

# Plosive and Fricative Sounds Produced by EFL Students Using Online Media: A Perspective on Learning English Phonology

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examined the EFL student's perception of viewing learning English Phonology using songs, poems and videos. The data were collected through observation, interview, and questionnaire. This study involves 4 Indonesian undergraduate students who were majoring in English and took Phonology class. The data aimed to analyze 4 students of TBI 3A (Indonesian-speaking learners) on producing plosive-fricative. For the next, the perspectives that the researcher obtained could help other students to make better their pronunciation, especially when they were producing plosive-fricative sounds. The participants' sounds were recorded in pronouncing plosives-fricatives by reading short poem. To answer the problem in this research, this study used some references and other learning media, such as YouTube. The data was analyzed using qualitative approach. The finding revealed that there were various students' perspective in producing plosive-fricative. It was found that students have many factors or perspectives on producing plosive and fricative sounds. The finding revealed that the students agreed that producing plosives is easier than producing fricatives. It is because they were still confused in sounding similar sound like /v/ and /f/ in fricatives as they just did what their mother tongue (Indonesia) pronunciation. This study also showed that the students agreed if the video is more effective than song to help them produce plosives and fricatives well. The results of this study also found that there are other factors (besides additional media e.g., song and video). Those are the internal motivation (e.g., motivation to learn English through movie, song or other media individually), and the external motivation (e.g., the material comes from the lecturer and their friends' presentation).

**Keywords:** *Plosives, Fricatives, Phonology, EFL students, Perspective*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many people learn to speak in English in order to have better job and communicate across the country. It is known that English as a global language becomes one of important aspects in globalization era. Public awareness of the importance of English as the main means of communication in this global era has been increasing. In Indonesia, using and learning two or three languages among students and English lecturers, with English as a foreign language (FL), Javanese as a mother tongue (L1), and Indonesian as a second language or national language (L2) have received considerable attention. In general, the context of English language learning and teaching (ELLT), and the goal of teaching English is to develop communicative competence, that is,

to gain substantial ability to communicate in a variety of communication situation [1].

Many companies that offer jobs require applicants to take an English language proficiency test, which usually includes speaking test. As a result, many people choose English as their subject in higher school. However, not all English department students, especially in IAIN Tulungagung, can speak English well, despite they have gotten the materials about speaking from their lecturers. It is commonly known that English language is not considered as a first/second language in Indonesia. Since there are differences between the native language and the target language, the problems and difficulties cannot be avoided such as Indonesian students may produce some English words in wrong way. For example, some Indonesian students produce 'v' in very just like when they produce 'f' in ferry. Actually, they just do what their

mother tongue said. So, that is why it is very important to study about pronunciation, especially on producing consonant sound, like fricatives and plosives [2]. It makes clear when Indonesian students use English without influenced by their first language. Fricatives are consonants with the characteristic that when they are produced, air escaped through a small passage and make a hissing sound. And plosives are a type of consonant produced by forming a complete obstruction to the flow air out of the mouth [3]. The difference between plosive and fricative is the fricatives are continuant consonants, which means that language users can continue making them without interruption as long as you have enough air in their lungs. While plosives are not continuants [4].

In this research, the researcher concerned in level of capability, how well the students produce plosives and fricatives. The subject of the research are 4 students from TBI 3A (Indonesian-speaking learners) in English Department of IAIN Tulungagung. They are selected by the oral test result in the previous week. The respondents could pronounce some words given by the researcher. Then they are allowed to pronounce it while it was being recorded. And then, the researcher gave the stimulus like music and video instrument. The next, it was compared the pre-test result with the new result after the subjects were given the stimulus. After getting the data, the researcher has interviewed the subjects to collect another data. The researcher hoped that the result could help them to find the factors of speaking English so that it can help to fix other students speaking ability.

Moreover, the next research was examined by other linguists who explored to find teacher's perspective on producing all of the English consonant and the participants are ten English-speaking teachers from Najran University with the questionnaire as the data [5]. However, in this article, the researcher tried to find students' perspective on producing plosives-fricatives and uses audio to analyze the errors pronunciation and the interview as the additional data. Besides that, this study also included audio and audiovisual instrument to collect the data where it is not found by their study's. Another difference between this article and their research is that this study observed the English department students as the participants while Jalal & Muhiburrahman examined English teachers.

Moreover, the next study conducted by some researchers [6]. These researchers examined to identify the specific sounds that are commonly mispronounced by low oral proficiency Malaysian students. The participants are Malaysian students who were taking university English courses and selected by purposive sampling. Twelve low oral proficient students were identified and invited by their English course instructor to participate in the study. The researchers used questionnaire and reading aloud test. Then the researchers implemented audio recording of reading aloud test to analyze error pronunciation. Besides that, the differences between this article and their research is this study managed audio and interview to collect the data and the participants are English Department students while Shak et. al., used questionnaire and reading aloud test.

Furthermore, another study explored by a researcher to find out common pronunciation errors in pronunciation English fricatives, and to find out percentages of global

and local errors in pronouncing English fricatives based on communicative effect Taxonomy [7]. The participants are Pattani Malay learners who were learning English as foreign language. The data are collected by using qualitative method and recorded the pronunciation of Pattani-Malay's students. However, this article finds students' errors on producing plosive-fricative. The differences between Jehma et. al., 's article and this study that are this study conducted a research towards the English department students who were learning Phonology; meanwhile, Jehma et. al 's research focused on Pattani-Malay's who produce errors in pronouncing both fricative and stops in initial, media and final position. This study also conducted interview and used audio to collect the data.

In addition, in the journal by other researchers investigated the pronunciation problems of Hausa speakers of English in Nigeria and the participants are 60 native speakers of Hausa studying at three universities in Northern Cyprus with pronunciation test that consisted of a word list, a short paragraph, and 15 individual sentences as the data [8]. Then, the collected data were transcribed and analyzed, and percentages and frequencies of pronunciation errors were computed. The researcher also used audio-record. They investigated the pronunciation problems in pronouncing a number of problematic English sound while in this article the researcher tries to identify only plosive and fricative consonants with the students of TBI 3A (Indonesian-Speaking Learners) who are students of English department as the participants. Besides that, the study [8] collected the data based on transcribed of students' audio recorded and then analyzed by the researcher; while this study collected the data by using audio and interview.

From the comparing those previous studies above, the research gap can be terminated that the excess of this study is that the instruments used in this case is more complete than the instruments used in other journals above. So, it could be obtained more data as the result. Besides that, this study also observed the students from TBI 3A (Indonesian-Speaking Learners) in order to draw and gain the data more accurate. As the result, this study detects, examines, discovers the students not only by interviewing but also by seeing and observing their daily activities in speaking class. So, it could be noticed, examined and identified the progress and how they are learning English sounds in the class.

## **2. METHOD**

This study is aimed to analyze producing plosives and fricatives by students of TBI 3A (Indonesian-speaking learners) in IAIN Tulungagung and to find the students' perspectives of learning speaking. It uses descriptive qualitative to probe of case study. The Creswell's theory used for the orientation in order to collect data from the audio, audio-visual material and also the interview. Based on Creswell, audiovisual material consists of image or sound to help the researcher found the central phenomenon under the study. The interview asks one or more questions to participants [9]. For the interview, the researcher conducted open-ended question directly. The

type of interview is one-on-one interview, the researcher interviewed to one-by-one student.

In the teaching learning process, the researcher uses 4 students of TBI 3A (Indonesian-speaking learners) randomly. The respondents here are the researcher took some respondents including 3 females and 1 male. The use of those students in order to make the researcher easily to analyze them, not only when the pre-test was given or occurred to observe their previous knowledge, but also during the English class, especially speaking class. So, the result could be more accurate as the researcher had known the habit of each participant as she teaches them.

The method used in this study is based on qualitative method. The researcher did “Challenge to the participants”. The challenge is the participants must pronounce the poem that had been given by the researcher. Firstly, the participants pronounced the poem without the additional instrument. Then the researcher would record their pronunciation. Secondly, the participants given by the additional instrument that is ‘song’. They must listen to the song in order to know how the native pronounce plosives-fricatives. After that, the researcher recorded the participants’ pronunciation. Thirdly, they would be given another additional instrument that is video recording. The video would be shown to the participants before they pronounced the poem. The next, the researcher recorded the participants while they pronounced the poem. After all of the data from the ‘Challenge’ steps had been collected, then the researcher tried to analyze the producing of plosives and fricatives. The researcher would compare the result from the pre-test (without additional instrument) and the post-test (with additional instruments). After obtaining the result data from the challenge step, next the researcher would do one-by-one student’s interview. The researcher asked some questions to the participants to obtain more needed information. The result of the interview had been connected to the result of practice session (pre-test and post-test). This step is called as ‘Result’ step.

### 3. RESULT

#### 3.1. Plosives and fricatives sound used in the poem

The transcription of sound was derived from a short poem given by the researcher, which have 26 fricatives and 19 plosives. The fricatives exist in the poem under the title “The Theft by Peter” here including labiodental fricatives ‘v’ sound and ‘f’ sound each 6 times and 2 times; interdental ‘ð’ and ‘ø’ sound each 4 times and 3 times; alveolar ‘z’ and ‘s’ sound each 3 times and once; palatal ‘ʒ’ and ‘ʃ’ sound each 4 times and once, and glottal ‘h’ in 2 times. While for plosives, there are voiced plosive ‘b’, ‘d’, ‘g’ sound until 10 times and voiceless ‘p’, ‘t’ in 9 times, without ‘k’ sound was detected. The researcher used the latest IPA KIEL and Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary on transcription the phonetic alphabetic [10].

The result of the observation in finding the plosives and fricatives through the poem can be delivered as in the Table 1.

**Table 1** Percentage of Plosives

No	Types		Frequency	Percentage
1	Voiced	B	6x	31.57%
		D	2x	10.52%
		G	2x	10.52%
2	Voiceless	P	4x	21.05%
		T	5x	31.25%
		K	-	-
	Total		19x	

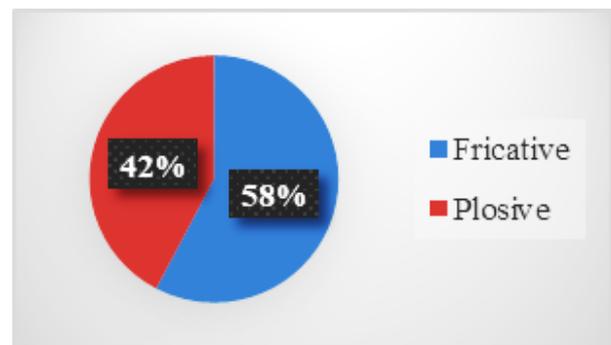
From the Table 1, it revealed that the most frequent plosive is /p/ plosive which come up 6 times and 31.57% more than others. Then followed by /t/ plosive which come up 5 times and 31.25%. However, the plosive /k/ has never appeared in the whole sentences of poem. The total number of plosives come up in the poem is 19.

**Table 2** Percentage of Fricatives

No	Type			Frequency	Percentage
1	Labiodental	Voiced	v	6x	23.7%
		Voiceless	f	2x	7.69%
2	Interdental	Voiced	ð	4x	15.38%
		Voiceless	ø	3x	11.53%
3	Alveolar	Voiced	z	3x	11.53%
		Voiceless	s	1x	3.84%
4	Palatal	Voiced	ʒ	4x	15.38%
		Voiceless	ʃ	1x	3.84%
5	Glottal		h	2x	7.69%
	Total			26x	

Based on Table 2, it figured out that the most frequent fricative is /v/ sound which come up 6 times and 23.7% more than others. Then followed by /ð/ and /ʒ/ sound which come up 4 times and 15.38%. However, the fricative /s/ and /ʃ/ were only appear once in poem. The total number of fricatives come up in the poem is 26.

For the conclusion of the use of plosives and fricatives in the poem, the researcher will serve the comparing data as in the Figure 1:



**Figure 1** Comparison of The Use of Plosives and Fricatives in Poem

#### 3.2. Result of pre-test and post-test I & II

From the analysis, it presented that the students make more mistakes in the pre-test than in the post test. The sum errors that the participants did in the pre-test are 21 times, while in the post-test I is 13 times, followed by post-test II is 6 times.

**Table 3** Sum of Errors

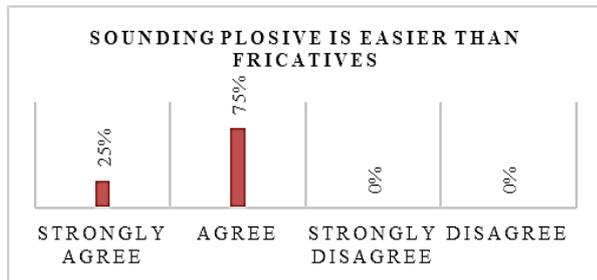
No	Name	Sum of Errors		
		Pre-test	Post-test (song)	Post-test (video)
1	Subject1	7x	4x	1x
2	Subject2	4x	3x	2x
3	Subject3	3x	2x	1x
4	Subject4	7x	4x	3x
Total of errors		21x	13x	6x

From the Table 3, it could be concluded that the least errors are 6 times which occur when the post-test with video, and the mostly errors is 21 times when the pre-test. From this it also can be seen that the errors made by students is decline.

### 3.3. Factors on producing plosives and fricatives

From the interview, the researcher observed students' perspective on learning English, especially in producing plosives and fricatives. the result of the interview including:

Firstly, the students' opinion about producing plosives and fricatives is the same. All of the participants agree that producing plosives is easier than producing fricatives. It was as the fricatives sounds contain a similar sound like 'v' and 'f'. A major of Indonesian ESL thought that they just do what their mother tongue said, as in word 'versi' and 'fire'. The students' opinion can be shown as in the Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Student's Opinion About Producing Plosives-Fricatives

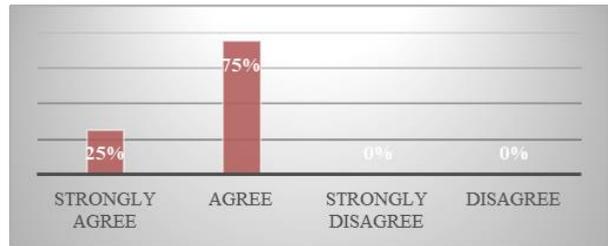
Figure 2 shows that all of the participants agree producing plosives is easier than fricatives. Secondly, the interviewing result showed that all of the students have problems in producing fricative sound /v/, then followed by 2 students have problems in producing fricatives /z/ and /3/, and the last is 1 student who have problematic in sounding /ø/, /f/, and /s/, as follows:

**Table 4** Problematic Plosives-Fricatives for Students

The students' percentage	Problematic of producing plosive-fricative sounds
100%	/v/
25%	/ø/, /f/, /s/
50%	/z/, /3/

The Table 4 displayed that all of the participants have difficulty producing /v/ sound. They were confused because the /v/ sound is similar to /f/ sound. As stated before, Indonesian ESL influenced by their mother tongue which is the Javanese language.

Thirdly, the observation showed that all of the students considered that video is more effective than the song to improve speaking English skill. The participants then delivered some reason(s) why they thought that video is more effective. The most common reason is that from the video, the participants could learn the shape lips of the native. Besides that, one student added that the video helps her to learn about tongue position. Even, one student also agrees that the video can deliver the emotion of the speaker. Meanwhile, there were no participants who considered the video as an interesting instrument to study speaking.



**Figure 3** Student's Opinion About the Effectiveness of Video

Figure 3 could be summarized that all of the students agree that seeing and listening video is more effective than a song, especially to learn about producing plosives-fricatives.

**Table 5** Student's Reason For The Effectiveness of Video

Percent of students	Response
25%	Able to see the native shape lips and tongue position
50%	Able to see the native shape lips
25%	Able to see native emotion

The researcher further asked the participants the reasons for the effectiveness of using video. A majority of them gave the reason: able to see the native shape lips. It helps them to consider how to produce plosive and fricatives. Another reason is that they are also able to see the tongue position of the native and the emotion too.

Fourthly, the participants also did compare the video and song. One participant said that she could not hear what the speaker said some sounds clearly in the song because of the song's instruments. Another participant added that song just give them less information on how to pronounce English well than the video. From the song, they could not see the shape lips and the tongue position from the native because they can only hear the sounds without know how to pronunciation.

Table 6 shows the interviewing result about the students' perspective of the song.

**Table 6** Students' Reasons Why the Song Is Not More Effective

Percent of student	Response
25%	Others: difficult to hear the correct pronunciation from the native because of the music instruments. Unable to hear the plosives and fricative clearly
50%	Unable to see the native shape lips
25%	Unable to see the native shape lips and tongue position

The table above says that the participant would rather choose the video because the major of them were unable

to see the native shape lips when they listening to the songs.

Fifth, this study could obtain some information about the students' perspective on the affected effect in learning speaking English. The major students said that internal motivation has an important role in improving students' English sounds skill. The internal motivation can be a motivation to study English hard through music or movie or another way. Another participant said that the external factors also have a role in students' speaking skill especially in learning English sounds in Phonology. The motivation can come from the students' classmates. From the addition, one student also said that the speaking skill that he has right now is coming from the obtained knowledge from phonology presentation by their friends.

The factors that had been considered by students can be seen from the Table 7:

**Table 7** Other Factors on Learning Speaking

Percent of students	Response
50%	Motivation from inside (have such big motivation coming from self for doing many activities to improve speaking skill and Plosives fricatives material from friend's presentation)
25%	Motivation from outside (have such big motivation from the environment around like friends or parents)
25%	Both motivation from inside and outside

#### 4. DISCUSSION

From the result of pre-test, the total frequency of errors that the researcher found is 21 times. It is divided into errors on plosives and errors on fricatives. The total of errors on plosives is 2 times while on fricatives is 19 times. From this result, we can indicate that they still have difficulties in the sounding consonant, especially in fricatives. After the students had been giving by the western song, there is an improvement in producing plosives-fricatives. The total frequency of errors is 13 times including 13 times errors on producing fricatives and no errors on producing plosives. It is indicated that the song has a role in improving students' skill in pronouncing English sounds.

Then, after giving the video, none of the students did the errors on plosives. They only did errors in fricatives 6 times. The errors that occurred was the least of the others. It is indicated that the video also has an important role in improving students speaking ability, even the video becomes is better than the song. It supported by another journal by a researcher who examined that the YouTube video can improve the students' speaking skills including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar and motivation [11]. The improvement based on their speaking achievement and the score gained. Another study conducted by Wang who proved that the video is the most effective media to study English, especially in speaking [12]. The journal concluded that video material provides visual aids for ESL learners. Video can expose much more information for the listener and can keep their attention focused on the aural material. In addition, a journal written by Hadijah who examined that using video in teaching and learning activity give so many benefits even though it

depends on the teacher to be able to deploy the video effectively due to numerous types of video that can be found and presented in the classrooms [13]. Another study conducted by Arjomad who discovered that the use of songs in the teaching and learning process has some benefit for students. they not only learn about how the words pronounced but also master listening English skill [14]. Most of the students are interested in learning English by using songs, they feel more relax in the learning process and their motivation in learning English increases and they expected to learn it using songs regularly and master English pronunciation and teachers are capable to construct better teaching materials [15].

Another result which supports the researcher result is from a book written by some researchers [16]. They say that the advantages of using video in general including: 1) Motion that is essential to mastery, 2) Critical processes and its effectiveness, 3) Dramatization that allow students to observe and analyze human interactions, 4) Skills learning, 5) Affective learning, and 6) Cultural understanding. All of those advantages could be considered in using creative media to support English sounds.

Even, according to Wright, many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful to the language learner [17]. That to say all audio-visual materials have a positive contribution to language learning as long as they are used at the right time, in the right place. However, to deploy video as a powerful tool during the teaching and learning activities, preparation is one of the main ways to make it more meaningful before implementing some other ways to encourage the students to be active learners. Then, the teachers are also required to design learning activities that can keep the students in active learner modes. In this case, the teachers are challenged to involve the students active during the teaching and learning activities by using video.

Besides that, from the interview, this study affirmed some findings. The first result is that all of the students agree if producing plosives is easier than producing fricatives. It is because the fricative sounds have the similarity in each sound, like the sound /v/, is similar to the sound /f/. This statement is also supported by a research directed by Ikhsan who examined that producing fricatives is difficult as the ESL students just imitate what their mother tongue stated and they felt that they acclimated, conformed, complied and altered the tongue when they spoke in English [18]. Another research handled by Shak et al also prove that fricatives are difficult. It is found that participants are more likely to make mistakes in pronouncing fricatives consonants than plosives consonants [6].

The second result conceded that the sound /v/ is the most difficult sound to produce for the students. From that result, it can be seen that there are no plosive sounds chosen as the difficult sound to produce. The third is that all of the students also agree that the video giving more effectiveness on producing plosives-fricatives. It was also proved by the result of the test which shows that the errors of the post-test (with video) are just 6 times and it is less than when they had given a song or when they had not given any instruments. The fourth result of the interview is the reason why the video is more effective. A major of

the participants chosen option B. From the video, the participants were able to see the shape lips of the native so that they will imitate the native's way of producing plosives and fricatives. Another participant also considered that the video delivers the information of the tongue position and also the native emotion when they are producing plosives and fricatives. Those all advantages cannot be obtained from the song (proved by Table 5: student's reason why the song is not more effective). When the participants were listening to the song, they had difficulties because of the song instruments. They could not hear the plosives and fricatives clearly. Even, by the song, the participants could not learn the shape lips and tongue position from the natives.

The last result is that the participants also agree if there are other affected factors to help them produce plosive and fricative sounds well. Those factors are internal motivation, external motivation, and the material given by their friend in phonetics-phonology class. The internal motivation, for example, participant 3 (who always did the least errors), she often watches a western movie and listening to western music. She also often makes some notes in every English class. She wrote the difficult material on her notebook, and sometimes she discussed it with her friend. Another example is from the participant 2 (who get fewer errors than participant 1 and 4), she always tries to imitate the conversation of the Western movie that she watched too. Another factor is the external factors. Major participants said that the environment has a role in helping them speaking English well. 75 % of the participants said that motivation often comes from their friends in college. Their friends sometimes did a conversation using English in the class so that the participants were pushed to do the same thing. However, most of the participants said that they do not get this motivation from the environment around their residence. They are more dominant using Javanese at home because most of the students live in Indonesia who use English as a Foreign Language. According to the research conducted by Al Hosni who found that there are a lot of factors that cause the difficulties among EFL learners to communicate in English. Some of them are from individual case, those are: linguistic difficulties, mother tongue use, and inhibition [19]. Some others are included into factors from outside such as: teachers' perceptions and tacit beliefs about teaching speaking, teaching strategies, curriculum, extracurricular, and assessment. Some learners also lack motivation to speak English. They do not see a real need to learn or speak English. In fact, "motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks in a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he preservers" [20]. The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and relate with the people around them [20]. In other words, it could be restated that motivation can be one of the affected factors that influencing student's speaking skill. The students who have lack motivation had more errors than students who have big motivation to learn English.

The last factor is that the participant also being helped by the material given by their friends during the presentation of the phonetics-phonology class. From the interview, the researcher knows that the participants are

also affected by the knowledge that the participants got during the phonetic-phonology presentation. In the presentation, the students also given by the song and video to help them understand the material. All the participants agree that whether the video or song, actually, they both have an important role in phonetic-phonology class, especially to help them understand how to produce plosive-fricative sounds. However, when the participants had to choose, they chose the video as the most effective media or instrument to help them fix sounding plosives-fricatives. It is in line with Nurhayati's research who examined that the experienced students using e-learning or online media such videos, Edmodo and others are very helpful for them in learning English Phonology [21]. This is indicated by the opinion of all informants that more benefits are obtained by developing intensive technology-based language learning and online interaction intensively.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The producing of consonants sounds especially plosives and fricatives is influenced by some factors. One of the factors is the use of additional instruments during the study. Those instruments can be audio or audiovisual. The audio (e.g., song) and the audiovisual (e.g., video) have important roles in improving student's speaking skill. However here, the audiovisual like the video is considered as a better instrument than the audio because of some reasons. The reason is that from the video, the students were able to see the shape lips and tongue position from the native. It is very useful to help them learn how to produce plosives and fricatives well. Even the use of the song is not more effective, it is still can give good effect for students in learning, for example through song or music can motivative them to study English and after the students had been giving by the western song, there is an improvement on producing plosives-fricatives. It is indicated that the song has a role in improving students.

Besides those instruments, the students also have other perspectives on producing plosives and fricatives. There are some affected factors which altered the students in speaking skill. Those factors are internal motivation (e.g., motivation to learn about speaking through movie, western song, etc.), external motivation (e.g., motivation extended or showed up from friends' attitude etc.), and also contemporaneous teaching (e.g., obtained knowledge from phonetics-phonology presentation done by the friends' participants). Compared with other related articles, the researcher only used 4 participants because this study only focused on the volunteer respondents who were willing to be observed. Consequently, the s could not get more valid information. This study was only using the participants from IAIN Tulungagung. As the consequent, the readers only got limit information. The incomplete information was given in this study also as the result of the limited time as this research just was conducted within two months.

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