

**ERROR ANALYSIS OF
ENGLISH PAST VERBS PRONUNCIATION
AT ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF
SMK MUHAMMADIYAH 1 AJIBARANG**

Ramli

the Graduate of English Education Study Program

Universitas Peradaban Bumiayu – Brebes

Email: ramliempi@gmail.com

Phone: +62 85786331374

Abstract

This study aims to describe pronunciation errors in English past verbs including vowels, consonants, and -ed endings and to identify the factors causing these errors among eleventh-grade students of XI DKV 1 at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Ajibarang. This study uses a descriptive qualitative design. Data are collected through voice recording and interviews. The technique of data analysis follows Sugiyono in Yani (2022: 38) namely, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. The findings reveal a total of 297 errors in regular past verbs and 65 errors in irregular ones. The most frequent errors occur in verbs like worked, returned, and ate, especially in pronouncing -ed endings (/t/, /d/, /ɪd/) and unfamiliar vowel/consonant sounds. Several contributing factors are

identified from student interviews. These factors include native language influence, age, limited English exposure, low phonetic awareness, and psychological issues. Solutions involve targeted practice, phonetic training, and supportive classroom strategies for students' improvement.

Keywords: *Error analysis, Pronunciation, English Past Verbs*

A. Introduction

Language is a fundamental tool for human communication, enabling people to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It plays a crucial role in building relationships, shaping culture, and constructing one's understanding of the world. Among the many languages spoken globally, English has emerged as a dominant international language and serves as a lingua franca across various countries and cultures.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and is included as a compulsory subject in the national curriculum from junior high school to senior and vocational high schools. The teaching of English focuses on four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking is regarded as a vital productive skill, as it allows learners to interact in real-life situations and is often considered a key indicator of language proficiency.

One of the major challenges faced by EFL learners, particularly in speaking, is pronunciation. Accurate pronunciation helps ensure that the intended message is conveyed clearly. However, pronunciation is often neglected in classrooms due to factors such as limited teaching resources, lack of teacher training in phonetics, and a greater emphasis on written

assessments. This neglect results in persistent errors, especially in pronouncing past verb forms both regular verbs ending in -ed and irregular verbs.

These pronunciation errors are commonly caused by interference from the students' first language (L1), limited exposure to native-like pronunciation models, and unfamiliarity with English phonological rules. Mispronouncing past verbs can hinder effective communication and may lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, identifying these errors and understanding their causes is essential to improving students' communicative competence in English.

This research focuses on the eleventh-grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Ajibarang, specifically class XI DKV 1, chosen based on input from the English teacher due to the students' active participation and noticeable challenges in pronunciation. The study aims to analyze the types of pronunciation errors made when using English past verbs and to identify the contributing factors. The findings are expected to support teachers in developing more effective pronunciation teaching strategies and to help students enhance their speaking skills, particularly in using accurate past verb forms.

B. Literature Review

In the process of learning a second language, error analysis plays a crucial role in understanding learners' difficulties and improving teaching strategies. According to Ubol in Maruti (2023), error analysis is a systematic description and explanation of learners' errors in both oral and written forms of the target language. It helps identify the deviation between learners' production and the standard or native use of

the language. Furthermore, error analysis not only investigates the causes of these deviations but also contributes to the development of theories in second language acquisition. It provides language educators and researchers with insights into how learners acquire and use the target language, highlighting aspects that require further attention and practice.

Speaking, as one of the productive skills, is also essential in language learning because it allows learners to express ideas through meaningful spoken interaction. Veena (2021) defines speaking as a productive skill involving the expression of thoughts and ideas through spoken utterances, primarily occurring in face-to-face communication or small group discussions. In language learning, speaking practice focuses on direct interaction, where learners must produce meaningful speech that adheres to grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules of the target language.

Pronunciation, as an integral part of speaking, is the foundation of intelligible communication. Manser in Juswandi (2022) explains that pronunciation refers to the manner in which words are uttered, while Kobilova (2022) emphasizes that it involves producing sounds, intonation, stress, and rhythm to create meaning. Similarly, Mulatsih in Triavivi (2023) highlights that pronunciation involves accurately articulating speech sounds with appropriate stress and intonation according to language norms. Therefore, mastering pronunciation is vital for learners to achieve effective oral communication and to minimize misunderstandings in speaking English.

In relation to this study, English past verbs are an important grammatical aspect that students must master to express actions or events that occurred in the past. Hornby in Yani (2017) defines the past as a period

prior to the present, while Efendi in Yani (2017) states that the past tense serves as a finite verb form representing completed actions. Moreover, verbs themselves, as noted by Hornby, Murthy, and Wren & Martin in Yani (2017), are words that express actions, states, or occurrences. From these perspectives, it can be concluded that English past verbs are verb forms used to describe actions or events that took place at a specific time in the past. Understanding the correct pronunciation of these past verb forms is crucial for English learners to communicate clearly and accurately in spoken contexts.

C. Method of Investigation

The writer uses a descriptive qualitative research design in this study. The data are obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data come from the eleventh-grade students of Class XI DKV 1 at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Ajibarang through voice recordings and interviews conducted with selected participants. The secondary data are derived from relevant books, journals, previous research, and articles that discuss error analysis, pronunciation, and English past verbs, which serve as theoretical support for this study.

To collect the data, the writer applies two main techniques, namely voice recording and interview. The voice recordings are used to identify pronunciation errors in students' oral performance, while the interviews provide deeper insights into the factors causing those errors.

For data analysis, the writer employs the interactive model of qualitative analysis proposed by Sugiyono in Yani (2022: 38), which consists of three

stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Through these steps, the writer identifies, organizes, and interprets the pronunciation errors of English past verbs made by students, leading to a comprehensive understanding of their pronunciation difficulties and possible causes.

D. Findings and Discussion

In this part, the writer discusses the total errors in the pronunciation of English past verbs made by the eleventh-grade students. The analysis is divided into two categories, regular verbs and irregular verbs. For regular verbs, the focus is on the segmental pronunciation and pronunciation of the -ed ending, which may be realized as [d], [t], or [ɪd]. Errors often occur because students tend to mispronounce or omit the final ending, which affects the accuracy of their speech. On the other hand, the irregular verbs are analysed based on their unique and unpredictable forms. Unlike regular verbs, irregular verbs do not follow fixed patterns, and thus the students' errors are mostly related to the change of vowel or consonant sounds (segmental). Based on the findings, the details of pronunciation errors in both regular and irregular past verbs are presented in the following sections.

1. Total Error Pronunciation in Regular Verbs

In the case of regular verbs, the errors are mainly caused by the unpredictable change of vowels or consonants and the realization of pronouncing -ed endings. The students often replace the correct vowel sound with another, omitted certain sounds, or pronounce the word based on spelling rather than standard pronunciation. Based on the findings, the errors in pronouncing regular past verbs can be formulated as follows:

Table. 1. Total Students' Error of Past regular verbs

No	Past Regular Verbs	Total Students' Errors
1	Visited	17
2	Used	1
3	Played	3
4	Prayed	4
5	Stayed	3
6	Tried	4
7	Rocked	6
8	Returned	20
9	Loved	18
10	Hoped	5
11	Helped	6
12	Cleaned	6
13	Opened	8
14	Closed	6
15	Watched	6
16	Cooked	14
17	Talked	15
18	Asked	7
19	Answered	19
20	Started	19
21	Finished	6
22	Moved	6
23	Lived	10
24	Worked	23
25	Joined	13
26	Stopped	10
27	Listened	7
28	Walked	13
29	Called	17
30	Looked	10

Based on the table above, there are 297 total errors pronunciation in past regular verbs, the students demonstrate varying levels of error in pronunciation. The highest error occurred in the word *worked*, which is mispronounced by 23 students, followed by *returned*, *answered*, and *started* by 19–20 students. Other verbs with a relatively high number of errors include *loved* (18), *called* (17), and *talked* (15). Moderate levels of error appeared in verbs such as *cooked* (14), *joined* (13), *walked* (13), *lived* (10), *stopped* (10), and *looked* (10). Meanwhile, verbs like *opened*, *asked*, *listened*, *helped*, *closed*, *cleaned*, *finished*, and *moved* showed fewer errors, ranging between 6 and 8 students. The lowest number of errors is found in *used* with only 1 error, followed by *played* (3), *stayed* (3), and *prayed* (4). It can be seen clearly from the table above. This indicates that while some verbs are generally easy for students to pronounce correctly, certain verbs particularly those with –ed endings pronunciation rules such as /t/, /d/, or /ɪd/ and also in segmental especially in unfamiliar English sounds remain a significant challenge.

2. Total Error Pronunciation in Irregular Verbs

In the case of irregular verbs, the errors are mainly caused by the unpredictable change of vowels or consonants which do not follow consistent rules. The students often replace the correct vowel sound with another, omitted certain sounds, or pronounce the word based on spelling rather than standard pronunciation. Based on the findings, the errors in pronouncing irregular past verbs can be formulated as follows:

Table. 2. Total Students' Error of Past Irregular Verbs

No	Past Irregular Verbs	Total Students' Errors
1	Went	1
2	Met	3
3	Saw	1
4	Wore	0
5	Ate	12
6	Drank	6
7	Was	2
8	Got	1
9	Bought	1
10	Came	5
11	Had	8
12	Rode	0
13	Let	0
14	Fed	4
15	Brought	1
16	Forgot	4
17	Felt	2
18	Left	3
19	Began	6
20	Took	5

Based on the findings, there are 65 total errors pronunciation in past irregular verbs. The students show different levels of error in pronunciation. The highest error occurs in *ate*, which is mispronounced by 12 students, followed by *had* with 8 errors, and *drank*, *began* with 6 errors. Other verbs with a relatively high number of errors include *came* and *took* 5 errors, as well as *forgot* and *fed* 4 errors. Moderate errors appear in verbs such as

left and *met* 3 errors, *was* and *felt* 2 errors. Meanwhile, several verbs show fewer errors, namely *saw*, *got*, *bought*, and *brought*, with only 1 student making mistakes. The lowest number of errors is found in *wore*, *rode*, and *let*, which are pronounced correctly by all students without any mispronunciation.

This indicates that while some irregular verbs, particularly those frequently used in daily communication such as *went*, *met*, and *saw*, tend to be easier for students to pronounce, others like *ate* and *had* remain challenging. The difficulties are not only influenced by vowel changes and irregular forms but also by the students' unfamiliarity with certain sound patterns, which leads to varied levels of accuracy in pronunciation.

E. Conclusion

The writer discovered that the eleventh-grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Ajibarang made several pronunciation errors in pronouncing English past verbs. These errors occurred in both regular and irregular verb forms. In regular verbs, the most common mistakes are related to the pronunciation of the -ed endings, which can be realized as [t], [d], or [ɪd]. Many students tended to pronounce all -ed endings as [ed], or based their pronunciation on spelling rather than phonetic rules, which affected the accuracy of their speech. In the case of irregular verbs, errors mostly occurred due to segmental changes, especially vowel shifts, as these forms do not follow consistent patterns.

From the findings, the total of 297 errors were identified in regular verbs, with the highest number found in *worked* (23 errors), followed by *returned*, *answered*, and *started* (19–20 errors). As for irregular

verbs, there are 65 total errors, with the most frequent being in the word *ate* (12 errors), followed by *had* and *drank* (8 and 6 errors). These findings indicate that both the realization of -ed endings and segmental pronunciation of irregular verbs remain significant challenges for students.

The research also identified several key factors contributing to these pronunciation errors. First, the influence of the students' native language (Indonesian or Javanese) lead to overgeneralization and transfer errors, especially in vowel and consonant sounds not found in their mother tongue. Second, age factor played a role, as students admitted that their pronunciation habits are already formed, making correction more difficult. Third, limited exposure to English reduced their familiarity with authentic pronunciation models. Fourth, many students had low phonetic awareness, causing them to misinterpret pronunciation based on spelling. Additionally, although students generally have strong motivation, issues such as low confidence, anxiety, and lack of structured practice contributed to their continued difficulties.

In conclusion, while the students showed a developing understanding of English past verbs, their pronunciation remains significantly influenced by linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The study highlights the need for more explicit instruction on -ed pronunciation rules, increased exposure to spoken English, and the integration of phonetic training in classroom activities. With targeted support and consistent practice, students' pronunciation accuracy can be gradually improved

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