about English lesson since they were at the Elementary School Grade. Generally, they were taught by introducing the vocabulary then continue in reading one text. In order to make them easily to speak specially in English, the teacher attempt to invite the students in reading some story. By that accustomed, the students hopefully able to speak fluently and create a well phonology.

In stimulating them, the teacher attempt to persuade the student in reading anecdote story. Since this story is very interesting and amusement. So the students will attract in reading the story eventhough there are still error in their phonology. Based on the background of the study previously, the identified refers to phonological features of seventh-grade efl students in reading anecdote story.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Phonology is the study of the sound system of languages. It is a huge area of language theory and it is difficult to do more on a general language course than have an outline knowledge of what it includes. In an exam, you may be asked to comment on a text that you are seeing for the first time in terms of various language descriptions, of which phonology may be one. At one extreme, phonology is concerned with anatomy and physiology – the organs of speech and how we learn to use them. At another extreme, phonology shades into socio-linguistics as we consider social attitudes to features of sound such as accent and intonation. And part of the subject is concerned with finding objective standard ways of recording speech, and representing this symbolically.

For some kinds of study – perhaps a language investigation into the phonological development of young children or regional variations in accent, you will need to use phonetic transcription to be credible. But this is not necessary in all kinds of study – in an exam, you may be concerned with stylistic effects of sound in advertising or literature, such as assonance, rhyme or onomatopoeia – and you do not need to use special phonetic symbols to do this.

The Role of Reading Aloud in EFL Phonological Awareness

The reading aloud technique serves as both a diagnostic tool and a pedagogical strategy in assessing young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' phonological competence. Kustila (2025) emphasizes that reading aloud bridges the gap between orthographic representation (graphemes) and acoustic production (fonemes), allowing teachers to observe real-time articulation. For young learners transitioning into secondary education, this practice is foundational. Latifah (2025) notes that reading aloud provides immediate auditory feedback, enabling seventh-grade students to notice their own articulatory deviations. Furthermore, the efficacy of reading aloud is closely tied to the learners' cognitive processing speed. Hasegawa (2023) discovered a strong correlation between a learner's underlying phonological awareness and their oral reading fluency; students with robust decoding skills exhibit significantly fewer



pauses and higher accuracy. Therefore, analyzing phonological features through oral reading provides a holistic view of a student's internalized L2 sound system rather than just isolated pronunciation skills.

First Language (L1) Interference in Segmental Feature Production

When seventh-grade Indonesian EFL students read English texts aloud, they encounter distinct phonetic boundaries that do not exist in their native language. This phenomenon, known as negative language transfer or L1 interference, heavily distorts their production of segmental features (vowels and consonants). Reskiawan (2025) posits that Indonesian learners habitually substitute unfamiliar English phonemes with the closest equivalent sounds from Bahasa Indonesia. This is particularly prevalent in the production of interdental fricatives (/θ/ and /ð/) and lax versus tense vowels. In a more granular analysis of vowel production among secondary school students, Fathoni (2024) identified that open-mid vowels like /æ/ and central vowels like /ə/ and /ɜ:/ yield the highest frequency of errors because these specific acoustic properties are absent in the Indonesian phonological matrix. Additionally, English orthography complicates this transition due to non-phonetic spellings. Kustila et al. (2025) observed that a vast majority of early adolescent EFL learners struggle heavily with silent letters (e.g., pronouncing the /l/ in *walk* or *talk*), as they naturally apply the phonetic, transparent reading rules of Bahasa Indonesia to the opaque orthographic system of English.

Prosodic Mastery and Suprasegmental Features in Anecdote Texts

Investigating phonological features within the specific genre of anecdote stories requires an evaluation that extends beyond isolated sound segments. Anecdotes are inherently narrative and humorous, relying on suprasegmental features—such as word stress, rhythm, and intonation contours—to successfully deliver the punchline or moral subtext. Maulinda (2025) reports that even when EFL students achieve decent segmental accuracy, their reading often remains monotonous. This lack of prosodic variation directly weakens the *intelligibility* and emotional delivery of a narrative text. According to Riquelme Gil (2017), mastering the prosodic dimensions of a second language is notoriously difficult for young EFL learners due to the rhythmic differences between stress-timed languages (English) and syllable-timed languages (Indonesian). When students read anecdotes without proper pauses or sentence stress, the comedic or dramatic timing of the story is lost. Salim et al. (2023) suggest that integrating suprasegmental training into oral reading activities helps junior high school students internalize the natural rise and fall of English speech, shifting them from mechanical word-decoding to expressive, fluent reading.

Pedagogical Constraints and Affective Factors in the EFL Classroom

The phonological struggles observed in seventh-grade classrooms are rarely isolated linguistic issues; they are deeply intertwined with instructional methods and psychological barriers. Fitriana and Agustian (2025) highlight a common systemic challenge: secondary school teachers in developing EFL contexts are frequently pressured by national curricula to prioritize vocabulary and syntax over explicit pronunciation instruction. Consequently, phonological guidance is often reduced to superficial "listen-and-repeat" drills without providing students with the necessary articulatory mechanics (e.g., tongue placement or voicing). This lack of explicit phonetic scaffolding frequently manifests as psychological distress during oral



performance. Purwati et al. (2023) documented that foreign language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are the primary affective barriers preventing junior high school students from reading aloud confidently. When anxiety levels peak, physiological tension further impairs speech organs, escalating phonological errors. To counteract this, Aini (2025) suggests that employing repeated reading techniques mixed with low-stakes interactive environments can alleviate affective filters, thereby boosting both phonetic accuracy and overall oral confidence in young adolescent learners.

The sounds of English

Vowels

English has twelve vowel sounds. In the table above they are divided into seven short and five long vowels. An alternative way of organizing them is according to where (in the mouth) they are produced. This method allows us to describe them as front, central and back. We can qualify them further by how high the tongue and lower jaw are when we make these vowel sounds, and by whether our lips are rounded or spread, and finally by whether they are short or long. This scheme shows the following arrangement:

a. Front vowels

/i:/ - **cream**, **seen** (long high front spread vowel)

/ɪ / - **bit**, **silly** (short high front spread vowel)

/ɛ/ - **bet**, **head** (short mid front spread vowel); this may also be shown by the symbol /e/

/æ/ **cat**, **dad** (short low front spread vowel); this may also be shown by /a/

b. Central vowels

/ɜ:/- **burn**, **firm** (long mid central spread vowel); this may also be shown by the symbol /ə:/

/ə/ - **about**, **clever** (short mid central spread vowel); this is sometimes known as schwa, or the neutral vowel sound – it never occurs in a stressed position.

/ʌ/ - **cut**, **nut** (short low front spread vowel); this vowel is quite uncommon among speakers in the Midlands and further north in Britain

c. Back vowels

/u:/ - **boob**, **glue** (long high back rounded vowel)

/ʊ/ - **put**, **soot** (short high back rounded vowel); also shown by /u/

/ɔ:/ - **corn**, **faun** (long mid back rounded vowel) also shown by /o:/

/ɒ/- **dog**, **rotten** (short low back rounded vowel) also shown by /o/

/ɑ:/ - **hard**, **far** (long low back spread vowel)

In arranging the vowels in a table or even depict them against a cross-section of the human mouth. Here is an example of a simple table:

	Front	Cetral	Back
High	ɪ i:		ʊ u:
Mid	ɛ	ə	ɜ: ɔ:
Low	æ	ʌ	ɒ ɑ:

Diphthongs

Diphthongs are sounds that begin as one vowel and end as another, while gliding between them. For this reason they are sometimes described as glide vowels. How many are



there? Almost every modern authority says eight – but they do not all list the same eight (check this for yourself). Simeon Potter, in *Our Language* (Potter, S, [1950])

Consonants

Some authorities claim one or two fewer consonants than I have shown above, regarding those with double symbols (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/) as “diphthong consonants” in Potter’s phrase. The list omits one sound that is not strictly a consonant but works like one. The full IPA list of phonetic symbols includes some for non-pulmonic consonants (not made with air coming from the lungs), click and glottal sounds. In some varieties of English, especially in the south of Britain (but the sound has migrated north) we find the glottal plosive or glottal stop, shown by the symbol /ʔ/ (essentially a question mark without the dot at the tail). This sound occurs in place of /t/ for some speakers – so /botəl/ or /botl/ (bottle) become /boʔəl/ or /boʔl/. We form consonants by controlling or impeding the egressive (outward) flow of air. We do this with the articulators – from the glottis, past the velum, the hard palate and alveolar ridge and the tongue, to the teeth and lips. The sound results from three things: -voicing – causing the vocal cords to vibrate where the articulation happens, how the articulation happens – how the airflow is controlled.

Definiton of Anecdote Text

Anecdote is a text which retells funny and unusual incidents in fact or imagination. An anecdote is a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person. It may be as brief as the setting and provocation of a *bon mod*. An anecdote is always presented as based in a real incident involving actual persons, whether famous or not, usually in an identifiable place. However, over time, modification in reuse may convert a particular anecdote to a fictional piece, one that is retold but is "too good to be true". Sometimes humorous, anecdotes are not jokes, because their primary purpose is not simply to evoke laughter, but to reveal a truth more 6 general than the brief tale itself, or to delineate a character trait in such a light that it strikes in a flash of insight to its very essence. Its purpose is to entertain the readers. Anecdote text can be a ridiculous or funny story sometimes, but not all anecdote texts must be funny. It depends on the incident in the story. However, anecdote should have an unusual part inside.

Generic Structure of Anecdote

1. Abstract
2. Orientation
3. Crisis
4. Incident.

Language Feature of Anecdote

1. Using exclamation words; it’s awful!, it’s wonderful!, etc
2. Using imperative; listen to this
3. Using rhetoric question; do you know what?
4. Using action verb; go, write, etc
5. Using conjunction of time; then, afterward
6. Using simple past tense

The Example of Anecdotes Story

Is it a boy or girl?



A lot of boys and girls in Western countries are wearing the same kinds of clothes, and many of them have long hair, so it is often difficult to tell whether they are boys or girls.

One day, an old gentleman went for a walk in a park in Washington, and when he was tired he sat down on a chair. A young person was standing on the other side of the pond.

“my goodness!” the old man said to the person who was sitting next to him on the chair. “Do you see that person with the loose pants and long hair? Is it a boy or girl?”. “a girl” said the neighbor. “she is my daughter.”. “oh!” the old gentleman said quickly. “please forgive me, I did not know that you were her mother.”. “I am not,” said the other person, “I’m her father.”

METHOD

The research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative was used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Holloway and Wheeler (2002) stated that qualitative research as “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world which they live. In this research, the researchers used the qualitative approach to find out student’s phonology in reading anecdote story for the first grade Junior High School.

Population is the whole subjects of the research. Meanwhile, sample is a part or the representative of population being researched. And it was made as data of the research. This study, the sample was taken for 3 students choosing by randomly.

In this research, the researcher concerned to the student’s phonology in reading anecdote story for the first grade Junior High School. And the researcher also applied the Random sample to fulfill this research. There were around 3 students that will be the sample in this study. This research applied qualitative descriptive data. And there were some steps of analyzing the data as the following procedure:

1. Asking the student to read the anecdote story
2. Recording their voice while they were reading the story
3. Checking the student’s phonology in reading anecdote story
4. Analyzing the student’s phonology in reading anecdote story
5. Taking note and drawing the conclusion

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The data of the research were the student’s phonology in reading anecdote story that has been recorded by the researcher. The researcher also took the Oxford Dictionary as the guide in analyzing the student’s phonology in reading anecdote story. The students were consists of 3 students in which they were taken randomly. The first initial’s student was NG. The second initial’s student was H and the last was F. Here is the anecdotes story complete with the phonology that taken based on the Oxford University.

Is [iz] it [it] a [ə] boy [b ɔːi] or [ɔːr] girl [g ɜːl]
A[ə] lot [l ɔːt] of [ɔːf] boy [b ɔːi] and [ən] girl [g ɜːl] in[in] western[w əstər] countries[k
ʌntrɪs] are[aːr]wearing[w ærɪn] the [de] same[seɪm] kinds[kaind] of [əf] clothes[kl ədz], and
[ən] many [m æni] of [əf] them [dem] have [h əv] long [lɒŋ] hair[h ær]. So [so] it



[ɪt] is [ɪz] often [ɑ:f ən] difficult [di:fɪk əlt] to[tu] tell[tel] whether[wəde:r] they [d əy] are[a;r] boy [b ɔ:i] or [ɔ:r] girl [g ɜ:l].

One [wan] day [d əy], an[æn] old [ɔ:ld] gentleman [dj əntlm ən] went [wen] for [f ɔ:r] a[ə] walk [w ælk] in [in] a[ə] park[p ɑ:rk] in [in] Washington [Wasin tən], and [ən] when[w ən] he [hi:] was [w əs] tired[t ærd] he [hi] sat [s æt] down [daun] on [ɔ:n] bench [b ənch]. A [ə] young [yang] person[p ərs ən] was[w əs] standing[stænding] on [vɒn] the [d ə] other [ɑ:d ər] side [said] of [əf] the [d ə] pond [p ɒnd].

My [mai:] goodness [gudn əs] the [d ə] old [ɔ:ld] man[m ən] said[s əd] to [t ɔ:] the [d ə] person[p ərs ən], who [hu] was[w ɔ:z] sitting [siting] next[n əx] to [t u:] him [him], “do [du] you [y ʊ] see [si:] the [d ə] person [p ərs ən]? Is [ɪz] it [it] a [ə] boy [b ɔ:i] or [ɔ:r] girl [g ɜ:l]? a[ə] girl [g ɜ:l]. said[s əd] [d ə] man[m ən]. ohh i[ɑ:i] see [si]. So [s ɔ:] are [ær] you [y ʊ] his [hiz] mother[m ɔ:d ər]?. no [n ɔ] I [ai] am [æm] her [h ər]father [f ɑ:d ər].

Data Analysis

For the first student was NG. Here is her phonology when she was reading the anecdote story.

A[ə] lot [l ɒt] of[ɔ:f] boy [b ɔ:i] and [ən] girl [g ɜ:l] in[in] western[w əstren] countries[k ʌntrɪs] are[a;r]wearing[w erɪn] the [de] same[seɪm] kinds[kaind] of [əf] clothes[kelɒtɔz], and [ən] many [m æni] of [əf] them [dem] have [h əv] long [lɒŋ] hair[h ær]. So [so] it [it] is [ɪz] often [ɔ:f ən] difficult [di:fɪk əlt] to[tu] tell[tel]whether[w əde:r] they [d əy] are[a;r]boy [b ɔ:i] or [ɔ:r] girl [g ɜ:l].

One [vɒn] day [d əy], an[æn] old [ɔ:ld] gentleman [dj əntlm ən] went [wen] for [f ɔ:r] a[ə] walk [w ælk] in [in] a[ə] park[p ɑ:rk] in [in] Washington [Wasin tən], and [ən] when[w ən] he [hi:] was [w əs] tired[t ærd] he [hi] sat [s æt] down [daun] on [ɔ:n] bench [b ənch]. A [ə] young [yang] person[p ərs ən] was[w əs] standing[stænding] on [vɒn] the [d ə] other [ɑ:d ər] side [said] of [əf] the [d ə] pond [p ɒnd]

For the second student was H. Here is his phonology when he was reading the anecdote story.

A[ə] lot [l ɔ:t] of[ɔ:f] boy [b ɔ:i] and [ən] girl [g ɜ:l] in[in] western[wəstər] countries[k ʌntrɪs] are[a;r] wearing[w ɪrɪŋ] the [de] same[seɪm] kinds[kaind] of [əf] clothes[kl ədɔz], and [ən] many [m æni] of [əf] them [dem] have [h əv] long [lɒŋ] hair[h ær]. So [so] it [it] is [ɪz] often [ɑ:f ən] difficult [di:fɪk ʌlt] to[tu] tell[tel] whether[w əde:r] they [d əy] are[a;r] boy [b ɔ:i] or [ɔ:r] girl [g ɜ:l].

One [wan] day [d əy], an[æn] old [ɔ:ld] gentleman [gentm ən] went [wen] for [f ɔ:r] a[ə] walk [w ælk] in [in] a[ə] park[p ɑ:rk] in [in] Washington [Wasin tən], and [ən] when[w ən] he [hi:] was [w əs] tired[t ærd] he [hi] sat [s æt] down [daun] on [ɔ:n] bench [b ənch]. A [ə] young [yang] person[p ərs ən] was[w əs] standing[stænding] on [vɒn] the [d ə] other [ɑ:d ər] side [said] of [əf] the [d ə] pond [p ɒnd]

CONCLUSIONS

Phonology refers to the study about sound of the language. In producing the language correctly will result a good communications. In this research, the researcher attempt to know about the student’s phonology in reading the anecdote story so that they can produce and speak



fluently and create a good pronunciation. The researcher also took the Oxford Dictionary as the guide in reading the anecdote story.

From the analysis above, the researcher has known the students phonology specially in reading anecdote story. Most of them still lack in the word of *countries* [k ʌntrɪs], *wearing* [w ærɪn], *same* [seɪm], *clothes* [kl ədʒ], *difficult* [dɪːfɪk əlt], *whether* [w ɛðeːr], *gentleman* [dʒ əntlm ən], *Washington* [Wasin tən], *tired* [t ærd], *down* [daʊn].

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