

## Overview Of Knowledge Of English Language Education Students Class Of 2021 About Minimum Pairs

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**Abstract.** *The study of the English language's phonology, or sound system, is known as English phonology. To understand each other between speakers and listeners, English users must be able to pronounce correctly so that the message is conveyed without misunderstanding. One of the important points that must be learned from the science of phonology is minimal pair words to train English language learners to speak like native speakers. This descriptive study aims to determine the level of knowledge of students about the lecture material that has been studied in the fourth semester, namely Minimal Pairs. The study method is cross-sectional with a sample size of 126 respondents taken by consecutive sampling. The level of knowledge of students was found to be in the good category as much as 32.5%, sufficient category as much as 62.7%, poor category by 4.8%. Most of the respondents, 62.7%, had a sufficient level of knowledge. The conclusion obtained from this study is that students majoring in English tadrís class of 2021 UIN North Sumatra have a sufficient level of knowledge about Minimal Pairs.*

**Keywords:** *Minimal Pairs, Overview, Knowledge, English Education*

### INTRODUCTION

The study of the English language's phonology, or sound system, is known as English phonology. As with all languages, spoken English has a wide range of dialect-to-dialect variation in its pronunciation. Given how widely spoken English is, this variance is very prevalent in it. The study of language's sound system is known as phonology (Odden, 2005). A language's sounds or phonemes are frequently unique from those of other languages. For instance, the sounds of English and Indonesian are distinct from one another. Each phoneme segment, such as vowels, consonants, and diphthongs (segmental phonemes), as well as stress, intonation, and periods (supra-segmental phonemes), differ from one another. To understand each other between speakers and listeners, English users

must be able to pronounce correctly so that the message is conveyed without misunderstanding. One of the important points that must be learned from the science of phonology is minimal pair words to train English learners to speak like native speakers.

According to Boey in Defi Rosamarlina (2007:14), minimum pairs are word pairs within a language that are distinguished from one another by just one unique sound. Long vowels and short vowels are two paired sounds, while voiced and voiceless consonants are two paired sounds that also have different meanings. According to John Higgins (2008), who agrees with Boey, minimal pairings are two words whose meanings vary primarily in terms of the sound pairs (as opposed to letter pairs) they possess. "Minimal pairs" are defined by Avery and Ehrlich as "pairs of words with different meanings and different in pronunciation on the basis of one sound only." In other words, minimal pairings are thought to distinguish between words with similar sounds but different meanings in English. The study of minimum pairings demonstrates that a single phonetic sound in a pair of words can be contrasted. Minimum pairs are pairs of words that differ in meaning, consisting of two words that almost sound the same, differing only by one phoneme. While the two words may have quite different spellings, their actual sounds—which could either be vowels or consonants—will be fairly similar.

Only when one word is voiced and the other is not, or when one word is short and the other long, does the difference between words in a pair change significantly. The places of articulation or pronunciation, however, must be the same. Long vowels and short vowels, such as /i:/ and /i/, /u/ and /u:/, // and /:/, etc., are examples of paired sounds. Voiced consonant sounds, such as /b/ and /p/, /v/ and /f/, /d/ and /t/, /k/ and /g/, /s/ and /z/, and others, are distinguished from voiceless consonant sounds. Take the sit-chair example. The only segment that differs between minimal pairs is the one segment that appears exactly once in the string. In other words, a minimum pair compares sounds that occur in the same location but have distinct meanings. For instance: peel pill, leak lick, chick cheek, and ship-sheep.

A study conducted by Harmer, a special issue with students' hearing during the teaching and learning process is the production of vowel and consonant sounds in pronunciation. In other words, kids learn a variety of pronunciations from the sounds they hear. If kids mimic the incorrect pronunciation of the persons they listen to, this will be an issue. Indonesians, particularly English-learning students, still have difficulty

pronouncing English words. The difficulty of pronouncing words with similar sounds or a few pair words is a frequent error among Indonesian learners. Minimal pairs are simply words that have different lexical meanings based on the way one of their sounds differs. Minimal pairs can be placed in the initial position, middle position and end position. The hope is that learners can recognize the sounds in English and practice the sounds correctly. On the other hand, learning minimal pairs is considered useful for both speakers and listeners in English speaking practice.

The mispronunciation of English words, especially minimal pair words, which is still common among many learners in proper pronunciation requires teachers who are experts in the field. Students need teachers who are competent in the field of phonology to be able to make improvements to the pronunciation errors of minimal pair words that are less precise. English tadaris students as prospective teachers are required to master the science of phonology properly and correctly so that they can be imitated by their students. In phonology, it is learned what and how minimal pair words are pronounced in everyday conversation so as not to experience misinterpretation of meaning either to native speakers later or to fellow English learners.

Students majoring in English education at UIN North Sumatra study minimal pairs in the English phonology course in the fourth semester. The provision of this knowledge is expected to be applied by English tadaris students when they teach in schools or educational institutions where they work. A good level of knowledge can be the basis for good attitudes and behavior as well, so that prospective teaching students not only provide education in the form of theory but also become role models for the surrounding community. Although there are many studies on minimal pairs, there are still few studies conducted on the level of knowledge of English language education students about minimal pairs, although it is actually important to know how far prospective teachers understand how to learn and apply minimal pairs material to English language learners. Based on the description above, the author chose the 2021 batch of students because they had just completed the phonology course in the fourth semester and would soon carry out community service so that it was expected for students to have a sufficient level of knowledge as a provision for later service. Therefore, the author wants to conduct a study to find out how the level of knowledge of 2021 English major students about minimal pairs is described.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a cross-sectional technique and is a descriptive survey. This study was conducted on students majoring in tadrif English class of 2021 in the fourth semester of lectures. The sample was taken using the consecutive (non-random) sampling method. The primary data used in this investigation were collected by researchers directly from the target. In order to gather the necessary subject qualities for a study, one must first approach the subject (Nursalam, 2021).

In this research, researchers used an instrument in the form of a questionnaire with the use of a scoring system when collecting data then distributed the questionnaire to the specified respondents and finally collected the results. And for data collection researchers use Googleform which is included in the questionnaire form. The questionnaire is a type of collecting data formally to the subject to answer questions in writing (Nursalam, 2021). The questions on the questionnaire were made to assess the level of knowledge of fourth semester English Department students. Questions about the level of knowledge as many as 22 questions with answer choices using multiple choice. The Guttman scale, a measurement scale that necessitates a definite response from the responder, is used as the standard for evaluating the respondent's measure of knowledge.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This study uses primary data from 126 students majoring in English Department 2021. Data collection was carried out once in June 2023. Data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents in the form of Google forms which assessed the respondents' level of knowledge about minimal pairs. The level of knowledge is divided into 3 categories, namely good, sufficient and lacking. Table 1 displays the results of the study on knowledge level. As can be observed, 79 (62.7%) respondents have sufficient amount of knowledge regarding minimal pairings, while 6 (4.8%) respondents still have a lack of knowledge. However, 41 (32.5%) respondents have an advanced level of knowledge.

**Table 1.**

<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Good</b>	41	32.5
<b>Sufficient</b>	79	62.7
<b>Lack</b>	6	4.8
<b>Total</b>	126	100.0

Depending on research that was carried out utilizing a questionnaire that had 126 respondents and a total of 22 multiple-choice items. Based on the study's results, respondents' understanding of minimal pairs differed substantially. Each respondent's knowledge was divided into three categories by researchers: good, sufficient, and lacking.

From the results that have been obtained, it is known that there are 6 respondents (4.8%) who are categorized into less results. Researchers assume that without knowledge and curiosity, anyone will not have knowledge. Curiosity can make us know something because of the encouragement from ourselves. By finding out whether it is from seeing, reading and so on we can get this knowledge. Especially for those of us who occupy the field of education with us mastering at least pairs in phonology we can become educational experts who can provide good teaching for students.

This assumption is supported by research (Elena & Song, 2021), which states that in their research there were 4 (3.2%) students who had less knowledge. This study shows the low knowledge of the community, especially education students related to knowledge about minimal pairs. This low knowledge can be improved by repeating and studying in depth the minimal pairs material coupled with practice or practice. The level of knowledge is influenced by several factors including age, information, education and experience. (Nirmalasari & Winarti, 2020).

From the results that have been obtained, there are also 41 respondents (32.5%) in the good category. Researchers assume that the greater the curiosity that a person has, the more knowledge is obtained to add insight and good results are supported because students are part of the education staff. In addition, the great sense of awareness that oneself is part of the education workforce can also be a reason for great curiosity because knowledge about minimum pairs is very helpful in teaching English for both teachers and students.

This assumption is supported by research (Pasaribu, 2022), which in the results of his research had good knowledge as many as 45 respondents (26.8%), here the researcher feels that minimal pair words is a linguistic science that must be mastered by an educational staff in order to support his role as a professional English teacher so that he can provide the widest possible knowledge to students and society.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on research results of the conducted research with a total sample of 126 respondents regarding, Overview of Knowledge of English Tadrıs Students Class of 2021 About Minimal Pairs, it can be concluded that the knowledge of English tadrıs students about minimal pairs is in the good category as many as 41 respondents (32.5%) with a sufficient category of 79 respondents (62.7%) and with a category of less as many as 6 respondents (4.8%), meaning that the majority of respondents taken from the fourth semester already know enough about minimal pairs material. In learning and teaching the minimum pairs material, teachers and other education personnel must be equipped with good knowledge. The knowledge possessed by education personnel related to minimal pairs can help students to continue to hone their pronunciation skills in English as one of the goals of English language learning. Learning motivation is closely related to learning activities carried out by students to become a teacher or education personnel.

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