Schwa

by Barli Bram

SCHWA OR UNSTRESSED VOWEL SOUND IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY ITEMS FROM SURAH AL-BAQARAH OF THE HOLY QURAN

[1]Hanna Irma Wahyuni, [2]Barli Bram
[1]English Education Master Student, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia
[2]English Education Lecturer, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia
Corresponding Author Email: barli@usd.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 2024 Revised: Published: **Keywords** Phonetics; phonolog; schwa; vocabulary item	This article investigated the schwa sound in English vocabulary items represented by letters 'o' and 'u' as in polite and submit. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the researchers collected 97 vocabulary items containing schwa sounds taken from surah Al-Baqarah verses 1-286. The results indicate that the schwa term that represents the unstressed syllable can be renewed with the terms proposed in this study such as 'astressed' and 'disaccented'. In addition, to maintain the schwa term, a change of its pronunciation is proposed becoming /ʃwə/ and not /ʃwaː/. Most of the written vowels 'o' and 'u' are pronounced in a strong form, and unstressed vowels 'o' and 'u' are pronounced as a schwa. The appearance of unstressed schwa in the vowels 'o' and 'u' is not determined by its location whether it is in the first or second syllable. Schwa could appear anywhere as long as he was not stressed. Schwa was not found in stressed syllables. Lastly, all -ion [ən] and -ous [əs] suffixes must be pronounced with a schwa. The results imply that EFL learners ought to consult an excellent dictionary to ensure correct pronunciation. Future researchers are expected to examine further patterns of a schwa sound in English vocabulary items to assist EFL learners in improving their pronunciation.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of pronunciation can be one of the problematic issues to learn because Indonesia has various languages and accents. Rismayati (2021) says that double vowel in English pronunciation is different, "most people believe that double 'o' letters meet in a word, the output sound is /uː/ or /ʊ/. For example, in the word 'wood' the output sound is /wʊd/, and the word 'school' is /skuːl/. However, in the word 'blood' the output sound is /blʌd/.", as an example. The sound [b] in the word 'climber' for example is pronounced as /ˈklaɪmə(r)/. Students struggle with pronunciation of schwa in monosyllabic words, making this research potentially helpful by providing a vocabulary collection containing schwa to simplify the process (Utami, 2020).

Currently, EFL learners are unaware of the existence of the weak vowel form [ə] sound. Especially for the English vocabulary items in which the vocal "o" and "u" are intended to be pronounced as [ə]. The word 'submit' for example, is commonly pronounced as /sʌbˈmɪt/ or /sɑbˈmɪt/. They are more likely to use the strong vowel [ʌ], [ɑ], or [ɛː] to pronounce the word instead of using schwa. A study by Kapranov (2021) and Kearns (2020) shows that students more often substitute schwa into /e/, /ɒ/, /æ/, /ɑː/, and /ɛː/ sounds. It is in line with Indriani (2001) that the schwa sound is closely similar to the sound [ʌ] and [ɛː] in some circumstances. The inclusion of schwa vowels in complex syllables and the absence of word stress may

impact high-level L2 pronunciation skills (Suzukida & Saito, 2022). Schwa sound is sometimes not owned by some languages, for example, Muna. Speakers tend to omit sounds to avoid mispronouncing schwa which does not exist in Muna (Indrayani & Nugraha, 2020; Riaz, 2021). Research conducted by Amalia (2012) about the error analysis of English vowel sounds showed that [ə] was the most problematic sound used by learners. This issue mostly happens to those whose 1st language is not English. Another research by Bamigbade and Raji (2022) indicates that the rule of creating strong vowel sounds in function words as schwa /ə/ is left out 150 times (22% of the total errors).

Several studies discuss the existence of schwa in English. First, a study was conducted by Aalders and Ernestus (2015) on the realization of /p,t/ after schwa in casual American English. The results of this study indicate that Schwa's absence does not affect VOT (Voice Onset Time) and also the duration of Schwa when present. This shows that the reduction process affecting vowels need not change the realization of consonants. Second, a study was conducted by Ambalegin (2021). This study analyzes phonology to investigate English vowel sounds as a central phenomenon represented by letters descriptively and qualitatively. This study produces the results of the English vowel pronunciation pattern 'r' positioned as a closed syllable that extends /a:/, /o:/, /ɜ:/ and produces schwa, as well as in diphthongs, double semi-vowels do not do triphthongs, letters *i, u, w* and *y* produce triphthong when combined with a vowel. Sugiura (2016) researched the impact of quick repetition of auditory words on L2 pronunciation enhancement of English schwa by Japanese EFL learners.

This study aims to explore English vocabulary items in which the letter 'o' and 'u' are pronounced as a vowel sound [ə] that appeared in the Al-Baqarah letter. This research is limited due to its basic purpose, which is collecting and comparing vocabulary items found in the Al-Baqarah letter and the commonly used vocabulary items in daily life. The basic theory used in this research is that 'Schwa is an unstressed syllable' (Fromkin et al., 2018; Indriani, 2001; Wise, 1975). By learning schwa, EFL learners can be more aware of and can perform better in speaking by implementing the schwa sound appropriately.

Considering the term schwa has been used for a long time, the researchers intend to renew this unstressed syllable term. The researchers consider that the term 'schwa' which is transcribed as /ʃwɑ:/ is irrelevant because it contains no [ə]. The researchers opine that the old term that starts the term schwa is more suitable because sheva is transcribed as /ʃəˈvɑ:/ (Wise, 1957) and contains a semivowel [ə]. The researchers intend to propose a new term for the 'schwa' depending on the prefixing in morphological theory. Morphology takes the role of the study of word structure or word formation and the rule (Fromkin et al., 2018; Rahayu, 2021) by considering or not considering the [ə] occurrence in its term. The main thing to hold is that 'schwa' is an unstressed syllable. Therefore, the researchers make some modifications to the schwa term itself and the unstressed term.

Based on the research background, the researchers formulate two questions in this study, namely:
1. What better term can replace 'schwa'?
2. What English vocabulary items with letters 'o' and 'u' are pronounced [ə] in the Al-Baqarah letter verses 1-286?

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
Descriptive qualitative research was used in this research. Qualitative research is holistic research on a particular object to investigate a social phenomenon that occurred holistically (Jaya, 2020). Descriptive research is the type of research that describes a particular phenomenon as clearly as possible without giving any threats to the object observed (Kountur, 2003).

This research involved library research and online sources as the main source. Document-based or text-based research is a study of the written document including textbooks, newspapers, magazines, letters, movies, journals, articles, and so forth (Jaya, 2020). The English translation of surah Al-Baqarah became the data source in this study since it has the most verses, totalling 286 verses, compared to any other letters in the Holy Quran. Thus, surah Al-Baqarah is an excellent and rich data source containing lexical items with a schwa sound.

Data Source

English vocabulary items in which the vocal 'o' and 'u' are intended to be pronounced as [ə] were the data expected for this study. The researchers took the vocabulary items expected from an English translation of Quran surah Al-Baqarah verses 1 up to 286. Ninety-seven words plus two additional findings were discovered to be observed in this study. The vocabulary items found were classified depending on the position or order of the letters 'o' and 'u' in the word. Subsequently, the vocabulary items required were transcribed through the online dictionary, www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com. For the special findings about the suffix found in the data, the researchers used the help of the Longman online dictionary because its schwa transcription was visible in the suffix transcription.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by following Jaya's (2020) analysis data procedure. First, the data were gathered through the data gathering instrument. Second, the data were edited by checking the clarity and completeness of the data. Third, the data were coded by identifying and classifying all the aspects of the data variables observed. Fourth, categorizing the data to the main research table (tabulation process). Fifth, the data have tested the credibility and reliability of data-gathering instruments. Sixth, the data were described by using tables and graphs to understand the research samples. Seventh was hypothesis testing to ensure the thesis's worth. It is also in line with the Glaser and Strauss (1967) theory in doing the research by first gathering the data, second categorizing the data, and third analyzing the data. In analyzing the data, the researchers compared the data found with the commonly used vocabulary items to enrich the vocabulary collection and to show the difference in pronunciation of the letter 'o' and 'u' in the words.

In constructing the new term of schwa to discuss the first question, the researchers used the morphological process precisely the affixation process. The changing of a stem to adjust the meaning to a particular context is a definition of a morphological process (Matthews, 1991). Some possible prefixes and suffixes were collected by the researchers to trial the possible new terms. After that, the researchers tried to construct or form a new term.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As stated previously, two questions were formulated in this article. In the following, the answers were discussed. **First, what better term can replace 'schwa'?** To answer this first research question about the new term of schwa, the researchers used the basic theory that schwa is unstressed syllables. Therefore, the researchers modified the word 'unstressed' which was closely suitable to represent the schwa to form the new term of schwa. The word 'unstressed' could be separated into three morphemes 'un-', 'stress', and '-ed'. Morpheme or prefix 'un-' has a meaning that reverses the meaning of the verb. Here, it means the reverse meaning of the verb 'stress', therefore, 'un + stress' meaning 'not stress'. The suffix '-ed' is used to form the past tense and past participle of regular verbs. Therefore, the word 'stress + ed' has a meaning that is emphasized. The meaning of unstressed was that it was not emphasized. The researchers looked for similar morphemes to the prefix 'un-', root 'stress',

and maintained the suffix '-ed'. The table below showed the possibility of the chosen morphemes:

Table 1
Possible Morphemes to Modify 'Unstressed'

Original ver.	P 1	P 2
un-	a-	dis-
stress	stress	accent
-ed	ed	-ed
New form	astressed	disaccented

Note: P stands for Possibility

The first possibility for the new form of schwa was astressed. It consisted of three morphemes as prefix 'a-', a verb 'stress', and suffix '-ed'. The prefix had some meanings including "on," "in," or "at" like in the word 'ashore' which meant at the shore, "in (such) manner" like in the word 'aloud' which meant in a loud manner, and 'a' means 'without'. However, Auni and Manan (2022) argued that the prefix *a-* can modify an adjective into an adverb. The verb 'stress' has the meaning of stressing something to give extra force to a word or syllable when saying it. Therefore, the word astressed meant the syllable was pronounced without any force.

The second possibility was 'disaccented'. It consisted of the prefix 'dis-', the verb 'accent', and the suffix '-ed'. The prefix '-dis' had a meaning in the converse of something or meaning 'not or none'. The verb 'accent' is meant to emphasize a part of something. The suffix '-ed' showed the past participle form of the word 'accent' so that it passivated the word 'accent'. In conclusion, the word 'disaccented' meant the particular part of the word was not emphasized.

Another possibility was to maintain the schwa name by changing its pronunciation. By using the pronunciation view, the word schwa is transcribed as /ʃwə/ not /ʃwɑ:/. Compared to the /ʃwɑ:/ transcription that consists of no [ə], the /ʃwə/ transcription is more relevant to refer to its meaning. The reason is that the [ə] existence eases linguistics learners to remember that a schwa refers to the vowel sound [ə].

Second, what English vocabulary items with letters 'o' and 'u' are pronounced [ə] in the Al-Baqarah letter verses 1-286?
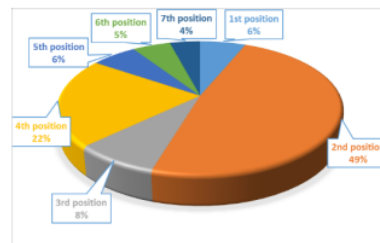

Figure 1. Data Distribution

Figure 1 above showed the data distribution of 97 vocabulary items found in surah Al-Baqarah.

Table 2
'o' and 'o' in the First Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	Oxford dict. transcription	Strong form	Source (verse)
1	obedience	/əˈbiːdiəns/	N/A	43
2	obey	/əˈbeɪ/	N/A	45
3	of	/əv/	/ɒv/	1
4	opponent	/əˈpəʊnənt/	N/A	204
5	originator	/əˈrɪdʒɪneɪtə(r)/	N/A	117
6	upon	/əˈpɒn/	N/A	40

*Note: "(r) is used to indicate where the sound /r/ is pronounced in American English and some other regional varieties of English. In a standard British accent, (r) is only pronounced if it occurs at the end of a word which is followed by another word starting with a vowel sound" (Spencer, 2017).

Table 2 above showed the first position of the letter 'o' and 'u' in English vocabulary items. There were 6 vocabulary items found in the data and transcribed using Oxford online dictionary. From the data, it was seen that all the words were stressed in the second syllable as bolded in the table. Therefore, the letters 'o' and 'u' which were positioned in the first letter were pronounced weakly or using a semi-vowel [ə] because it was unstressed. Gordon and Roettger (2017) elaborate that in some languages, only consonant length, but not vowel length, successfully identified stress levels. Syllable stress is a syllable that is perceived as more prominent because it has a longer length, more extreme pitch values, and/or (to a lesser extent) increased loudness than other surrounding syllables; also known as the (prosodic) accent (Abdulrahman & Ramamoorthy, 2021). The data above indicated that the vocabulary items were *obedience, obey, of, opponent, originator,* and *upon.* Those are common vocabularies that most people use in daily conversation and the bible or translated Al-Quran or other holy books and literature. In comparison, some other vocabulary items such as organization /ˌɔːɡənaɪˈzeɪʃn/, urban /ˈɜːbən/, opportunity /ˌɒpəˈtjuːnəti/, opposition, operator /ˈɒpəreɪtə(r)/, obstacle /ˈɒbstəkl/, and octopus /ˈɒktəpəs/, the first 'o' and 'u' letter were not pronounced or transcribed as [ə]. However, the word 'of' had an exception. It could be pronounced /əv/ and /ɒv/ depending on how strongly it was intended to be pronounced. Speakers could use the weak form /ə/ as an example, a noun phrase 'a cup **of** tea' might be pronounced as /ə ˈkʌp **əv** ˈtiː/.

Table 3
'o' and 'u' in the Second Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	Transcription	Strong form	Source (verse)
1	but	/bət/	/bʌt/	19
2	combined	/kəmˈbaɪnd/	N/A	161
3	command	/kəˈmɑːnd/	N/A	99
4	commanded	/kəˈmɑːndɪd/	N/A	68
5	commands	/kəˈmɑːndz/	N/A	67
6	commercial	/kəˈmɜːʃl/	N/A	282
7	commit	/kəˈmɪt/	N/A	61
8	community	/kəˈmjuːnəti/	N/A	213
9	complete	/kəmˈpliːt/	N/A	150
10	compulsion	/kəmˈpʌlʃn/	N/A	256
11	conceal	/kənˈsiːl/	N/A	42
12	concealing	/kənˈsiːlɪŋ/	N/A	33
13	concerned	/kənˈsɜːnd/	N/A	182
14	concerning	/kənˈsɜːnɪŋ/	N/A	23
15	condition	/kənˈdɪʃn/	N/A	68
16	confirming	/kənˈfɜːmɪŋ/	N/A	41
17	connection	/kəˈnekʃn/	N/A	190
18	consigned	/kənˈsaɪnd/	N/A	85
19	contentment	/kənˈtentmənt/	N/A	126

No.	Words	Transcription	Strong form	Source (verse)
20	convenient	/kənˈviːniənt/	N/A	282
21	corruptly	/kəˈrʌptli/	N/A	60
22	dominion	/dəˈmɪnjən/	N/A	107
23	for	/fə(r)/	/fɔː(r)/	50
24	forbid	/fəˈbɪd/	N/A	83
25	forbidden	/fəˈbɪdn/	N/A	2
26	forever	/fərˈevə(r)/	N/A	39
27	forgave	/fəˈɡeɪv/	N/A	52
28	forget	/fəˈɡet/	N/A	44
29	forgive	/fəˈɡɪv/	N/A	58
30	forgiveness	/fəˈɡɪvnəs/	N/A	199
31	mosquito	/məˈskiːtəʊ/, /mɒˈskiːtəʊ/	N/A	26
32	Muhammad	/məˈhæmɪd/	N/A	6
33	submission	/səbˈmɪʃn/	N/A	45
34	submissive	/səbˈmɪsɪv/	N/A	128
35	submit	/səbˈmɪt/	N/A	43
36	succeeding	/səkˈsiːdɪŋ/	N/A	66
37	successful	/səkˈsesfl/	N/A	5
38	succession	/səkˈseʃn/	N/A	87
39	suffice	/səˈfaɪs/	N/A	137
40	sufficient	/səˈfɪʃnt/	N/A	115
41	supported	/səˈpɔːtɪd/	N/A	87
42	supporter	/səˈpɔːtə(r)/	N/A	23
43	surrender	/səˈrendə(r)/	N/A	116
44	surrounded	/səˈraʊndɪd/	N/A	81
45	to	/tə/	/tuː/	40
46	together	/təˈɡeðə(r)/	N/A	19
47	towards	/təˈwɔːdz/	N/A	29

Table 3 showed the second position of the letter 'o' and 'u' in English vocabulary items. It was seen in the data that all the words found were stressed in the second syllable as bolded in the table except for the word 'to', 'for', and 'but' because they had only one syllable. However, the word 'to', 'for', and 'but' had exceptions. The word 'to' could be pronounced as /tə/ or /tuː/. It depended on how strongly those words are pronounced. The schwa is pronounced neutrally, but some native speakers delete it due to its prestige (Carr, 1993). In the case that the word 'to' was emphasized, the long uː as in the /tuː/ might be used. Meanwhile the 'to' was not emphasized, the schwa /tə/ is recommended to use to make the pronunciation sounds better. Another example was the word 'must' which was transcribed as /məst/ for the weak form and /mʌst/ for the strong form of its transcription. Therefore, this generalized rule also could be used for the word 'for', 'but', and 'must'.

In this case, it could be generalized that the letter 'o' and 'u' which were positioned in the second letter were pronounced schwa [ə] due to the unstressed syllable. Stress in English is indicated by placing an accent mark over stressed vowels (Fromkin et al., 2018). Some common vocabulary items used in the table covered *complete, forget, forbidden*, and *supporter*. Other common vocabulary used which were not mentioned in the data included convenient /kənˈviːniənt/, conclude /kənˈkluːd/, confuse /kənˈfjuːz/, police /pəˈliːs/, and position /pəˈzɪʃn/. These additional vocabulary items the letter 'o' and 'u' located in the second order also had stress on the second syllable and unstressed schwa at the first syllable.

Table 4
'o' and 'u' in the Third Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Word	Transcription	Strong form	Source (verse)
1	from	/frəm/	/frɒm/	2
2	produce	/prəˈdjuːs/	N/A	111

No.	Word	Transcription	Strong form	Source (verse)
3	prohibited	/prəˈhɪbɪtɪd/	N/A	194
4	protect	/prəˈtekt/	N/A	255
5	protector	/prəˈtektə(r)/	N/A	107
6	provided	/prəˈvaɪdɪd/	N/A	3
7	provision	/prəˈvɪʒn/	N/A	22
8	usury	/ˈjuːʒəri/	N/A	275

Table 4 above showed the third 'o' and 'u' position in English vocabulary items in the Al-Baqarah letter. Three things were discussed in this section. The first one is about the word 'from'. Similar to the 'to', 'but', and 'for' terms in the previous, 'from' had two versions of its British transcription. /frəm/ belonged to the weak form of 'from' and /frɒm/ to its strong form.

The second, the third positioned 'o' and 'u' was pronounced as schwa because it was unstressed at the first syllable as in the **pro**duce /prəˈdjuːs/ when 'pro' was unstressed. [p] and [r] were consonants and [ə] was a semivowel. This also occurred in the common terms used such as **pro**mote /prəˈməʊt/, **prof**essor /prəˈfesə(r)/, **pro**cedure /prəˈsiːdʒə(r)/, and **pro**pose /prəˈpəʊz/. The 'pro-'is not pronounced as schwa if it was stressed as in the word problem /ˈprɒbləm/, therefore, [ɒ] is used.

The third was about 'usury' /ˈjuːʒəri/ that the stress located in the first syllable. The first 'u' in the first syllable was stressed while the second 'u' is unstressed, therefore schwa existed. The researchers assumed that this might happen because the palatal approximant [j] sound was voiced and side-by-side with the long vowel u [uː], therefore, to reduce the energy in speaking these words, the voiceless [s] was pronounced with the schwa [ə].

Table 5
'o' and 'u' in the fourth position in surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	OALD transcription	Source (verse)
1	abrogate	/ˈæbrəgeɪt/	106
2	admonition	/ˌædməˈnɪʃn/	232
3	alcoholic	/ˌælkəˈhɒlɪk/	219
4	arrogant	/ˈærəgənt/	87
5	canopy	/ˈkænəpi/	22
6	disobedient	/ˌdɪsəˈbiːdiənt/	26
7	disobeyed	/ˌdɪsəˈbeɪd/	61
8	effort	/ˈefət/	205
9	error	/ˈerə(r)/	286
10	hypocrite	/ˈhɪpəkrɪt/	8
11	ignorant	/ˈɪgnərənt/	67
12	injury	/ˈɪndʒəri/	263
13	innocent	/ˈɪnəsnt/	54
14	into	/ˈɪntə/	286
15	invocation	/ˌɪnvəˈkeɪʃn/	114
16	onion	/ˈʌnjən/	61
17	opposition	/ˌɒpəˈzɪʃn/	137
18	recognised	/ˈrekəgnaɪzd/	89
19	recompense	/ˈrekəmpens/	4
20	reconciliation	/ˌrekənsɪliˈeɪʃn/	228
21	resurrection	/ˌrezəˈrekʃn/	4

The data above represented the existence of the schwa sound in the fourth positioned 'o' or 'u' letter in English vocabulary items found in the Al-Baqarah letter. The bolded transcription indicated the stress. To compare the data found, the researchers added some additional vocabulary items chosen depending on the position of the 'o' and 'u' order such as remote /rɪˈməʊt/ and majority /məˈdʒɒrəti/. The stressed vowel sounds used to include [æ],

[iː], [e], [ɪ], [ɒ] and [ʌ]. It turned out that diphthongs [eɪ] and [əʊ] were also used in stressed syllables of the data found. In accordance with the theory that schwa is an unstressed part in a particular word, all the data showed that the schwa represented the written letter 'o' and 'u' were unstressed wherever the syllable position was.

Table 6
'o' and 'u' in the Fifth Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	OALD transcription	Source (verse)
1	consummate	/ˈkɒnsəmeɪt/	235
2	ransom	/ˈrænsəm/	196
3	reckoning	/ˈrekənɪŋ/	202
4	sinfully	/ˈsɪnfəli/	188
5	victory	/ˈvɪktəri/	89
6	wisdom	/ˈwɪzdəm/	129

Table 6 above showed the fifth positioned 'o' and 'u' vocabulary items found in the data. The highlighted part in the transcription indicated that it was stressed. These seven data showed a coincidental pattern where all the first syllable was stressed and the second was unstressed. To prove that this pattern was non-coincidental, the researchers found other similar vocabulary items. Those were measure /ˈmeʒə(r)/, culture /ˈkʌltʃə(r)/, century /ˈsentʃəri/, venture /ˈventʃə(r)/, capture /ˈkæptʃə(r)/, circuit /ˈsɜːkɪt/, leisure /ˈleʒə(r)/, formula /ˈfɔːmjələ/, mixture /ˈmɪkstʃə(r)/, campus /ˈkæmpəs/, author /ˈɔːθə(r)/, common /ˈkɒmən/, and an American fortune /ˈfɔːtʃuːn/ (BrE) /ˈfɔːrtʃən/ (AmE). The stress on the second syllable schwa occurred at the first syllable as found in the words produce /prəˈdjuːs/ and conduct /kənˈdʌkt/. However, schwa did not always be found in the fifth positioned 'o' and 'u' in English vocabulary as discovered in the words dispute /dɪˈspjuːt//ˈdɪspjuːt/ and disgust /dɪsˈgʌst/.

Table 7
'o' and 'u' in the Sixth Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	OALD transcription	Source (verse)
1	ceremony	/ˈserəməni/	196
2	creator	/kriˈeɪtə(r)/	54
3	creature	/ˈkriːtʃə(r)/	164
4	kingdom	/ˈkɪŋdəm/	247
5	pleasure	/ˈpleʒə(r)/	35

Table 7 shows the sixth positioned 'o' and 'u' in English vocabulary items found in the Al-Baqarah letter. Five vocabulary items were found with various syllable counts in this section including two, three, and four-syllable words. Since the researchers considered that these five vocabulary items were not adequate, therefore, additional random words which belong to the sixth positioned 'o' and 'u' were added as follows; maximum /ˈmæksɪməm/, premium /ˈpriːmiəm/, headquarters /ˌhedˈkwɔːtəz/, abandoned /əˈbændənd/, diagnostic /ˌdaɪəgˈnɒstɪk/, technology /tekˈnɒlədʒi/, develop /dɪˈveləp/. Highlighted sounds indicated the stressed syllable position. The stressed vowel sounds were found in the data including [e], [iː], [ɪ], [æ], [ɔː], and [ɒ]. Not only vowel sounds, but diphthong [eɪ] also appeared in the stressed syllable of the word 'creator' which was transcribed as /kriˈeɪtə(r)/. All vocabulary items clearly depicted the schwa position that was always unstressed despite the number of syllables that existed. However, the 'o' and 'u' sounds were unpronounced schwa like in the word diagnostic transcribed as /ˌdaɪəgˈnɒstɪk/. Here, the schwa occurred in the second syllable, however, it represented the letter 'a' not 'o' or even 'u'.

Table 8
'o' and 'u' in the Seventh Position in Surah Al-Baqarah

No.	Words	OALD transcription	Source (verse)
1	difficult	/ˈdɪfɪkəlt/	185
2	difficulty	/ˈdɪfɪkəlti/	184
3	scripture	/ˈskrɪptʃə(r)/	42
4	testimony	/ˈtestɪməni/	140

Table 8 above showed the seventh positioned 'o' and 'u' vocal letters in English vocabulary items found as the data. Since there were only four data found, therefore, some random vocabulary with the same characteristic that the 'o' and 'u' were located in the seventh letter order in a word, such as synchronic /sɪŋˈkrɒnɪk/, furniture /ˈfɜːnɪtʃə(r)/, adventure /ədˈventʃə(r)/, configure /kənˈfɪɡə(r)/, and enclosure /ɪnˈkləʊʒə(r)/. The bolded part in the transcription indicated the stressed syllable. The three-syllable vocabulary items had the stress on the first syllable including difficult and furniture, therefore, the unstressed schwa was located at the third syllable. The second positioned stressed syllable of the three-syllable words had the schwa on the first syllable as shown in the words adventure and configure. However, there were some exceptions in the word synchronic which had no schwa, and the word enclosure which had stressed on the second syllable and unstressed on the third syllable. The two-syllable word might have the stress on the first syllable and schwa on the second syllable like in the word scripture which was transcribed as /ˈskrɪptʃə(r)/. Lastly, the four-syllable vocabulary items gotten showed that they had stressed on the first syllable and schwa on the third syllable as shown in the difficulty /ˈdɪfɪkəlti/ and testimony/ˈtestɪməni/.

Table 9
Other Findings of the Schwa in Suffixes –ion and –ous

No.	Words	Suffix	Oxford dict. trans.	Longman dict. trans.	Source
1	admonition	ion	/ˌædməˈnɪʃn/	/ˌædməˈnɪʃən/	232
2	compulsion	ion	/kəmˈpʌlʃn/	/kəmˈpʌlʃən/	256
3	connection	ion	/kəˈnekʃn/	/kəˈnekʃən/	190
4	invocation	ion	/ˌɪnvəˈkeɪʃn/	/ˌɪnvəˈkeɪʃən/	129
5	opposition	ion	/ˌɒpəˈzɪʃn/	/ˌɒpəˈzɪʃən/	176
6	rebellious	ous	/rɪˈbeljəs/	/rɪˈbeljəs/	26
7	reconciliation	ion	/ˌrekənsiliˈeɪʃn/	/ˌrekənsiliˈeɪʃən/	228
8	resurrection	ion	/ˌrezəˈrekʃn/	/ˌrezəˈrekʃən/	4
9	righteous	ous	/ˈraɪtʃəs/	/ˈraɪtʃəs/	62
10	submission	ion	/səbˈmɪʃn/	/səbˈmɪʃən/	132
11	succession	ion	/səkˈseʃn/	/səkˈseʃən/	87

*Note: grey highlighted indicates that the data have not been shown in the previous data.

While analyzing the data of this study, the researchers found that schwa did not only occur in the vocal letter 'o' and 'u' but also occurred in the words with the suffix –ion and also –ous. Exclusively, this section discussion employed an extra transcription from the online *Longman Dictionary* due to the hidden schwa in the suffix –ion and –ous in the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* online. Theoretically, the suffix ion was used to modify a verb to be a noun. The noun 'connection' which was taken from the data as an example consisted of the verb 'connect' and is followed by the suffix '-ion'. From the data, it was seen that all the suffix -ion in the word should be pronounced as /ən/. Nababan, Ambarita, and Sitinjak (2023) explained the attachment of suffix -ion into verbs can convert a verb to a noun. To support this statement, some other examples of nouns consisting of the suffix –ion were taken such as creation /kriˈeɪʃn/ /kriˈeɪʃən/, decision /dɪˈsɪʒn/ /dɪˈsɪʒən/, location /ləʊˈkeɪʃn/ /ləʊˈkeɪʃən/, education /ˌedʒuˈkeɪʃn/ /ˌedjʊˈkeɪʃən/, attention /əˈtenʃn/ /əˈtenʃən/, information /ˌɪnfəˈmeɪʃn/ /ˌɪnfəˈmeɪʃən/, exposition /ˌekspəˈzɪʃn/ /ˌekspəˈzɪʃən/, adaptation /ˌædæpˈteɪʃn/ /ˌædæpˈteɪʃən/, corruption /kəˈrʌpʃn/ /kəˈrʌpʃən/, submission /səbˈmɪʃn/ /səbˈmɪʃən/. The

underlined transcriptions were taken from the Longman online dictionary, while the highlighted part is the schwa sound that existed.

The suffix –ous took the role of modifying a noun to be an adjective that means 'full of something'. For example, the word dangerous consisted of the root words 'danger' and '-ous' which meant full of danger. Pujastuti, Maharani, and Utami (2022) argued that suffixes -y, -ful, -less, **-ous,** -ic, -ial, and -al can modify a noun to be an adjective. There were two data taken from the Al-Baqarah letter that had a schwa in the suffix –ous. Therefore, to support the data, some other adjectives were taken as follows numerous /ˈnjuːmərəs/ /ˈnjuːmərəs/, dangerous /ˈdeɪndʒərəs/ /ˈdeɪndʒərəs/, famous /ˈfeɪməs/ /ˈfeɪməs/, mysterious /mɪˈstɪəriəs/ /mɪˈstɪəriəs/, continuous /kənˈtɪnjuəs/ /kənˈtɪnjuəs/, religious /rɪˈlɪdʒəs/ /rɪˈlɪdʒəs/, dangerous ˈdeɪndʒərəs/ /ˈdeɪndʒərəs/, anonymous /əˈnɒnɪməs/ /əˈnɒnɪməs/, hilarious /hɪˈleəriəs/ /hɪˈleəriəs/, nervous /ˈnɜːvəs/ /ˈnɜːvəs/, anxious /ˈæŋkʃəs/ /ˈæŋkʃəs/, curious /ˈkjʊəriəs/ /ˈkjʊəriəs/, conscious /ˈkɒnʃəs/ /ˈkɒnʃəs/. /. The underlined transcriptions were taken from Longman online dictionary, while the highlighted part is the schwa sound that occurred in the adjectives found. All of the suffixes -ous were pronounced as schwa /-**əs/.**

In conclusion, this research results in renewing the unstressed schwa term with *astressed* or *disaccented* terms and changing its pronunciation to /ʃwə/. Also, unstressed vowels 'o' and 'u' are pronounced as a schwa, not determined by location. Schwa is not found in stressed syllables. All -ion [ən] and -ous [əs] suffixes must be pronounced with unstressed schwa. These results are different compared to other research which has been discussed in many studies. Recasens (2022) argued that full schwa, a short, variable, and low-intensity mid central vowel, may occur in stressed languages and unreduced syllables in stress languages, with increased variability in F1 and F2 dimensions. Benyagoub and Bouahania (2020) advocated for a moraic approach in prosodic phonology, explaining epenthesis differences and Schwa Vowel deletion in specific morphological contexts, incorporating moraic structure and inflectional paradigm.

CONCLUSION

Based on the two research questions, two conclusions can be drawn. The first one is that the schwa term that represents the unstressed syllable can be renewed with the terms proposed in this study such as astressed and disaccented which are formed by a morphological process. In addition, to maintain the schwa term, a change of its pronunciation is proposed becoming /ʃwə/ and not /ʃwɑː/. The second is that although most of the written vowels 'o' and 'u' are pronounced in a strong form, unstressed vowels 'o' and 'u' are pronounced as a schwa. The appearance of unstressed schwa in the vowels 'o' and 'u' is not determined by its location whether it is in the first or second syllable. Schwa could appear anywhere as long as it was not stressed. Schwa was not found in stressed syllables. Lastly, all -ion [ən] and -ous [əs] suffixes must be pronounced with unstressed schwa.

This study implies that EFL learners ought to practise and recheck their pronunciation by consulting an English dictionary to improve their pronunciation. By the completion of this research, researchers recommend future researchers analyze more deeply the patterns of the schwa sound in English vocabulary items to ease future EFL learners to master the schwa or unstressed vowel sound.

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